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President's Message: Leadership

We are facing some challenging times economically around the world and here at home. I would encourage all PTAs to review their budgets and their revenues from their fall fundraisers. As state and local revenues are reduced so is the funding for our schools. Please remind parents that any amount that is given to the PTA helps to provide programs and materials for our children. If your fundraising monies do not meet the approved budget figures, then your PTA may want to amend their budget. Your PTA may need to consider additional fundraisers or reducing expenditures. Keep in mind that adding additional fundraisers may be challenging for parents at this time.

Volunteers are vital to our organization. As a leader, remember to make volunteering easy for volunteers. Have good lines of communication; set clear expectations for board members and committee chairs. Ask committee chairpersons to review responsibilities and guidelines with the committee members. When volunteers take time out of their schedule, be sure they know the time, date and location where they are volunteering. Have a written sheet giving directions, for example how to make copies. If a volunteer is working the lunch room, have the schedule posted with the responsibilities. Provide a contact name for the volunteer in case they have a question. For large events, consider having a Volunteer "Check In" table. The table can have a master list with the volunteers names, times and location they are working.

Please remember to contact everyone who has volunteered, even if circumstances change and the volunteer is no longer needed. The volunteer who does not get contacted will be disappointed and may choose not to volunteer in the future.

Remember to thank and acknowledge the efforts of all the volunteers helping out the PTA.

Thank you for all you do for the PTA and our schools. It is our children who are benefiting from all our efforts.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving.

Wendy Logan
HCCPTA 2008-2009
President
President@HCCPTA.com

Save the Date and Deadline Reminders:

November 4	General Election
November 7-9	Convention 2008, Hotel Roanoke
November 15	Form 990 IRS deadline for most PTA units
December 1	Membership dues to state office deadline
January 26, 2009	PTA Day at the General Assembly



Don't forget

DISTRICT NEWS

Fairfield District News

Brookland Middle School PTA welcomed Helena Lythgoe of State Farm on October 16th, for a Family Financial Workshop. The workshop covered the basics from bank accounts and money management to saving for education, retirement and more. The workshop was free and refreshments were served.



Tuckahoe District News

Ruby F. Carver Elementary PTA—Over 350 people participated in Carver PTA's 2nd Annual Brunswick Stew and Festival. It was a wonderful fall evening with Brunswick stew, bread, lemonade and cookies. The kids had a great time playing and everyone had a chance to see old friends and meet new ones. The event allowed everyone to see our community and what makes Carver a great place. If you'd like the recipe we used for our Brunswick stew, check it out on the Carver PTA website at www.carverpta.org.

HCPS students participate in International Walk to School Day

Article written and photographs taken by Lane Burgess

Reprinted with permission from HCPS School Days online at www.henrico.k12.va.us/schooldays

They came from all directions on bikes, scooters and their own two feet, still making it to class on time. On October 8, 2008, Tuckahoe Elementary School students gave up the familiarity of cars and buses and set out to make a difference.

Each year, International Walk to School Day brings children and families together from around the world to take the first steps toward enhancing children's health, improving air quality and the environment, and creating safer routes for walking or bicycling.

Hundreds [of] students and parents ventured outdoors to make the trek.

"We invited the whole neighborhood to meet at our house to have snacks," explains Sandy Michalick, mom of kindergartener Jackson. "I felt a great sense of community. It promotes physical activity for him and it's a fun way to bond as a family."

Teachers and faculty members were just as dedicated to the cause. Jeremy Seward, physical education instructor, traveled in the dark by bike for 20 miles. Many teachers carpooled or walked as groups. "Everyone was so enthusiastic today," says Muriel Brinkley, assistant principal. We had one school bus with only one student and three buses with only two students. It was a big success. It's a grassroots effort to encourage the county to put in sidewalks so students can walk or ride bikes safely to school each day."

Volunteers in bright yellow greeted students along busy streets to help ensure safety. In the U.S., International Walk to School Day is expected to include 5,000 schools from all 50 states. Walkers from the U.S. will join children and adults in 40 countries around the world.

"This year we're trying to help the earth because there's pollution," says fifth-grader Madelyn Grace Ownby. "We're trying to reduce, reuse, and recycle. This has never happened to me, and I've been here since kindergarten. I would always just take the car, and now I'm walking. I'm so excited."

"This is great for the kids to see how easy it is to get up and walk," says parent Bob Battle. "We have the added advantage to get to talk with each other as we're walking; mornings are usually a very hectic time."



DISTRICT NEWS continued

Varina District News

Submitted by Tammy Gartrell, Varina District Vice-President

Varina District had in attendance 16 people at the last HCCPTA meeting, we came in second for the most attended in the districts, we could have been tied at 17. Way to go, Varina, keep up the good work!

Seven Pines Elementary PTA program on October 14th was Fitness and Nutrition Night. Our 5th grade shared a nutrition poem, and our 2nd graders did dance aerobics to start off the meeting. We split into two groups—one group went to the gym to do family fitness exercises and the other group stayed in the cafeteria to hear the guest speaker from VCU talk about nutrition programs they offer for free and how to get your kids to eat vegetables. After 15 minutes we then switched group locations.

Varina Elementary is celebrating 100 years of learning. The Varina/ Mehfood PTA hosted a carnival on Saturday, November 1st from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Elko Middle School is doing the Internet Safety Program “Enough Is Enough” on November 18th, at 7 p.m.

Donahoe Elementary PTA will have Art/Paint the Tiles Night and a Blood Drive on November 18th at 7 p.m.

Donahoe Legacy Lives On

*Article written by Patty Kruszewski, Henrico Citizen Managing Editor
Reprinted with permission from Henrico Citizen newsletter (www.henricocitizen.com)*

In a lifetime devoted to education, Cashell Donahoe left his mark on schools from Hopewell to Henrico, as teacher, principal and eventually assistant superintendent of Henrico County Public Schools.

But not many know that the namesake of Donahoe Elementary School in eastern Henrico was also deeply involved in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, serving as the church’s first area assistant superintendent. The Cashell Donahoe legacy, in fact, lends its name not only to the school but to the Donahoe Foundation, a scholarship fund that assists students attending Southern Virginia University in Buena Vista.

No one knows this legacy better than members of the Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Mechanicsville. One of the church’s members, Deborah Dunham, teaches fourth grade at DES; another, Carlos Chacon, has a third-grader at the school and is active in the PTA.

On Sept. 13, Dunham and Chacon were among the 55 church members who turned out for a service project to restore and improve the DES nature trail and greenhouse area on the school’s 30th anniversary. Church members of all ages – including students from Donahoe, Mechanicsville Elementary, Stonewall Jackson Middle School, and Lee-Davis Little School – formed crews that tilled the flowerbeds for new plants, removed poison ivy, trimmed underbrush, widened the trail and laid mulch.

Seven Pines PTA Fitness & Nutrition Night



2nd Grade Penguins



5th Grade Penguins



DISTRICT NEWS continued

Brookland District News

Submitted by Angela McKinney, Echo Lake PTA President

Echo Lake Elementary School recently launched a new program known as WATCH D.O.G.S. (Dads of Great Students), an initiative of the National Center for Fathering, to promote the relationship between significant male role models and students. The Echo Lake Elementary School PTA and the school have partnered to invite fathers and other male role models to serve as volunteers every day at the school. The volunteers, easily recognized in specialized T-shirts, serve for a full day as an extra set of eyes to maintain a positive, upbeat learning environment. They can be seen assisting in classrooms and the lunchroom, at recess, and engaging with students as they arrive at school and head home at the end of the day.



The program was launched with a "Donuts with Dads" event. About 100 fathers showed up at 7:15 in the morning on October 6th to have donuts with their children and learn more about the WatchDOGS program. During the first week of the event 117 fathers have signed up to be a WatchDOG. We are overwhelmed at the response from our fathers when asked to help make a positive difference in our children's education by spending a day at school. We know the numbers will continue to grow!



Today, more than 760 programs in 33 states participate in the WATCH D.O.G.S. program.

"I am overwhelmed and excited," says Principal Jodie Brinkmann. "We truly want to have more male role models for our young boys, as well as all of our students. We usually see plenty of moms spending time in the school. By having dads, uncles, and grandfathers volunteering in our school on a daily basis, we feel we can truly make a difference in our children's lives."

~Angela McKinney, Echo Lake PTA President

The 2004-2008 Maude Trevvett Elementary School PTA saved and with some help from Brookland Supervisor, Dick Glover was able to get a Marquee this summer! Also their new PTA team started its first ever website this year! Way to go Maude Trevvett!!!

George H Moody Middle School will host The Concert Ballet of Virginia's "The Nutcracker Suite" on Saturday, November 22nd. There will be two performances, at 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm, both on the same day. This is a great opportunity to kick off the winter season with a one hour performance of this holiday classic. The shorter show length is perfect for families with younger children. Tickets are \$10 for adults, and \$5 for seniors and children under 12. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Shawna Shade of the Moody PTA at 266-8536 or TheArts@mmspta.com, or purchased at the door on November 22nd.



Three Chopt District News

Springfield Park Elementary PTA will hold its annual Holiday Shop on Friday, December 5, 2008. It is a fun time for the kids to shop for their family with a personal shopper and for the parents to visit the crafters and vendors.



Henrico County Council of PTAs Scholarship Fund



Each year the HCCPTA awards nine seniors from Henrico County a scholarship. One student from each high school is selected. This past school year, with the generous help of the local units and the community, we were able to award each of the nine recipients \$1,350 each toward their college education. The main focus of the scholarship is financial need. Our scholarship committee reviews grades, community and school activities, as well as referral letters to determine who the nine recipients will be.

In 2008 - 2009 school year, HCCPTA will be seeking donations from the local units. Please consider a donation to HCCPTA to support this scholarship as you work on your budgets for this school year. Without your local unit support, we would not be able to provide the financial support that these students need in order to fulfill their dreams.

Please send checks made payable to HCCPTA to our Treasurer:

Andrea Beck
7211 Elko Road
Sandston, VA 23150

Thank you for your support.
Denise Russell
HCCPTA Scholarship Chair

Reflections—Thank You

by Kelly Powell, HCCPTA Reflections Chair

We want to thank all the Reflection Chairs and volunteers who helped with their programs at their local unit PTAs. We are looking forward to seeing all the winning entries from your schools.



Frequently Asked Questions:

- Send in only the Outstanding Interpretation winners from each category and age division to the county level.
- Do not send us any of the judging sheets from your local unit programs.
- Please include with your entries the Local Unit Participation Form and the Tracking Form. Both of these forms are available online. www.hccpta.com
- Drop off information: You have two choices to drop off you Outstanding Interpretation winning entries to the county level.
 1. Put the entries in your school's "Pony Mail" Send it to Rivers Edge Elementary School attn: Wendy Logan **by Friday, Nov. 14th**
 2. You may drop off entries in person on **Thursday, Nov. 13th** at Moody Middle School. We will be there from **5:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

We will process these entries and have them judged. The HCCPTA Reflections Program will be on Tuesday, January 20th, 2009 at Deep Run High School at 7 p.m. More information regarding the program and the winners will be in December newsletter. The entries that do not move onto the District level will be available for pick up the night of the Jan. program.

National PTA Takes a Poll

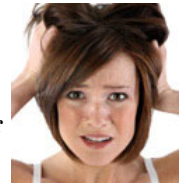
Help PTA understand what is important to you and your members. In less than two minutes you can check off the topics that you would like to see PTA address and discuss when the PTA National Council of States (with grassroots representation from all states) meets in March 2009. Take the poll yourself and tell your members to weigh in. PTA wants to hear from everyone. Announce the poll at your meetings, put it in your newsletters, and add it to your websites.

Use this address to take the poll and direct your members: <http://www.pta.org/issues/>.

VA PTA Attacks Sales-Tax Headache

Reprinted from VA PTA Voice newsletter

Virginia PTA has negotiated with state officials to streamline the process for local PTAs to apply for sales tax exemptions.



Before the change, local PTAs were having to call the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), for the first time, to get a letter saying that they comply with regulations governing charitable solicitation of contributions. Before that there was a Question 12 on the exemption application that asked PTA's group number and that number was part of the determination letter.

For a local unit, this was another step in the process that is already difficult.

PTA and the state agency have agreed on a letter that will suffice for meeting compliance regulations. What will happen now is that the local PTA will apply for its 501©3 tax exemption determination, send the paperwork to the state PTA office and, assuming they have met the criteria, will receive the VDACS letter to send when they remit the paperwork to the state.

Because local PTAs are under the state organization's umbrella, the state office can determine if they are in compliance and thus eligible for the letter.

In past years, the state Taxation Department's application for tax exemption called for a "sequence number." Local PTAs that have the old form in their files should replace it with the new form.

Keep in mind, units only have to file with the state for the tax exemption once every five years.

Questions? Contact. . . .

Tricia Rudolph, Treasurer
Virginia PTA
treasurer@vapta.org

PTA Radio

Reprinted from VA PTA Voice newsletter

National PTA has introduced PTA Radio-an online radio show focused on education and family issues while providing easy, real-life tips and information.

PTA's first online broadcast, PTA Radio is another way for the organization PTA to provide resources to today's time-challenged parent. PTA Radio will focus on issues affecting families and child advocates and will provide real-life answers to everyday problems.

A new show airs every two weeks.

Anyone can listen to PTA Radio on-demand and catch a quick show online at their leisure with the click of a mouse. Show lengths range from 5 - 10 minutes and features interviews with different national experts every other week.

The first series of shows focus on male involvement tips and highlight a different partner of PTA's, the SAYLORS—Men Organized to Raise Engagement (MORE) alliance. Shows are hosted by Rae Pica, author and international specialist early childhood physical activity, and Chuck Saylor, National PTA's president-elect.

The inaugural PTA Radio show is called, "Getting Dads into the School Setting," and includes an interview with Bryan Davis, Director of All Pro Dad -a fatherhood program of Family First and formed of current and former NFL players and coaches who call attention to the importance of fatherhood.

Parents and child advocates can listen to PTA Radio by going to the following link <http://www.jackstreet.com/jackstreet/WMBKpta.davis.cfm>.

Marion Akins
Chairman, Parental Involvement Committee
parenting@vapta.org





PTA Take Your Family to School Week

Plan events for February 8–14, 2009

Apply for \$1,897

Connect families and schools.
Continue the PTA legacy.

Award application deadline:
5:00 p.m. CST, Friday, November 7, 2008*
Event ideas, posters, award application, and more at
pta.org/familytoschool.

* Local PTAs in good standing may apply. All applications will be subject to competitive review.

Awards funded by AXA Foundation,
Proud National Sponsor of PTA.



National PTA Unit Recognition Program Notice

For the past three years the PTA Unit Recognition Program has acknowledged and awarded local PTA's for all of the great things and hard work they are doing year round. Unfortunately, due to a significant decline in participation (e.g., the first year of the program had over 800 participants, the current year had only 300) and because it is cost prohibitive, this program will be discontinued, effective October 2008. We would like to thank the local PTAs that participated in this program and we encourage all PTAs to continue with their membership efforts—you are all winners in our book!

Please remember that there are plenty of additional opportunities to recognize PTA units. Browse our PTA award programs page for information on other awards programs, including the PTA Hearst awards. We have lots of other opportunities for your PTA to win awards, grants recognition, and more!

For additional info, questions or concerns please contact us at info@pta.org. Thank you for being PTA!

Cell Phones in Schools—Give VA PTA Your Feedback

Reprinted from VA PTA Voice newsletter

Enter "pros and cons of cell phones in schools" in any internet search engine and don't be surprised to see 4.2 million return entries!

In the United States, cell phone ownership ballooned to more than 255.4 million in 2007 from 33.8 million 12 years earlier. Decreasing costs and increasing features have put wireless handheld devices into the hands of children as well as their parents.

Meanwhile, school divisions struggle with regulating cell phone use during school hours. Some ban them from the campus of elementary and middle schools and forbid high schoolers from using the devices while classes are in session. Others recognize that, short of strip-searching every child every day, an outright ban is all-but-unenforceable.

Educators are concerned that students could use the camera feature in many phones to cheat on tests - photographing test papers and texting the photos to those waiting to take the exam. Others see cell phones and texting as yet-another distraction to keep students from being focused on the classroom.

But this sometimes put schools at odds with parents, who want their children to keep in touch with plans for the day. Forgotten books or school work can be rescued if children alert parents quickly enough. A missed bus or cancelled school activity is less of a trauma if help can be summoned by cell phone.

Some schools permit students to use pay telephones between classes, during recess or at lunch. But not all children carry the requisite coinage and those calling times might not be convenient for parents at work.

So what do you think? Should students be allowed to carry cell phones to school? Should cell phone use be restricted - or banned -- during school hours? If you were in charge, what would you do?

Please send your comments to feedback@vapta.org. Please include your name and town and, if applicable, age(s) of your child(ren). Try for 50 words or fewer. Comments of 75 words or more will be edited for length. Feel free to send suggestions and ideas for future Feedback features to the same address.

Last issue's FEEDBACK! topic: School Start Times

Here are a few responses:

Our high school students start their day at 7:25. Many of them are sleep deprived. Teenagers have internal clocks that, appropriately for their age, often do not allow them to go to sleep early even if they go to bed early. What is best for the education of our students, not merely what is most expedient, ought to be paramount in the minds of decision makers. ~**Donald Wilms, English Department, Manchester High School, Midlothian**

Our family has been in 2 VA school districts - one with HS start times of 8:40 and the other (currently) 7:20. The later start time made for healthier kids and there were NO PROBLEMS with after school activities. It just makes sense to send teens to school later. ~**Pat Higgins, Fairfax County**

Young children look like they are sleep-walking to the bus each morning, a huge safety concern! My 3rd grader cannot eat when she wakes that early but lunch is only 3 1/2 hours away at 10:35 am. Three hours later, she is back on the bus in time for her sugar level to bottom out. Does anyone else feel the rising number of serious behavioral issues may be a connected to sleep deprivation or nutrition? ~**Rhonda Hurley, Roanoke**

"Messages to the Public," The Role of Sleep on Memory and Learning Conference, Washington D.C., March 2008: "Changes in sleep and circadian regulation occurring in adolescence are inconsistent with optimal learning when morning school start times are too early (before 8:30 or 9:00)." ~**Therese Tuley, Robinson Secondary School, Fairfax County**

It makes sense to meet the learning and health needs of students by providing suitable hours. Districts with later starting high schools increase participation in sports, maintain after-school care for younger children, and spend the same amount to bus students to schools. It's time to set schedules based on facts. ~**Phyllis Payne, MPH Co-founder, Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal (SLEEP), Fairfax County, www.sleepinfairfax.org**



2009 PTA National Convention & Exhibition

Join PTA members for the 2009 PTA National Convention & Exhibition on **June 26-29, 2009** in sunny **Ft. Lauderdale, Florida!** Plan to attend and promote this opportunity within your local unit with the information and resources available at www.pta.org/annualconvention. Registration and hotel information will be available in March 2009. Group discounts and special rates will apply for advance registrants.

For more information to help you budget and plan your trip to the National Convention, please e-mail nptameetings@pta.org. For more information on Ft. Lauderdale, visit www.sunny.org.



PTA Take Your Family to School Week Awards

Plan events for February 8–14, 2009

The PTA national organization is offering awards of \$1,897 to local PTAs with plans to celebrate PTA Take Your Family to School Week 2009.

The week, February 8–14, is a special opportunity for schools to open their doors to all families and give parents a unique perspective on students' school days, give educators openings to build positive partnerships with families, and give kids fun ways to share their school experiences.

Promoting family involvement in children's education has been at the heart of PTA since its founding in February 1897. Take Your Family to School Week and the \$1,897 Awards honor and continue that legacy.

Tell us your plans to celebrate PTA Take Your Family to School Week 2009 and your unit could win \$1,897 to support its work. Applications must be received at PTA national headquarters by 5:00 p.m. CST, Friday, November 7, 2008. Late applications will not be accepted.

Details can be located at www.pta.org/take_your_family_to_school_awards.asp.



LOCAL UNIT REMITTANCE STATEMENT

DEADLINE 12/1, 3/1, 6/30

Date Rec'd _____
 Check # _____
 Date _____
 Amount _____

For units to be in good standing, dues must be received in the State Office postmarked by December 1. Membership dues should also be submitted on March 1 for memberships paid on or after December 1, and June 30 for memberships paid on or after March 1.

When remitting dues to the State Office ~~State and National~~ membership dues should be included in one check payable to Virginia PTA in the amount of \$2.50 per individual (National \$1.75/member and State \$.75/member). It is the responsibility of Virginia PTA to remit dues to National PTA monthly. Please pay council dues directly to the council.

Please mail check and form to: Virginia PTA
 1027 Wilmer Avenue
 Richmond, VA 23227-2419

National ID No. _____

Complete Name of Local PTA/PTSA _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Local PTA/PTSA President _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

City or County _____ PTA District _____

Local PTA/PTSA Treasurer _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Signature of Treasurer _____

WHEN REMITTING DUES TO THE STATE OFFICE, PLEASE PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

This payment covers dues received from _____ to _____

Amount charged for local unit dues per individual is: \$ _____

_____ # of parents/guardians _____ # of staff/faculty _____ # of students

The total of these should equal your total membership reported below

For these classifications, the parents/guardians can be any member who is not considered a student or staff/faculty.

Enter the number of members: _____ x \$2.50/member = \$ _____

PTA Founders Day Gift \$ _____

Total Remitted \$ _____

A COPY OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP LIST IS NOT REQUIRED AT THIS TIME BUT MUST BE ACCURATELY MAINTAINED BY YOUR UNIT AS IT MAY BE REQUESTED AT ANY TIME.

FOR STATE OFFICE USE ONLY		
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