



*everychild. one voice.*

# CONNECTION

*A publication of the Henrico County Council of PTAs*

*May/June 2006*

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**President's Message - Thanks!**

As we begin to wind down to the end of the school year, we take time in the month of May to express our thanks to the two major components of PTA: Parents and Teachers. It is important to recognize the parents and other volunteers who have given the most precious gift of their time to the PTA and the school.

Whether they gave an hour a month or four hours a day, volunteers are the backbone of our organization. We depend on their talent and their passions to accomplish the important goals that we set forth at the beginning of the year.

It is also important to thank the teachers and other staff members in the school. These are the people who care for our children five days a week for nine months of the year. From the teachers who work so hard to instill a love of learning, to the clinic aide who gives a band aid, the secretary who smiles at them every morning and the cafeteria lady who reminds them to eat some fruit...these are the people who impact our children every day and they deserve our gratitude.

While it would be inappropriate to spend PTA money on fancy gifts there are many creative ways to offer thanks – a certificate of appreciation in a nice frame; a meaningful poem rolled up with a ribbon; a drawing done with care by a child. The most moving volunteer celebration I ever attended was one where the teachers had prepared a feast for the volunteers. It was wonderful and so sincere. I urge every PTA to do something...anything... to recognize the contributions of these people in a public way. Make sure the school marquee says "Thank you teachers and staff." Put a poster in the main hallway that says "We love our volunteers." If you haven't already planned something, it's not too late. Even a small gesture of thanks will mean a lot.

Finally, I offer my thanks to you. PTA leaders are not easy to come by. My story is just like yours: I started out cutting up Campbell's soup labels. Little by little I found myself being persuaded to take one position and then another until...well, you know the rest! I have one request as this year draws to a close: Please keep saying "yes." Please stay involved in PTA. If you are fairly new to it, hang in there and continue to contribute in your local unit. If you are ending your tenure as a local unit officer, please consider joining me at the County Council. We are the direct link between the local units and the school system. We need board members from every corner of the county with students at every grade level. We need new people to bring their ideas and experience. Please call or email me. Just like the local school PTA, the County Council can't continue without volunteers to carry out our mission and goals. We need you.

*Anne Carson  
HCCPTA 2006-2007 President*

## President's Checklist

### June

- Update 2006-2007 PTA/PTSA Officer Roster with the HCCPTA. Go to [www.hccpta.com](http://www.hccpta.com) then click on PTA Forms. Print the form and send it to our Communications Chair, Helena Lythgoe.
- Have transitional board meeting with old and new members.
- Assume duties at end of transitional meeting.
- Send all forms including the new officers names/addresses to the State PTA Office. EIN (tax ID) number must also be on file with the State PTA office.
- Review and update committee procedure books, develop procedure books for new positions.
- Make sure the outgoing president arranged the audit for the previous year financial records.
- Make reservations for Virginia PTA's leadership Training Conference and Virginia PTA's Legislation/Education Conference.
- Remind your Treasurer that all dues collected since March 1 must be in to the State Office by June 30.

### **HCCPTA Elects New Officers for 2006-2007**

Henrico County Council of PTAs elected the following officers for 2006-2007 at its Annual Awards Banquet earlier in May:

President	Anne Carson
Area VP – Brookland	Mirinda Lawrence
Area VP – Fairfield	Lula Lamb
Area VP – Three Chopt	Open
Area VP – Tuckahoe	Sharon Dunkum
Area VP – Varina	Andrea Beck
Secretary	Tammy Zimmer
Treasurer	Kim Harris

## **State and District PTA**

### State PTA

**President – Dianne Florence**

E-mail .....president@vapta.org

**President-Elect – Melissa Nehrbass**

E-mail .....pre-elect@vapta.org

### Richmond District PTA

**Director – Sharon Dunkum**

804 741-4489 .....richmond@vapta.org

**First Assistant – Tammy Billups**

E-mail.....richmond\_asst@vapta.org



# Walk This Way Virginia PTA

## 2006 LEADERSHIP TRAINING CONFERENCE LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY, Farmville JULY 14 AND 15

Now is the time to start making plans to attend the 2006 Leadership Training Conference at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. The LTC committee is busy planning for a fun, informative, and energizing experience for all attendees. Once again this year we will be combining the Legislation/Education Conference with LTC; however a new more engaging format will be utilized to combine these two events. This is a great opportunity for your board and especially your legislation chairman along with any other members interested in acquiring basic training as well as more focused training in PTA advocacy.

LTC will run all day on Friday, July 14 and Saturday, July 15 and the basic registration price for the two days with on campus lodging for Friday night and five meals (lunch and dinner on Friday and all meals on Saturday) is \$130. What a deal for your new or returning local unit, council, or district leaders. If you wish to commute for two days the cost is \$105 and if you can only attend for one day the cost is \$80 and includes your lunch and dinner for each day. You may wish to come in on Thursday night for the extra fee of \$48 which includes your on campus lodging and breakfast on Friday.

As always we will have the basic nuts and bolts workshops to train officers and committee chairs. In addition we will be offering National PTA Building Successful Partnership training, and we are working with National PTA to provide hands on workshops to assist local units in using the new Online Membership Dues Reporting (OMDR) process which will be required for all local units. The scholarship auction will be with a "LIVE" auctioneer and we will also have the ever popular PTA Store, District and Committee displays, and vendor hall. For your added enjoyment we are planning a voluntary "Walk for Kids" event to benefit the scholarship fund and to promote healthy living among us all.

Watch your school mail for registration information coming your way sometime in May. Keep in mind, one person cannot capture all the training needed or available to your unit at LTC. Send as many members as possible! Remember training is always a legitimate use of PTA funds and is the best way to strengthen and revitalize your PTA!

For more information go to: [www.vapta.org](http://www.vapta.org)

**REMEMBER TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND PUT A NOTATION ON YOUR BUDGET FOR THE STATE CONVENTION IN NOVEMBER. WE WILL BE PROVIDING ADDITIONAL DETAILS IN THE FIRST FALL NEWSLETTER.**

**STATE CONVENTION  
2006 - HOTEL ROANOKE  
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA  
NOVEMBER 17-19**

## Legislation-Education Conference

**What's the Conference About?** Speakers include representatives from the board of Education, Department of Education, Governor's office, Higher Education, and PTA. Topics will include the current Proposed Legislation Program and other legislative and education items currently of interest.

**When and Where?** The Legislation-Education Conference is part of the annual Leadership Training Conference, July 14-15, 2006 at Longwood University.

**Who should attend?** Presidents, Vice-presidents, Legislation chairperson, Education chairperson and ALL members benefit from the Conference. The general public is also welcome.

**What will it Cost?** The Leg-Ed conference is part of the Leadership Training Conference (LTC) which will reflect a savings to local units. Use the LTC registration materials to register for Leg-Ed.

For more information, contact:

Legislation Committee Chair, [legislation@vapta.org](mailto:legislation@vapta.org)  
Education Committee Chair, [education@vapta.org](mailto:education@vapta.org)

### We Have EXTRA MONEY! Now What?

Good for you! Your fundraisers were more successful than you thought and/or your expenses were lower than you thought. Now there is extra money left over. What do we do with it? First, be sure to put aside money that is encumbered but not yet spent ... bills that will be due between now and September. These items might include your insurance payment, money for a welcome-back breakfast for teachers, money to cover receipts that have not been turned in yet, etc. If you have accounted for those items and a little cushion for unexpected carryover expenses and there is still money left, you should talk to your principal about needs the school has. (Every principal has a wish list!) Have the board make up a list of recommendations to present to your membership ... remember, the money belongs to them, not the president or the principal or the board. Only the membership can approve changes to the budget. At your next general membership meeting, present those suggestions and take a vote ... if you have no more meetings planned for this year, do it in September. PTAs should not have large amounts of money just sitting in the bank. The members who donated money, paid memberships and participated in your fundraisers, expect to SEE the benefits...they deserve to know what you have spent that money on ... and it should be spent in the current year unless you advertised that it was a fundraiser for a long term project. If you have questions about your budget, please contact one of your HCCPTA officers or the state PTA Treasurer. We are here to help you.

## Recharge & Refocus

Summer is a great time to recharge and refocus. While you have a break from the day to day demands of the school year, take some time to think about what your PTA has accomplished and what you would like to accomplish in the coming school year. All organizations work better when there is a written plan. Take the time to meet with the officers and write down your plan. List your goals and how you will accomplish each of them. It will help you to prioritize tasks so that you are using your financial and human resources as effectively as possible.

I hope at the top of your "To Do" list you have "**Attend Training.**" Whether you are a first time officer or a "veteran" who has been around PTA for many years, training is **ALWAYS** a good idea. Procedures change... new programs become available... new priorities emerge. Even if you've come to training in previous years, the networking can provide new ideas. The Virginia PTA, Richmond District PTA and the Henrico County Council PTA provide three separate opportunities for officers, board members and committee chairs to attend a training session. I urge every PTA to send as many people as possible. Please come to Longwood University on July 14/16. If you can't be there, be sure to attend the Richmond District training now planned in September. It will be well worth your time! I promise!  
Have a wonderful and safe summer!

*Anne Carson*  
*President, HCCPTAs*

## Membership Dues Reminder – Submit by June 30

Membership dues for all new PTA members joining after March 1 are due to the State PTA Office by JUNE 30. Please double-check your figures and membership totals with your treasurer and remit only the amount due for those members recruited after your March 1 remittance. If your local unit has collected any dues this year and have not yet sent them to the Virginia PTA, please remit all monies by June 30, 2006. Mail to Virginia PTA, 1027 Wilmer Ave., Richmond, VA 23227

## Incoming/Returning Presidents – Be on the Lookout

Incoming/returning presidents have to be on the lookout for information from National PTA and Virginia PTA. National PTA has already mailed out one of four **Quick Reference Guides** that replaces the *Annual Resources for PTAs*.

These additional PTA Quick-Reference Guides will be sent in the Back-to-School kits:

PTA Programs Quick-Reference Guide,  
PTA Membership Quick-Reference Guide, and  
PTA Money Matters Quick-Reference Guide

PTA presidents will receive the Back-to-School kits in July 2006, and can provide the Quick-Reference Guides to the volunteers who will handle each of these areas.

These new PTA Quick-Reference Guides will answer many questions immediately and show PTA leaders just where to find more information and support in all areas of running a PTA. Please give this guide to the 2006-2007 president in your PTA leadership transition.

Virginia PTA's correspondence with incoming/returning presidents is the Incoming President's Package. One of the most important pieces in there is the Officers Listing. This form, listing contact information for all officers and committee chairs, is required to be on file with Virginia PTA due to the section on Non-Profit Organizations in the Code of Virginia. Even if your entire board hasn't changed since 2005/2006, you must provide this information. Without this information on file, your local unit cannot receive its 501(c) (3) Determination Letter nor be able to apply for Virginia Sales Tax Exemption. This is just one piece of information needed to be on file at the state office; the other items are Paid Dues, Current Bylaws, copy of Approved Audit Report, EIN number, and a copy of the 990/990 EZ information return if the unit is required to file one with the IRS.

**Outgoing presidents, if you receive these mailings, please pass them on to the incoming president.**

### Reflections – Think Ahead

Is it too early to think about Reflections? No! Students can begin working on their entries now. Summer is a great time to reflect on the theme and begin putting together ideas for an entry. Remember – students can enter as many entries as they want and in all categories! Speaking of categories, look for some additional ones for next year! The theme for next year is "My Favorite Place..."

If your school has not participated in Reflections, now is a good time to start the program. There will be training available at the State Leadership conference in July and locally in the fall. It is a wonderful way to enhance the arts program at your school. Won't you consider participating in the program and giving your school's students the opportunity to succeed in this worthwhile program?

Has your school run a wonderful Reflections program? Want to nominate that chair for our position on the County Council level? Contact Anne Carson, HCCPTA President, with your recommendation.

## Need to Update Your Bylaws

Are your local unit bylaws currently updated? There's nothing complicated about the bylaws revision process. They are required to be revised at least every 5 years or sooner. Suggested bylaws are provided that are easy to complete and submit for approval. The process takes about 90 days to complete. Below we have listed those units whose bylaw revisions are due and those that are now past due. Go to MEMBERS ONLY to access the Bylaws Help Desk, find answers to other bylaws questions. Need assistance? Contact: Phyliss Ayers, Virginia PTA Bylaws Committee Chairperson - [bylaws@vapta.org](mailto:bylaws@vapta.org)

Speaking of bylaws, here are local units in Henrico County with Bylaws that are overdue:  
(as of 5/22/06)

<u>PTA/PTSA</u>	<u>Last Revision Date</u>
Fairfield MS PTA	08/30/2000
Glen Lea ES PTA	05/21/1999
Longan ES PTA	05/01/2001
Seven Pines ES PTA	04/27/2000
Varina HS PTSA	07/19/2000
Varina-Mehfoud ESs PTA	01/01/2001

Local units in Henrico County with Bylaws that are due for revisions between 7/06 – 12/06:

Adams ES PTA	10/29/2001
Glen Allen ES PTA	09/21/2001
Hermitage HS PTSA	10/12/2001
Johnson ES	07/10/2001
Sandston ES PTA	11/12/2001
Springfield Park ES PTA	07/05/2001

### **Information Needed!!!!**

Don't forget that we need your 2006/2007 board information submitted to us no later than 6/15/06 so that the 06/07 Directory can be published by the time we return to school. There is a form available on the County Council website, [www.hccpta.com](http://www.hccpta.com); however, any format is acceptable. If you already have your information set up in your computer, just forward it to our Communications Chair, Helena Lythgoe at [lythgoes4@comcast.net](mailto:lythgoes4@comcast.net)

## 2006 George H. Moody Scholarship Recipients



The George H. Moody Scholarship has provided financial assistance to worthy Henrico County graduates in pursuit of higher learning for over 20 years. The Scholarship is named in honor of Dr. George H. Moody, former teacher, principal and Superintendent of Schools, who retired in 1969 after 38 years of service. George H. Moody's integrity and dedication to improving the quality and standards of education within the county have been well documented. He left an indelible mark on Henrico County Public Schools during his thirteen years as Superintendent. The Henrico County Council supports Dr. Moody's level of drive and enthusiasm in supporting our graduates as they follow their educational goals. We believe in higher education and are committed to providing extra financial assistance that will make it possible for a young person to continue his or her education upon graduation from high school. This could mean going to college, entering trade school, nursing training or other post high school training

The criteria we review include financial need, extracurricular and community service, the students essay and recommendations. This year, through the efforts of Henrico County Council of PTAs and its local PTA units, we are pleased to award 13 scholarships in the amount of at least \$1,450 each to a group of very deserving graduates. We wish you the best in your future endeavors.

### *Congratulations to:*

<b><i>Miss Heather Inga Davis</i></b>	<i>Mills Godwin High School</i>
<b><i>Miss Brittany R Davis</i></b>	<i>Hermitage High School</i>
<b><i>Miss Leeand Andrea Diggs</i></b>	<i>Hermitage High School</i>
<b><i>Mr Hung Do</i></b>	<i>DS Freeman High School</i>
<b><i>Miss Melissa Joanne Eads</i></b>	<i>Hermitage High School</i>
<b><i>Miss Brittney Nichole Hill</i></b>	<i>Varina High School</i>
<b><i>Miss Shanice Morgan</i></b>	<i>Hermitage High School</i>
<b><i>Mr Salve Mukabumwe</i></b>	<i>Henrico High School</i>
<b><i>Miss Katie Marie O'Brien</i></b>	<i>Henrico High School</i>
<b><i>Miss Niti S Patel</i></b>	<i>JR Tucker High School</i>
<b><i>Miss Harwinder K Singh</i></b>	<i>Henrico High School</i>
<b><i>Miss Fatima Monai Smith</i></b>	<i>Hermitage High School</i>
<b><i>Mr Kelmern Keon Tunstall</i></b>	<i>Highland Springs High School</i>

# 2005-2006 Volunteers of the Year

Jacob L. Adams Elementary School - Angela Nelson  
Baker Elementary School - Nancy Barks  
Brookland Middle School - Ginny Ferguson  
Byrd Middle School - Tina Venuti  
Ruby F. Carver Elementary School - Ann Morgan  
Chamberlayne Elementary School - Marsha Hembrick  
Crestview Elementary School - Tanya Huskey  
Jackson Davis Elementary School- Laura Hennig  
Deep Run High School - Marcy Paton  
Cashell Donahoe Elementary School - Lisa Jones  
Dumbarton Elementary School - Diane Wengo  
Echo Lake Elementary School - Laurie Paxton  
Fair Oaks Elementary School- Monica Cox and Rebecca Gillen  
Fairfield Middle School - Alice Bryant  
Douglas Southall Freeman High School - Dorothy Livick  
Gayton Elementary School- Ann Marie Trepp  
Glen Allen Elementary School - Silent Auction and Parent Social Committee  
Mills E. Godwin High School - Joyce Bayse  
Greenwood Elementary School - Lisa Young  
Henrico High School - Suzanne Wren  
Hermitage High School - Laura Turner  
Highland Spring Elementary School - Operadella Williams  
Highland Springs High School - Viola Hicks  
Hungary Creek Middle School - Helena Lythgoe  
Charles M. Johnson Elementary School - Sherry Pierce  
Laburnum Elementary School - Novelle Myles  
R. C. Longan Elementary School - Scott Jarvis  
Maybeury Elementary School - Mary Kevan Roper  
George H. Moody Middle School - Amy Goodfellow  
Montrose Elementary School - Stacy Charles  
Nuckols Farm Elementary School - Lynn Canada  
Pemberton Elementary School - Angi Griffin  
Pinchbeck Elementary School - John Massanopoli  
Pocahontas Middle School - Heidi August  
Ratcliffe Elementary School - April Halstead  
Ridge Elementary School - Jennifer Hollis  
River's Edge Elementary School - Mei Ho  
John Rolfe Middle School – Andrea Beck  
Sandston Elementary School - Thina Patterson  
Seven Pines Elementary School - Lydia Frye  
Shady Grove Elementary School - Kim Terry  
Short Pump Elementary School - Michele Kinnick  
Short Pump Middle School - Debbie Stuckey  
Skipwith Elementary School - Kristen Vithoukaskas  
Springfield Park Elementary School - Joe Mirabile  
Three Chopt Elementary School - Anne Varner Scott  
Maude Trevvett Elementary School - Denise Russell  
Tuckahoe Elementary School - Julie Eddins  
Tuckahoe Middle School - Janet Fitrer  
John Randolph Tucker High School - Susan Burnette  
Twin Hickory Elementary School - Michelle Quinn  
Varina High School - Misti Binns  
Varina/Mehfound Elementary School - Melinda Boisseau  
L. Douglas Wilder Middle School - Laura Holly

Celebrating  
Those Who  
Cheer  
And Support  
Our Children



# **PTA MEMBERSHIP AWARDS**

## **100% MEMBERSHIP**

<b>Ruby F. Carver Elementary PTA</b>	<b>110.56 %</b>
<b>Pocahontas Middle PTA</b>	<b>103.30 %</b>
<b>Nuckols Farm Elementary PTA</b>	<b>109.65 %</b>
<b>Shady Grove Elementary PTA</b>	<b>102.33 %</b>
<b>Short Pump Elementary PTA</b>	<b>102.68 %</b>
<b>Tuckahoe Elementary PTA</b>	<b>124.76 %</b>

## **MEMBERSHIP INCREASE**

<b>Jacob Adams Elementary</b>	<b>6000 %</b>
<b>George Baker Elementary</b>	<b>65 %</b>
<b>Harry Byrd Middle</b>	<b>23 %</b>
<b>Donahoe Elementary</b>	<b>33 %</b>
<b>Echo Lake Elementary</b>	<b>4 %</b>
<b>Greenwood Elementary</b>	<b>125 %</b>
<b>Henrico High</b>	<b>7 %</b>
<b>Highland Springs Elementary</b>	<b>95 %</b>
<b>Harold Ratcliffe Elementary</b>	<b>42 %</b>
<b>Maybeury Elementary</b>	<b>4 %</b>
<b>Ridge Elementary</b>	<b>3 %</b>
<b>River's Edge Elementary</b>	<b>36 %</b>
<b>Short Pump Middle</b>	<b>15 %</b>
<b>Three Chopt Elementary</b>	<b>20 %</b>
<b>Maude Trevvett Elementary</b>	<b>11 %</b>
<b>Tuckahoe Middle</b>	<b>55 %</b>
<b>J R Tucker High</b>	<b>1 %</b>
<b>Twin Hickory Elementary</b>	<b>10 %</b>
<b>Varina-Mehfoud Elementary</b>	<b>10 %</b>

UNIT ASSESSMENT AWARDS  
GIVEN AT COUNTY COUNCIL BANQUET



George F. Baker PTA	Best Utilization of Students
Crestview ES PTA	Best Educational Support
Jackson Davis ES PTA	Best Support for New Teachers
Cashell Donahoe ES PTA	Most Active Principal Award
Laburnum ES PTA	Best Parent Support
R. C. Longan ES PTA	Most Creative Use of Funds for Technological
AdvancesMontrose ES PTA	Best Utilization of Volunteers
Pemberton ES PTA	Best Utilization of Funds for PTA Families in Need
Rivers Edge ES PTA	Best Resource for Parent Input
Skipwith ES PTA	Best International Program
Shady Grove ES PTA	Most Interesting Programs
Short Pump ES PTA	Most Creative Programs
Springfield Park ES PTA	Strong Support of Reading Programs
Three Chopt ES PTA	Best New After School Enrichment Program
Trevvett ES PTA	Best Parent Resource Programs
Henry D. Ward ES PTA	Most Teacher Support
Harry F. Byrd MS PTA	Best Utilization of Fundraising Funds
Fairfield MS PTA	Best Student Involvement
Short Pump MS PTA	Best Utilization of E-mail to Keep Parents Informed
Douglas S. Freeman HS PTSA	Best Community Service
Henrico HS PTA	Most Far-Reaching Programs
Highland Springs HS PTSA	Best Volunteer List
J. R. Tucker	Most Community Projects

Maybeury ES PTA

OUTSTANDING LOCAL UNIT

Certificate of Recognition/Contributing to the Year End Assessment

Fair Oaks ES PTA

Charles Johnson ES PTA

## School recess still common, but no longer a given

WASHINGTON -- One sure way to get parents exercised is to take away recess, the playful part of the school day when their kids can run wild. In some places, it no longer exists. The proportion of schools that don't have recess ranges from 7 percent for first and second grades to 13 percent by sixth grade, new government figures show.

Put in perspective, the overwhelming majority of elementary schools still offer recess each day, usually for about 25 minutes. Most children get one recess a day, if not two or three. What troubles parents, though, is a sense that recess is under siege, so much that the Cartoon Network and the National PTA have launched a "Rescuing Recess" campaign. Kids are leading the huge letter-writing effort to school officials with one theme: Let us play.

"The reason I get riled up - and that most parents do - is we see recess as an opportunity for children to play," said Diane Larson, a mother of four in Tacoma, Wash. "It's a time for children to be imaginative, to show innovation on the playground. And it's one of the times when kids actually get to interact with their friends." Larson and other parents in her district want elementary schools to offer separate recess periods each day, but students often get only their lunch periods to let loose. The recess drop-off is most noticeable in third grade, she said, when preparation for testing kicks in.

Where recess is in decline, school leaders usually blame academic pressures. Under federal law, schools must test and show progress in reading and math starting in third grade. But how schools manage their time is a local decision. Recess competes with many other activities for schedule time, from music and arts to gym classes and computer classes.

At Rivers Edge Elementary outside Richmond, Va., children get only one gym class a week, which makes their daily recess period even more important, said PTA President Wendy Logan. "The kids study all day, and they need some time for social activities," Logan said. "And those kids who struggle sitting the whole day - they're the ones who need it the most."

Nationwide, 99 percent of elementary schools schedule time for physical education apart from recess. More than half, though, offer those gym classes only once or twice a week. Elementary schools in poor communities offer less recess, and less overall time for exercise during the school week, than other schools, the government study found.

The 2005 school figures, released Wednesday, come from the Education Department's first study on food and exercise in public elementary schools. It includes no data from previous years to determine, for example, whether recess has been declining over time. Local disputes over the elimination of recess have popped up in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Miami and other communities. Such local stories, not the national picture, worry parents.

To them, recess is an institution - how could an elementary school not have it? When are kids supposed to yell with their friends, play tag or kickball, just have some fun? "It's how I believe they start building their social structure," said Sandi Hocker, a mother of two in San Antonio, Texas. "Their P.E. classes are organized, and they are activity related. I think (children) need recess just for the socialization."

In an informal survey by the National PTA of its state leaders, more than half said daily recess is at risk. Only 9 percent were confident recess would not be reduced in their school. The Cartoon Network has pledged more than \$1.3 million to save recess. That includes more than \$300,000 in grants to PTA chapters for participating in the ongoing letter campaign.

Mark Schneider, commissioner of the National Center of Education Statistics, presented the government findings on recess and exercise. He declined to draw conclusions from them. But given the obesity rates among children, he said: "I think we should all be concerned about any schools that aren't providing sufficient physical activities."

**PTA is your connection to the best parent resources**  
For the latest tips, ideas & news to help your child succeed  
Sign up for **The PTA Parent** electronic newsletter at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).

## **HEADS UP HIGHSCHOOL PTA/PTSAs**

**Lots of questions have come up regarding student involvement in PTAs in our High Schools. Here are some answers that we found in the membership section of the Annual Resources Guide, [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).**

***Why should a PTA/PTSA involve students?*** What can students contribute besides provide membership numbers? Can students really handle the responsibility of membership? These are just a few of the questions adult members of local units ask when considering involving students in a PTA/PTSA. Students can provide excitement, enthusiasm, energy, ideas and "manpower" for those projects where parent volunteers are shorthanded or short on time. By offering students leadership opportunities, you unlock a very dynamic and positive force.

### **The following is a list of good reasons for involving students in a PTA:**

- To put the Objects of the PTA into action.
- To provide a new prospective on your PTA's ideas and programs.
- To give students an opportunity to participate in the planning and execution of PTA programs; young people's viewpoints and ideas are essential because all PTA programs focus on youth.
- To give students a better understanding of adults and adults a better understanding of students, thereby bridging the generation gap.
- To teach students useful leadership skills such as public speaking, decision making, project and program planning and conflict resolution.

***Remember, all high school students can be members of your PTSA, there is no age requirement.***

### **How does my PTA become a PTSA?**

Changing from a PTA to a PTSA requires an amendment to you PTA bylaws. Although it is a simple amendment to add "student" to "parent teacher association," making it "parent-teacher-student association," the usual procedures governing amendments must be observed. What follows is an example; feel free to adapt it according to your unit's needs.

- Appoint a committee to study the question. Invite students to attend the committee meeting(s) at which youth membership will be discussed.
- Discuss the pros and cons of adding youth members. Meeting times, procedures, and duties of current members may have to be changed to accommodate students. The bylaws should be reviewed to determine if additional change would be needed.
- The committee's recommendation, including any amendment(s) to the bylaws, should be made to the executive board.
- While your unit may want to include your students as members, it may seem inappropriate to give them full voting privileges. In that case, you may choose to amend your bylaws to create an associate member category without voting rights.
- The executive board should vote to recommend the change to the association. The membership must receive 30 day's prior notice of any proposed amendments to the bylaws. The motion to amend the bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting.
- If members approve the change, the bylaws need to be amended and submitted to you state PTA office for approval.

### **Student Involvement Ideas**

- Have students serve as assistants to PTA/PTSA officers. This will provide students with valuable leadership skills and with opportunities to offer their perspective on issues.
- Ask student members to study a legislative bill and present their research to your PTA board. Students can also prepare and present testimony for a school board, state legislature, or Congress.
- Ask students to assist in writing and designing your PTA's/PTSA's newsletter. Add a student focus column written by students.
- Involve students in your website design and content.
- Have students ambassadors welcome participants at PTA/PTSA special events.
- Ask for student opinions regarding their school programs and social events.
- Plan a career night or college night for students and their parents.
- Work together with other student groups to plan an orientation for incoming freshman.
- Encourage students to organize art fairs, talent shows, school financial aid workshops, resume writing workshops, and health fairs.
- Organize events for graduation night. Plans could include dancing, movies and games in a festive atmosphere.
- Propose a "bridge the gap" dance for students, parents and grandparents.
- Have students put on a dance workshop for adults and students.

***The above was excerpted from the Membership Section of the Annual Resources for PTAs.***

# Comfort Zone Camp

Written by: Sarabeth Kawugule

Please read below to learn about a fantastic volunteer opportunity through which you will help a grieving child and actually have a great time doing it.

Comfort Zone Camp is the nation's largest nonprofit bereavement camp for children. Founded by Lynne Hughes and her husband Kelly, the camp serves kids ages seven to 17 who have lost a parent, sibling or primary caregiver. Since 1998 the camp has helped guide more than 2000 children from 25 different states, through their grief, providing a safe, nurturing environment where kids can have traditional camp fun, while at the same time acquire tools to help them cope with their loss. Staffed by trained volunteer counselors, including many grief professionals, Comfort Zone Camp offers one or multi-day camps throughout the year.

## Healing Circles<sup>SM</sup> & Camp Activities

Camps typically serve 40-50 children, each of who is paired with a volunteer "big buddy." Activities include games, arts & crafts, and small "healing circles<sup>SM</sup>" led by grief counselors. A memorial service, which can be attended by campers' parents and siblings, is held at the conclusion of each camp. Children can repeat in subsequent summers. Special camps just for teenagers also are available.

## Where The Camp Operates

Most camps are held in the Richmond, Virginia area, attracting campers from all over the United States. Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Comfort Zone Camp has held 14 satellite camps in the New York metropolitan area for 9-11 victims' children. These camps are now open to any grieving child. Comfort Zone Camp anticipates establishing a permanent camp facility in central Virginia, which will be the first of its kind in the nation.

## Camp Costs

Comfort Zone Camp is available at no cost to campers. Transportation also can be provided. The camp is funded entirely by donations from individuals, corporations, grants, and other civic organizations, which completely cover the \$18,000 it typically costs for a weekend camp. Among the organizations that have generously contributed to Comfort Zone Camp are Discover Financial Services, Bon Secours Community Partnership Initiative, New York Mercantile Foundation and A Little Hope.

## Volunteers

More than 500 trained counselors help make Comfort Zone Camp possible. These volunteers - social workers and grief therapists as well as stay-at-home moms and corporate businessmen - serve as "big buddies" to campers, who provide them with ongoing emotional support throughout the camp. (Volunteer applications can be found at [www.comfortzonecamp.org](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org).)

## Comfort Zone Camp

2101 A Westmoreland Rd  
Richmond, VA 23230  
1-866-488-5679 (toll free)  
[info@comfortzonecamp.org](mailto:info@comfortzonecamp.org)  
[www.comfortzonecamp.org](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org)

## Fairfield District

It's been a pleasure working with you this past year and I look forward to 06/07. Make sure you get rejuvenated over the summer so we can dig back in this fall. If anything comes up over the summer that you need assistance with, feel free to contact me.

Lula Lamb  
VP - Fairfield  
321-6838  
[llamb@trane.com](mailto:llamb@trane.com)

## Three Chopt District News – Finish Line in Sight!

The Three Chopt District is having a busy time now that Spring Break is behind us, with lots of events (and the planning that goes with them) to round out the school year. By the time you read this, we will have less than a month of school left – barely more than 20 days of classes before summer!

All school PTA's are gearing up for graduations, whether it is Fifth Grader, Eighth Grader, or Senior. Most of our elementary schools are holding the ever popular Field Day, usually in mid-May to avoid the year-end rush. In the midst of all this, many of our boards are electing and installing their officers for the 2006 – 2007 school year. Wow – who said the PTA was boring!?!

Almost all our schools were able to attend the Moody Scholarship and Volunteer of the Year Awards Banquet on May 2. Our district had the highest percentage of local unit assessment forms returned to HCCPTA – way to go! – And we garnered a handsome array of unit awards during the banquet. These forms are a valuable tool for the HCCPTA, who uses them to glean trends and ideas for future use for all PTA's.

Summer is almost here – we're ready for the final push!!

Submitted by  
David Johnson  
Three Chopt District VP

## **New Boards –**

### **What the Heck is HCCPTA?!?**

Most of our PTA's are in the midst of electing and installing new boards for the 2006 – 2007 school year. New boards mean new people (mixed in with all you grizzled veterans), so now is a great time to expose these newly installed folks to what HCCPTA is all about and how we can help you be a more effective PTA. For you veterans who have seen this information before, this will be a great refresher – remedial HCCPTA. Read below for a thumbnail sketch of HCCPTA, and ask all your officers and committee chairs to do the same!

#### **What is HCCPTA?**

- A group of local PTA units organized for the purpose of promoting PTA issues within our boundaries
- The first line of defense, support, and assistance for local units, as well as the most important source of guidance and information

#### **What are the Goals and Objectives of HCCPTA?**

- Promote the objects and interests of the National PTA and Virginia PTA
- Strengthen the local units in our membership
- Provide for conference and cooperation among the member units on matters of mutual concern

#### **How is HCCPTA Organized?**

- We are organized and chartered under the authority of the Virginia PTA
- We operate under bylaws approved by the State PTA.
- We are one of approximately 112 councils in Virginia

#### **What Additional Relationships does HCCPTA have?**

- Richmond District PTA – liaison to State PTA
- HCPS Superintendent – a member of the HCCPTA board
- HCPS School Board
- HCPS School Principals

#### **What HCCPTA cannot do**

- May not legislate local units
- May not assist in conflict resolution unless invited by local units
- May not compel local units to enter into council projects
- May not assess local units for funds without their consent

#### **What can HCCPTA do for You?**

- By definition, we are a council of local PTA units; we are here to serve you
- **Key goals of the Executive Committee of the HCCPTA for 2005-2006:**
  1. Increase meaningful communication with local units through newsletters, a website, and more direct communication between Area VPs and local units
  2. Provide training for local unit PTA members and promote all programs available at district, state, and national levels
  3. Assist local PTA units as needed
  4. Increase awareness of the HCPS programs and contacts
  5. Increase awareness of educational issues

#### **What can You do with HCCPTA to Enhance Your PTA?**

- Attend general membership meetings and report back to your board and general membership
- We can only be effective by staying connected, which means two-way communication. HCCPTA is here to serve you. Let us know what we are doing right, and what we are not doing that we could be doing.