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CONNECTION

A publication of the Henrico County Council of PTAs

October 2006

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President's Message – Advocacy for All Children

Last month I talked about parent involvement as it relates to your direct relationship with your school and your children. This month I'd like to talk about another aspect of involvement: Advocacy. We all begin as advocates for our own children. I'm talking now about the next step in that evolution: **advocating for all children.**

One of our missions as PTA members is to **"speak on behalf of children."** Our motto says **"Every child; one voice."** There are many ways that we can advocate for children and for public schools. First, **on the local level, you and your PTA can be "one voice"** speaking to the school administration. When you have an idea that might improve the educational environment of your school, discuss it as a PTA. If there is consensus, PTA leaders can and should talk to school administrators.

On the county level, **your County Council of PTAs provides the "one voice"** when we speak to the superintendent, other leadership team members, and school board members. Often the topics we choose to present come from local units; who bring issues of county-wide relevance to our attention. We can even pass resolutions and write position papers which we present to the appropriate school officials.

The **Virginia PTA is the "one voice" at the General Assembly and state Board of Education on issues of statewide importance.** The topics they present come from the legislation program that local units are asked to vote on in September and October, and from resolutions that are voted on at the VAPTA Convention. This year, the **VAPTA Convention will be held at the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke, on November 17-19.** (See details later in this newsletter.)

Issues of national importance are presented by the National PTA, again, as resolutions that were approved, by members who attend the National PTA convention.

Another way to **"speak on behalf of children" is at the polls** on November 7th... this year we'll have the opportunity to vote on a State Senator and Congressman. Every one of these officials, if elected, will at some point make decisions that affect public schools and the lives of children. Remember, active PTA/PTSA members help make important decisions at every level of PTA.

Anne Carson
HCCPTA 2006-2007 President

President's Checklist:

OCTOBER

- o Choose delegates to attend Virginia PTA's Convention and send in the registration.
- o Hold a Legislation Meeting to have your general membership vote on VAPTA's Proposed Legislation Program and send tally sheet to your District Director.

NOVEMBER

- o Attend Virginia PTA's Convention on **Nov 17th-19th** at the Hotel Roanoke in Roanoke.
- o Remind your Treasurer that all dues must be sent to the State Office by December 1 so your Local Unit remains in "Good Standing."
- o See that your Reflections program is on track to meet County due date of November 21st.
- o **Attend Superintendents Meeting with PTA Presidents on November 28th at 4:30 p.m. at Central Office on 9 mile road.**

Three Chopt District News

Summer vacation has come and gone, how quickly time flies. Back to the busy hustle and bustle of school life. To students it's a time of sadness and for parents a time of joy. Regardless of the reaction we hope this 06/07 school year our students and parents will join us in creating "Footsteps to the Future". I know the 16 PTA's of the Three Chopt are looking forward to another exciting school year as well as the Henrico County Council. As the new HCC Vice President I am definitely excited about representing the Three Chopt area. We have a wonderful mix of new and returning officers. If I can be of assistance please do not hesitate to contact me at threechopt@hccpta.com.

Mirinda Lawrence
Three Chopt VP

DEEP RUN HIGH SCHOOL
DRAMA DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

"IT HAPPENS EVERY SUMMER"

November 9 - 11, 2006

7:00 p.m.

The Deep Run High School Drama Department will be presenting the play called "It Happens Every Summer" from November 9 - 11 at 7:00 p.m. each night. This production is a comedy about a group of girls who go to New York City to be interns at a fashion magazine for the summer. It showcases their adventures and misadventures, friendships, conflicts and romances. Tickets will go on sale October 26th and are \$5.00 in advance and \$8.00 at the door. Advanced tickets can be purchased from any Deep Run High School Drama student, or by contacting Mrs. Sheryl Gibson, Deep Run High School Drama Department, at smgibson@henrico.k12va.us. Any questions, please contact Mrs. Gibson.

The **Pupil Transportation Department** for Henrico County Public Schools is experiencing a serious shortage of bus drivers at this time. The shortage is due to many reasons including unfilled vacancies, extended illnesses, daily absences, etc.

Any help you and your PTA can offer to help advertise this shortage would be greatly appreciated. **These are full-time positions (7-hours per day) at \$11.04/hour with benefits (health insurance, etc.).** New drivers must go through a 48-hour state certified class which takes about 2 ½ to 3 weeks to complete.

County Council Banquet

The Annual County Council Banquet will be held on Tuesday, May 1st at Hermitage High School in Commons A. The theme this year is keeping in line with our Moody Scholarship walk "Footsteps to the Future." Registration will begin at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will start promptly at 6:30 p.m. The deadline for all materials, including volunteer of the year for your school will be early April prior to spring break, so be planning for that. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. Crystal Sarvay or Sharon Martin, co-chairpersons at Banquet@hccpta.com

As students get older, parent involvement, unfortunately, tends to diminish. In middle school and beyond, PTAs have a vital role to play in keeping parents engaged in their children's education. Here are a few ideas for PTA-sponsored events and programs that will help keep this relationship alive.

Smooth transitions

Provide orientations for parents whose children are entering middle school for the first time: Ask administrators to highlight policies and expectations in the parent handbook. Hold a discussion about the similarities and differences between the old school and the new one. Provide a student-guided tour of the facilities. Serve dinner in the cafeteria. Arrange visits with counselors and teachers.

Meet the parents

Hosting parent-to-parent events allow parents to meet and get to know each other and their children's friends. Before athletic events and school performances—occasions when many parents are at the school dropping off their children—are great times to host events where parents can enjoy refreshments and mingle with one another.

Substance-free events

Bring in featured speakers once a month to address alcohol and substance abuse prevention issues for parents and students. In your school or PTA newsletter, provide parents with tips and current information on drug and alcohol issues. Organize a variety of fun, substance-free events at the school, including sports activities, dances, and movies.



**Virginia PTA:
State Convention
“All Aboard! PTA Express”
November 17-19, 2006
Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, Virginia**

Whether you're a PTA president, teacher, parent, anyone looking to get more information about education or children's issues, Virginia PTA is committed to supporting your advocacy efforts. The Virginia PTA Convention is the annual business meeting of our association and is open to all members. The convention is the one opportunity each year for Virginia PTA members to vote on critical issues, adopt resolutions that establish the positions of Virginia PTA and attend workshops on current issues. All local units are strongly encouraged to send delegates to convention to represent your local members. Be sure to include convention expenditures (\$115/night hotel; \$150+ convention registration; meals and mileage reimbursements) in your annual budget. “Call to Convention” Packets were sent to all PTA Presidents last month. Go to www.vapta.org for details. Make plans now and join us in the beautiful mountains of Virginia!

**Footsteps to the Future
County Council Scholarship Walk**

In honor of *George H. Moody*

Date: Saturday 3/24/07

Time: 10am to 12pm

Where: Wilder Middle School

Start getting your teams together. Your PTA and school can participate! Sports Teams, SCA, PTA boards, etc. etc.

Open to any Henrico County citizen.

PTA President's Meetings
with Superintendent, Fred S. Morton IV
Tuesday, November 28th
Tuesday, March 20th
4:30 p.m.
Multi-purpose room – Central Office





Mark Your Calendar Now!

Monday, October 23, 2006

Wilder Middle School

Leadership Training Workshops General Membership Meeting

6:00 – 7:00 PM – Vendor Exhibits, Refreshments and Registration

7:00 – 8:30 PM – Brief Meeting and Workshops

8:30 – 9:00 PM – Workshop Round-Up: Opportunity to ask questions on any PTA Issue

All local unit officers and committee chairs should attend this valuable event especially if you have missed the State and District Training Opportunities!

- **President:** the Easiest job in PTA
- **Treasurer:** Audit, Budget, and much more
- **Secretary:** Minutes and more
- **Membership:** Learn the benefits of ODMR – Online Membership and Dues Reporting
- **Bylaws and Standing Rules:** Why do we need them? Need a revision, bring all your questions
- **Newsletters:** Hear tips from our winner of the State PTAs top Newsletter award
- **Volunteers:** How to Attract and Keep Volunteers (by involving all Families and Cultures)
- **Fundraising/Program Alternatives:** Get new ideas for projects and programs for your PTA
- **Website and beyond:** Website/web page; everything you always wanted to know
- **County Council Delegates:** How can you help your PTA stay informed?

**Don't miss out on this great opportunity for PTA Leadership Training.
We'd like 100% participation from the Henrico County School PTAs for this important meeting and exchange of ideas.**

**We will also have vendors with fundraising and program information to share.
We guarantee that everyone who attends will learn something new and helpful to make your local PTA unit more effective and your time commitment to PTA easier.**

Need more information?? Contact Anne Carson by e-mail at dcarsonva@comcast.net

We look forward to seeing you on October 23, 2006!

Reflections Program 2006-2007

"My Favorite Place..." is a school that participates in the PTA's 2006-2007 Reflections program. It is a wonderful opportunity for children in grades K through 12 to express themselves artistically and receive recognition via literature, photography, musical composition, visual arts, dance choreography and video/film production.

"My Favorite Place..." is a school with a PTA/PTSA in good standing with its students works proudly displayed at the Council, District, State or even National level. It's not too late to participate in this year's Reflections theme: **"My Favorite Place..."** Just contact me at Reflections@hccpta.com, and I'll get you the materials you need.

The National Theme Search for 2008-2009 is underway. Up to three theme ideas may be submitted per local PTA. They are due in the Virginia PTA State Office by Friday, November 3, 2006. The student who submits the winning theme will receive \$100 and recognition at the National PTA Convention in June 2007. Entry forms are available at www.hccpta.org.

This year's Henrico County Council Reflections deadline is **Tuesday, November 21, 2006**. Entrees can be sent via the "Pony" mail system used by the schools or can be physically dropped off. The mail to location/drop-off location has not been finalized at publication time, but will be announced soon. Please contact me if you have not received additional mail/drop-off location information by this publication release. You will need to bring your school's first place winners in each division, a completed Local PTA Participation Form (Form A) and a Tracking Form. These forms can be found on the HCCPTA website on the Reflections link at www.hccpta.com. I am highly recommending a local PTA Reflections deadline of Friday, October 27, 2006. **All Reflections Chairs or PTA Presidents should send an e-mail to: Reflections@hccpta.com with your school's contact information in order to receive regular program updates on the Reflections Program.**

At this time I am in need of several people to help with our Reflections Committee at the County level. Please let me know if you can help in any way. I look forward to sharing this gratifying endeavor with all of you. Nothing is more rewarding than the look on a child's face when his/her pride rises to the surface when he/she sees his/her work on display at a Reflections Ceremony – and you get to be a part of that moment in his life.

Anne Carson
Acting HCCPTA Reflections Chair
Reflections@hccpta.com

The Parent Resource Center of Henrico County Public Schools

Henrico County Public Schools believes that a strong parent/school partnership is an essential building block in an effective educational program. Toward this belief, the Parent Resource Center provides information, education, and support for parents of students in our schools. Programs and services offered through the Parent Resource Center will be conducted at sites throughout Henrico County. Go to:

www.henrico.k12.va.us/parents/parent_resource.html a current list of resources and upcoming workshops.

Excellent Schools Don't Just Happen ... They're Created! Become a National PTA's "School of Excellence"

Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification will help all schools in the nation assess their parent involvement practices, make improvements where needed, and earn one or two distinctions:

√ **Certification of Excellence**, for schools that have outstanding parent involvement practices in place.

√ **Recognition of Commitment**, for schools that are committed to pursuing excellence in parent involvement.

Establish a team, including parents, a teacher, student, the principal, and a community member, and complete the assessment, available in the Parent Involvement area of www.pta.org.

Online Membership and Dues Reporting

Connect to the Full Power of PTA:

Virginia PTA Helps Build Comprehensive Database of PTA Members

Virginia PTA is one of nine states taking part in the pilot phase of a centralized database to discover who PTA members are and to be able to serve their needs better. As a local PTA in Virginia, your participation is necessary to make this project a success. You'll be asked to collect individual names, postal addresses, and e-mail addresses of your members for local, state, and national communication use. You'll be provided with a new, standard membership form to make data collection easy. (Please be aware that members will receive only the communications they sign up for, and their contact information will not be sold to a third party.)

Having direct access to all of our members allows our association to better advocate for children by mobilizing more members on key issues affecting children. The more members we can connect, the more we can accomplish for children.

To make this a reality, we want to connect to your officers, committees, and members by collecting the names and addresses of everyone in your unit. Having this information will improve the way we communicate and allow us to deliver news about special services, resources, and exclusive benefits directly to your members. This means that, as PTA president, you'll no longer need to forward important messages from your state PTA and National PTA; it will be done for you!

What's more, not only will we be able to share data with you, but you'll have access to it for your PTA's use. Through a Web-based system, local unit leaders will be able to generate mailing labels and send broadcast e-mails to their members. This can help spread the word about school happenings, volunteer opportunities, and coming events quickly, easily, and at no cost.

Consider this advantage, too: Never again will contact information for your unit be lost when the individual responsible for managing that information leaves the office or moves to a new district. The information will be centrally kept (and secured through password protection) and available via the Internet from your home, office, or school.

Our state PTA office sent local PTA presidents the Web link, username, and password specific to their unit (May 22 mailing). There's no need to retype all those names and addresses. Simply upload your membership file to the Web. It's that easy!

Benefits of Connecting to the Central Database

- Password-protected so your information is secure
- Web-accessible from anywhere, any time
- Easy to use; simply upload your membership file to the website
- Provides the ability for two-way communication with your membership
- Increases the ease of relaying your PTA's news to members
- Enables your members to subscribe to free resources based on their interests
- Provides individuals with more contact from their state PTAs and National PTA
- Access to customer service representatives to answer your technology questions
- No cost to your PTA

**Get the PTA Power Connection.
Get Connected Today!**

Why Connect to PTA's Central Database?

Among the many benefits for your local PTA, the database:

- Makes it easier for your PTA to maintain records and communicate with your members
- Saves you money—there's no need to buy your own database software
- Is offered free of charge
- Upgrades automatically, again at no charge
- Prevents loss of information due to resignation, disaster, or poor record keeping
- Is password protected, so your information is secure
- Is Web-accessible from anywhere, at any time
- Is easy to use—simply upload your membership file to the website
- Provides two-way communication with your membership
- Offers another way to relay your PTA's news to members
- Gives members the option of subscribing to free resources based on their interests
- Creates an opportunity to provide added contact from [state] PTA and National PTA
- Is serviced by National PTA customer service representatives, who can answer your technology questions

Take advantage of the benefits and get connected!

Benefits of Connecting to All PTA Members

- When we know who our members are, we can better serve their needs.
- Having e-mail addresses makes communication quicker, more efficient, and cost-free.
- Local PTAs can generate mailing labels and send broadcast e-mails to their members.
- Members can take direct advantage of services, resources, and exclusive benefits from [state] PTA and National PTA.
- The ability to communicate directly with members makes it easier to relay important messages from Virginia PTA and National PTA.
- By keeping every member informed, PTA can advance its Mission of speaking for every child with one voice.

Help us build a centralized PTA membership database. Use the Web link, username, and password that the Virginia PTA sent to your local PTA president (**May 22 mailing**) and get connected today!

ROBERTS RULES ???

Could your PTA Unit use some help?

See: Roberts Rules of Order Revised, at

<http://www.constitution.org/rror/rror—00.htm>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Henrico County Council of PTAs General Meetings 2006-2007

Monday, October 23, 2006 7:00 p.m. Wilder MS
“Leadership Training Workshops”

Monday, January 22, 2007 7:00 p.m. Deep Run HS
“Reflections Awards, Display and Ceremony”

*Tuesday, February 6, 2007 7:00 p.m. Godwin HS
“HCPS Proposed Budget Presentation”
Joint Meeting with Lay Advisory

Tuesday, May 1, 2007 6:00 p.m. Hermitage HS
“Annual Meeting, Awards and Recognition Banquet”
*6:30 p.m. Meet and Greet before these meetings.

R.E.B. Awards for Distinguished Educational Leadership

Overview

The Awards will seek to recognize those principals who go beyond the day-to-day demands of their position to create an exceptional educational environment. Four principals will be publicly recognized, one in each school district of the Metropolitan area, i.e. the Counties of Chesterfield, Hanover, and Henrico, and the City of Richmond. Each award will consist of a \$7,500 cash grant to the principal, and an additional \$7,500 for the principal's school for projects chosen by the principal.

Nominees must be principals who

1. Manage effectively to promote excellence in education
2. Demonstrate leadership and exemplify commitment
3. Inspire their students and are advocates for their school and their faculty
4. Encourage team spirit
5. Foster cooperation between the school and the community
6. Maintain dialogue with students, parents, faculty, and staff
7. Have been principal of their school for at least three years.

Nomination Process

The Community Foundation in partnership with the R.E.B. Foundation invites principal nominations from the school community and from the public at-large. Principals may not nominate themselves.

The nomination should take the form of a letter, and explain the nominee's distinguished educational leadership as well as address the personal and professional qualities of the nominee as they relate to the criteria of this award. The original nomination should be no more than two 8 ½" x 11" typed or computer generated pages in length. The nomination may be accompanied by up to three (3) additional one-page letters of support.

Nomination Deadline

All nominations **received** by The Community Foundation on or before 5:00 p.m., **Friday, October 27, 2006** will be forwarded for District-level review. *Nominations will not be accepted by facsimile or by email.*

Nominations should be addressed to

R.E.B. Awards for Distinguished Educational Leadership
c/o The Community Foundation
Attn: Susan H. Hallett, Program Officer
7501 Boulders View Drive, Suite 110
Richmond, VA 23225

Check out our Website!
Check the HCCPTA Website (www.hccpta.com) for useful information.