

CouncilConnections

A publication of the Schaumburg Township Council of PTAs

November/December 2011

Greetings from the President

My heart started to beat faster when I saw the subject line of Lori Filby's (our newsletter chair) email – articles due by Dec. 3rd. "Oh well, that's still a few weeks away, surely I will have some idea to write about by then," I thought. The deadline drew closer and still not a single idea.

I started to think about why I had nothing inspiring to offer. Then, I recalled, I had this problem when I was a local unit President – by the time the holidays rolled around I was worn out and suffering from temporary PTA burn out (although the first year I was a President I didn't realize the burn out was temporary). I decided to search the subject of PTA burn out. Imagine my surprise when I noticed most of the hits were posted or written in December of various years. Hmm...what is going on for PTA volunteers during November/December? Could it be that there are many events to pull off with less people willing to volunteer? On top of all the PTA work to be done, we are trying to prepare for our own holiday celebrations...clean the house, decorate, buy presents, spend time with friends and family...the list goes on and on. Additionally, as the leaders we are left "holding the PTA bag" as others back out of volunteer commitments reasoning they have too much to do to get ready for the holidays. At times, I felt like screaming "you don't think I have to get ready for the holidays?"

I decided to read through the articles I found in hopes that I would find some inspiring tips on dealing with PTA burn out to pass on to all of you. I was so disappointed when I read the same old tips – delegate, make sure you are signing on for things you enjoy (did any of us begin our PTA careers with the vision of President or extraordinary volunteer dancing in our head?), learn to say no, volunteer in small amounts. Obviously, those tips are not directed for the President – because when many say no to helping, the event still must go on.

I began to think about what helped me through my December burn out and have a few thoughts:

- Now is the time to be honest with your good friends about the help you need – they will come through for you. I have even had help from some friends who didn't have children attending my school. Don't forget to ask your teachers for help – often they are so appreciative of all that we do for the school they are willing to lend a hand.
- Get back to your PTA roots – instead of trying to fill every volunteer spot for events like the holiday secret shop, schedule yourself to take some shifts. Then, be present in the moment – watch the children's faces as they make their purchases – their excitement and delight will help you remember why we do all these things.
- Rest assured that you will get a PTA break over the winter break – I promise you will get very few, if any, PTA emails. I still remember how refreshed I felt when I had to jump back in the PTA saddle in January.

My holiday wish for you is that you will come back feeling refreshed and ready to take on the PTA world in January. I wish you all a joyous, relaxing and fun filled winter break.

Best Wishes,
Lisa Guagenti
2011-2012 President
Schaumburg Township Council of PTAs

Exceptional Child

This month I would like to discuss a topic mostly focused on children in general: “bullying”. However, I think it is important to discuss how our magnet and special education students get bullied. How are they being affected by all of this other stuff going around them. How are they taking the impact of watching others get bullied or being bullied themselves? What kind of resources are we providing for them as well? Is the normal general information and programs enough for our kids? Do they understand and grasp the concept. Are they prepared to stand up and fight against it? Do they feel safe telling the RIGHT adults about their situations? Are we as adults letting them down? I went into a school that a child was clearly being ridiculed and bullied for being the smartest one in class and the child told the teacher (as we teach them to do) and the teacher said “ he didn’t really mean to hurt your feelings, its ok”. Tell me, do you really think that child will have the courage a second time to tell his teacher? I know I’m on a rampage but I feel ALL of our children need to be looked after and feel safe.

I have heard others say children of special needs don’t need to be taught about bullying because “they don’t understand what’s going on”. I believe no matter how severe the case of special needs their feelings still get hurt and we should do what we can to arm them with the tools they need. Once we do that we have to do the right thing by them. Not just dismiss it.

We are blessed to be in a district that has such strong values and is teaching the PBIS principles throughout the classrooms. We need to support our teachers, staff, and administrators in continuing this essential work for ALL of our kids. In my travels around the state I have seen and heard appalling things but also some very exceptional things.

I want to end in giving you an additional resource for our kids from the group Common Sense. As a person trying to teach other I have worked with the educators programs. It has been useful and I have found it easy to use. Hopefully you can get some ideas and tips as well.

Good Luck and let’s continue the fight of keeping ALL our kids safe and protected.

Matthew John Rodriguez
Exceptional Children Chair

For more information, visit these Web Sites –

greatschools.com

commonsensemedia.org

SaveTheDate!



- 01/04/12** STC Meeting, Addams Jr. High*, 9:00 a.m.
- 01/11/12** Nominating Committee Workshop**, CCSD15 Admin Bldg., 6:30 p.m.
- 02/01/12** STC Meeting, D54 Board Room, 9:00 a.m.
- 02/17/12** District 54 Foundation Mardi Gras, 7:00 p.m.
- 03/17/12** STC Meeting, D54 Board Room, 9:00 a.m.
- 03/09-10/12** Illinois PTA Convention, Schaumburg Marriott
- 03/16/12** STC Auction, Meridian Banquets

*At Addams enter through Door 15, proceed downstairs to the meeting room.

**Visit ilpta-d37.org for more information about this workshop.

High School Scholarship

The Schaumburg Township Council of PTA's scholarship program provides \$2,000 scholarships for graduating seniors who have been enrolled in a District 54 elementary school for at least one year and a District junior high for 2 years. Funding is provided through memorials and honoraria, local PTA unit donations, and STC's annual Auction.

In 2010-11, we awarded twelve scholarships to seniors who demonstrated not only academic ability, but also community service, athletics, involvement in many school clubs and activities, employment, and a genuine love for learning and a drive to succeed in the future. We received over 60 applications, and it was such a pleasure to read each one. Applications will be available at the local high

schools and on the STC website in December. Once the applications are collected, we will request a panel of readers from the members of STC. We are thankful for each of the STC volunteers who serve as a reader. They have a challenging job as often so many of the applicants are deserving of a scholarship. Listening to each recipient speak at the Scholarship Recognition Dinner in May confirms that the time and energy spent on PTA really does make a difference in the lives of the students of District 54.

Christine Kawalek & Michelle Carlucci
High School Scholarship Co-Chairs

Check it out!

Applications for the
2012 High School Scholarships
are **now** available at

pta.sd54.org

And don't forget to watch the Site for the
2012 Elementary Scholarship
applications in late January!



Local Unit News

Dirksen School

At Dirksen, we just had our Annual Pancake Breakfast and it was a great event with a wonderful turnout. Our parents had the opportunity to relax and socialize while our kids were busy eating scrumptious pancakes and playing with friends. Our Dirksen Dads did all the cooking including 3 kinds of pancakes, eggs, sausage and bacon! The kids loved seeing their dads do the cooking (and the moms did too)! We even had a drawing of "Teacher Prizes". Each teacher donated a prize to the drawing. It could be anything they wanted to donate (and it didn't have to cost money), like our art teacher Mr. Singer who will be giving a private drawing lesson for 4 students. Our 3/4 teacher Mr. Evitts will be playing basketball with 3 students and their friends. Our 1/2 teachers will be giving 5 girls manicures and playing Wii games with 5 boys. Several teachers are taking kids out to lunch, like our Principal and Vice Principal (Dr. Piech and Mrs. Hall) who are taking 2 kids to Oberweis for lunch and ice cream. Also our 5/6 teachers Ms. Hall and Mrs. Sczcupaj are taking 4 kids to a lunch of their choice! Oh boy, hope the kids don't have steak and lobster in mind! All in all it was a great time and the winners are going to have a blast with their teachers!!

We are also planning a few events for December: We are having our first (in a long time) Movie Night on December 9th. We did a "Choose Your Own Movie" where the kids voted on one of three movies. The winning movie is: *Snow Dogs!* We will be serving Pizza, Popcorn, Candy, Juice and Water. We are also planning our first (also in a long time) Holiday Shop on Monday, December 12th through Wednesday, December 14th. We are hoping that this is going to be a great event and the kids are excited and looking forward to being able to go holiday shopping for their loved ones!!

If anyone is interested in how these events turn out, please feel free to email me at: dirksen54pta@gmail.com

Amy Mordini
Dirksen PTA President

Reminder!

Due at the February 1 meeting:
STC Scholarship donations

If your STC representative is not your local unit president, contact Lisa Guagenti (lilamog@msn.com) to have that person's name added to the email list for announcements and meeting reminders.

Addams Jr. High

We are in the season of being involved, caring and sharing. As parents, we want the best of everything for our children, especially with their education. PTA stands for Parent/Teacher Association. We are the largest recognized organization dedicated to the welfare and well being of children. Through PTA we have the opportunity to work with children, meet new families, make new friends, but best of all get to know and understand the people that we entrust to educate and mold our children for the future. Together we are creating enrichment programs to enhance the educational environment. As president at Addams, I am very fortunate to be involved with so many caring and supportive staff, teachers, PTA's board and committees and members. With such a caring community that we have, the programs supported by our PTA's do wonders. I will have had four continuous years in junior high with my children, and I am very blessed to be involved with such a fantastic community--for their involvement, sharing and caring.

Jennifer E. Lichwa
President Addams Jr. High

**We cannot always build the future for our youth,
but we can build our youth for the future.**
~Franklin Delano

Lakeview School

“What Happened To The 'Treat' in Tuesdays?”

This is a question quite a few of our lunch supervisors have heard. That and, “I have the same food at home to bring for lunch, this isn't a treat!”

While most of the parents that have voiced their opinions agree there is nothing wrong with an occasional 'TREAT', we all agree that there is nothing wrong with providing healthier choices to our students. Our PTA hosts one nacho day, one pizza day and one hot lunch day each month. Our Hot Lunch Chair has gone above and beyond to make sure there is always a healthy choice for hot lunch.

We have two main challenges at Lakeview with our Tuesday Treats. Number one is cost. With the exception of Ice Cream Tuesdays, we have tried to keep our Tuesday Treat price to fifty cents. Unfortunately, sometimes healthier is more costly. Our second challenge is keeping the kids interested and wanting to come back the following week for another 'treat'.

Our \$1.00 Ice Cream Tuesdays are always a hit with the students! We have these once a month. We searched out the freezers at Sam's Club and found some ice cream products that were appealing to the students and not so hard on their diets. We found Swiss Miss Fudge Bars that are only 100 calories and are still full size! We also found that our students love the Minute Maid Lemonade Juice Bars. Skinny Cow offers a Cookies and Cream or a Vanilla Ice Cream Sandwich. With these choices, that the students love and parents can feel good about, Ice Cream Tuesdays is always a huge success.

Our second best item is probably the Baked Chips day. The kids seem to love that they can have Cheetos and Pretzels and Potato Chips. If any of them realize they are eating baked chips instead of fried, no one has mentioned it.

Although we have tried fruit cups, animal crackers and go-gurts, all which proved to sell much less than

the chips, we have not given up! We will continue to search for healthier treat options for the students of Lakeview. The students are after all, what PTA is all about!

Angie Hosp
Lakeview PTA President



Membership Reminder

Don't forget that District 37 will be awarding its PTA Rocks! Grammys to the three district units with the highest increase in membership as of December 31, 2011. Each Grammy winner will receive a complimentary registration for the 2012 IL PTA Convention in Schaumburg March 9 and 10.

This could be you! Continue to recruit members and submit dues payments throughout the year. Winners will be announced in January.
Good luck!!



Armstrong School

Hello everyone from Neil Armstrong PTA! Can you believe it's December already? Where does the time go? We have been very busy at Armstrong since school began. We have enjoyed muffins with moms, donuts with dads, and our very first new and improved family fun night we call exploring together. We have started the year with a successful book fair that will help us support our birthday book program, a program very dear to my heart. As for our daily happenings, the students are loving the teacher run PBIS store and earning punches for good behavior. Filling up their punch cards is a lot of fun for our students when they get to turn in their full cards for little goodies they have earned. I am looking forward to the next 6 months with all of the usual events and just loving what I do. After 15 years at Armstrong, this is my final year and I really want to just absorb it all. A smile is an amazing paycheck at the end of a hard day passing out pizza or hot dogs and I wouldn't trade it for any paying job if I don't have to! Have a wonderful December everyone and a safe, happy and healthy holiday season and new year to come!

Deb Pielmeier
President, Neil Armstrong PTA