

Northwest Cook Region District 37 Dialogue

National Congress of Parents and Teachers
Illinois PTA – District 37 Publication – Back to School: 2011

Nicole Fentem, Director

www.ilpta-d37.org

Michele Sheppard, Editor

From Our Director

School is back in session and that means as PTA volunteers we may be feeling a little overwhelmed. I am hoping that those of you who made it to Packet Orientation on August 2nd attended the workshops and are feeling a little less stress as a result of the great information given that night. If any questions have come up since then, be sure to contact me or any of the Northwest Cook Region/District 37 board. Thank you to everyone for working as a team for all the children's benefit. You ROCK!

Fall trainings have been scheduled to further relieve your anxiety. Please see the Leadership article, your council president or www.ilpta-d37.org for specific information on the courses. We try to add additional course as you feel are necessary. Let us know what you might want in addition to what we currently have scheduled.

By now, all units should have their audits completed, goals and theme created, and budgets proposed. If you have not completed these tasks yet, please add these items to your "urgent" list and work on them as soon as possible. Remember: a PTA budget is based on the PTA goals which must support the mission and purposes of PTA.

Finally, I want to invite you to celebrate our first Northwest Cook Region Annual Meeting entitled "PTA Rocks!" It will be at The Cotillion, 360 South Creekside Dr., Palatine IL 60074 on Monday, October 17. Registration and a cash bar begin at 6pm. The meeting will begin at 7:00pm. This year we will be electing the nominating committee for

the Northwest Cook Region. We will also be honoring those units that stand out in our Region/District as a result of applying for the Local Unit Honor Award. Please join us for a fun night to commemorate all that you do for children and family. Remember that reservations are due no later than October 1. See the attached invitation to this Dialogue. More details are forthcoming via email soon.

Nicole

Nicole Fentem
Illinois PTA District 37 Director

DATES TO REMEMBER

September 13, 2011 – PTA Road to Success 6:30 PM
D15 Administration Building, AH

September 14, 2011–PTA Money Matters¹⁰¹ 6:30 PM
D15 Administration Building, PAL

September 19, 2011 – PTA President Course 6:30 PM
D15 Administration Building, AH

September 21, 2011 – PTA Council Course 6:30 PM
D15 Administration Building, PAL

October 1, 2011 – PTA Membership Dues payment
due to Illinois PTA office

October 17, 2011 – Annual Meeting 6:30 PM
Cotillion: 360 S. Creekside, PAL

MEMBERSHIP – Lori Filby



PTA Rocks! We all know it and now its time to spread the word! This year's membership campaign is easy to monitor and easy to promote. And who doesn't want to achieve success in the always exciting world of PTA Membership!

As your unit ROCKS its membership numbers, you'll be rewarded for Record Breaking Sales. Register more members this year than you did last year and your local unit will be named a record winner! Increases in your membership of only 5, 10 or 15 members over last year can make your unit a record breaker. You can see your unit in the PTA Membership infamy! Any unit who registers 37 new members over their 2010-2011 membership total will be inducted in the District 37 Membership Rockin' Hall of Fame and will be individually recognized at the 2012 annual meeting. It gets even better! You can win a Grammy! The three units with the greatest increase in membership over their 2010-2011 totals as of December 31, 2011 will receive our Grammy and one free registration to this year's Illinois PTA Convention.


How can your unit receive these rewards? It starts out like every other thing your PTA does: you're going to need a plan. Doesn't have to be elaborate. Set some goals. Make them achievable and manageable for your unit. If you haven't done so already, appoint a Membership Chair and maybe even set up a Membership Committee or Team. Let's think about some things that might help you develop your plan and put it into practice.

- Look at your last year's total membership number. Meeting this goal can be the greatest challenge of all. You'll want to approach all of those past members for renewal of their membership early in the year. This is easy if you have a Back to School event or an annual PTA mailing that you use for your initial membership promotion. These are your tried and true members who don't need much cajoling or convincing. Don't worry if some of your last year's members have gone on to the

Junior High or the High School. They are still members of your community. You may want to create a letter or flyer that you can send to these folks to outline benefits of joining your PTA after their children have left the school.

- Consider your recruitment activities carefully. Most units find that a large Back to School event is a great place to sell those initial memberships and in some cases this is all that is needed. Remember that membership is a yearlong process, so if face to face recruiting works best for your unit, it may help to have a few events. Maybe a "Bring a Friend" social just before or after a meeting. How about setting up an informational table at another family event later in the fall? Set up a table at every school event. If you have good promotional materials and some solid explanations of the benefits of membership, you may not need to staff that table every time. Just remember that manning the table will always yield the best results.
- New families to your school—Kindergarten and Early Childhood families, transfers, etc.—are almost always interested in joining. They are the future of your school, neighborhoods and PTA. Do you have a Kindergarten Screening or New Parent orientation event? This is the perfect place to meet and greet and talk to these folks about your PTA and all the benefits of being part of the organization. Be prepared to answer questions about the differences between PTA and other parent groups. Often times these parents have friends outside of your school that may not have PTA. Explaining the organization and all that it does to reach all children can help to convince these folks to join. Don't worry if they are initially hesitant to jump into the PTA game. You might want to welcome them to a meeting or event so they can see the organization in action. Try to identify a neighbor that they know who is an active PTA member. Sometimes finding the right person to extend an invitation to join can make all the difference.

MEMBERSHIP – Lori Filby, cont'd

- Don't forget your teachers. Did you have a change in staff? How about support staff? Its easy to explain to these folks the importance and value of PTA, they see your unit in action all the time. Need help getting out the word? Ask your principal or a respected teacher to send an email or mention the membership campaign at a staff meeting. You can always create a mailer to put into staff mailboxes. Signs in the staff lounge can also be effective.
- 
- Once you've hit your last year's number or if you are struggling to get to this number, its time to go outside of the school walls. The challenge can be finding new groups to target for membership. Think small! Ask members to reach out to student's grandparents, caregivers and their neighbors who may not have any children in the public schools. We are all part of our neighborhoods and all neighbors benefit from strong PTAs and strong schools. Even if you only have moderate success here, you may find a few new members you didn't have before. Don't forget that membership in your local unit is also membership in the National PTA and our goal is to work for every child. Elderly neighbors who have relatives in other states may like the idea that they are supporting a national initiative with far reaching goals.
- Now expand your target out a little wider to include local businesses. Maybe they are a Hot Lunch vendor or they partner with you for a restaurant night. There are also plenty of businesses in your neighborhood that never do business with you, but like other neighbors, they want to see your school and your PTA succeed. Sometimes the folks who would like most to know what your PTA is doing aren't directly inside your community. Do you know a Real Estate agent who does business in your

neighborhoods? Maybe they don't live there, but they will want potential buyers to know that they are involved in this community. They can also be a good voice for recruiting move-ins to your unit.

At this point you may or may not have achieved your goal. If you did, great! Congratulations! If not, don't worry. We have all year to work together to raise our numbers. Don't forget the PTA Web sites can be great resources for lots of ideas. They have great promotional materials that can help you to recruit and retain members. Visit the Illinois PTA (www.ilpta.org) and the National PTA (www.pta.org) Web sites and check it out.

NEWSLETTER– Michele Sheppard

As you begin the year and decide how and how often you are publishing your newsletter, remember that keeping your membership informed is your primary goal.

If you publish an online newsletter, how do you handle those members that do not have access to the internet? Have you considered providing hard copies to those parents?

Are you providing your membership with all the information that they need to be informed participants in your PTA? Some PTAs have reduced the number of issues that they are publishing due to costs. While fiscal responsibility is necessary, have you considered the possibility of producing a shorter newsletter rather than fewer editions? Timely information is very important for your members.

The last item to consider is who receives your newsletter? While a newsletter is a member necessity, consider providing the information to all the families so that they can see what your PTA is doing. If they don't know what the PTA does, they will never get involved. Copies of your newsletters should also be sent to the District Director, District Newsletter Chair, as well as your school district administration and school board.

TECHNOLOGY – Brent Fentem

Is the number of children with cell phones in your child's school increasing? Do you notice adults walking into the school with the cell phone in hand either talking or texting? Are you aware of the no usage of cell phone in school zones law that was passed and/or the no texting while driving law? Most likely if people are walking into the school doors in the middle of a conversation or a text on their cell phone, they were in the process of that while behind the wheel of the car in the parking lot. You may be aware of the threat this can be to everyone, but it is important that we teach others about not only the fines that could result of their ignorance of the law, but the safety and well being of our children they could be endangering.

Use your newsletter, website or any correspondence/means you can to educate everyone about the risks of cell phone usage. This is a great form of parent education and definitely falls under the role of a PTA. The State of Illinois has a whole portion of their website dedicated to the campaign: "Drive Now. Text Later.". Inform your community about this campaign and give them the means to help support it and get the word out there. As a PTA, there are sample articles you can use, fact sheets and much more to share with the community.

Drive Now. Text Later.

You can't do both.



Texting while driving on Illinois roads is illegal and deadly.

To raise awareness of the dangers of texting while driving in order to reduce the number of cell-phone

related accidents on Illinois roadways, agencies statewide are partnering to remind motorists to "[Drive Now. Text Later.](#)"

You may click the link above or copy and paste below to enter the website created for much more information.

http://www.illinoistollway.com/portal/page?_pageid=133,2823985&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL



TREASURER – Barb Quinn

Ten Tips for Treasurers as the Year Begins

Does your role as the *new* PTA Treasurer seem a bit daunting? Here are 10 tips to help you get off to a strong start in keeping the job manageable.

1. Make sure the financial records of the previous year have been audited.
2. Plan and prepare a proposed budget that reflects the goals, programs and past practices of the PTA. Remember, only the general membership can adopt the budget--the board is making a recommendation.
3. Plan and prepare a business-like procedure for handling all PTA funds, including the use of both a deposit voucher and expense voucher system. This will help create a check and balance system of financial safeguards.
4. Deposit all PTA funds immediately, in a financial institution approved by the PTA board.
5. Review the PTA bylaws to determine any duties required of the treasurer, especially remittance of dues to the state office. Just a reminder, National PTA dues was increased July 1, 2011. The state and national portion of dues is now \$4.25 per person. The first dues remittance **must** be submitted to the state office postmarked no later than **October 1st**.
6. Make sure that the proper Internal Revenue Service documents have been prepared and submitted. (See the IRS website for some tips on reporting for non-profits)
7. Prepare a policy for any returned checks. Determine how you will recover these funds, including any bank fees, before you need to take action.
8. Be sure that you are in compliance with any insurance requirements. If you are insured through the Illinois PTA group coverage with AIM, that includes a dual signature policy on all checks, as well as statements being sent directly to someone who is **not** authorized to sign checks.
9. Work with the other members of the PTA to continually evaluate your financial health.
10. Ask for assistance when you need it. District 37 is here to help--we are as close as a phone call or an e-mail.

Barb Quinn 847.985.9078 bquinnpta@aol.com

HEALTH/SAFETY – Joyce Stenzel

Using Elizabeth Gilbert's Book, Eat Pray Love, we can use the same three word summary concept to help all of us to start this school year off - TALK PLAY WALK. These three simple words can help all parents to ensure a great start to this upcoming school year.

TALK

Such a simple thing to do, but as school starts, it seems to find the time to TALK more challenging these days with busy family schedules and those electronic devices. Some ideas to get more TALK in your life include: No Electronic Use Hours (like TV/Wii/Computer turned off certain hours), Family Meals (and remember our kids can cook and help with the prep) and use the time wisely on those drives to/from your children activities to catch-up. TALK with your children - it is so important to THEM.

PLAY

All of us need more physical activity in our lives, so PLAY with your children everyday. As highlighted in the National PTA's booklet, Healthy Lifestyles – A Parents Guide,

“In 2005, more than a third of high schoolers reported watching three or more hours of television per day on an average school day. This inactivity is not only harming children's health but affecting children's academic success. Physical activity improves children's academic performance. Studies show that providing more time for physical activity (by reducing class time for academics) can lead to improved test scores, particularly in the area of mathematics. Physical activity programs have also been linked to stronger academic achievement, increased concentration, and improved reading and writing test scores.”

So, get outside and active with your children. Kick the soccer ball, shoot some hoops, swim a lap or chase your son/daughter with a quick game of tag. Get moving and you will see improvement in your children and your own lives (along children's grades) as you PLAY with THEM.

WALK

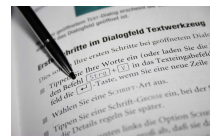
“In 1969, 42 percent of children ages 5 to 18 walked or biked to school; in 2001, only 16 percent did” as noted in the same PTA Parent Guide. So, if you can WALK or bike to school, plan your day to do it and you will be healthy and kinder to the environment, too. Perhaps, you can lead a “walking school bus”—walking groups of students to school—on a rotating basis with other parents can be a great way to help your kids increase their daily physical activity, especially if you have concerns about their safety. To get ideas, check out www.walktoschool.org as we all WALK with THEM.

So, remember these three words to ensure that all of us have a great start to the 2011-2012 school year – TALK PLAY WALK.

A quick reminder if your school PTA is planning a healthy lifestyle program which involve families, students, schools and/or communities, perhaps National PTA can help fund your program this school term. National PTA is awarding up to 10 PTA Lifestyle grants with awards of \$1,000 possible. Specific details and on-line grant application forms are available on the National PTA website and note that your school PTA application is due no later than Friday, September 2, 2011.

SECRETARY – Michele Sheppard

Congratulation on being elected to this important office!



Many people feel that this is the easiest job on the executive committee of the PTA. This is not true. The secretary is a very important part of the PTA. The secretary does so much more than send letters and card, and record the minutes of the meetings. They are the person that keeps the association organized. The secretary sends out meeting reminders, helps the president establish the agenda for the meeting by keeping track of what items of business need to be addressed, and when needed serves as the parliamentarian. Have a great year and please don't hesitate to contact me if you need assistance.

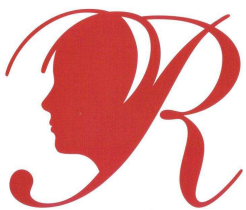
LEADERSHIP – Cindy Giambarbaree

As you continue planning for the upcoming school year, please continue to check our website: www.ilpta-d37.org for the most up to date information. In the meantime, I want to make you aware of some important upcoming events. District 37 will be holding training courses in September at the Palatine District 15 Administrative Building upstairs. All courses begin at 6:30pm and will last approximately three hours. The courses being offered so far are:

PTA Road to Success – September 13th
Money Matters 101 – September 14th
Presidents Course – September 19th
Council Course – September 21st
PTA Road to Success – November 15th

These courses provide the basic understanding, the legal requirements, and the financial concerns of PTA. It is required in your bylaws that all officers take the Road to Success course. If you belong to a Council, every member of the board (officers, presidents and chairmen) needs to take the Council Course to be in compliance with the Council bylaws. If you would like additional trainings throughout the upcoming months that are not listed here, please contact Nicole (nfentem@ilpta-d37.org) right away so that we can get them scheduled for you. These classes are offered so that you can continue to have successful PTAs year after year. Remember, the more your members know about PTA the more successful you will be as a whole.

REFLECTIONS – Joan Scovic



About PTA Reflections
(excerpt from www.ptareflections.org)

Since 1969, the national PTA Reflections Program has encouraged students across the nation and in American schools overseas

to explore their artistic talents.

The PTA Reflections Program is designed to enhance quality arts education for students in preschool through grade 12, encouraging them to create works of art in the areas of dance

choreography, film production, literature, musical composition, photography, and the visual arts. Hundreds of thousands of students participate through their local PTAs each year—millions over the course of the program's history.

The Reflections Program helps parents encourage the creativity and lifelong learning of their children, and offers children recognition for their artistic endeavors.

Parents, teachers, and community members all play a critical role in providing a positive learning environment for children. Supporting the PTA Reflections Program is one way you can increase student achievement, foster student talents, and promote the arts in your home, your school, and your community.

Northwest Cook Region Reflections Update

This year's Reflections theme is "Diversity Means. . ." Children through the Northwest Cook Region can submit works of art reflecting this theme through their local PTA unit. Local chairs who could not attend the recent Reflections Workshop can contact Joan Scovic at thescovics@hotmail.com for an electronic copy of the materials handed out that evening.

Local chairs need to turn in their portfolios to the council chairs by November 11. Local chairs with questions about Reflections can contact the council chairs for further information about the program.

Arlington Heights Council

Dawn Walter

630-802-7017

dawnelwalter@gmail.com

Northwest Suburban Council

Nancy Mau

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Schaumburg Township Council

Tammy Loch

847-884-7730

jerntamfbn@juno.com

Best of luck to all of our young artists as they embark upon another year of Reflections projects!



LEGISLATION – Matthew Rodriguez

Welcome back! I know everyone has been anxiously waiting for the next PTA communication and a new year filled with legislation activities.



On July 8th, 2011 Governor Pat Quinn signed into law House Bill 1204. It is now Public Act 97-0087 which targets violence in elementary schools. The excerpts from the article below highlight the importance of this new piece of legislation.

From: Chicago Tribune by Tara Malone Clout Street 1:44 p.m. CDT, July 8, 2011

Illinois school children will get a lesson in peace keeping as early as kindergarten starting this fall, under a suite of education bills that Gov. Pat Quinn signed into law today at a North Side school.

Students in kindergarten through third grade now will study how to resolve conflicts without violence during a unit that spans at least three weeks every year. The new law extends to the youngest students the lessons that now began in fourth grade and continue through senior year.

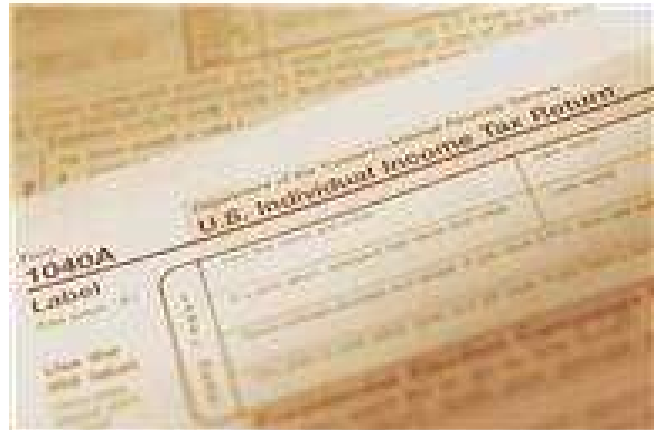
“It’s hard to learn if you are worrying about your safety,” Quinn said during a bill signing ceremony at Wells Community Academy High School on the Near North Side.

For the rest of the article you can go to <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/politics/clout/chi-quinn-signs-education-bills-20110708,0,792206.story>

Also <http://news.yahoo.com/gov-quinn-signs-bill-prevent-elementary-school-violence-223900308.html>

**SAFE
SCHOOLS**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PRESIDENTS AND TREASURERS



FILING THE 990-N ELECTRONIC POSTCARD

Over the past three years, the reporting requirement for Gross Receipts for Non-Profits and Charities has been undergoing revision. The current requirement for PTAs, designated by the IRS as 501 c 3 associations, allows filing of the 990-N Electronic Postcard if the PTAs gross receipts for the fiscal year ending on or after December 31, 2010, do not exceed \$50,000.

Completing the e-filing requires 8 items:

1. Employer Identification Number (EIN).
2. The tax year (i.e. 7/01/10 - 6/30/11).
3. Legal name and mailing address of the PTA.
4. Any other names the organization uses.
5. Name and address of principal officer (i.e. president during the fiscal year reported)
6. Web site address, if you have one.
7. Confirmation that the annual **gross receipts** are normally less than \$50,000.
8. If applicable, a statement that your organization has terminated operations.

DISTRICT 37 COUNCIL CORNER

Arlington Heights Council of PTAs

Where did the Summer go? The Arlington Heights Council of PTAs and our nine school PTAs (Dryden, Greenbriar, Ivy Hill, Olive-Mary Stitt, Patton, South Middle School, Thomas Middle School, Westgate, and Windsor) spent some of the Summer like you probably spent it – training, transitioning responsibilities and knowledge, and getting ready for a great 2011-2012 school year.

We held a technology training session over the Summer for our membership. The session focused on using a free internet-based computer application to produce forms that can be emailed to members and viewed on-screen with one “click”. It was given to respond to the needs of our school PTA units to reach members quickly, to exchange reliable information, and to make it easier for parents and other volunteers to sign up for events and activities.

Reaching membership and new members for our school PTAs remains a focus as we head into the school year. We worked on a video with District 25 to be seen during the year in the nine schools and the greater Arlington Heights community, with representative works by all nine school PTAs, as well as testimonials given by individual students, parents, and teachers, to spread the word about the many benefits of PTA involvement.

Looking ahead to the AHC’s first event in the Fall, we will host our 2nd Annual PTA Wellness Fair at 6:00 PM on November 10 at South Middle School in collaboration with District 25. Studies continue to report ever-increasing rises in adult and childhood obesity, diabetes, heart disease, other health concerns, and health care costs. This District-wide Wellness Fair will provide children and families with information and inspiration to make healthier choices in their daily lives and enough fun and physical activities to get all hearts pumping.

Our sincere thanks to all PTA volunteers and District 25 for your hard work and dedication as you prepare to make everything happen in the coming school year! Thank you to Kim Murray, AH Council Calendar Chair, for her continuing

leadership in presenting the technology training session. Thank you to Jenn Doner, AH Council Cultural Arts Chair, and the many volunteers who helped make the PTA video possible.

And...here we go!

*Shannon Silverman and Jody Stautzenbach
AHC Co-presidents*

Northwest Suburban Council of PTAs

Northwest Suburban Council is looking forward to more great idea-sharing and networking among the 20 PTAs in our council this year. We welcome a new Vice President-Legislation, seven new committee chairs and fourteen new presidents to the board, along with our dedicated returning crew! Our first general membership meeting on September 26 will feature a parent program focusing on nutrition and physical well-being at home and at school. We will partner with school district personnel and experts from Northwest Community Hospital, among other resources, to offer tips on getting kids to be more active, as well as healthy meals and snacks.

*Tracey Coleman
NWSC President*



DISTRICT 37 COUNCIL CORNER, continued

Schaumburg Township Council of PTAs

As I clear the summer and vacation fog from my brain, and think about heading back into the school year, I realize that this time of year is more significant to me in terms of hopes, dreams and goals than New Year's. This year, I find myself pondering the word partnership. Right now I have lots of questions regarding partnerships floating in my brain but have to admit I don't have the answers. I want to share some of the questions in hopes that we will all ponder the questions and come to some answers individually and together:

- How can local unit Executive Committees build strong partnerships with their Executive Board and their General Membership? Are we attracting new volunteers and tapping into everyone's individual talents and skills. How can we attract more individuals to get involved? Are we welcoming, accepting and considering all ideas? How can we keep good volunteers?
- How can STC develop a strong, supportive partnership with the local units? In what ways can STC help local units?
- What would help strengthen the connection between local units, STC, D37, Illinois PTA and National PTA?
- What does it mean to be a partner with the school? Are we developing good working relationships with our Principals and school staff? How can we strengthen the PTA/school partnership even more?

I believe the key to our success has to do with considering our partnerships at every level. I hope all of us will continue to ponder the word partnership and what that looks like in action.

District 54 had a great turn out at D37's Packet Orientation on August 2nd. I enjoyed reconnecting with old friends and meeting new people. It helped energize me and get into "PTA mode" a bit more by

seeing the energy and enthusiasm of the local unit leaders who attended the workshops. By the time this newsletter comes out, STC local units will have hosted School of Information Days and back to school events. Knowing the leaders we have, I am confident that these events went well and that there is much excitement and energy kicking off the school year. Our first STC meeting is Wednesday September 7th at 9am. I am looking forward to a successful year developing partnerships together.

Lisa Guagenti
STC President

National PTA[®] News

Worldwide Day of Play—September 24, 2011

National PTA[®] and Nickelodeon are also collaborating on **Worldwide Day of Play**, an initiative that encourages kids to go outside and play. On September 24, Nickelodeon will suspend all programming and go dark all afternoon. On this day, thousands of schools and community organizations will be hosting events engaging kids in physical fitness around the world. In 2010, more than 100 PTAs held events and activities to encourage families to be active together.

Member Benefits Provider Message

Receive Year-Round Savings at OfficeMax[®], a
PTA Member Benefits Provider

National PTA and
OfficeMax[®] have



partnered to bring

special savings to all PTA members.

Members can save on supplies, furniture, ink and toner, and OfficeMax ImPress[®] Print Center Services—and stock up on back to school essentials like backpacks, notebooks, art supplies, and more. Simply visit the [member benefits page](#) for complete details and print out the August coupon.

Be sure to pass along this great news to all of the PTA members you know. Offers will be available throughout the year, all designed to help with keeping kids supplied.

Illinois PTA News

The 110th Annual Illinois PTA Convention will be held March 9th and 10th at the Chicago Marriott Schaumburg.

This is right in our backyard. The convention will offer numerous workshop sessions and a full exhibit hall of vendors. It would be great to have a group from your PTA come and discover all that the convention has to offer. More details will be coming soon, but begin planning now to send at least a few people from your unit to this highly valuable learning, yet fun experience.

Volunteering at the convention is a fun and easy way to see what the convention is all about. Volunteers are needed to help with many different aspects of the convention such as:

1. Being a host/hostess in a workshop room. (Great for a workshop you want to see.)
2. Being an usher during the general session. (If you are going to be there anyway, why not help out?)
3. Helping with registration or hospitality.

Contact Nicole Fentem if you are able to volunteer.

DISTRICT 37 BOARD

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STC	Lisa Guagenti lilamog@msn.com

ILLINOIS PTA NW COOK

REGION and DISTRICT 37

invite you to the

ANNUAL MEETING

Monday, October 17 at 6:30 PM

at the Cotillion in Palatine.