

# Northwest Cook Region District 37 Dialogue

National Congress of Parents and Teachers  
Illinois PTA – District 37 Publication – Fall: 2012

Nicole Fentem, Director

[www.ilpta-d37.org](http://www.ilpta-d37.org)

Michele Sheppard, Editor

## From Our Director

Thank you to everyone who attended the second Northwest Cook Region Annual Meeting that was held on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is nights like this one when all our units and councils come together for a particular purpose, work together, and accomplish our goals that remind me why I became a PTA leader ten years ago. Our sense of community and love for all kids brings us together and allows us to collectively be a strong voice for our children, their education and ultimately their (and our) future!



We were privileged to have school board members, school district administrators, and many levels of PTA members at our dinner. The region elected our Director for the 2013-2015 term. We were honored with Megan Vidis, from Advance

Illinois as our keynote speaker on Common Core Standards. We were also able to network across our region, hear the outstanding school district 54 Jazz Band directed by Eric Caliendo, honor our exceptional units who took the time to share their programs with us and enjoyed a nice meal together. Of course a highlight for many were the awards we were able to give our phenomenal PTAs.

**Job Well Done!!!** MacArthur PTA of Hoffman Estates and Hunting Ridge PTA of Palatine who were presented with our Outstanding Local Unit Honor Award for the 2011-2012 year. Five units

achieved the Honor Award. We also honored two other levels of awards: Honorable Mention Awards and Recognition Awards. The units who accomplished these awards should be extremely proud of their efforts as well. Keep up the great work! If your unit did not receive an award this year, please continue to use the PTA mission and purposes to guide your efforts throughout this year. Next year if you fill out an application, we may be honoring your PTA at our annual meeting!

*Nicole*

Nicole Fentem

Illinois PTA NWCR/District 37 Director

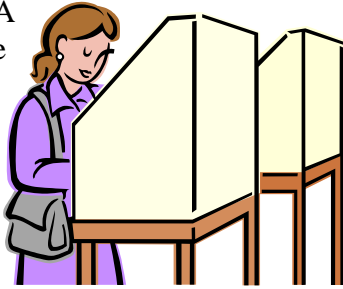
## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

November 8, 2012 6:30 PM	Bylaws I workshop SD 54 District Office, SCH
November 9, 2012	Reflections due to Councils
November 13, 2012 6:30 PM	Bylaws I workshop SD 25 District Office, AH
January 9, 2012 6:30 PM	Bylaws II workshop Olive Mary-Stitt, AH
January 16, 2013 6:30 PM	Bylaws II workshop SD 54 Rauch Center, SCH
January 23, 2013 7:00 PM	Nominating Workshop SD 54 District Office, SCH

## LEGISLATION – Barb Quinn

### PTA Votes / Election Activities

It is critical that all PTA members demonstrate their role as child advocates by becoming educated about candidates for public office and their positions on legislative issues that are important to children and public schools. By exercising our democratic right to vote, we are able to give children a voice. This is especially critical in the upcoming elections on November 6, 2012.



In the 2012 federal elections, voters will determine our president, our vice president, all 435 members of the U.S. House of Representatives, and 33 U.S. senators. In state elections, voters will elect 13 governors, thousands of state house and senate members, and countless mayors, regents, city council members, boards of supervisors, county officials, and school board trustees. Your vote can make a difference for our children and communities.

If you want to learn how your PTA can participate in the election process, download or access the following resources:

- [PTA Votes 2012 Election Guide](#)
- [Elections and Candidates](#) - Browse races by state, or enter your zip code to identify upcoming elections and locate your polling place
- [Register to vote](#)

### What PTAs Can Do Around Elections:

It is election time again and many PTA leaders have questions about what election related activities they can and can't engage in. Local PTA's are non-profit organizations and fall under the IRS election guidelines for non-profits. To help you decide what activities your local PTA should get involved in we have provided a few quick can and can't statements.

PTA Can:



- Host a candidates' forum: all candidates appearing on the ballot for a given position must be invited to participate and given equal time to respond.
- Publish a candidate's questionnaire: all candidates must be given the opportunity to answer the questionnaire and responses must be printed exactly as written.
- Register voters: volunteers must register all eligible voters regardless of party affiliation or political views.
- Remind members to vote.
- Educate candidates on issues important to PTA.



PTA Can Not:

- Invite only one candidate in an election to come speak to the PTA.
- Tell PTA members to only vote for a candidate who supports "X" position.
- Distribute any campaign materials on behalf of a candidate.
- Wear campaign buttons or t-shirts during a PTA meeting.

### HOSPITALITY, Kelly Hemphill

What a great time was had at the "PTA Rocks" Annual Meeting!!! Thank you to everyone who made this year so much fun. Thanks to Lisa Guagenti, Joan Scovic, Boy Scout Troop 461 of Inverness, and the School District 54 Jazz Band. I hope you all had a great time too.



## MEMBERSHIP – Lori Filby

With the start of every school year comes an influx of operational questions from the local units. In the wonderful world of membership, the questions are about dealing with card printing, distribution, dues submission and more. These are basic operational issues that newer membership chairs and presidents are unfamiliar with. These are easily answered and for the most part, there are instructions and clear guidelines for dealing with them. The best way to gain experience is to do it. You can find information on all of these types of things on the Illinois PTA Web site. If you need immediate assistance, don't forget your unit's own human resources. Past presidents, membership chairs or even treasurers often have knowledge of these operational things from being involved, even if only peripherally, in their prior roles. Your council or our region board members are great go-to folks for support, too. Don't hesitate to use these resources!

While some of these questions are basic and operational, others can be more nebulous. Let me give you an example. Lots of units offer what they call "Family Memberships." This can be a terrific way to attract members, but it can also be complicated and easily misunderstood **not only** by those purchasing such memberships but the units that are offering them **as well**. Check out this excerpt from the National PTA Quick Reference Guide for Membership.



### *Individual Membership*

PTA is an individual member association, which means we are an association of individuals who voluntarily join to support the work PTA does. Each member has rights and a voice in what PTA does. Some PTAs have explored innovative methods to increase membership through a variety of methods. Check with your state PTA to find out more about what other units in your state are doing.

### *Family Membership*

One member = one card, one vote. While many units provide family memberships to encourage

more people to join, it is important to remember that each person who joins through a family membership is actually an individual member and entitled to all the rights and benefits of membership.

If your unit offers a family membership, it must be reflected in your bylaws. Check with your state PTA if you have questions about whether this is an option for your unit and/or for suggestions for bylaws wording.

The state and national dues portion for each person who joins through a family membership must be forwarded to your state. Your unit should always have an accurate list of members to determine who is eligible to vote at meetings.

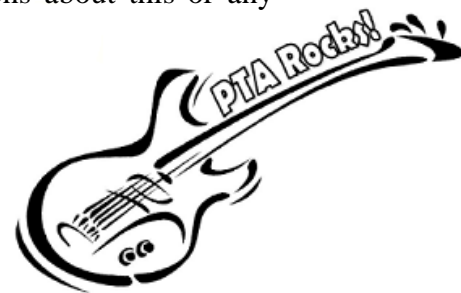
Each person who joins through a family membership:

- Provides you with their name and contact information, which must then be reported to state and national to initiate all benefits of membership.
- Pays dues. Your unit may decide to assess a flat fee for the first person who joins, then a reduced fee for your unit's portion of the dues assessment for each individual member.
- Is entitled to all benefits of membership, including the right to vote at your meetings and a membership card.

In summary, if you offer a Family Membership that is intended to cover say two members, be sure you are clear that only two family members are actual members and have voice and vote. And, perhaps most importantly, be certain that you are collecting enough to cover the full cost of state and national dues for those two members.

If you have questions about this or any other membership issues, don't hesitate to contact me.

Happy recruiting!



### **Bullying Awareness Month**

While researching this very important HOT topic, learning about different situations and examples of bullying, to my surprise, I discovered



that the biggest question is “where are the parents?” As parents we have all experienced the time when our children become independent, which seems to start at age 2; they tell us they are big now, that they don’t need us, that they do not want us lurking and supervising them, and the list goes on. However, as more and more studies are conducted we are learning that kids really NEED and WANT us involved and guiding them. A shocking 58% of kids say their parents are their biggest influence. That tells me there is still hope guys!

Why is this important? How does it relate to bullying? It is important and relates to bullying for the following reasons.

1. Social Media - More and more kids are experiencing bullying not only on the school grounds but cyber-bullying off the school grounds. As we know the internet NEVER sleeps and the kids are connected 24-7 to the internet via smart phones and other electronic means. They are using actual computers less and less. What does this mean? It means that putting that computer in the middle of the living room to keep track of what the kids are doing, saying, what websites they are visiting, is not working anymore. Our kids are taking the bullying to their bedrooms not ever getting time out to unplug.
2. Kids NEED their parents. I cannot tell you how sad it is to hear kids say “if only.” If only my mom or dad would have listened. If only my mom or dad would have checked on me. If only my mom or dad would have noticed the signs. If only someone would save me from these awful experiences.

I know all of us as parents want to believe our kids are in a safe haven in the schools that they are in and that all that is happening is exceptional opportunities to learn and get educated throughout the day. The reality is that life is becoming more complicated for our teens and pre-teens, and we as parents need to listen and pay attention to the signs of distress.

We have to go back to basics and open lines of communication with our children. Trust me I know this is a MONUMENTAL task. We text our kids, leave messages, sometimes emails, etc. We need to be sitting our kids down and actually talk to them. Do NOT accept those “fine, idk, it’s so stupid” answers. All of you know what I am talking about. You ask your child how was school today? What is usually the answer? “Fine.” “OK.” What did you learn? “Nothing” Then the conversation is over. This is the age of technology and the kids are losing the ability to express themselves in a polite, respectful way. Why, you ask? The reason is because they are communicating via electronic means with shortcuts: LOL, JK, JP, etc.

What signs are we looking for as parents? Many of the kids say they pretend to be sick so they do not have to go to school. They are depressed. They do not hang out with their normal friends and/or their grades are slipping. These are just a few examples. If your child is doing any of these things it does not automatically mean they are being bullied but it does mean we need to dig deeper and ask more questions on what’s going on. There are SO many situations that get out of hand quickly and they may start innocently enough but unless it gets straightened out there is no way to stop the torture.

I will share a quick story as an example of just one situation. A girl moved to a new school and made some new friends. For three weeks she was happy and getting along well in school. The girls would all meet at her locker, etc. Then, on the Friday of the third week after school her mom grounded her for the whole weekend. The punishment was no cell phone, no computer online time, and no communication with her friends. On that next Monday this child went to school and none of the girls she was friends with would talk to her. She sat down next to them at lunch and not one of the girls said a word to her, they just got up and all walked



## **PARENT ED – continued**

away to another table. By Wednesday this girl could not take it anymore. Thursday her mom had to pick her up from school because she was sick, and Friday she was still sick. All weekend the girl was fine. She played outside, was eating well, and showed no signs of distress until Monday came around. The mom went to the school and talked to the teacher, principal, and the school police officer. When the stories were told, the group of girls said they had tried to get a hold of the new girl all weekend through text messages, Facebook, everything to get together and hang out during the weekend. They group felt the new girl was acting like she was too good for them. Once the group of girls found out that the new girl was just grounded they were all immediately friends again.

This is a very simple case of misunderstanding. What about when it's more serious and our kids are being teased and hurt by what kids say on Facebook after school? What about when they are physically in danger because someone is threatening physical harm? What about when they are being the bully and they make up fake names and profiles to hurt others? It has come to my attention that as of right now just saying negative comments about another person online can be grounds for legal action.

We need to teach our kids what social responsibility is. We need to teach them that even though they are telling us they know Facebook, Twitter, etc. is public info to all, they are still saying their most intimate, private thoughts and information with the pretense that they only are telling "their friends". Schools, colleges, employers, everyone is looking at what our kids post. Even if our children are mad, posting their feelings on a social media avenue is NOT the place to be expressing it. You cannot take it back. It is public information and it is a permanent foot print.

Sources: <http://www.stopbullying.gov> <http://www.common sense media.org>  
<http://www.safenetwork.org>

## **LEADERSHIP – Tracey Coleman**

Congratulations to all of the Local Unit Honor Award, Membership Hall of Fame, and Gold/Platinum/Double Platinum Record winners at this year's annual meeting!

PTA leaders and school administrators often ask us "what does my school's PTA need to do to win an award?" The answer is: your PTA is probably already doing many award-winning activities. What you need to do is to actually apply for the awards! Yes, it's more paperwork - but it pays off in many ways.



PTA awards, like the above Northwest Cook Region/District 37 awards and the Illinois PTA awards for 2012-13, are focused on how well your PTA's activities reflect the mission and purposes of PTA. Reviewing the criteria and writing the applications will remind you of what your PTA is doing well and perhaps point out new opportunities for programs or advocacy work. Being nominated for an award is rewarding for your volunteers; it makes them feel that their effort is important and appreciated. If you are chosen as a winner, you can and should share that excitement when recruiting members, since potential members will want to be part of a successful association! You can also learn from other award-winning PTAs, who may have good ideas that could work for your unit.

This is a great time of year to think about the upcoming Illinois PTA awards to be given at the convention in April. (Find the packet at <http://illinoispta.org/information.html> and on the local unit disk.) Don't wait until the week that nominations are due and spend your spring break typing - get them in well before the March 29 deadline! The key is to distribute the individual nomination forms this fall to the appropriate board members and get them thinking about what might qualify. Remember, what seems like an ordinary activity in your PTA in fact might be inspirational to other units! Not sure how to write the best description for your event? Please feel free to ask the District 37 board members or other veteran PTA leaders for help.

Obviously a PTA should focus its efforts on advocacy and programs, not on winning awards. But when you're doing a good job, it's nice to be recognized. And you can't win if you don't apply! So nominate your PTA for a state, national or district award for 2012-13!

## TREASURER – Barb Quinn

### *Financial Best Practices for PTAs*

Two topics of conversation heard recently about best financial practices have become "Hot topics" as the debate rages.



The first is debit cards. The Illinois PTA publication, *Money Matters 101*, gives a great deal of information with regard to debit cards for PTAs. While we recognize that debit cards are, most likely, the wave of the future, there are several areas of concern that need to be addressed before PTAs move into this realm:

- who would be authorized to use the PTA debit card
- how would authorization be verified
- how would the use of a debit card effect the PTA liability and bonding insurance
- how many debit cards would be in the possession of the PTA
- how would the PTA continue the check and balance system in place with the use of expense vouchers when using a debit card

We recognize that these obstacles can be overcome with the creation of a fiscally responsible procedure for the use of debit cards. Our recommendation continues to be that until you have created the procedures, it is probably more effective to continue using the current check request system. We will continue to research effective "best practices" with regard to PTA debit cards and update you as often as necessary.

The second topic relates to the payment of PTA expenses. The National PTA publication, *Quick Reference Guide for Treasurers*, clearly states that all PTA payments *must* be made by check. In practical terms, what does that mean for your PTA? If you have a cash bank for any given event, and require supplies to continue the event, it is our recommendation that the chair or a member of the committee purchase the supplies and submit an expense voucher (check request) for reimbursement. This provides the necessary paper trail to document all expenditures on the part of the PTA and keeps you in compliance with National PTA requirements. In some situations, the PTA is expanding large

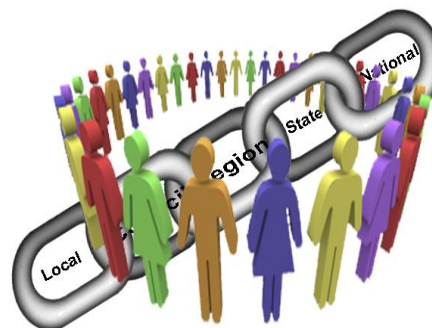
amounts of money for a particular event. Our recommendation continues to be to work with a vendor who will submit an invoice to the PTA, or have the treasurer on hand when larger purchases are made. If this is not possible, another suggestion is to have the chair of the event request a check for the approximate amount of the purchase to pay for supplies, and return any unused portion of the funds to the PTA treasury along with the receipt from the purchase.

Our goal is to provide you with practical tips on best financial practices. Should you have specific individual concerns, please feel free to contact a member of the Northwest Cook Region PTA.

## DO YOU LEAD BY EXAMPLE?

One of the benefits of PTA membership is the privilege of participating in PTA business. Indeed, our PTAs need the input from members as well as their actual presence to cast votes on important matters like the budget, the bylaws, formation of a nominating committee and officer elections.

As a PTA officer or board member, it is up to you to set the example by attending your local unit meetings, council general membership meetings, and even the state convention business sessions. All officers and board members are expected to be at the PTA meetings, this is something a person inherently agrees to when taking on the leadership position. Encourage non-board members to come with you, to get used to PTA business and to feel more connected to the association. This is a great way to get them ready for future board or officer positions! Leadership development is hard to do when we're so focused on immediate events, so keep this in mind as you head to the next meeting on your calendar.



## SCHOLARSHIP – Jeanne Hamilton

The student application deadline for this year's Lillian E. Glover Scholarship is February 15, 2013. Applications should be in the guidance offices of our high schools. If you know a graduating senior who is planning on an education related career, please take the extra step to let them know of the wonderful scholarship opportunity that Illinois PTA has for them. This year two scholarships, one \$3000 and one \$2000, will be awarded to high school seniors residing in Illinois.

As PTA members and PTA units, we can help fund this worthy Scholarship through memorial gifts and direct donations via the Illinois PTA office or by purchasing any of the following:

- Illinois PTA Life Memberships
- Book of Recognition
- Distinguished Service Scroll
- Certificate of Recognition
- Local Unit Educator of the Year
- Scholarship Gift Cards
- PTA Note Cards
- In Memoriam Cards
- Scholarship Charms/Jewelry
- Convention Promotional Items
- Gifts of T.H.A.N.K.S.

These awards are great ways to recognize the people in your community. More details on each of these awards can be found at: <http://www.illinoispta.org/Scholarship/Scholarship%20Support.pdf>. You may also find information on ordering the volunteer awards at: <http://www.illinoispta.org/Scholarship/ScholarshipVolunteerRecognitionOrderForm2012.pdf>.

Especially with money being tight for everyone these days, think about purchasing a gift that actually gives twice this year.

## HEALTH /SAFETY – Joyce Stenzel

By using indicators such as achievement tests, teachers' descriptions of children in classes, and their own interviews, analysis of relationships and other



observations, Carolyn Pape Cowan and Philip Cowan, husband-and-wife psychologists at the University of California have concluded that it is possible to predict how well children will do emotionally, socially and academically.

The key? How the *parents* are doing. That's true, whether the parents are together or separated, and matters more than the number of hours with their children. Even in cases where mothers truly care about the development of their sons and daughters, says Carolyn Cowan, spending every possible moment with them when they get home from work, "the children do not fare well if the adults aren't taking care of themselves and their relationships."

She adds: "It's not just the quality of the mother and father's relationship with the child, but how they're managing as a couple that affects how well kids do. Not many couples truly share the load equally, but where it does feel shared, the husband and wife are happier as a couple and their parenting is more effective and nurturing."

Overall, the Cowans believe half of how children turn out is probably genetic and beyond parents' control. But their research suggests that about 15 percent of what happens to children can be attributed to what parents have done, 15 percent to how the marriage is going, and another 15 percent from the history of the family — for example, the parents' own experiences as children. That's equally true, they say, for divorced or separated parents and stepparents.

Lessons, according to the Cowans:

- **Make your relationship a priority.** Schedule time together. Make it happen. If a long night out isn't possible, at least try for a regular hour here and there.
- **Make yourself a priority.** Take breaks for yourself. Find time for friendships.

"Frazzled people with the best intentions but who are not themselves getting nurtured and befriended — and getting relief from looking after kids and family — are just not going to be as available with the energy it takes to be a strong parent," says Carolyn Cowan. "Those kids will not do as well."

By DiscoveryHealth.com writers at HowStuffWorks.com  
<http://health.howstuffworks.com/pregnancy-and-parenting/parenting/happy-parents-make-happy-kids.htm>

## REFLECTIONS – Joan Scovic

### Why is arts education so important?

Arts education not only cultivates imagination, self-expression, and creativity, but also plays a vital role in the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It promotes visual literacy, which enables students to analyze and interpret the meaning of complex visual imagery that permeates the media and popular culture.



### How can parents make a difference?

Parents play a vital role in the survival of sufficient arts education in schools. Collaboration among parents, teachers, and arts leaders can create a powerful constituency advocating for arts programs in schools. Parent involvement is an integral part of not only influencing decision makers to include arts education as part of the basic curriculum, but also guaranteeing the best possible education for all students.

Encourage education leaders and elected officials to support arts education:

- Research the issues and debates concerning arts education, and know the facts about how arts education will benefit students.
- Investigate the existing arts education curriculum and standards for your state. (You can access this information on the website of your local and/or state board of education.)
- Assemble a group of parents who share the same concerns, and as a group, meet with the principal to assess the status and quality of arts education within the basic curriculum.
- Enlist the support of your local PTA in addressing the issue. Work with your local PTA's arts chair and federal legislation chair in generating support for arts education. There is strength in numbers, and it is important that there be a critical mass of

parents and teachers working together on the issue.

- Solicit guidance and support from your state arts agency and community arts leaders. (Information about your state arts agency can be found at the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies website.)
- Attend school board meetings and hearings to voice your support for the inclusion of arts education in schools.
- Urge your network of advocates to maintain persistent communication with school administrators and elected officials in advocating quality arts education for every child.

### What is the role of the National PTA Reflections Program?

National PTA's Reflections Program is designed to enhance, rather than replace, quality arts education for grades K-12. In its 30-year history, the Reflections Program has encouraged millions of students across the nation and in American schools overseas to explore their artistic talents. More than 600,000 students participate in the Reflections Program through their local PTAs each year. The program helps parents encourage the creativity and lifelong learning of their children. It provides opportunities for children's creative self-expression, and recognition for their artistic endeavors. Parents, teachers, and community members all play a critical role in fostering a positive learning environment for children. Supporting the Reflections Program is one way you can promote the arts in your home, school, and community.

**Deadline reminders:** For units in a council, portfolios are due to your council by November 9. Non-council and council deadline to turn their projects to D37/NWCR is December 7.

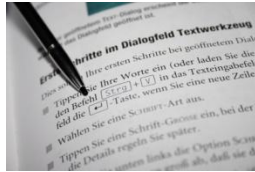
Reprinted with permission from the National PTA  
[http://www.pta.org/topic\\_parent\\_involvement\\_in\\_arts\\_education.asp](http://www.pta.org/topic_parent_involvement_in_arts_education.asp)





## SECRETARY – Michele Sheppard

Source: [http://non-profit-governance.suite101.com/article.cfm/how\\_to\\_take\\_meeting\\_minutes](http://non-profit-governance.suite101.com/article.cfm/how_to_take_meeting_minutes)



Taking minutes at a meeting is not always a popular activity, but it is an important one. The meeting minutes serve as a record of what action the board of directors has taken. In the eyes of the IRS, courts, and auditors, board meeting minutes are legal documents. Nonetheless, there is no single format to take minutes. You can do what makes sense for you and your group. However, following these tips can help make writing meeting minutes easier:

- Remember that meeting minutes are for future and outside readers as much as they are for the people present. Make sure whatever you write down will be clear to people coming into the process at a later time.
- Typing meeting minutes on a laptop can make the process quicker and easier; however, a pen and paper work well, too, and might keep you from writing down too much information.
- Make a note of who is present. If necessary, pass around a sign-in sheet.
- Use the meeting agenda as an outline for the minutes.
- Details do not belong in meeting minutes. Do write down any motions and decisions made and the key findings of any committee reports.
- Use bullet points to make the minutes easier to read. Each bullet statement should represent a different finding, discussion, or decision. Use nested bullets (bulleted statements within a bullet) if appropriate.
- Make a note of issues that were tabled until future meetings; this will serve as an important reminder to the board of things that still need to be done.
- Transcribe or review minutes as soon as possible after the meeting, while your memory of what happened is still fresh.
- Before you submit the meeting minutes, proofread for typos and omissions.

## BYLAWS

Every PTA is self-governed through its bylaws. Do you know what are in your bylaws? Does every board member of your PTA have access to your bylaws? Are your bylaws up to date?

Every two years PTAs are required to look at their current bylaws, update them and amend them as the membership sees fit. For most PTAs in our Region, this is the required year to create a committee to examine the bylaws.

For those PTAs wishing to learn more about updating bylaws, Northwest Cook Region is holding training for you. We will have 2 sets of identical workshops.

*Bylaws I* will help you learn the difference between what is required to be in PTA bylaws and what areas your PTA can alter as the membership sees fit. It will also give you tips as to how you will want to word the information you want in your bylaws. The goal is to make bylaws review an easy task for anyone in your PTA to take on.

*Bylaws II* will be held in a computer lab. This workshop assumes you committee has already reviewed the current bylaws and is just about ready for approval by the director. You may use this time to input your PTA information into the bylaws template or ask last minute questions on how you might word something in the bylaws. Ideally by the end of this workshop your bylaws will be complete and ready for approval by the general membership. Details on the workshops can be found here: [http://www.ilpta-d37.org/resources/TrainingFlyer\\_FallWinter2012.pdf](http://www.ilpta-d37.org/resources/TrainingFlyer_FallWinter2012.pdf).

The current and most up to date bylaws template can be found on our website at: <http://www.ilpta-d37.org/forms.html>. Please start your updating process with this document using MS Word. The template will help you alter the areas that are not required by law and PTA while keeping the required information intact. This makes the updates and approval process run quicker and more smoothly.

Remember the bylaws can only be approved at a general membership meeting, not a monthly board meeting.

## MEETINGS: GENERAL VS. BOARD

Why don't we just call **every** meeting we have a "General Meeting"? That is how we are treating them anyway, right?

General Meetings happen for a specific purpose just as board meetings have their specific purposes. Yes, as a general member you are “more invited” to one than the other - the general membership meeting. Yes, there are some advantages to being an officer or chairman of a committee within the association - you get to vote on the day to day activities and events which have already been approved by the general membership.

As a general member, you have a voice in the big picture: who the officers are, who will be on the nominating committee to represent you, how much money the PTA needs to run its programs for the year and whether the program should happen or not (approval of the budget), how much the local portion of the membership dues will be. You also have the perk of shorter meetings as a general member. A majority of the work is done by the board at regularly scheduled meetings so only final action is needed at a general meeting—where the members approve the recommendations of the board.

As a board member who attends board meetings you get to be a part of the vote on the more specific happenings of the PTA. Your voice is heard as to what restaurant nights you will hold, where and when; what vendors will be used by a committee for an event; what are the themes for the events; should there be a website and with what carrier for how much and what will it look like? Board members also determine policy and procedures for the PTA.

For transparency sake, most PTAs invite all members to board meetings. Non- board members are allowed to attend and encouraged to do so but with voice and no vote. All voting on topics at these meetings are reserved for board members.

It is necessary to have separate meetings and both types of meetings so that the bylaws are being followed and so that the business of the association can run appropriately.

The bylaws specify those items that require a board vote:

- a. review tentative budget for recommendation as a proposed budget to the general membership for adoption;
- b. transact necessary business in the intervals between general membership meetings and such other business as may be referred to it by this association;
- c. create standing committees;
- d. approve plans of work of the standing committees;
- e. present reports and recommendations to the general membership meeting of this association;
- f. approve routine bills within the limit of the budget; and
- g. elect an audit committee.

If all meetings are general meetings, these items still need to be handled by the board members present and not the entire membership present. There must be enough board members present to meet the board quorum for these business items to be handled. In other words, only board members can vote on these items. The budget can't be presented to the GM without it being approved for presentation by the board, etc.

## TECHNOLOGY – Brent Fentem

As PTAs continue to stay current with their membership, many are opting to utilize social media as a way to communicate with members. National PTA has suggestions that help in establishing what might work best for your particular PTA available at: <http://www.pta.org/5045.htm>. Illinois PTA also has suggestions on pages 64-66 in the new PTA Leadership Reference Guide that was included in the Local Unit Packet given to each president in August. In addition, the guide can be found here: <http://www.illinoispta.org/Districts%20Info/PTA%20Leadership%20Reference%20Guide.pdf>.

No matter what your PTA determines is right for your community, remember to make sure your social media avenue remains ethical and about issues, not people. Be an information source for all and keep personal comments to private pages and remind those in your group to do the same.

## NEWSLETTER – Michele Sheppard



As newsletter chair, I have the privilege of receiving the local unit newsletters. The newsletters are looking great and I hope that you all apply for the Illinois PTA Newsletter award.

One of the criteria for the Outstanding Newsletter award is to have information from both Illinois PTA and National PTA. There are several sources for information from National PTA. The Our Children magazine is now available online. A digital replica of every edition is available at [PTAOurChildren.org](http://PTAOurChildren.org) and from the [Our Children landing page](#) on PTA.org. The digital edition will feature bonus material such as video and audio clips, live links in the articles, and social media sharing capabilities.

PTAs are welcome to reprint PTA-authored newsletter articles from *PTA Partners in Leadership*, *PTA Local Leader News*, and *PTA Parent* in their publications, so long as they include proper attribution.

- **Parenting**—The PTA Parent provides concise information twice a month on topics such as parent involvement, student success, child safety, and health and wellness. Information comes from PTA's vast pool of parent resources as well as from other online resources for parents.
- **Federal policy**—The monthly PTA Takes Action Update offers the latest news on legislative issues affecting families, children, education, schools, and communities. It also provides resources for readers to get involved in advocating for children's issues. Subscribers also receive Action Alerts with breaking news and calls to action.
- **Local PTA leader resources**—The twice-monthly Local Leader News gives PTA local leaders information on PTA programs and resources and offers ideas for improving their leadership and unit management skills.

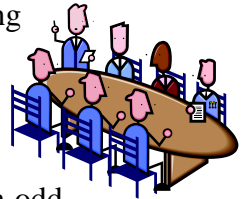
All reprinted PTA articles must include the following credit line: *Reprinted with permission from National PTA.*

To reprint articles from non-PTA sources, you must seek permission from the author or originating organization. These articles will have either a byline with attribution at the beginning of the article or a "reprinted with permission" statement at the end, or both.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

It's time to think about your PTA's nominating committee! Yes, it's early in the school year, but in order to have a slate of officers in time for spring elections, the process starts now.

The members of the Nominating Committee are elected, not appointed or recruited by the president. Check your PTA's bylaws for specifics, but usually the Nominating Committee has an odd number of members. Some are executive board members elected by the executive board at a board meeting, and some are general members (not officers or board members) elected by the membership at a general membership meeting. The reason for this is to have a variety of people represented on the committee, so that it is not controlled by one group or clique of members. You want to cast a wide net when looking for potential leaders!



Once the Nominating Committee is elected, its members meet to elect the chairman and to set up the first committee meeting. They will then start seeking nominations and begin considering candidates for each office. The Nominating Committee will prepare a slate with one candidate for each office, to be posted as specified in the bylaws, usually 30 days prior to the election meeting.

For more information on the role of the Nominating Committee, check out the brochure from Illinois PTA at:

<http://www.illinoispta.org/Leadership/Newbrochures/Nominating%20Committee.pdf>.

We also highly recommend that Nominating Committee members attend our Nominating Committee Workshop, to be held on January 23 at 7:00pm at the Schaumburg District 54 offices.

## DISTRICT 37 COUNCIL CORNER

### Northwest Suburban Council of PTAs

#### NWSC PTA Business

The Council held its first General Membership meeting and program on Monday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, at Walter R. Sundling Junior High School. At this time, the Council approved minutes from its last General Membership meeting, the Audit Report, as well as the 2012-2013 NWSC PTA Budget. After the business was concluded the council's first program was presented to more than 50 parents. The program on bullying by Karen Stortz (karinstortz.com) discussed bullying prevention, intervention and responses for parents.

#### Council Goals

The grand tour! As part of our council's commitment to collaboration, communication, and leadership, I have begun to visit PTA meetings at each of our 20 local unit PTAs.

I'm not going with a checklist in one hand and a red pen in another; I'm going with the desire to learn as much as I can about the issues that are important to each individual PTA. I'm going to demonstrate my commitment to the PTAs and their leaderships. I'm going to see how best I can facilitate collaboration within our group – which will facilitate collaboration at the local level. I'm going to see how the Council can lead and liaise between the individual units and the higher levels of PTA.

District 15 is a school district made up of 12,000 students from 7 different municipalities. Our PTA units represent 15 elementary schools, 4 junior high schools, and one learning center, which serves students (from preschool on up) focusing on their individual needs.

An integral part of being a leader is understanding the needs of your community. For me, as a council president, that means knowing the needs of our school district PTAs, as well as the volunteers, families, staff and students who stand with them. As a PTA president, it means knowing the needs of your individual school, students, staff and families.

As we settle into the school year, let's take a moment to sit down and really get to know the people we work for and work with. Your school communities will be stronger for the effort.

*Julie O'Hara*  
NWSC President

### Schaumburg Township Council of PTAs

It is that time of year when local units are holding general membership meetings to accept the audit, adopt the proposed budget and for some, elect their nominating committee. The same is true for the STC council. On October 10<sup>th</sup>, STC held their general membership meeting to take care of the fall business. Generally, we follow our business meeting with a parent education event. This year, since it is election season, we held a Candidates Forum. In Schaumburg Township School District 54, there are two Illinois House districts and two Illinois Senate districts for a total of eight candidates running for the General Assembly. All eight candidates were invited to and attended the forum. We began planning for the forum in June. Letters of invitation were sent along with ground rules that were signed by the candidates and returned. Questions were solicited from various interest groups – the community, the school board and our teachers. As the date drew closer, plans were made for room set up, supplies needed and how many helping hands would be necessary. Also, other forums were attended and observed to help make sure our plans were thorough. Finally, the big night arrived and the forum went off very well.

This event could not have been possible without the assistance of many people. We are so fortunate to be a part of Northwest Cook Region because much of our help came from other councils that are part of our region. Julie O'Hara from NWSC shared the documents that were created for a candidates' forum that was held in their area during school board elections. Barb Quinn shared all her knowledge and experience and was instrumental in our planning process. Shannon Silverman from Arlington Heights Council attended the forum and worked as a question screener. Nicole Fentem worked as a time keeper along with STC board member Mikel Eppenbaugh. Lori Filby, as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice



## DISTRICT 37 COUNCIL CORNER, continued

President for STC and Legislation chair, worked tirelessly to pull it all together. We even had help from our Superintendent, Ed Rafferty and school board secretary, Sherry Douglas who both sorted questions for duplication and appropriateness. Finally, we were extremely fortunate to have Michele Sheppard as our moderator. Michele graciously agreed to be our moderator the weekend before the forum, when our scheduled moderator had to cancel due to the death of a family member. Michele did an outstanding job and we cannot thank her enough!

I am so proud that we held this event as I strongly believe that it is so important for PTA to help our community gain information on the candidates running for office. Remember, **PTA VOTES** on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

*Lisa Guagenti  
STC President*

### Arlington Heights Council of PTAs

Now until mid-year is a good time to keep an eye on whether your PTA is experiencing fundraising fatigue. In these tougher economic times, parents are more likely to get tired of being asked to pay money to PTA fundraisers. It is a problem because fundraising is not the purpose of a PTA but a PTA does need to raise funds to fulfill its purposes. It is also a problem because it affects people's interest in joining and becoming involved in PTA.

By now you probably know the total amount raised from your first fundraiser. Maybe you have more than one fundraiser going and have those amounts also. Is the amount raised significantly less than in past years, even after trying things like extending deadlines? Maybe it's not as much for the second or third year in a row.

The good news is that there is a cure! Several fundraising experts recently offered advice in the article *Doing It Right*, written by Jon Krueger and published by National PTA.

"Schools, families, and the [fundraising] industry would all be better off if we ran fewer fundraising programs, and ran them more efficiently and with greater participation," says Jim Pike, a fundraising professional in New Jersey.

According to Pike, having too many fundraisers will create burnout—with volunteers, parents, students, and teachers. Parents and other supporters are already being tapped by the local Little League team, football teams, the Girl Scouts, and other organizations. The last thing your PTA wants to do is get stuck in the fundraising traffic jam.

John Kukta, a professional fundraiser in Ohio, advises PTAs to concentrate on the fundraiser that makes the most money for the school. He says that one well-planned, well-executed fundraiser can bring in more than triple the amount raised through a few mediocre programs. In addition, sticking with one good fundraising drive will prevent parents and other supporters from developing fundraising fatigue.

To prevent burnout and return participation to effective levels, remember that less is more when it comes to fundraising."

Several of our unit PTAs took deep breaths last year and this year to step out of their comfort zone and mixed it up with Fall mixers for parents. They each held their own parent mixer as a large fundraiser. They each reported that it was a tremendous success. Fellow parents who might not otherwise meet each other were able to connect in a relaxed, social setting. It drew people that don't usually come to meetings or other events. Funds raised exceeded their expectations and helped eliminate smaller, less successful fundraisers.

To all dedicated PTA leaders who try to find ways to ease fundraising fatigue, well done!

*Julie Birenbaum and Shannon Silverman  
AHC Co-presidents*

*Jon Krueger is communications specialist for the Association of Fund-Raising Distributors & Suppliers. The full article can be found at <http://www.pta.org/2313.htm>.*

## PTA CHECKLIST REVIEW

It is almost November, is your PTA on track? Use the PTA checklist on our website to help you: <http://www.ilpta-d37.org/forms.html>. Remember, you may customize this for your PTA! This is just a template to get you started.

Some things to think about:

**Has your PTA participated in any Leadership Promotion?** Check your bylaws for required training courses that must be taken by the board. Watch the website, email and Facebook for more training courses to be offered.

**Have you promoted PTA?** Display PTA materials and discuss the benefits of belonging to the PTA at school events and use this opportunity to build and demonstrate the partnership between the school and the PTA.

**Have you begun promoting the Reflections Program this year?** Contact principal and faculty with Reflections Project general rules. 2012/13 Reflection Theme: *"The Magic of a Moment..."*

**Have you held your first General Membership Meeting of the year?** Be sure your budget is approved by your membership and you elect the general membership members to your Nominating Committee.

**Is your PTA in good standing?** Have you purchased PTA liability insurance? Have you submitted your first dues payment by October 1<sup>st</sup>? Remember to send dues in every month to Springfield. Are you preparing to file your financial information with the IRS?

## NATIONAL PTA NEWS



## NORTHWEST COOK REGION/ DISTRICT 37 BOARD

Director	Nicole Fentem <a href="mailto:nfentem@ilpta-d37.org">nfentem@ilpta-d37.org</a>
Secretary/ Newsletter	Michele Sheppard <a href="mailto:mls1960@aol.com">mls1960@aol.com</a>
Treasurer/ Leg. Consultant	Barbara Quinn <a href="mailto:BQuinnPTA@aol.com">BQuinnPTA@aol.com</a>
Health	Joyce Stenzel <a href="mailto:jmstenzel@aol.com">jmstenzel@aol.com</a>
Hospitality	Kelly Hemphill <a href="mailto:gillie94@aol.com">gillie94@aol.com</a>
Leadership	Tracey Coleman <a href="mailto:traceykc Coleman@sbcglobal.net">traceykc Coleman@sbcglobal.net</a>
Membership	Lori Filby <a href="mailto:membership@ilpta-d37.org">membership@ilpta-d37.org</a>
Parent Ed.	Matthew Rodriquez <a href="mailto:tazcubano@aol.com">tazcubano@aol.com</a>
Reflections	Joan Scovic <a href="mailto:jscovic@gmail.com">jscovic@gmail.com</a> and your nominating comm
Scholarship	Jeanne Hamilton <a href="mailto:jeannemarieh@msn.com">jeannemarieh@msn.com</a>
Technology	Brent Fentem <a href="mailto:bfentem@ilpta-d37.org">bfentem@ilpta-d37.org</a>
AHC	Julie Birenbaum <a href="mailto:julester@comcast.net">julester@comcast.net</a>  Shannon Silverman <a href="mailto:shansilverman@gmail.com">shansilverman@gmail.com</a>
NWSC	Julie O'Hara <a href="mailto:joh1012@yahoo.com">joh1012@yahoo.com</a>
STC	Lisa Guagenti <a href="mailto:lilamog@msn.com">lilamog@msn.com</a>



**Courses begin Promptly at: 6:30 pm**

**Northwest Cook Region**



*everychild.onevoice.*

**Registration Begins at: 6pm**

# Fall/Winter Trainings

<b>Date</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>What is it and who should attend</b>
Oct 17	<b>Money Matters 101</b>	This course will take you through everything you will be responsible for as a PTA treasurer including how to prepare a budget, conducting an audit, fundraising, managing money and bank accounts, electronic banking, treasurer's financial reports, accountability to members and the government, and how to protect your 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status. It is suggested that all PTA treasurers and presidents take this course, but it would be beneficial to any PTA officer.
Nov 8 & Nov 13	<b>Bylaws I</b>	This workshop covers what bylaws are and what needs to be considered in updating them for your PTA and how to handle the process. Questions are welcome. The goal is to make an seemingly overwhelming task an easy task and process to go through. This training will be held Nov. 8 in Schaumburg and repeated in Arlington Heights on Nov 13 at the school district 25 building (1200 S. Dunton Ave.).
Jan 16	<b>Bylaws II</b>	This is an interactive workshop that will allow onsite answers to last minute questions before approval by the director. Time permitting, completed bylaws may be approved onsite. At minimum, completed bylaws may be turned in for final review.  Location: SD54 Rauch Center, Computer Lab 520 East Schaumburg Rd Schaumburg, IL 60194

Classes will end no later than 9 pm

**Please RSVP ahead of time to [nfentem@ilpta-d37.org](mailto:nfentem@ilpta-d37.org). Walk ins are welcome, but materials/resources cannot be guaranteed.**

Oct 17 & Nov 8 Trainings will be held at:  
School District 54 Admin Building  
524 E. Schaumburg Road  
Schaumburg, IL 60194

Submit any questions or concerns to:  
  
Nicole Fentem  
Northwest Cook Region Director  
E-mail: [nfentem@ilpta-d37.org](mailto:nfentem@ilpta-d37.org)