

October 2009

Palm Beach County Council PTA/PTSA

Volume 17, Issue 2

Presidents Message

It is hard to believe it is October all ready!

I know many PTAs and PTSAs have held really great programs since school started. I have heard some great stories about Back-to-School events for school staff as well as families, programs to help our new Kindergarten parents “adjust”, membership drives, and general meetings outlining PTA plans for the year. Keep up the great work.

The council has been busy working on similar programs for all of our members. Our back to school event involved a series of training sessions. We were able to provide a series of 3 training sessions on the workings of PTA. We also had some excellent guest speakers. A last minute addition found Mr. Hernandez at our first session discussing some of the changes in the district. During the second session we had, Dr. Christy discussing efficacy and PTA.

We have also scheduled our first General Meeting for October 7th at 6:30pm at the School Board Building Conference room C& D. The topic is a “District Update”. It is an important conversation that everyone should participate in so be sure to send a representative (or 2 or 3). We will have Ms. Killets (Chief of Staff) and Mr. Hernandez (Chief Academic Officer) and several school board members attending to discuss all the new changes.

One area that often gets over looked in the rush to start a new year is insurance. Did your PTA review your insurance and bonding needs? Do you need to renew or start an insurance and/or bonding policy?

Thanks

Kay

Kay M. Stagrav

President

Palm Beach County Council of PTA/PTSA

"PTA...Empowering Families!"



Table of Contents

October 2009



Volume 17, Issue 2

2009-2010 Palm Beach County Council PTA/PTSA Board Members

OFFICERS

President—Kay Stagray
President Elect—Jen Martinez
1stVP Community Relations—Candace Rojas
2ndVP Communications—Jennifer Olson
3rd VP Leadership/Immediate Past President—Mindy Haas
Treasurer—Mary Beth St. George
Recording Secretary—Wendy Corso-Ruud
Parliamentarian—OPEN

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Awards Chair—Robin DeLisser
Cultural Council Representative—OPEN
Environmental Chair—Tom Knoll
Historian Chair—OPEN
Legislation Chair—Carolyn Ehrilch
Membership Appreciation—OPEN
Reflections Chair—Jennifer Mowell
Scholarship Chair—Mary Beth St. George

SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Calendar Representative—Carolyn Ehrilch
ESE Advisory Committee—Karen Holme
Art of a Complete Education—OPEN
Attendance Boundary Committee (ABC)—OPEN
Charter School District Advisory Committee—OPEN
Family Action Network—OPEN
School Board Meeting Representative—OPEN
School Health Advisory Council—OPEN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	Page 1
What is State Convention?	Page 3
Leadership Update	Page 4
Florida Kid Care / Fund Education Now	Page 5
PTA Member Benefits	Page 6
Reflections Reminders/Newsletter Updates	Page 7
Exceptional Student Education Information	Page 8
H1N1 Flu Information	Page 9
Children's Home Society	Page 10
Green Minute	Page 11
4Generations Institute	Page 12

WHAT IS STATE CONVENTION?



**These Questions and More
will be answered at our
State Convention
Platform Workshop**

Palm Beach County Council
PTA[®]
everychild.one voice.

on

October 27, 2009 @ 6:30 pm

Hosted by:

Hidden Oaks Elementary PTA

7685 S. Military Trail, Lake Worth, FL 33463

Learn all about convention...

What does it mean to your members?

Who should attend?

How does it effect PTA throughout Florida?

Where do Platform Items come from?

Discuss the proposed Platform Items.

Explore what it will mean if the items are passed.

Share your comments and concerns.

Tell us how you want us to vote.

Not only will this be a great workshop for anyone attending the convention...it will also provide an opportunity to have your voice heard if your unit is unable to send someone to convention!

RSVP/Questions: PalmBeachCountyPTA@yahoo.com

AND WHY SHOULD OUR PTA CARE?

PTA...EMPOWERING FAMILIES!

By Mindy Haas, Vice President of Leadership & Immediate Past President

The leadership training that was held last month was a huge success. Not only were our PTAs educated on the business of PTA, but also on being an effective leader at your local unit. The Palm Beach County Council of PTA/PTSA will continue throughout the year to bring you the most current and updated information to help continue the success of your local unit.

As the Leaders of the Palm Beach County PTA/PTSAs, the council has been asked to be a source of vital information from the school district. As a Council we are apt to assist and support the district and its efforts to maintain the quality and encourage the enhancement of our children's education. By hosting our school districts Chief Academic Officer, Jeffrey Hernandez, we as the leadership felt this would be the best way to bring information that is very much needed to you.

As PTA we do not hold a position on the curriculum framework, but we do continue to maintain a position on adequate recess time, class size, and many other positions that can be effected by the new framework. We ask of you to take a hard look at this issue. Look at all the facts, wait for results, and don't assume them before they are given.

As parents you should support our teachers. We should never directly involve the children. Our children should go to school with no concerns or worries. They should know that they are loved and that you are doing the best to help support their education.

We have had definite concerns for a long time that our school district was on critical alert and standards were not being met. The system was apparently breaking down and our children were being left behind, maybe not at your school, but at many schools throughout the county. Think about this, do you want your child to be the "best of the best" or the "best of the worse"? Keep an open mind.

One final note, if you choose to hold a meeting at your school regarding the curriculum framework and PTA is being represented, you must remain neutral, listen to the facts and assure there is proper decorum with the your guests and attendees. PTA has a responsibility to all children as well as the members of your local unit.

Now is the Time to Enroll in Florida KidCare

Uninsured families throughout the state are encouraged to apply for Florida KidCare in preparation for back-to-school. Florida KidCare, the state's low-cost health insurance program for children under age 19, is designed to provide low-cost healthcare benefits to families regardless of their income. Coverage includes doctor visits, check-ups and shots, prescriptions, vision and hearing screenings, dental care, emergency services, surgical care and more. Florida KidCare enrollment is open year-round and monthly premiums depend on household size and income. For more information or to apply for Florida KidCare, visit www.floridakidcare.org. Families can also call 1-888-540-5437 to receive an application by mail. *(this information was obtained from Core (a newsletter from the Florida Department of Education) [Vol 3, Issue 16].)*



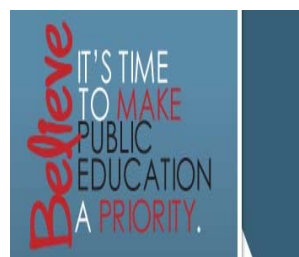
We have done research, including meetings with members of the Fund Education Now group. We also reviewed their website (www.fundeducationnow.org). After discussions with the group, we think their main goal is to keep the inadequate funding of education in the forefront, news, etc.

They did attend our Rally in Tally. The group has had meetings/discussions with Latha Krishnaiyer [Legislative Chair FPTA], Deb Booth and Dawn Steward [Federal Legislative Chair, Florida PTA]. They also have children who attend an elementary school in Orange County .

We asked about their "fundraising". We were told that they will not accept donations from corporations, etc. The "donate now" button on their website is for anyone who wants to help -- but they will only accept donations up to \$25.00. (Which will help cover costs of printing materials, the website, etc.) We also asked about signing up to receive information and if they would keep email info private. She replied "yes".

We encourage participation by our PTAs. The more we ALL work together, the better it is to get those who spend part of their time in Tallahassee to see that we are a **FORCE TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED**, and they should be listening to us.

Karin Brown	and	Jean Hovey
President		President-Elect
Florida PTA		Florida PTA



PTA Member Benefits

By Wendy Corso Ruud, Recording Secretary

Member Benefit Providers

2009-2010 Member Benefits Providers

Because of the size of our organization, PTA is able to partner with businesses and negotiate special discounts, fundraising opportunities, and other valuable benefits exclusively for PTA members. When you make purchases from these companies, not only will you receive a discount, but National PTA will also receive a percentage of royalties from the sale. PTA is working diligently to establish relationships with additional Member Benefit Providers to provide you with even more exclusive benefits in other categories. When you see a Proud Member Benefits logo, you'll know the company has established a relationship with National PTA to provide special services or discounts exclusively for PTA members. To ensure that benefits are provided only to PTA members, access to the list of providers and their offers is password protected. Please check the back of your PTA membership card for the username and password.



National PTA and Barnesandnoble.com have developed a discounted online bookstore for PTA members featuring over one million titles of books, textbooks, audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, and videos. Members will save 5% on all purchases ordered from this site in addition to any normal site discounts of up to 40%. New titles and special discounts will be featured periodically. Orders of \$25.00 or more qualify for Fast & Free delivery within 3 business days or less. (see site for details).



The HP Academy Store is the exclusive shopping destination for students and educators to receive discounts & savings on HP's consumer computing and printing products. The HP Academy Store offers customizable solutions to provide you with the tools you need, at exclusive education discounts. HP offers the HP Academy program to select education partners who are looking for an exclusive technology shopping portal site for their organizations. PTA plays a vital role in providing the best tools for parents to help their children be successful students. HP is proud to extend eligibility & access to PTA members to visit and join the HP Academy Store to gain exclusive access to HP's innovative education solutions at significant savings.

MetLife Auto & Home® has worked with PTA to bring PTA members a group insurance program that comes with special savings and benefits. This program includes competitive benefits and superior discounts for members.



Southwest Airlines Vacations has teamed up with National PTA to offer PTA members an exclusive discount on vacation packages. Members can save 5% on vacation packages to more than 40 exciting destinations, in addition to everyday low rates and ongoing special offers. Southwest Airlines Vacations offers convenient and affordable vacation packages, perfect for busy parents trying to plan their next getaway! Simply choose your destination, select your flights and hotel accommodations, then add theme park tickets, tours, rental cars, and more — all in one place, for one low price. Southwest Airlines Vacations Benefit Banners: Use these downloadable banners in your newsletters or on your PTA website to tell your members about this Exclusive Member Benefit.



T-Mobile and PTA have partnered together to bring PTA members exclusive discounts on wireless mobile service and equipment. All PTA members receive special discounts on selected promotional devices, exclusive discounts on monthly service charges and waived activation fees on T-Mobile products and services.

The Reflections Program

Jennifer Mowell

Reflections Chairperson

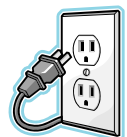
Each year, the PTA Reflections Program challenges students to create art inspired by a specific theme. Themes are selected from hundreds of ideas submitted by students to the PTA Reflections Program Theme Search. Past themes have included "Exploring New Beginnings," "If I Could Give the World a Gift...," "A Different Kind of Hero," and most recently, "I Can Make a Difference by..." and "Wow!" The 2009–2010 theme is "Beauty is..." Students participate in the Reflections Program by submitting entries to a local PTA or PTSA. Nationally, the program has six arts areas—dance choreography, film production, literature, musical composition, photography, and visual arts—and four grade divisions—primary, intermediate, middle/junior, and senior. The PTA Reflections Program is designed to enhance a quality arts education by providing an opportunity for students to explore their artistic talents and receive positive recognition for their efforts. The program begins on September 14 and ends on December 9 this year.

Simple ideas for teaching kids to care for the environment

Tom Knoll Environmental Chair

Here are some simple things you can do to teach your children to respect their environment and hopefully raise lifelong green stewards.

- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth. When you let the water run while brushing your teeth, gallons of water go down the drain
- Draw & color on both sides of the paper. Give the kids all the misprints from your computer, such as those extra pages you get when printing an e-mail
- Play outside. If you show enthusiasm for the great outdoors & all it has to offer, your kids will follow your lead. When a child learns to love the earth, he'll take care of it.
 - Turn off light & ceiling fans when you leave a room
- Unplug all unused electronics. That means video games, TVs, cell phones & i-Pod chargers. Anything plugged in still sucks energy.
- Plant a vegetable garden & shop at a Farmers Market. This will help your kids learn that food doesn't come from grocery stores.



A Message from Karen Holme, School District—ESE Representative

Florida Parents of Exceptional Students please review House Bill 81 [HB 81 - Use, Prevention, and Reduction of Seclusion and Restraint on Students with Disabilities in Public Schools](#)

This bill was created to provide regulation to the practices of physically restraining or secluding ("time out room") our students with disabilities. Presently Florida is one of about nineteen states that has no regulation for this. Because the Government Accountability Office has recently produced a report concerning injuries and even death caused by restraining or secluding children, it is imperative that Florida pass this regulation.

The misuse of physically restraining a child can cause physical injuries, and mental trauma, as well. This is a very serious issue that needs YOUR help. Florida PTA's position statements regarding child protection and safety support this bill.

Please, **support this bill by calling your senators and representatives NOW** while they are at their home offices. Please tell them we need these regulations to help keep our children SAFE at school! Find your senators/ reps here:

<http://flsenate.gov/Legislators/index.cfm?Mode=Find%20Your%20Legislator&Submenu=3>

You may find the Government Accountability Office report on Restraint and Seclusion here:

www.gao.gov/new.items/d09719t.pdf

Need more information regarding ESE students? Please call or email me.

Karen Holme mamaholme@aol.com or 561.718-1884

H1N1 (Swine) Flu: What You Should Know

Outbreaks of swine flu have been making headlines all over the world. What makes the swine flu more serious than other kinds of flu? What can you do to keep your family safe? Novel H1N1 is a new influenza virus that was first detected in the United States in April 2009. It was initially called swine flu because it was thought to be similar to an illness that normally occurs only in pigs. However, testing has since revealed that this is not entirely true, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The symptoms of swine flu include: Fever (greater than 100°F or 37.8°C), Sore throat, Cough, Stuffy nose, Chills, Headache and body aches, Fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with novel H1N1 flu virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

The World Health Organization is close to classifying the outbreak as a pandemic. This does not mean that the disease has become more deadly or that there is more cause for alarm, only that it has spread widely around the world.

Staying healthy

The CDC suggest that adults and children follow this advice:

- Avoid contact with those who are ill.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Follow the advice of local health and government authorities. You may be asked to restrict your movement and stay at home.
- Develop a family emergency plan as a precaution. This should include storing a supply of food, medicines, face masks, alcohol-based hand rubs, and other essential supplies.

If you think you have the flu

Avoid close contact with others.

Stay at home or in your hotel room.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Report your illness to your healthcare provider immediately.
- Do not go to work, school, or travel while ill.

Visit the CDC's website (www.cdc.gov) for more H1N1 flu information.

Introduction to John C. Sherman, Program Director Children's Home Society Safe Place/Street Outreach Program Director

My son was 17 years and 364 days old when he darted past his mother and me and jumped in to a waiting car. He disappeared without a trace. It was painful for me. It nearly killed my wife. We were totally unprepared for this. Our relationship with Ri was obviously a disaster but we had no idea that he would walk out of our lives without a word. We had nowhere to turn. Weeks turned to months with no word from Ri. Then we got our first break. While going through Ri's room looking for clues my wife found an old cell phone that still had a bunch of his friends names and numbers. She called them one by one. Finally a lead! One of his high school theater friends told us she heard Ri was in New York. Ri was an accomplished high school actor, singer and performer. We are one of the few couples in South Florida with no ties to New York so this came as a surprise to us. We begged his friend to please try and contact him in anyway she could. She promised us she would. We had hope at last.

After 6 agonizing months, we got the call every parent of a runaway prays for. Ri called and spoke with his mom letting her know he was OK and living in Covenant House. He found work and was moving into a small place in the Bronx. He told her he wanted to pursue his acting career. I do not remember any apologies. That would come years later. I cannot recall anything in my life as painful as those 6 months. It is truly amazing that I am now in a position to help other parents. I was so ignorant and missed most of the signs. It is my life's mission to make sure I get the word out to anyone who will listen.

Kids just don't bolt out the door without warning signs. The following is a list of signs that a youth may be on the verge of running. It is taken from National Safe Place's "TIPS To Help Adults Help Teens" and from my own experience working with hundreds of troubled youth and their families. Remember it is virtually impossible to perfectly predict the behavior of an adolescent. These signs can be symptoms of many different issues. One thing is critical. Never ignore them.

- **Sleep changes:** fatigue, insomnia, increased sleeping
 - **Personality changes:** abrupt mood swings, apathy, irritability, preoccupation with a single thought, withdrawal and growing isolation from the family.
 - **School problems:** failing grades, cutting classes, disciplinary problems.
 - **Withdrawal from friends:** fallouts and hostility towards former friends, making new, significantly older or atypical friends.
- Difficulty coping with family transitions:** death, divorce, illness, loss of job, a move to another city, etc.

I am often asked how can I prevent my child from running away? You guessed it. There is no easy answer. There is a story I will share with you that always stuck with me. I was new with the FL Dept. of Juvenile Justice and noticed that our Assistant Superintendent had an amazing ability to work with the youth and get them to open up and conform to program rules. I asked him what was the deal? He told me, John it is simple. Think of the conversations you have with your kids like a banking relationship. Every time you speak to them in an encouraging way you are making a deposit into the relationship bank. If you beat them down with sarcasm and act like a dictator you make a withdrawal from the relationship bank. He said, John I make plenty of deposits into that relationship bank. When things get rough that kid will listen to me because they allow me to draw down on the encouraging deposits I have made during the course of our relationship. The best preventive measure is to really listen to your teen and have a relationship bank that is overflowing with encouraging deposits. That child will trust you and be honest with you in difficult times. Pretty wise counsel.

Trust your gut. Do not use "normal adolescent behavior" as an excuse to pretend nothing is wrong. Lovingly confront your teen and ask them what is going on. Do not hesitate to ask for outside help. There are many wonderful counselors out there. We have a teen and family counseling program here at Children's Home Society, 561- 868-4470. Our counselors provide tremendous free resources for troubled youth and their families. The main thing is to recognize you do not have to go through this on your own. Next month we will discuss Project Safe Place and what to do if your teen runs away.

Eric Gehring, Education Director
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation

Bill to Open Oil Drilling off Florida Coast

From Grist: While Louisiana struggles to restore coastal wetlands ravaged in large part by decades of oil and gas drilling, its senior senator is leading the effort to lift the ban on drilling off Florida's Panhandle. U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.) is the lone co-sponsor of legislation sponsored by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) to open up new areas in the eastern Gulf of Mexico to oil and gas development. Introduced last month, Senate Bill 1517 would allow drilling in federal waters 45 miles off the Panhandle's coast. Current law bans drilling any closer than 125 miles off Panhandle beaches and 235 miles off Gulf Coast beaches from Tampa south. Opposing the Murkowski-Landrieu plan is U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), a longtime foe of offshore drilling. He joins other Florida leaders worried about drilling's impact on the state's lucrative tourism industry, which in 2008 alone generated more than \$65 billion for Florida's economy and \$3.9 billion for the state in tax revenue. Nelson has criticized the drilling bill as giveaway to the oil industry. "This isn't even thinly veiled," Nelson said. "It's an oil industry bailout plan. And it's Alaska and Louisiana's senators plan to boost their own revenues in tough economic times. But even in the toughest of times, there are some things states shouldn't sell out, like Florida's economy and environment."

<http://www.grist.org/article/2009-08-26-sen.-landrieus-plan-to-export-louisianas-coastal-destruction-to/>

Imperiled coral enjoys renaissance - but Palm Beach activists spar over protections

From Palm Beach Post: About a quarter-mile off the condo-lined beaches just north of Port Everglades, a rare and delicate species of coral thought to be nearing extinction just a few years ago now covers an area of ocean floor the size of a city block. In fact, against all odds, staghorn coral is thriving all along South Florida's coastline from Palm Beach to Miami-Dade counties. The thickets of studded, white-tipped bronze coral branches form nurseries for than 6,000 marine species, as well as the skeletal foundations of more elaborate reef formations.

Now the federal government has ordered protections for staghorn coral in a vast swath of ocean floor, bounded on the north by the Boynton Inlet. But efforts to extend that zone farther north to the Lake Worth Inlet are running into opposition from the Town of Palm Beach, which says the extended zone could interfere with plans to rebuild its eroded beaches

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/localnews/content/local_news/epaper/2009/08/30/0830coral_reef.html

September 19 was International Coastal Clean-Up Day

In partnership with organizations and individuals across the globe, Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup engages people to remove trash and debris from the world's beaches and waterways, identify the sources of debris, and change the behaviors that cause marine debris in the first place. Families and friends are invited to join in this world-wide volunteer event. Our local organizer is Keep Palm Beach Beautiful. Many locations available all over the county. Plenty of extra dates (into November) if you were unable to help on the 19th.

<http://www.keeppbbeautiful.org/fcc2009.htm>



4 generations INSTITUTE

THE WOODEN BOWL

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table, but the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Food fell off his spoon onto the table. When he grasped the glass, milk spilled.

The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the mess. "We must do something about Grandfather," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor." The husband and wife set a small table in the corner. There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner. Since grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes he had a tear in his eye as he sat alone. Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The four-year-old watched it all in silence. One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making?" Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up." The four-year-old smiled and went back to work.

The words so struck the parents that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks. Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table. For the remainder of his days, he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

Children are remarkably perceptive. Their eyes ever observe, their ears ever listen, and their minds ever process the messages they absorb. If they see us patiently, provide a happy home atmosphere for family members, they will imitate that attitude for the rest of their lives.

The wise parent realizes that every day the building blocks are being laid for the child's future. So let's be wise builders and role models to everyone we meet. Our children are watching.

As I build the 4Generations Institute to promote inter-generational public policy, communications and volunteer commitments, I am awed by the power of relationships. Just as in families, the health of a community is in the depth and breadth of relationships among those who share common interests.

I'm pleased to keep in touch with you. Your responses are always welcomed....

If you know others who might like to receive my messages, please forward this on and let them know about my offer....

As a gift for you, here's a link to a wonderful website of quotations.....Please enjoy and share

<http://www.allgreatquotes.com>

All the best to you and yours!

Jack



**Palm Beach County
Council PTA/PTSA**

P.O. Box 881157
Boca Raton, Florida 33488-
1157
palmbeachcountypa@yahoo.com
www.palmbeachcountypa.com

Empowering Families



TO: