



Timely Topics



NIAGARA REGION PTA

New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.
- Branch of the National -

Issue No. 1

Editor: Timothy Stoll

Winter 2009

From Our Region Director...

WE DON'T BAKE WE ADVOCATE

My note to all this month will be short but hopefully not without thought and meaning. After having attended Convention this past month I and the others that took part in this incredibly well run weekend walked away inspired to continue advocating for children. The speakers filled out minds with much to think about and the young children who entertained us left us weak in the knees as we listened in awe to their amazing voices. It reminds all of us of why we do what we do. I hope over the next two years when convention is in Buffalo that more of our units will attend and return to their schools equally energized.

So I leave you with a quote from a book that was written one of our speakers, Byron V. Garrett, National PTA CEO. The book is titled, "THE ABC's of LIFE.

(Here is part of the 'A' chapter) "A" ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

You must be willing to accept the challenge to be highly successful in life. People spend their entire life waiting for opportunity. They spend time waiting for great things to happen. Instead of waiting for opportunity, take hold of your future and face each day with a spirit of optimism and excitement.

Accepting the challenge requires that you take action. Whether it's a baby step, a hop, a jump or a significant leap, begin each new day with the desire to excel and a passion for greatness. Without question, "accept" is an action word. You must accept the challenge, adopting the thought process that it's a brand new day. This new day is filled with opportunity disguised as obstacles. Know you are going to make it happen. Begin today-accept the challenge.

This position we have accepted is a challenge but together we can succeed. Work together, respect each other and the ideas that each individual brings to the table. We all make a difference in the life of a child. No matter the size, it is a difference.



Diane Campbell
Niagara Region Director

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This Issue's Quotable Quote:

"Children are great imitators. So give them something great to imitate."
~Anonymous

Were You Just Exposed? By Amy Grout 2009

The above question was a catch phrase recently used by well known magazine Consumer Reports, a non profit organization that provides unbiased information aimed at keeping consumers safe and educated. Writers were referring to the unsettling results of a recent study that provides a snapshot of how Americans are being exposed to BPA in their canned foods. Bisphenol-A (BPA) is a building block of plastics and plastic additives that is used in many consumer products, including those that come into contact with our food. BPA has been in the news much recently, particularly in relation to the safety of plastic bottles, due to its link to health hazards to humans. This is a risk that is even greater for children. BPA is a known endocrine disruptor, which means that it mimics our body's own hormones, putting you at increased risk for adverse health effects (cancer, neurological symptoms, thyroid dysfunction, and more). As mentioned, BPA can be found in plastics (those labeled #3 or #7 may leach BPA into our food or drink). It can also be found in the lining of canned foods. Canned foods were the focus in a recent Consumer Reports investigation, and although results can draw no conclusions regarding any particular brand of food, they certainly

do indicate that exposure is *very likely* if you choose to ingest canned food or drink. In fact, not only is exposure likely, but exposure of consumers eating just one serving of certain foods tested could more than double what the FDA now considers typical dietary daily exposure.

So what are parents to do? For themselves? For the children? Be informed. Keep reading as the controversy over this chemical unfolds. There are many organizations lobbying to change government policies that relate to using BPA in products that come into contact with our food and drink. There are also big companies fighting back and saying that the risk is not substantial.

If you choose to take steps in the direction of limiting your own exposure and that of your family's, there are actions you can take. Do not use plastics labeled with the #3 or #7 designation for food or drink (water bottles, baby bottles, etc). Opt for fresh or frozen food instead of canned. Even some of the cans labeled 'organic' and, believe it or not, 'bpa free' have shown detectable levels of the chemical you may be trying to avoid.

How to Encourage a Love of Learning and Reading in Your Child

- The most important thing you can do for your child is to encourage a love of reading and learning. To begin, here are five ways:
- Every day, read to your infant or young child, or read with an older child.
- Show that you enjoy reading. Let your child see you reading books, magazines, newspapers, school notices and other written materials.
- Use your public library and discover its resources with your child. Talk about the kinds of books you want to check out. Make sure that everyone gets to check out a book!
- Use your television as a teaching tool. Watch it with your child and talk about what you are viewing.
- When you learn something new, share it with your child. Let your child see how learning continues throughout a lifetime.

10 Things Schools/Teachers Wish Parents Would Do

1. Establish a daily family routine, including healthy eating and sleeping habits.
2. Build their child's self-esteem by expressing interest in the child's schoolwork and affirming the child's worth through positive messages.
3. Communicate openly with the school and contact the school when they are aware of issues concerning their child's school success.
4. Set high and realistic standards for their child.
5. Check on homework regularly and ask questions about their child's work.
6. Read or talk with their child. Connect everyday experiences to what is being learned in school.
7. Express high but realistic expectations for their child.
8. Use community learning opportunities. Expose their child to the library, museums, the theater, concerts, etc. Encourage their child to join clubs, scouts, after-school sports or fine arts, and other community programs.
9. Monitor out-of-school activities and set expectations for appropriate behavior.
10. Model learning at home by playing games, reading newspapers or magazines, and discussing current events.

Legislation/Education Conference 2010

What: Legislation/Education Conference 2010

When: February 27-28, 2010

Where: Desmond Hotel, Albany, New York



March is PTA Advocacy Month and there are many ways PTA members can become involved in advocacy. Early in the month, NYS PTA offers its annual Legislation/Education Conference, providing current information on hot topics and long-standing issues. Presentations and panel discussions are given by New York State Department of Education officials as well as other education and health partners, and members of the NYS PTA Board of Managers. Open to all interested PTA members, this conference offers specific advocacy training as well as resources that can benefit the local PTA and school community.

Save the Date Flier and additional information can be found at the NYS PTA website: www.nyspta.org.

School Buses and Flashing Lights

Passing a stopped school bus with flashing red lights anywhere in New York is not only illegal, but dangerous. Flashing red lights mean the bus is picking up or dropping off students. Flashing yellow lights mean the bus is preparing to stop, and serve to warn motorists to slow down. Motorists must stop for buses **flashing their red lights, whether traveling on single, multilane roadways or school parking lots**, when approaching the bus from either the front or the rear.

The first time fine for illegally passing a school bus is a \$250 fine, 5 points on your license, and/ or a possible 30 days in jail. *Motorists passing school buses are the second leading cause of student transportation fatalities.* For more information to protect your children: www.saferoutesinfo.org/resources/



Rules for Safeguarding Your Child

Protect your child by selecting the safest route between home and school. Then, go over the directions with your child. Explain why you chose the route that you did and what your child can do to avoid danger. Take a few minutes to go over these rules below. Remember, the same rules apply no matter where your child goes: to school, a bus stop, playground and even a friend's house.

- 1. Walk On Sidewalk:** Watch out for cars pulling into, and backing out of, driveways.
- 2. Walking On The Left Facing Traffic If There Are Not Sidewalks:** Staying to the left allows you to watch oncoming traffic and to get out of the way if necessary.
- 3. Cross Only At Corners:** Avoid the dangerous practice of "jaywalking". Cross at an intersection controlled by a traffic light wherever possible.
- 4. Stop And Look All Ways Before Crossing:** If there's no traffic light, wait until oncoming cars are at least a block away before crossing. A car may still be able to stop if it's closer but children are often badly frightened by "near" accidents.

5. Watch For Turning Cars: Children sometimes forget to look and unintentionally walk into the side of a turning vehicle.

6. Continue To Look Left, Right, And Left Again As You Cross: It's easy to miss an oncoming car.

7. Avoid Crossing Between Parked Cars: It's almost impossible for drivers to see youngsters who enter the roadway from between parked cars.

8. Play Away From Traffic: Playgrounds, schoolyards and your own backyard are the safest place to play.

9. Be Especially Alert In Bad Weather: Rain, snow, fog, and even umbrellas can obstruct vision. Also, drivers may be unable to stop quickly. Children should wear brightly colored and retro-reflective clothing

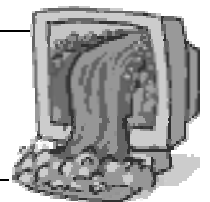
10. Obey Police Officers, Adult Crossing Guards, Safety Patrol Members And Traffic

Signals: These "safety guardians" can greatly enhance a child's safety when going to and from school.

AAA, "Best Route To School"

Niagara Region PTA Website

Our website has been updated! Be sure to check frequently for information on upcoming events, including details about Presidents/Principals dinner, Niagara Region Spelling Bee, and more... at our website: www.NiagaraRegionPTA.com.



AWARDS...

CONGRATULATIONS!

Jeri Bowden, past Region Director received the Mary Ruth Ulrich Outstanding Service Award at the Fall Conference. Niagara Region PTA presented this to her for her devotion to PTA on the Local, Region and State levels.

Inscribed on her award: "The Essence of Persistence – The power to shape the future is earned through persistence. No other quality is as essential to success. It is the sandpaper that breaks down all resistance and sweeps away all obstacles. It is the ability to move mountains one grain of sand at a time."



PTA's Family-School Partnership Awards

How family-friendly is your school? What is your PTA doing to increase family involvement? How effective is your PTA at connecting programs to student learning? The Phoebe Apperson Hearst Family-School Partnership Awards give PTAs an opportunity to answer these questions and receive national recognition for their success.

The online application will be available October 1st at www.pta.org/Hearst. Please encourage your unit to review the application questions now and consider applying after the New Year (applications are due March 1st). PTAs could receive \$500 or even \$2,000 for their success in achieving the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.

Learn more at www.pta.org/Hearst.

Jenkins Memorial Scholarship Applications

The 2009-2010 Jenkins Memorial Scholarship applications are now available.

Applications were mailed to the high school guidance offices. In addition, the application is available on the website at: <http://www.nyspta.org/awards/jenkins.cfm>. PTA presidents should check with their high school guidance counselors to remind them about making this scholarship application available to eligible seniors. Each high school may nominate up to TWO students for the scholarship. A student who applies for this scholarship must be attending a NYS public college/university or community college with the intent of majoring in education. If you have any questions or for further information please contact Jacqueline Wilson, NYS PTA Twin Projects Chair at twinprojects@nyspta.org.

Deadline: Completed applications with all supportive information must be sent to the NYS PTA Office and be **postmarked by January 15, 2010**.

Presidents: Please get the word out about this award. Make sure there are flyers posted in your

schools. Also make sure that your NYS PTA code number is written on the application.

PLEASE NOTE: Your unit must be in good standing in order to be eligible to submit names. A "unit in good standing" has membership and insurance paid to date and bylaws updated every three years.

DO YOU KNOW A HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR OR SENIOR WHO IS AN OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER?

If you know of a student that fits into this category, have them apply for the **NYS PTA Youth Humanitarian Award (In Memory of Stanley Marcus)**.

A humanitarian is defined as one who is devoted to the welfare of all human beings. The honoree is selected for the *quality* of humanitarian activities, rather than on the quantity of extra curricular activities. Academic achievement is not a factor.

This award is presented annually to an outstanding junior or senior who exemplifies the humanitarian principles through quality volunteer community service. The award was established in 1978 To honor the memory of Stanley Marcus, who died while serving as a vice president of NYS PTA. **Application forms are sent to all high school Principals and PTA/PTSA presidents by November 1st or can be found at www.nyspta.org.**

Deadline: Entries must be sent to the Region Director and postmarked by **January 31, 2010**.

Each school district may select one nominee.

A region winner will be chosen and then forwarded to the NYS PTA where a state winner is selected. The region winner is presented with a plaque and a monetary award. The state winner is awarded \$250 and an engraved pen and pencil set. Funds for this award are obtained through the sale of NYS PTA pins and from public contributions, which may be made at any time. Be a proactive advocate for your school and your students by spreading the news!!!

Honor an Advocate in Action

The NYS PTA has created a new award to honor your PTA volunteers. The Advocate in Action Award can be given to a PTA colleague, a student, a teacher or a board of education member and others. An Advocate in Action is someone who works for change, improvement and growth. The award information was included in the latest President mailing.

For more information,
Email: advocate.award@nyspta.org
Or contact **Terri Emmert 716-433-0319**

PLEASE REMEMBER TO GIVE AWARDS!!

Any Questions:



Terri Emmert
6388 Badger Drive
Lockport, NY 14094
716-433-0319



Niagara Region PTA Calendar 2009-2010

Niagara Region PTA Events

Reflections Reception February 2010

Presidents & Principals Dinner Wednesday March 3 2010

4th & 5th Grade Spelling Bee – Albion Elementary? Saturday April 10 2010?

Spring Conference - Thursday May 6 2010

NYS & National PTA Events

NYS PTA Legislation/Education Conference - Albany Saturday February 27 – Sunday February 28 2010

NYS PTA Jenkins Interviews - Buffalo Saturday March 13 2010

PTA Virtual Lobby Day Wednesday March 17 2010

NPTA Convention - Memphis Fri - Sun June 11 -13 2010

NYS PTA Summer Experience - Utica Friday July 30 – Sunday August 1 2010

Timely Topics Deadlines

Timely Topics articles due (info for Mar.-May) Feb. 1, 2010 arrives in home by Mar.1

Timely Topics articles due (info for Jun-Sept.) May 1, 2010 arrives in home by June1

Deadlines

NYS PTA Jenkins Teacher Education scholarship application January 15 2010

NYS PTA Youth Humanitarian application January 31 2010

Presidents & Principals Dinner February 25 2010

Return of membership cards & final dues payment March 31, 2010

Walter Potocki Service Award application April 15, 2010

Spring Conference April 30 2010

Insurance payment to NYS PTA June 1, 2010

Jane Skrzypek Volunteer application June 15, 2010

PARP Award application June 15, 2010

Form A with President information June 15, 2010

NYS PTA Teacher Fellowship application June 21, 2010

*Niagara Region PTA Executive Board & Committee Meetings:

Sept 10, Oct 8, Nov 5, Jan 7, Feb 11, March 11, May 6 (Spring Conf) and June 10 (Picnic).

REGION NEWSLETTER COMPETITION DEADLINE MARCH 30th

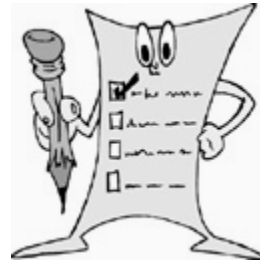
Units and councils are encouraged to submit their newsletters to the Region for judging. This Award is to recognize exemplary achievement in linking the home and the school. You must be a unit or council in "good standing". Here's what your newsletters will be judged on:

APPEARANCE

Neatness, Clarity of print, Layout and design, Use of graphics

CONTENT

National and State Materials
Items of local interest
News of/for students
Message from PTA President
Articles from chairmen
Articles from school personnel
Follow-up on past events
Informative and essential news items



MECHANICS

Masthead, Variety of materials and layout, Spelling and grammar, Accuracy, Originality

NOTES:

- Using periods between PTA (P.T.A.) is an automatic disqualification.
- Ads and/or graphics, etc. promoting businesses (Tops, Target, etc.) should not be included in newsletters.

The region winner will be submitted to the NYS PTA competition.

Make sure you submit **2 different issues** to Region Director Diane Campbell, **postmarked by March 30th**. Send to 108 William St., Tonawanda, NY 14150.

Any questions? Contact Terri Emmert at 433-0319

Unit _____ Unit code 11- _____

Name of Newsletter _____

Editor Name _____

Editor Phone _____ email _____

Method used to reproduce your newsletters _____

Is each copy in color? _____ yes _____ no

Do newsletters only go to PTA members? _____ yes _____ no

NIAGARA REGION PTA

SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD IN MEMORY OF WALTER POTOCKI

Niagara Region PTA established the Walter Potocki Special Service Award to honor the memory of a man who gave unselfishly and devotedly of his time and energy in support of PTA activities on behalf of children and youth.

Walter Potocki was always ready and willing to undertake whatever task needed to be done, with a smile and good cheer. In his own unassuming way, he lent support and assistance to PTA projects, whether on the unit, council or region level.

This award will be presented, not necessarily annually, but rather when the Niagara Region PTA awards committee feels that an individual has served with the same dedication and support that Walter Potocki gave. It is intended for a man who is a PTA member, but not necessarily an officer or a chairman. Rather, he would be someone who has enhanced the work of PTA by giving his time and talent, through his own special efforts, perhaps behind the scenes, in support of and on behalf of children and youth.

A nomination application for the award is included on the following page with an April 15 deadline for the receipt of nominations. The application asks submitters to describe why the applicant qualifies for the award and what his activities for PTA have been.

The award, consisting of a certificate and a memento with inscription, will be presented at Spring Conference. Only one award will be given at Spring Conference.

Criteria:

- ~Male (father, grandfather, teacher, administrator, foster parent, community member)
- ~Member of PTA unit in good standing in Niagara Region
- ~Has given service to children through PTA
- ~Has given unselfishly of his time and talent
- ~Has supported, enhanced and encouraged the efforts of PTA

**NIAGARA REGION PTA
SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD IN MEMORY OF WALTER POTOCKI**

Criteria:

Male member of PTA unit in good standing who has given unselfishly of his time and talent to support, enhance and encourage the efforts of PTA.

Name: _____ Phone: _(_____)_____

Address: _____

I NOMINATE THE ABOVE CANDIDATE BECAUSE: (Use additional page if necessary)

Contact person: _____

Address: _____

Phone: ___(_____)_____

Date: _____

PTA Unit & Code #: 11-_____

Deadline Submission: April 15, 2010

Submit the completed form to: Diane Campbell, Region Director
108 William Street
Tonawanda, NY 14150