



everychild.one voice.

ONE VOICE

Winter 2008

The PTA Difference

The term “PTA” is commonly used to describe any parent group, and many parents, teachers and administrators are unaware of the distinct differences between PTA and other parent organizations.

All parent groups are not the same!

- PTA is a not-for-profit organization and the nation’s original and premier parent involvement group in schools.
- PTA has more than 23,000 local units and nearly 6 million members. Iowa PTA has approximately 16,000 members.
- PTA units are supported by a national and state structure that provides valuable information, resources and training.
- PTA believes parents are *more* than fundraisers.
- PTA works with parents to advocate for proper funding, leadership, and instruction for all schools and school districts.
- Every chartered PTA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. (See article on tax exempt status in this issue!)
- Local PTAs are eligible for discounted insurance for board members and for events that are not covered by their schools.
- PTA membership is open to everyone.
- Local PTAs make their own decisions.
- PTA provides a united national voice for children.
- There is NO CHARGE to form a PTA in Iowa

For more information go to the following:

Defining the Difference

<http://www.pta.org/documents/Defining%20the%20Difference-english%202007.pdf>

Why PTA?

http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/board/documents/Why_PTA.pdf

What PTA Does

http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/board/documents/What_PTA_Does.pdf

History of Iowa PTA

<http://www.iowapta.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=iowaPTA.history>

PTA Mission

PTA is...

- ❖ A powerful voice for all children
- ❖ A relevant resource for families and communities
- ❖ A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child

Dues must be sent to the Iowa PTA office by the end of each month for any new memberships sold during that month. Include a Dues Remittal Form and Membership Roster along with payment. Membership forms may be found on the Iowa PTA website at <http://www.iowapta.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=membershi p.committee>

Get all your PTA instructions and forms at
www.iowapta.org

INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE

Calendar

Don't Throw Away Your Tax Exempt Status!

Theft Prevention Tips

Nominations, Please!

PTSA = Parent Teacher Student Association

News about Afterschool Programs

What You Need to Know about the Internet

Healthy Lifestyles

Our Busy Busy Lives

Save the Date!

108th Annual Iowa PTA Convention

April 25 & 26, 2008



Excellent Schools don't
just happen...
they're created.

Excellent schools are created through the dedication of superintendents, principals, teachers, parents and community members who are passionate about student success.

The **Parent/Family Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification** recognizes schools whose parent involvement programs are based on the *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs*.

To learn more about the certification process – or to begin your certification process – please go to:

<http://www.pta.org/picert>

Iowa PTA is proud to announce the Iowa schools that have received National PTA's *Schools of Excellence Certification* – the gold standard for parent involvement.

Greenwood Elementary, Des Moines (2007)

Eisenhower Elementary, Davenport (2006)

Hubbell Elementary, Des Moines (2005)

Clive Elementary, West Des Moines (2003)

Pierce Elementary, Cedar Rapids (2003)

Westridge Elementary, West Des Moines (2003)

REFLECTIONS

2007-2008 Reflections Theme: "I Can Make A Difference By..."

Theme submitted by Meghan Therese Blunt.

Meghan is a 4th grade student at Grace Sutherland Elementary School in Glendora, CA.

The PTA believes all children deserve a quality arts education and encourages students to pursue artistic expression through participation in its annual arts Reflections Program. When children express themselves through words, pictures, music, photography, film and choreography, they grow intellectually. They learn to analyze their thoughts, feelings and ideas. They learn to look at things, people and experiences in a fresh and exciting way and they become more interested in the ideas and works of others. The Reflections Program also helps parents encourage and recognize the continuous self-discovery process of their children.

**REFLECTIONS ENTRIES ARE DUE IN THE IOWA PTA
OFFICE JANUARY 31, 2008**

FOR INFORMATION GO TO:

[HTTP://WWW.IOWAPTA.ORG/INDEX.CFM?FUSEACTION=IOWAPTA.REFLECTIONS](http://www.iowapta.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=iowapta.reflections)

CALENDAR

2008

- Jan. 10 Iowa PTA Board meeting ia_office@pta.org
- Jan. 31 Deadline to submit Reflections Entries to Iowa PTA
<http://www.iowapta.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=iowaPTA.reflections>
- Jan. 31 Deadline for dues to the Iowa PTA office (for memberships sold in January)
http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/membership/Monthly_Dues_Remittal_Form.pdf
- Feb. 1 Scholarship Application deadline
<http://www.iowapta.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=iowaPTA.scholarships>
- Feb. 10-16 PTA Take Your Family to School Week
http://www.pta.org/familytoschool/familytoschool_landing.html
- Feb. 17 PTA Founders' Day
http://www.pta.org/ap_founders.html
- Feb. 18-22 PTA Advocacy Week http://www.pta.org/ne_press_release_detail_1171662932109.html
- Feb. 27-28 PTA Legislative Conference http://www.pta.org/ne_conference_details_1117134273468.html
- Feb. 29 Leap Day! Deadline for dues to the Iowa PTA office (for memberships sold in February)
http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/membership/Monthly_Dues_Remittal_Form.pdf
- Mar. 14 Deadline to apply for the PTA Unit Achievement Award for the 2007-2008 membership year
Go to www.pta.org/local_leadership_resources.html and look under Programs.
- Mar. 31 Deadline for dues to the Iowa PTA office (for memberships sold in March)
http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/membership/Monthly_Dues_Remittal_Form.pdf
- Apr. 1 Scholarship Winners notified by Iowa PTA
<http://www.iowapta.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=iowaPTA.scholarships>
- Apr. 2 Read Across America <http://www.nea.org/readacross/index.html>
- Apr. 12 Drop Everything and Read (D.E.A.R.) Day <http://www.dropeverythingandread.com/>
- Apr. 22 Earth Day <http://www.iowapta.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=iowaPTA.convention>
- Apr. 24 Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day www.daughtersandsonstowork.org
- Apr. 25 Iowa PTA Board meeting ia_office@pta.org
- Apr. 25-26 Iowa PTA State Convention**
<http://www.iowapta.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=iowaPTA.convention>
- Apr. 27-May 3 National Volunteer Week <http://www.pointsoflight.org/programs/seasons/nvw/>
- Apr. 30 Deadline for dues to the Iowa PTA office (for memberships sold in April)
http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/membership/Monthly_Dues_Remittal_Form.pdf
- May 4-10 PTA Teacher Appreciation Week
http://www.pta.org/archive_article_details_1143233402484.html
- May 11-17 School Board Recognition Week
<http://www.iasb.org/memberbenefits.aspx?id=2548&terms=school+board+recognition+week&rawsearchtype=1&fragment=false&SearchType=AndWords>
- May 25 National Missing Children's Day
http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PageServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PageId=1992
- May 31 Deadline for dues to the Iowa PTA office (for memberships sold in May)
http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/membership/Monthly_Dues_Remittal_Form.pdf

- Jun. 8 End of the Rescuing Recess Volunteer Challenge
http://www.cartoonrecessweek.com/win_prizes.html
- Jun. 21-23 National PTA Convention http://www.pta.org/ne_conference_details_1116942630843.html
- Jun. 30 Deadline for dues to the Iowa PTA office (for memberships sold in June)
http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/membership/Monthly_Dues_Remittal_Form.pdf
- ASAP **Send list of officers for next year to Iowa PTA as soon as you know who they will be! Resources and membership cards will not be sent until an Officer Form for 2008-2009 has been received by the Iowa PTA office**
http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/leadership/officer/New_Officer_Form.doc

Access National PTA's "PTA Parent's Calendar" to customize for your PTA at:
http://www.pta.org/local_leadership_subprogram_1182971433468.html

Adobe Reader will allow you to fill in and print the calendar. Adobe Acrobat is required to save your customized changes.

Take Pride in Your PTA – Celebrate Your Dedication and Achievement!

The *PTA Unit Achievement Award* recognizes and celebrates the great things PTAs are doing. There's no fee to participate, and the application process is easy!

To qualify, your PTA must meet all four of the following requirements:

- Obtained a 5% net increase in membership or a minimum of one member per student in your school.
- Conducted at least one program or project that provided an opportunity for parent to be involved in the school.
- Conducted at least one program or project that increased awareness among parents about issues that affect student achievement or school success.
- Participated in the state PTA's convention or another state-sponsored event.

For more information and an application form, go to www.pta.org/local_leadership_resources.html and look under **Programs**.

Don't Stop Now! New Opportunities for Membership!

The "New Year... New Opportunities" campaign features plenty of resources to help you and your membership committee build a stronger PTA—one that truly represents the school community and is a powerful voice for all children. There are stickers, handout cards, fliers, Yard signs, newsletter ads, Web banners, membership forms, and a campaign guide to help you put it all to use! For details, go to:

http://www.pta.org/local_leadership_subprogram_1195589079015.html

Healthy Lifestyles

Eat Local, Eat Healthier

*What is good for the Earth
is good for you, too!*

Eating more local foods can mean a healthier you and a healthier planet. Look for local farmers who use no synthetic pesticides and fertilizers (organic farming) or at least use less of them. Local food requires less fossil fuel to get the food to you. All of this means that the food is healthier, tastes better, is fresher, and is good for you and our planet. It is a lot easier to eat local than you might think. Listed below is some information for buying local:

To locate a farmers' market near you go to:

<http://www.agriculture.state.ia.us/farmermarket.asp>

Going to a farmers' market is not only a great way to get some grocery shopping done, but it is also a great family outing. It is like attending a mini festival, only it is held every weekend spring through fall!

To my surprise the food was only a little more expensive and in some cases not more expensive at all. You can find everything from fruits and veggies to honey products - from bread products to desserts - from meats to wines - and occasionally a chair massage!

Although farmers' markets are typically only available spring through fall, there are other ways for a person to eat local produce throughout the year. A great way to find markets that sell local produce or to find a restaurant that uses local produce, go to:

<http://www.edibleiowarivervalley.com>

- Tracey Adamowski

Teen Safety

Teens and pre-teens experience a lot of peer pressure to try drugs and/or alcohol. Parents can help by connecting with other parents to ensure all get-togethers have adult supervision. Tell the host you will stop by with some sort of refreshment so that you will have the chance to meet the parents and see if you are comfortable with the environment your teen will be in. Make sure to let your teens know they can always call if they become uncomfortable - *and be available should they call!*

Childhood Obesity

Today there is a serious epidemic sweeping through schools and taking our children down...obesity. Childhood obesity increased from 5 percent in 1964 to about 13 percent in 1994. Today, it is about 20 percent - and rising!!!

There are many physical health issues that come with childhood obesity such as diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart disease, as well as sluggish brain activity. There are also mental side effects like low self-esteem, and depression. These problems can have a serious effect on not only how well our children perform at school but how happy and successful they will be later in life.

There has been a lot of debate lately about why so many kids are overweight... Is it fruit juice and soda, fast food, or too much time in front of a Play Station playing video games? Most likely, it is a combination of things.

It *would* be nice to have just one thing to blame, because then it would be easy to fix or change. Actually, there is one thing that is the cause of most childhood obesity:

Too many calories in

Vs.

Too little calories burned

So what can parents do? We all know we need to watch the "empty calorie" snacks, but we also need to watch the calories of healthy snacks. An extra PB&J sandwich after school, a bowl of cereal for a bedtime snack and the typical 2-3 glasses of fruit juice can add as much as 600-700 calories a day...enough to pack on an extra 35 pounds a year for a seven year old!

The latest Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that children and adolescents engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Parents can help by getting their children involved in sports - team sports such as baseball or soccer - or individual sports like gymnastics or dance. But getting your child to become more active doesn't necessarily require putting them in sports or dance lessons. The biggest way for parents to help their children - and themselves - become more active is to **PLAY** with them. Get out and shoot some baskets with your kids - or take a hike around the neighborhood - try inline skating with them - throw around a Frisbee. You will all feel better!

Our Busy Busy Lives

It seems that whenever someone asks a friend or co-worker how they are, the standard answer these days is “busy!” There is no denying that we live in a fast-paced world. We want it all! And it seems that volunteers are among the busiest people – PTA volunteers included! Below are a few tips that may help free up some of your time – or at least help you keep your sanity!

What Hat Are You Wearing Now?

We are all faced with demands from family, friends, bosses, co-workers, etc. We put on a different hat for each task we undertake.

As a PTA volunteer, you probably have more hats in your closet than most people. You’re the person who is always asked to do “just one more thing,” because others know you won’t say “no” when it’s something for the children. And so you collect more and more hats.

Sometimes our necks get tired from trying to balance so many different hats.

Sometimes we are forced to wear more than one hat at a time – or switch hats so quickly that it makes our heads spin!

Sometimes we just want to get rid of some – if not all – of them.

Here are a few tips on how you can keep your extensive hat wardrobe without going completely “bonkers.”

- It’s O.K. to ask for help. Recruit friends, neighbors – even the kids.
- Accept the fact that no one is perfect. Learn to make compromises.
- Set priorities. Learn to delegate. Work smarter – not harder.
- If something doesn’t get done, the world won’t come to an end. Find an alternative and move on.

The volunteer work you do for PTA is very much appreciated! Just remember to wear your “fun” hat along with your other hats – after all – what can be more fun than doing something for our children!

Time Savers

* When you find a useful number in the phone book, highlight it so it’ll “pop” out the next time you need it.

* Skip the photo store and order prints from an online service.

* If you’re always searching for a pen, stash one in every purse and keep one in your checkbook.

* Keep a lint roller in lots of places (the laundry room, the glove compartment, the shelf of each closet, by the front door) so you’ll be able to zap fuzz and pet hair in seconds.

* Note cards, envelopes and stamps kept in a zip-top plastic bag in your purse will let you dash off a thank-you note or other short correspondence while you are sitting in a waiting room or in the school parking lot picking up your kids.

* Schedule your next haircut before you leave the salon – and remember to put it on your calendar!

* Reserve library books online instead of driving to the library to do it. Many libraries allow you to renew books online, too.

* Store your receipts in a designated pocket of your purse or wallet. This way, you’ll always have the one you need at your fingertips should you need to make a return.

* And my favorite – “*The commercial break*” While watching your favorite show, jump up during commercials. Most last about 3-5 minutes. In that little time, you can pay a couple of bills, load or unload the dishwasher, clean out your purse, do some intense exercises (anyone can last for a few minutes!) or ???

***** The BIGGEST time saver of all is to make sure you get enough rest. If you’re tired, you just don’t work as efficiently. So be sure to make time for yourself! *****

NOMINATIONS, PLEASE!

Most PTAs are kept very busy all year with membership campaigns, programs, fundraisers, and many other events. These activities are fun and highly useful, but they need strong leadership and direction to be successful. That's why the work of your PTA's nominating committee in proposing new leaders is one of the most important aspects of running your PTA.

The first step in the process is to consult your bylaws. Remember your bylaws provide the "roadmap" for the entire process. The number of people to be elected to the nominating committee should be stated in the bylaws, usually an uneven number. Members of the nominating committee must be members of your PTA. The current PTA President may NOT serve on the nominating committee.

The purpose of the nominating committee is to nominate one qualified candidate for each elected office. Nominees must be a member of your PTA and have given their consent to serve. A report is prepared for the PTA board listing nominees for each office. The committee's work is completed when the report has been presented to the membership.

The work of the nominating committee should include the following considerations:

- Identify the characteristics & skill sets of potential PTA leaders that are needed to meet the needs of the organization.
- Interact with the board to identify needs and potential leaders
- Perform an analysis of board needs (current vs. future.)
- Be sure to evaluate the level of diversity among the PTA leaders.
- Provide input into the development of job descriptions, qualifications and criteria
- Establish that applicants for elected positions have qualifications as outlined in the bylaws.
- Find the best, qualified people to lead your PTA.
- Develop a process to recommend nominees with the following qualities:
 - Vision & leadership:* The ability to see the big picture and the courage to set direction to achieve the PTA mission
 - Stewardship:* The integrity to serve the interests & pursue the goals of the organization.
 - Knowledge:* Knowledge of PTA, its operations and organization
 - Diligence:* Dedication and commitment to the PTA's goals.
 - Collegiality:* Possessing a sincere and respectful attitude toward fellow PTA members and their views.
- Communicate with all members within the PTA to identify a diverse but representative group of potential leaders.
- Continue to establish the pool of potential leaders from inside and outside the PTA.
- Create a pipeline for future leaders by being forward-thinking.
- Be well versed in the responsibilities and skill sets required for all positions.
- Screen and interview potential leaders prior to putting them on the slate.
- Determine the slate and seek the consent of each candidate.
- Announce the slate of candidates according to the procedures described in your bylaws.
- Recommend opportunities for training to enhance leadership development for the newly elected officers and board members.
- Advise the president on committee member selections and appointments.

PTA Take Your Family to School Week – February 10-16, 2008

Learn all about it at

http://www.pta.org/familytoschool/familytoschool_landing.html

Is your PTA ready for the “S”? Investigating the PTSA option (PTSA = Parent Teacher Student Association)

In today's world there is a need for young people and adults to understand and communicate with each other and to work together for a common cause. The PTSA provides an atmosphere in which issues and problems of mutual concern may be discussed and resolved.

- Iowa PTA Bulletin, 1974

Whether they are called a PTA or a PTSA, many high school, middle schools and junior highs continue to involve students and consider them full and equal members. Students wishing to belong to PTSA must pay membership dues and should have full voting rights. By joining PTSA, young people will not only have a voice in the decisions that may directly affect them, they will also have the opportunity to see how those decisions are made. They often bring a fresh new perspective to the conversation and learn about parliamentary procedure and the value of volunteerism.

The PTA should **not** automatically go to the student council leaders for student input. Clearly, the student leader is not always the individual who can afford another extra-curricular activity, nor is he/she necessarily the one who needs to work with the PTA. Treat students like any other members – no special committees just for students. If student members are treated differently, we are not working in a partnership, but instead are creating a fragmented or segregated organization. However, officers in nonprofit organizations are legally responsible for the organization, so consideration should be given to requiring officers to be of legal age. This stipulation would be made in the association's bylaws. **Colo-NESCO PTSA** offers students the opportunity to job shadow adults in officer positions to help students develop good leadership skills under supervision.

To formally involve students in your organization, begin with a discussion involving members, the principal and a cross section of students who are representative of the entire student body. After the vote by the association is taken, amend the bylaws and submit them to Iowa PTA for approval. Changing the name from PTA to PTSA is optional. Contact the Iowa PTA office for assistance.

There are five ingredients included in the recipe that will keep the PTSA healthy and growing. All are essential. All are of equal importance.

1. Everyone must have the attitude that the PTSA will succeed provided everyone works together.
2. Select meaningful and relevant projects that make the PTSA of value to students.
3. Develop understanding and sensitivity among your leadership and members.
4. Communicate with your members and the community regularly.
5. Take credit for what you are able to accomplish.

Congratulations to Colo-NESCO for being the most recent PTA to become a PTSA!

Watch for *PTA Fundraising Essentials* - Coming Soon to YOUR Mailbox!!

PTA Fundraising Essentials: Strategies for 2008

The 2008 edition of *PTA Fundraising Essentials* will be launched in January this year to provide more time for PTAs to employ the magazine's valuable fundraising advice. The issue will be filled with practical strategies to assist PTAs in raising money through both traditional and nontraditional fundraising events and donor solicitations. Special content will focus on "priming the pump" with matching and challenge grants.

"As a matter of public policy, we are building more prisons; we have more cells than we have schoolrooms. What are we telling our young generations to come? We can't give you an afterschool program, we can't give you this, we can't give you that, but we can give you 25 to life."

--Singer, actor Harry Belafonte, *Washington Post*, November 3, 2007

**Mark Your Calendars: Iowa Afterschool Alliance Legislative Breakfast
March 13, 2008, 7:30 to 9:00 a.m.
Legislative Dining Room at the Iowa State Capitol**

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance has reserved the morning of Thursday, March 13, 2008 to speak with Iowa legislators about afterschool policy in our state. The IAA welcomes all supporters to attend. Later in this issue you will find specific ways to communicate with legislators. The IAA Legislative Breakfast is the perfect opportunity to tell your legislator what's on your mind concerning afterschool and our youth!

Good News and Bad News from the U.S. Congress

Good News: On December 26, the President signed an omnibus spending bill that provides a \$100 million increase for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) for fiscal year 2008, putting the total funding at an all time high of \$1.1 billion. Funding for 21st CCLC provides the bulk of financing for most afterschool programs. Many thanks are due to advocates for the calls, emails and letters that made this badly needed and well deserved funding increase a reality. In Iowa, this results in an increase from \$4,969,860 to \$5,476,308. We will now be able to serve an additional 506 students for a total of 5,476. For information about what this increase means on a state-by-state basis, go to:

http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/Current_vs_Final_FY08.pdf

Bad News: While good news for afterschool programs, the omnibus provides less than inflation level increases for some programs, including the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The bill substantially cuts vital programs such as Even Start, Teacher Quality Enhancement, Comprehensive School Reform, and others.

Good News: Funding for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program to allow low-income elementary school children to receive a fresh fruit or vegetable snack every day at school will be increased. The House version authorized \$70 million annually while the Senate version authorizes \$225 million annually. Differences will now be reconciled by the House/Senate Conference Committee as early as next month.

Bad News: The Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act to update nutrition standards for school foods sold outside of meals was stripped from the Senate version of the Farm Bill. The legislation would ensure that all foods sold during school conform with current nutrition science and address pressing threats to child health and nutrition at school.

Calling All Dads and Other Important Guys!

February/March *Our Children* Focuses on Father Involvement

Look for the February/March issue of *Our Children* magazine, an established resource for PTAs and parents around the nation for more than 100 years. The focus of the next issue will be father involvement. Look for a feature on "Proud Dads," a successful and growing organization that helps create "magic moments" between children and their fathers, as well as advice on how to engage fathers in school activities.

DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR TAX-EXEMPT STATUS!

Beginning in 2008, small tax-exempt organizations will have a new filing requirement. It's short, easy and electronic – it's the new e-Postcard.

If your PTA normally has annual gross receipts of \$25,000 or less and does not have to file Form 990 or 990-EZ, you must file the e-Postcard. The e-Postcard is due by the 15th day of the fifth month after the close of your tax year. For example, if the end of your PTA's fiscal year is June 30, the e-Postcard is due by November 15.

What happens if you don't file? You risk losing your tax-exempt status!

Go to www.irs.gov/eo for complete details - and while you're there, sign up for Exempt Organization's free email newsletter, *EO Update*, to receive up-to-date information posted on the charity pages of irs.gov.

It Can Happen to You – Theft-Prevention Tips for PTAs

PTAs need to be diligent about their controls to detect, prevent, and deter theft and fraud. The following tips are suggestions to follow when dealing with monetary transactions. For more information, refer to PTA Money Matters Quick Reference Guide at http://www.pta.org/local_leader/MoneyMatters_QRG.pdf

- Tip #1** Have and follow internal controls.
Review the controls on a regular basis
- Tip #2** Have constant supervision of the PTA's assets and inventory.
Secure all check stock
Make timely deposits
Prepare timely bank reconciliations
Never sign blank checks
Require two signers on all checks
- Tip #3** Devise a plan to secure all monies during fundraising events.
Use pre-numbered tickets
Pre-sell or pre-register tickets for an event to reduce the amount of cash on hand at an event
- Tip #4** Follow-up with all fraud issues to get the "what happened" facts after a fraud loss.
Many times, the fraudster is someone who is known, liked, and trusted
- Tip #5** Ask questions to reduce the risk of fraud.
Are all our volunteers bonded? (Iowa PTA has low cost bonding insurance available to PTAs)
When was the last time we reviewed our internal controls?
- Tip #6** Steps to take if theft has taken place.
Gather the facts
Verify if insurance will cover the loss
Call appropriate authorities
Notify Iowa PTA immediately for assistance!

Do you know what your kids know about... THE INTERNET

Ninety-five percent of parents can't "identify common chat room lingo that teenagers use to warn people they're chatting with that their parents are watching."

--Ketchum Global Research Network, *Parents' Internet Monitoring Study*
(National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and Cox Communications, 2005),
As reported by NetSmartz Workshop, "Statistics," www.netsmartz.org/safety/statistics.htm

The internet has created countless new opportunities for learning. Families can use the Internet to learn more about community activities or to turn a rainy day into a virtual field trip. And it makes it easy to stay in touch with relatives and friends across the country.

But... **internet predators** seek out victims who are looking for acceptance and looking to be heard. Also, **cyberbullying** is a growing problem and is just as real and hurtful as traditional bullying. The Internet has the potential to create a cyberbully, too. When communicating online, it can be easy to forget that there is a real person on the other end, and children may say things they would never say in person.

What can you do?

Make sure your children feel comfortable talking to you about their online experiences, both good and bad. Never threaten to take away Internet access as a punishment for something that happens (intentionally or not) to your children while they are online. They will find another way and they will keep it secret.

Keep your family's computer in an open space in a common room. You want to be able to casually monitor what your child is doing.

Educate yourself about what your child is doing online, and make sure you are comfortable using the programs your child uses. If you don't understand something, ask your child – it's a great way to start a conversation.

Periodically review with your child his or her list of online contacts. If you don't know someone listed, ask your child about that person.

Search the Web for information about your family. Use a search engine and see what comes up. You want to stay a step ahead of potential predators, and this is one way to find out what type of information they are able to access about your family.

Install blocking or monitoring software on your family's computer. There are many tools available – make sure your children know that you have installed the software and why you have decided to do so. This may make them think twice before doing something online that they know is against your family's rules. However, don't forget that these are just tools; you should always supplement these tools with honest communication with your children.

Establish a Media Use Contract with each child in your family. It is important that you have a conversation with each child to set rules and limits that are appropriate for him or her. Be explicit about how you intend to monitor online activities and what the consequences will be if the contract is broken. Post the contracts next to the computer as a reminder.

Visit www.pta.org for more media and technology safety tips.

Resources

Common Sense Media, www.common sense media.org

Internet Keep Safe Coalition, www.iKeepSafe.org

NetSmartz Workshop, www.netsmartz.org

- from National PTA

PTA BANNER

A 2-1/2 foot by 4 foot, heavy-gauge vinyl banner with the "everychild.onevoice." logo is available from Iowa PTA. The banner has blue letters on a white background and can be customized to include the name of a local PTA unit or council. These banners are a great way to make the PTA's presence known at school and community events. Order at: http://www.iowapta.org/pdf/iowaPTA/programs/Banner_Order_Form.pdf.

Need an idea? - Got an idea?

Go to the NATIONAL PTA IDEA BANK

Find or share successful programs and projects at

www.pta.org/local_leader/idea

**WELCOME NEW IOWA PTA
BOARD MEMBERS**

Iowa PTA would like to introduce our newly elected/appointed board members.

Secretary/Treasurer

Liz Mink
Clinton, Iowa
Email: lizmink@hotmail.com

Reflections Coordinator

Kathy Roat
Des Moines, Iowa
Email: akkr@earthlink.net

Scholarship Coordinator

Tammy Koolbeck
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
TKoolbeck@compassgmt.com

**IOWA PTA TO CALL
LOCAL UNITS**

The Iowa PTA Membership Committee will be contacting all local units in the next couple of months. They would like you to share your membership campaign themes and hear your success stories.

The IPTA Membership Committee will also offer advice and ideas if you are experiencing membership problems.

Remember dues must be sent to the Iowa PTA office by the end of each month.

To contact the IPTA
Membership Committee
Email Claire Leonard at:
famleonard3@mcleodusa.net
Or the Iowa PTA office at:
ia_office@pta.org

Nominate a CHARACTER COUNTS! Coach of the Year

The Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union are now accepting nomination forms for the 2008 CC! Coach of the Year.

The CHARACTER COUNTS! Coach of the Year Award honors a worth recipient who embodies the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring & Citizenship. Rather than spotlight winning records and isolated acts of heroism or generosity, the Award was conceived to recognize individuals whose coaching lives and achievements demonstrate an enduring commitment to any or all of the following qualities associated with good character:

Uncompromising integrity and courage demonstrated by a willingness to do the right thing despite social pressures or personal risk;
Generosity of spirit and a willingness for self-sacrifice in devotion to helping others;
Community service for the common good;
Willingness to place the welfare of athletes ahead of personal desire to win;
Perseverance and inner strength enabling youth to overcome abilities
An enduring commitment to teach, encourage, advocate and model the Six Pillars of Character through their coaching career.

In recognition of this honor, a \$1,000 cash award will be made in the name of the recipient to their respective athletic department to further enhance character development initiatives. The winner will be recognized during the State Basketball Tournament. **Nominations are due FEBRUARY 15, 2008.** To download a form, go to:

<http://www.drake.edu/icd/ccii/ccii-in-sports/index.php>

IOWA PTA BOARD OF MANAGERS 2007 - 2009

President

Johanna Bobenhouse
Hanna195844@aol.com

First Vice President

Karen Rowan
amazonkaren@yahoo.com

VP Leadership

Open

VP Legislation

Stacy Bredbeck
sbredbeck@earthlink.net

VP Membership

Claire Leonard
Famleonard3@mcleodusa.net

Secretary/Treasurer

Liz Mink
lizmink@hotmail.com

Bylaws Chair

Heidie Bates
Donbates1@juno.com

Convention Chair

TBA

Immediate Past Pres.

Kim Winterhof
Gwinterhof@cfu.net

Executive Director

Alda Helvey
(515) 225-4197
(800) 475-4782
ia_office@pta.org

Cedar Rapids Council

Tammy Koolbeck
TKoolbeck@compassmgmt.com

Clinton Council

Maribeth Bousman
Mbousman1@mchsi.com

Davenport Council

Regina Clewell
Clewell3@mchsi.com

Des Moines Council

Sandhya Nath
sandhya@mchsi.com

Newton Council

Doug Wolf
drwolf@iowatelecom.net

FREE on-line training:

To reach as many members as possible, National PTA is proud to present e-learning, a computer-based training program. Each member's potential is just beginning to be tapped with e-learning. Check it out at:
www.pta.org/local_leader/elearning/

everychild.onevoice

Iowa PTA
8345 University Blvd.
Suite F-1
Des Moines IA 50325-1168
(800) 475-4782
(515) 225-4197
(515) 225-6363 Fax
ia_office@pta.org
www.iowapta.org

National PTA
541 N. Fairbanks Ct.
Suite 1300
Chicago IL 60611-3396
(800) 307-4782
(312) 670-6782
(312) 670-6783 Fax
info@pta.org
www.pta.org

Get the E-Connection!

Iowa PTA regularly sends news and updates via email to PTA units. If you are not receiving electronic communications, contact the PTA office with email addresses for you and your board.

Iowa PTA *One Voice* is published quarterly.

Past issues of *One Voice* can be found on the Iowa PTA website at www.iowapta.org Select Newsletter

Stay In Touch!

Let us know what your PTA is doing – send a copy of your newsletter or minutes to the Iowa PTA office at: ia_office@pta.org