

North Dakota PTA
Office
623 E. Main Ave. #106A
West Fargo, ND 58078
(701) 297-9168
ndptaoffice@702com.net

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“Presidents Message Feb. 2009”

We have certainly had enough snow this year and it may have you thinking about places with warmer temperatures. One warm place to think about is Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The reason you should be thinking about it is because it's the location for the National PTA Convention this summer. The dates for the event are June 26-29. I encourage each unit to consider sending someone to Convention this year. It is a wonderful investment to make in your incoming president or another PTA member. They will come back fired-up for the year with great ideas that they learned from workshops, featured speakers, and from networking with other PTA members from across the nation. There will be over 30 workshops, 200 exhibits and 100s of ideas, handouts and giveaways. Last year ND had 10 people attend Convention – including two student members! Let's see if we can break that record this year! Registration and hotel information will be available at www.pta.org in March.

I want to remind you of two wonderful resources that ND PTA has available to your units. Kathryn Gay (Fargo) and Mindy Axtman (Minot) have been certified as trainers by National PTA to make presentations at your units. Do you want to learn about increasing membership, or how to be financially viable, ways to boost your leadership, etc.? Then call the State Office and request a trainer to make a presentation at your PTA.

North Dakota's 2008 National Reflections winner, Harrison Astrup, has been invited to attend the Department of Education's unveiling of more than 55 pieces of nationally recognized artwork in Washington, D.C. on February 10th. Harrison's winning artwork is one of the featured pieces. His visual arts entry is entitled, "I Can Make a Difference By...Being an Inventor." You can view Harrison's work and all of the other National winners from last year's Reflections program at www.pta.org in the Reflections Gallery. Congratulations Harrison!

I am pleased to announce the new Office Director of ND PTA. Robyn Thorvilson from Fargo will be the voice you hear on the other end of the line when you call the office. New office hours will be 9:00am until 2:00pm Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and will coincide with the Fargo School schedule. Robyn will be checking emails and phone messages regularly when she is unable to be in the office at a given time.

I know all of you join me in wishing Carol Labernik a heartfelt THANK YOU as she has served as the PTA Office Director for almost 10 years! The words that come up most often when people talk about Carol is that she is a wonderful asset to ND PTA. Carol is an example to all of us when it comes to enthusiasm for PTA. She has shared her genuine care and extensive PTA knowledge with so many of us over the years. Carol, you will be missed and we wish you well!

Marcia Hellevang

Wow

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Reflection's program. The state office received many wonderful entries!

The national deadline is March 2nd.

Next years' theme is....

"Beauty Is"



The PTA Mission

- To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools and before governmental agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children; and
- To encourage parent and public involvement in the schools of this nation.

If you could live an eternity and not change a thing or exist for the blink of an eye and alter everything, what would you choose?"

Erin Gruwell

North Dakota's Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC) Check out the wonderful resources and workshops NDPASS has to offer individuals, schools and PTA's at <http://www.pathfinder.minot.com/index2.html>

ONE EASY RESOLUTION

Jan Harp Domene,
National PTA President

Many of us will (try to) keep resolutions for New Year’s. Some of these resolutions will be to do things we’re already doing, but perhaps better, or at least more often. Other resolutions will be to try something new, to explore the world beyond the borders we know. One resolution will help you do a little bit of both—and help boost involvement in our schools at the same time. All you need is access to the Internet, and a little bit of time, literally whenever it fits your schedule.

PTA has always been exceptionally good about connecting people who are passionate about helping children be successful and healthy—but now we have technology that allows us to connect those people in a whole new way. I want you to resolve with me to embrace the possibilities of online social networking, because it’s not just for our kids anymore.

If you haven’t visited the PTA pages on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Fotki, you haven’t seen the amazing online community that continues to grow there every single day. You’ll find postings and pictures and videos of people who are sharing ideas, inspiration, and lots and lots of information. You can even communicate with PTA’s leadership, including myself.

For anyone unfamiliar with the sites that millions of people (and most of our children) have been using, PTA is launching an entire series of introductory videos to help you get acquainted with social networking. Leaders can learn how to establish a Facebook presence for their local units, and how to reach out to their community and connect with the national office once they do. And absolutely anyone interested in supporting our nation’s children can learn why this new form of communication is so important, and just the few simple steps it takes to get involved.

So as you resolve to bring more people into your PTA this New Year, check out <http://pta-tv.org> (with the username “ptacommunity” and password “1pta1”—just click “enter” to watch each video) to see how easy it is to be part of our online community. And I’ll see you on Facebook!

PTA University Coming to ND in August

North Dakota PTA is excited to announce a new opportunity coming to you in August 2009. Due to the strong attendance at the Fall Training events that the Council PTAs provide, and due to a smaller attendance at the State PTA Convention/Annual Meeting the past few years, ND PTA board members have decided to combine the separate events into one - PTA University. PTA members will still have the opportunity to attend workshops geared to skills needed for specific positions in leadership that they have typically taken at the Fall Training events. There will also be workshops on general topics related to PTA and aiding children in their schools and communities that have been available at the State Convention. An evening meal with the membership awards ceremony, a keynote address by a National PTA representative and the presentation of the Friend of Children award will also be held, along with conducting the business needs that come before the PTA membership. PTA University is currently being planned for August 31st in Minot but please check the next issue of the *Update* for a finalized date and a complete schedule of events. Although everyone from across the state is encouraged to attend the first ever ND PTA University, the Council City that is not hosting the PTA University (which would be Fargo in 2009) will still conduct their own annual training event. We hope that many of you will take advantage of this expanded training opportunity. Don't forget to check for more details in future *Update* issues.

Submitted by, Marcia Hellevang

Educational *SENSATIONAL* **2009 PTA National Convention**

Friday, June 26- Monday, June 29

Greater Ft. Lauderdale Broward County Convention Center, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Connect for Success in Sunny Florida!

- ❖ **Collaborate with hundreds of PTA leaders from across the country.**
- ❖ **Discover ideas, programs, and resources for leading PTA into the future.**
- ❖ **Learn new ways to increase family involvement and promote student success.**

Congratulations to ND Teacher of the Year

North Dakota PTA extends their congratulations to the North Dakota teacher of the year, **Beth Ekre!** She is a sixth grade teacher at Carl Ben Eielson where she teaches language arts and social studies and is the track and field coach. Beth is a supervising teacher for practicum students from NDSU, MSUM and Concordia Colleges. She is the department chair for sixth grade language arts, a language arts representative on the District Curriculum Council Committee, and a sixth grade representative on the District Language Arts Study Committee. Beth and her husband are also both pursuing their master's degrees. Her family is the key to her life and success. She believes in teaching students to serve the needs of others and playing active roles in their community. Beth believes that active citizens give back to their communities. She believes that when we start to do community work as adults we consider it a sort of moral obligation, but when kids start young it becomes a part of who they are. Congratulations to Beth for her accomplishments in and out of the classroom as she makes a difference in the lives of children!

Dates to Remember...

March 1st	Music in Our Schools Month
March 2nd	NEA's <i>Read Across America</i>
April 1st	Keep America Beautiful Month
April 22nd	Earth Day
May 4- 8	Teacher Appreciation Week
June 26-29	National PTA Convention – Ft. Lauderdale

North Dakota PTA Office hours

**The Office Hours are
9:00 am to 2 pm Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, following
the Fargo Public schools schedule.**

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701-297-9168**

ndptaoffic@702com.net

Raising Good Citizens

What Can Parents Do?

Media and Technology

Safety Tipsheet

Category: Music



What You Need to Know

Benefits

- Music is a powerful communicator and an excellent channel of self-expression.
- Music concerts can be great family fun. From free summer concerts to treating your children to a performance from their favorite group for a special occasion, music concerts can bridge the generation gap, and expose everyone to something new and exciting.
- Learning how to play an instrument, even in early childhood, can strengthen student problem solving and critical thinking skills, teach discipline and problem solving, and provide another outlet for your child’s creativity.

Risks

- Music piracy is not just unethical; it’s illegal. The recording industry is becoming increasingly tough on enforcing copyright regulations and prosecuting by law those involved in sharing music, downloading songs for free or even purchasing an illegally copied CD.

Ratings

In 1985, National PTA worked with the Recording Industry Association of America created the Parental Advisory Label to warn of a CD’s explicit content. In most cases, artists offer edited/clean versions.

What You Can Do

- Share music with your child. Trade favorite CDs with your child, and be aware of what you are listening to. Try to figure out why your children enjoy the music they listen to; don’t be afraid to ask them if you simply don’t understand. Likewise, talk to your children about the music that you like and the songs that hold important memories for you.
- Buy music legally. Create a family account with an online music retailer and use songs to reward good behavior and grades. Avoid obtaining music from file sharing sites that make it easy to consume pirated music.
- 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. Once the contracts have been signed, post them in a prominent place in your home as a reminder.

Visit these online resources for in-depth information:

- Parent Teacher Association, www.pta.org
- Common Sense Media, www.commonsensemedia.org/music-reviews
- Recording Industry Association of America, www.riaa.org/toolsforparents.php (800) 307-4PTA (4782)
- www.pta.org

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Phoebe Apperson Hearst Family-School Partnership Awards

Does your PTA have a special way of making every family feel welcome at school? Perhaps you have an information folder that is delivered by a PTA member to each new family at the beginning of the year as well as throughout the year to new families that move to your school area. Or maybe your PTA coordinates a tutoring time or provides language classes to support student success. Does your PTA have a unique way to encourage two-way communication between school and home? If you said “yes” to any of these questions your school needs to consider applying for the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Award. There may be other areas that your school has been strong in implementing the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. Descriptions of the six standards are listed below. Check them out and see if your PTA doesn’t shine in one or more area and then apply for the award.

This award has three levels of recognition:



- The **Outstanding Family-School Partnership Award** will be given to one local PTA that has excelled in all six National Standards, and includes a monetary award of \$2,000.
- The **Family-School Partnership Award of Excellence** will be given to six local PTAs (representing the best of each of the National Standards), and includes a monetary award of \$500 for each PTA.
- The **Family-School Partnership Award of Merit** will be given to all PTAs that apply to the awards program, in recognition of their commitment to building partnerships.

All local PTAs in good standing are eligible to apply—and it’s free!

Look for the application at pta.org/hearst. The application deadline is March 1, 2009.

This new Hearst Awards program merges and replaces the Phoebe Apperson Hearst-National PTA Excellence in Education Partnership Award and Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification.

Six Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

Standard 2: Communicating effectively—Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

Standard 3: Supporting student success—Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Standard 4: Speaking up for every child—Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Standard 5: Sharing power—Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

Standard 6: Collaborating with community—Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

FOUNDERS' DAY BANQUET

The threat of rain, snow and icy conditions did not stop Minot's finest volunteers from attending the Founder's Day Banquet on February 9 at the Holiday Inn Riverside. Despite the weather conditions, over 150 people enjoyed the festivities designed to celebrate the establishment of PTA and honor volunteers for their service.

Certificates of Appreciation are awarded for outstanding dedication by volunteers and are nominated by the local PTA unit. Kudos to the following certificate recipients.

BEL AIR

Bonnie Allerdings
Mindy Axtman
Carol Bellew
Jennifer Doctor

DAKOTA

Jennifer Baker
Cindy Bauer
Loline Bishop
Christy Boteler
Liz Byers
Kate Cotter
Angie Formica
Joe Higginbottom
Janet Salyards
Courtney Seelhorst

PERKETT

Katie Heide
Rae Hoffer
Jim Paszek
Sheila Racine
Ed Sehn
Sarah Sem

LONGFELLOW

Lynae Holmen
Paula Johnson
Cindy Larcombe
Tracey Lawson
Kathi Tillema
Dawn Wunderlich

MCKINLEY

Lana Ferris
Rochelle Foltz
Andrea Hedberg
Mary Hove
LeAnn Westerang

NORTH PLAINS

Kori Clevenger
Ann Devisfruto
Dee Richards
Crystal Risner

WASHINGTON

Colleen Gregory
Lori Nord
Lori Olson
Kim Rosencrans

GOLDEN OAKS

Lando Vix

LINCOLN

Deb Monger
Randi Hall
Dianna Johnson

SUNNYSIDE

Jenn Arlien
Kendo Carlson
Myrna Gathman

LEWIS & CLARK

Shana Iverson-Fried
Paul Lepp
Renee Nordquist
Barbara Rosinski
Jennifer Slagstad

ROOSEVELT

Terri Ell
Jane Kelly
Tammy Ketterman
Calleen Larson

EDISON

Marlene Albrightson
Jennifer Bartsch
Nikki Bischof
Rhonda Delzer
Kim Hegre
Wendy Keller
Christel Laskowski
Judy Walter
Kara Ziegler

Also honored at the banquet were individuals who have shown distinguished service for the betterment of our schools, our children, our families and our community. Each recipient of the NDPTA Honorary Life Membership was chosen by their local PTA unit or the Minot City PTA and \$25 was given in their name to the NDPTA Education Scholarship Fund. Three cheers for our recipients:

- Minot PTA: Becky Dewitz, Carol Labernik, Jim Olson, Nancy Taylor & Dianne Van Berkom
- Dakota PTA: Julie Gallagher, Darlene Leatherbury & Patty Rasmuson
- Edison PTA: Joni Moen & Dawn Negron
- Lewis & Clark PTA: Cheryl Clementich
- Lincoln PTA: Theresa Bolinske
- Longfellow PTA: Julie Kudrna
- North Plains PTA: Shelly Jean-Pierre
- Perkett PTA: Dixie Bergrude
- Washington PTA: Tiffany Olson & Elizabeth Roberts
- MCC/CC PTA: Charlene Bangen

This year's banquet was also a time to honor a longtime mentor to our local PTA's. Dr. Lowell Latimer has been an educator, principal, administrator and member of PTA for 50+ years and has received numerous awards for his dedicated service to PTA, the Minot Public Schools and the community. As a special honor to Lowell, the Minot City PTA created an award called the Dr. Lowell Latimer Award and surprised him with it that night. It included an award created with his image with the help of All-American Trophy in Minot, a letter from Governor John Hoeven and a Proclamation by Mayor Curt Zimbleman, declaring February 9, 2009 as "Lowell Latimer Day" in Minot and a beautiful scrapbook filled with well wishes and stories about Lowell from his friends, family, co-workers and former students. The scrapbook was skillfully crafted by Minot City PTA's Co-VP, Nancy Taylor.

Despite the terrible weather, the evening was full of excitement and fun and proved the future of PTA in Minot is strong!

Susan Wagers, Minot City PTA, Co-Vice President



The nationwide reading celebration takes place each year on or near March 2, the birthday of children's author Dr. Seuss. Across the country, thousands of schools, libraries, community centers, and more participate by bringing together kids and books, and you can too!

Your reading event can be as simple or elaborate as time and inclination allow. Whether you choose to scale up or down, keep in mind the basic premise and it's almost sure to be a success:

On March 2, the National Education Association is calling for every child to be reading in the company of a caring adult.

Reader's Oath

I promise to read
Each day and each night.
I know it's the key
To growing up right.

I'll read to myself,
I'll read to a crowd.
It makes no difference
If silent or loud.

I'll read at my desk,
At home and at school,
On my bean bag or bed,
By the fire or pool.

Each book that I read
Puts smarts in my head,
'Cause brains grow more thoughts
The more they are fed.

So I take this oath
To make reading my way
Of feeding my brain
What it needs every day.

Interesting PTA Trivia

PTA first began as the National Congress of Mothers. At the first meeting of National Congress of Mothers February 17 - 19, 1897, there were 200 expected but 2,000 attended.

In 1898, they called for physical education in public schools.

In 1900, the Advisory Council was established with Theodore Roosevelt as chairman. Roosevelt served until 1919.

In 1911, the national PTA convention recommended kindergarten be made part of the public school system.

In 1912, PTAs sponsored hot lunch projects in many schools.

In 1922, the oak tree was chosen as the official emblem for the PTA.

In 1972, the US Post Office honored the PTA with an 8-cent commemorative postage stamp to celebrate 75 years of PTA.

Reading Help: Beyond “Sounding It Out”



by: Jenny Rich

Decoding words can be one of the biggest challenges a child faces when learning to read. Schools teach a wide range of ways to help children decode words, some of which you can use at home.

Take a picture walk. Before you and your child sit down with a new book, particularly one that you intend to read together, take a picture walk. Read the title and author to your child, and then go through the book page by page; decide what’s happening on each based on the pictures. This exercise will help orient your child to the story and give him or her some sense of what words to look for while reading.

Skip and return. Let’s say that your child is stuck on the word “brown” in the sentence “The brown dog is chasing after the bouncing ball.” Prompt him or her to skip the hard word, finish the sentence, and then take another shot at the unknown word. Because of the way the sentence is written, your child should know that the word missing is an adjective. A scan of the picture will provide your child with a clue as to what the word might be. Then your child can make a connection between the written word “brown” and the spoken word “brown.”

Use what you know. Let’s pretend that your child is having trouble with the word “chasing” in the sentence, “The brown dog is chasing after the bouncing ball.” He or she looks to the picture and reads “chasing” as “runs”—a perfectly logical guess. You can then say something like “I noticed you had some trouble with this word, and then you said ‘runs’. Let’s take a look at the word together and see if we can figure out what the author used there instead of ‘runs’?” Then help your child look at the first letter, the last letter, or any known combination of letters in the words to help him or her reach the right answer. This is a low pressure way to offer some help. If your child still struggles, say the word and move on.

Employing all or some combination of these strategies when you’re reading with your children may be the boost they need to go from frustrated readers to confident ones.

Jenny Rich is a licensed reading specialist who worked as a teacher in the New York City public schools. She is now a stay-at-home mom and the editor of the children’s literacy website www.ethansbookshelf.com.

Dr. Lowell Latimer Nominated by North Dakota PTA For Shirley Igo Advocate of the Year Award

2008 marked the passing of one of PTA’s greatest child advocate leaders, PTA national president Shirley Igo (2001-2003). Shirley was a model of public service and volunteerism throughout her life. She was an impassioned and compassionate leader, dedicated to moving PTA forward and committed to ensuring that other would follow.

To honor Shirley, PTA will present an annual award to one individual who most exemplifies the qualities that made Shirley a true advocate for all children. Some of these qualities are:

- Servant Leader
- Forthright leadership
- Passionate for children’s causes
- A good listener
- Respectful
- Mentor, counselor, advisor
- Effective child advocate
- Visionary
- A thinker/reflective
- Wise
- Caring

After the board members of ND PTA read the above qualities they unanimously chose to nominate Dr. Lowell Latimer of Minot, ND for the first ever Shirley Igo Advocate Award. Many of the board members have observed first hand or have been the beneficiary of these qualities as they have worked alongside Dr. Latimer. PTA boards at the local, Council, State and National level have benefited from his leadership. Dr. Latimer founded the unique Golden Oaks PTA in 1994, which consists mainly of retired persons that no longer have children in the school system. Each month they meet together at a school to hear a presentation about a specific program or area of study at that school building. They are a shining example of extending the care and concern for children and their education well beyond the time their own children are in school. They are investing their time and energy to ensure that the future generation of students will reach their full potential.

Dr. Latimer has used his leadership skills beyond PTA as well. He has lead the ND Retired Teachers Association, served on the Board of the ND School Study Council and the Teachers Fund for Retirement. He has served the students and teachers of Minot as teacher, administrator and assistant Superintendent. He still holds a part-time position with the Minot Public School Foundation where he advocates for inspirational and enriching activities. Dr. Latimer has been instrumental in instilling culture in the schools by starting Hostfest in the Schools which brings visiting artists from the annual Scandinavian Festival into school classrooms. His involvement in helping students to collect school supplies for children in Afghanistan helped the state earn the International Outreach Award in 2006. He also received the Character Builder Award in 2007 for his mentorship and advocacy in the character building of youth in the community, based on the 7 pillars of good character outlined in Character Counts. There is not enough room in this publication to list the many honors and awards that he has so deservedly received.

Though Kim Anderson of Dana Hills High School, CA was chosen as this year’s recipient of the Shirley Igo Advocate Award, anyone who has had the privilege of knowing and working with Lowell would agree that he is tops in our book! North Dakota children have been the true beneficiaries of Lowell’s 53 years of continual PTA membership! Thank you for years of tireless service and for the example that you are to others. We look forward to many more years of serving beside you.

Submitted by, Marcia Hellevang

Fargo First-Grader to go to Washington for Ceremony



As an aspiring future U.S. President, 7-year-old Harrison Astrup of Fargo is getting a chance to see the city of his dreams.

The Longfellow first-grader and his mom will make the trip to Washington, D.C., on Saturday to attend a ceremony that's, in part, in his honor.

Harrison is one of two national winners in the K-2 category of a national PTA contest. The "Reflections Program" judges K-12 students for visual arts, literature, dance choreography, musical composition, photography and film/video production.

"I don't think he gets it – how rare it kind of is," said his mom, Stephanie. "It was kind of shocking that he won nationally."

The budding artist beat out thousands of kids to win the themed contest, "I can make a difference." The then-kindergartner's watercolor and marker masterpiece showed his idea of making a difference: inventions.

"He comes home and draws every day," said his mom, also an artist.

Harrison's drawing, which features an inventor putting together robots, will be on display until March at the Department of Education in Washington.

For those who can't make the trip to the nation's capitol to see Harrison's drawing, go to <http://pta.browsermedia.com> to see it. (Click on "Program Gallery," "Visual Arts" and then "Primary Division" to see his artwork.)

This prospective president has more to offer the nation than just his artistic skills. The 7-year-old is studying up on presidents; specifically his idol, Abraham Lincoln.

"He's my little smarty pants," his mom said, adding with a laugh: "I'm learning from him."

By: Kelly Smith and Mila Koumpilova , INFORUM, Published February 06 2009