

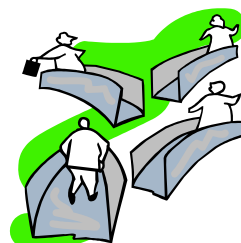
**“Presidents Message – Call To Convention 2008”**

*Marcia Hellevang, NDPTA President*

Welcome to the “Call-to-Convention” issue of the *Update*. Many of you have attended training events, held your back-to-school programs and are off to a great start! Keep the momentum going by attending the State PTA Convention in Fargo on October 18<sup>th</sup> with additional opportunities on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Check out the full range of events on the schedule/registration form found inside this issue.

The focus of convention this year is the PTA members. Studies continue to show that parental involvement is a key component of student success. Studies are also showing the importance of community involvement in the success of the education system. We will explore ways to not only increase our membership by looking outside the box for new members, but we will also spur our PTAs to involve, inform and activate their members.

With the help of the current National PTA Secretary/Treasurer, Betsy Landers, we will explore the fact that membership is everyone’s business. Another workshop will focus on using available programs to educate and inform PTA members. And a workshop entitled “PTA Votes” will help PTAs learn to involve and activate their members to influence a positive change in issues related to children. Membership accomplishments of PTA units will be acknowledged at the convention luncheon. The business meeting will include the election of new board members and voting on proposed bylaw changes. The nominees’ bios and proposed bylaw changes are included in this *Update*. The convention committee is excited to report that vendors have been invited to share their information at booths during convention. **Everyone will be inspired by the featured speaker, Carol Ritter, to parent their children in a way that will help them rebound from what life throws at them. The featured speaker’s presentation is free and open to the public.** And of course, convention gives members the opportunity to network with each other. Who is your unit sending to convention to gain valuable insight to bring back to your local school to keep the momentum going?



North Dakota PTA

Office

623 E. Main Ave. #106A

West Fargo, ND 58078

(701)297-9168

ndptaoffic@702com.net

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- +** **PLUS great pullouts...**  
Proposed State PTA Bylaws changes, NDPTA 08-09 Budget, NDPTA Officers list, Convention Registration and much more!

## 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.

# Reflections



Reflections areas of cultural arts are: literature, musical composition, photography, visual arts, dance choreography, and film/video production.

The upcoming year's theme is  
**“WOW!”**

The State Deadline will be **Feb. 9, 2009**. Please start advertising in your school right away this fall. It's going to be another great year for Reflections!!

Kristen Larson  
([KLarson@getyourgroceries.com](mailto:KLarson@getyourgroceries.com))

Nancy Sarafolean  
([Sarafolean@cableone.net](mailto:Sarafolean@cableone.net))

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

### Sharing Best Practices with each Other

There is a strong need/desire for PTAs to share programs and best practices with other PTAs. Please submit those ideas/practices to Carol at [ndptaoffic@702com.net](mailto:ndptaoffic@702com.net) We would love to include as many as possible in our upcoming issues and our website [www.ndpta.org](http://www.ndpta.org).

Possible topics include:

- Healthy fundraisers
- Ways to increase attendance at PTA meetings/Convention
- Ways that you have increased membership
- Successful programs involving healthy lifestyles, safety and/or parent involvement
- Ways that you have promoted (and grown) the Reflections Programs

# Who Ensures that Public Education is Good?

By Marcia Hellevang

*“Where do good public schools exist in America?  
Everywhere the public is involved in public education.”*

That is the opening statement on the Public Education Network’s “Take Action” brochure which I received at a workshop at the Parent Information Resource Center conference in Baltimore. State PTA presidents were invited to join with the State and National PIRC directors and staff for their annual conference. Because PTA and PIRC have similar goals in the area of parent involvement and student success the conference is an excellent opportunity to join together to reach common goals.

One of the workshops that I attended was lead by Arnold Fege, Director of Public Engagement and Advocacy at the Public Education Network (PEN). He informed us about the Civic Index, a newly released set of resources and tools for school communities to use to assess the conditions that support community engagement in fostering quality schools and strategies for increasing community engagement in this process.

Mr. Fege began by explaining that schools can’t do their job alone. They must have the support of the community. Standards based reform tells us what is needed within a school to be high performing; the Civic Index tells us what is needed outside the school. After conducting five national polls between 2001 and 2006 and working with 30 national experts from universities and national organizations PEN clarified 10 index categories. The ten Civic Index categories that have a strong correlation with public school success are:

- Education leadership of local elected officials
- Commitment to the values of tolerance and inclusiveness
- Active parents
- Strong civic organizations
- Utilization of school performance data to improve school quality
- Youth involvement
- Partnerships with higher education
- Knowledge of and voting for school board
- An active business community

These Civic Index categories can be used to define and measure a community’s support of their public schools as well as identify areas that are strong and areas that can be improved. For a substantial fee a community can carry out the survey to see how they compare and then set up an action plan. However even without completing the survey, but simply being aware of the categories we can be lead to see areas where we could initiate improvements. A natural category for PTA to be involved in is having active parents. Through PTA we can give parents varied opportunities to be involved in their children’s lives and for years studies have shown that parent involvement has a direct correlation to a student’s success. How is your PTA encouraging parents to participate? Do you have family nights at school or reading with the family events? Does your

PTA sponsor speakers or programs on parent involvement to encourage parents to become more involved in their children’s lives? **Have you encouraged your PTA members to hear national speaker, Carol Ritter, at the State Convention on October 18<sup>th</sup> as she educates parents on raising resilient children?** Is there two way communications between the school and families so that concerns and celebrations can be shared? Is your PTA planning a health fair or walk-to-school event for families in October which is Child Health Month? The possibilities are almost limitless and as Mahatma Gandhi said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” May your PTA take a lead role in advancing positive change in our public schools.

For more information on the Civic Index visit [www.publiceducation.org](http://www.publiceducation.org) or [www.civicindex4education.org](http://www.civicindex4education.org).

“ An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest “

Thank you to the following contributor for their support to the NDPTA and the children of North Dakota!  
**BCBS of North Dakota**

**North Dakota PTA  
Office hours**  
**The Office Hours are  
9:30 am to 1 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday,  
following the Fargo Public schools schedule.**  
**You can find us at...**  
**623 E. Main Ave. #106A  
West Fargo, ND 58078  
701-297-9168 [www.ndpta.org](http://www.ndpta.org)  
[ndptaoffic@702com.net](mailto:ndptaoffic@702com.net)**

# PTA Convention Workshop Descriptions

## **Making Membership Everyone’s Business!**

From the member who comes once a year, to your most active volunteer... from the school principal, to the school board... from the community center, to the center of your community... being a part of PTA is something that has relevance and can make a difference. No matter what your role or responsibilities might be, there is a membership link. Come learn what they are... and how to use them to build your PTA.

## **Resources to Inform and Involve Your Membership:**

Gather ideas on how to use existing resources (ex: Thinkfinity, educational programs by Liberty Mutual, Driver’s Forum, Three for Me, etc.) to provide education and information for your PTA members.

## **PTA Votes: Educate and Activate Your Membership**

In this election year learn what your PTA can and can not do politically. Find out how to get involved personally and as a school. Discover the keys to learning about the candidates and what questions to ask to determine if the candidates are real education supporters.

## **Membership Roundtable:**

Join with other PTA members to explore best practices for membership. Learn from each other ways that your PTA can grow its membership, get parents involved at school, programs that are used to educate parents and more.

### **2008 National PTA Quick Reference Guides – ONLINE!**

[www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org), under Local Leader Resources, you can view the guides and download them!

The North Dakota PTA Insurance provider is AIM- Association Insurance Management  
[www.aim-companies.com](http://www.aim-companies.com) 1-800-876-4044

**Watch for renewals from the NDPTA State Office soon!**

**Put PTA Three for Me to Work for You**



Help make the new school year a great success. Increase family involvement with PTA Three for Me.

PTA Three for Me:

- Asks parents to dedicate three hours to their children’s schools, in any way they can—from home, at the school, or in the community. Once they see how easy involvement can be, parents tend to volunteer even more time!
- Makes all parents feel welcome in the school, and valued for their time and talents.
- Organizes and shares school and teacher needs with parents, helping everyone work together to support student learning.

It’s as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1. Invite parents to sign a promise card and dedicate three hours of their time to meeting the needs of the school. Provide a list of involvement opportunities, and collect information on parents’ skills and interests to match parents to the best opportunities.

2. Keep track of volunteer hours, and continually provide updated involvement opportunities.
3. Recognize parents for completing their three hours of involvement.

For more information, and materials to start Three for Me at your school, go to [www.three4me.com](http://www.three4me.com).

**Dates to Remember ...**

**September 2008**  
PTA Membership Drive

**October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008**  
Deadline for “Early Bird Membership” Award!

**October 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
NDPTA Convention  
Radisson –Downtown Fargo

**October 16<sup>th</sup> 2008**  
“Lights On Afterschool”

**October 27-31, 2008**  
Red Ribbon Week

**North  
Dakota  
PIRC!**

North Dakota’s Parent Information Resource Center (PIRC)  
Check out the wonderful resources and workshops NDPASS has to offer

individuals, schools & PTA's at  
<http://www.pathfinder.minot.com/index2.html>.

\*\*\*CONVENTION ALERT\*\*\*

*“MAKE MEMBERSHIP MATTER”*

The North Dakota PTA Annual Meeting/Convention and Membership Awards Luncheon will be held at Radisson in Downtown Fargo, Saturday October 18<sup>th</sup>,

2008. (We will be offering some Rep. **Besty Landers** on Friday

So mark your calendars! new friends and help us Training on Friday speaker, **Carol Ritter** on time, so make plans NOW



extra training with our National PTA afternoon, the 17<sup>th</sup>, with lunch.)

Come learn, share, make spread the PTA word. afternoon, workshops & Saturday. It will be a great to bring delegates from

your Unit!

[www.ndpta.org](http://www.ndpta.org)

**Everyone wins with PTA!**

**Fargo Public Schools**

North Dakota PTA

Office  
623 E. Main Ave. #106A  
West Fargo, ND 58078

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# National Student/Parent Mock Elections

PTA will work alongside the National Student/Parent Mock Election (NSPME) for the 2008 Mock Election, taking place on October 30<sup>th</sup> of this year. Excerpts of a letter from National PTA President, Jan Harp Domene states:

*“Through the Mock Election, NSPME engages young people and their parents, facilitating a dialogue between them that is truly invaluable; by voting on both candidates and contemporary issues, this project initiates an important discussion on the responsibility and power we all have as citizens.*

*As members of PTA, parents and community leaders are called upon to be strong advocates for all children. The 2008 Mock Election, however, will provide students from elementary school through high school with an opportunity to speak up for themselves. Not only will children discover that their voice and their priorities are valued, but families and schools will learn about what matters to youth—in their own communities and across the country.*

*Coordinators are needed at the state and local level. Volunteers are also needed to assist coordinators with a myriad of responsibilities, including:*

- Gaining approval and support from school and district administrators;***
- Building community support and involvement;***
- Dissemination of information to parents, teachers, principals, and school boards;***
- Assisting teachers in planning education activities; and***
- Election day on-site voter assistance and ballot tallying.”***

To learn more about the National Student/Parent Mock Election visit [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) and enter “mock election” into the search box. You will find a fact sheet about the Mock Election and the complete letter of PTA President Jan Harp Domene. You will also find the “Planning Election Activities Checklist”. The checklist encourages PTAs to:

- \* Know dates and deadline for their state and county.**
- \* Let candidates and voters know the PTA positions on important issues impacting the lives of children by possibly hosting a candidate forum, sending out a PTA candidate**

**questionnaire and publishing the responses, running a mock election at your school for students, etc.**

**\* Partner with other organizations that are listed on the site.**

If you have any additional questions about the Mock Election or how your PTA can be involved, please contact Jim Vanderhook, Public Policy Specialist in PTA's National Office of Programs and Public Policy, at (202) 289-6790 Ext. 211 or [jvanderhook@pta.org](mailto:jvanderhook@pta.org).

## **State PTA Convention Bios 2008-09**

### **Bylaws/Resolutions Chair: Susan Wagers (Re-election)**

My name is Susan Wagers and I came to North Dakota as a result of my husband Charlie being stationed here with the Air Force. We have lived here for the last 12 ½ years and will make Minot our home upon Charlie's retirement. We have been married for 22 1/2 years and have 2 sons, Justin, 21 and Zach, 15 and a sophomore at Minot HS. I have served Minot PTA's at Dakota Elementary, Memorial Middle School and Minot High School in various positions to include President, VP, Volunteer Coordinator and was the committee chair for a number of fundraising activities and programs. I am currently the President at Minot High School, Co-VP for the Minot City PTA and serve as the current Bylaws/Resolutions Chair for NDPTA. I am employed at the Souris Valley Humane Society as a development director of sorts in that I handle all of our fundraising, membership and volunteering activities as well as administrative assistant duties and am our website administrator.

### **VP Membership: Mary Gangl**

My name is Mary Gangl. I grew up in Pennsylvania, moved here in 1982. I graduated from business college, attended 2 years at MSU and have worked full-time ever since. I was elected in July as VP of Membership on NDPTA. This year I will serve as Treasurer on McKinley Elem. PTA board, where for the past 2 years I served as Co-President. I volunteer at Holy Spirit Church as a Kindergarten Sunday School teacher and Wednesday night catechesis. I have worked at Mhd Hornbachers since 1991, except for 1 ½ years after Matt was born, when I worked for Upstream customer service. I am currently being promoted to customer service supervisor at Hornbachers and look forward to my new roles there. My work, volunteer and life experience gives me a variety of experience that I hope will allow me to encourage parents, grandparents, businesses, and the whole community to be a positive influence in our children's lives. I believe it takes a village to raise a child, and PTA can help equip our "village" members with the tools they need to make every child's potential a reality. Thank you for the opportunity and responsibility I hope to be given.

### **Treasurer: Terry Titus**

Hi, my name is Terry Titus. My husband, Jay, and I live in Fargo. We have two children, a son in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and a daughter in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. As with many of you, my involvement with PTA began when my son started kindergarten. I have found that PTA provides a great way to be involved in my children's schools and to stay informed. Being active in PTA has provided many enjoyable opportunities. I've served in several different capacities. The first was as a processor of General Mills Box Tops for Education and Campbell's Soup labels. Others are Staff Appreciation Chair,

School Pictures Chair, and treasurer for PTAs at the kindergarten, elementary, middle school, and Fargo City Council PTA levels. This year I'll be trying something new-Membership Chair for the Fargo City Council PTA. I'm looking forward to learning more about the many ways the NDPTA is, and can be, of service to youth and families.

**Parent Involvement: Shelane Hoverson (Re-election)**

My name is Shelane Hoverson and I am honored to be nominated for a second term as Parent Involvement Chair. I was born and raised in small town ND, and currently live in south Fargo with my husband Jon and three girls -Kellie (sophomore at South), Cassidy (7th grader at Discovery) and Jamie (6th grader at Carl Ben Eielson). We have also been blessed this year with a foreign exchange student named Julia, a 16 year old from Sao Paulo, Brazil, who is attending 11th grade at South. I have been a PTA member since 1998, and have had the pleasure of serving in several capacities; currently I am Parent Involvement Chair for ND PTA, Nominating Chair for Fargo Council PTA, and secretary for CBE PTA. I am the full-time CEO of our home, and my other volunteering passion is working with Hospice of the Red River Valley.

**Public Relations: Mindy Axtman**

Hi! My name is Mindy Axtman. I have been married for 15 years to my husband, Tim. We have 2 boys; Alex is in the 4th grade, and Brady started Kindergarten this fall. I am currently working in the lunch room at Central Campus High School in Minot, which gives me plenty of time to fulfill my many volunteer obligations! I am the President of the Bel Air PTA and also the Secretary for the Minot City PTA. I look forward to the privilege of serving with the great people on the state PTA board.

**VP Leadership: Carla Solem (Re-election)**

Hello, my name is Carla Solem. I work as an independent consultant in grant writing and fundraising. I have been active in various volunteer opportunities through church, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, School, and work. My husband Mark and I have lived in Fargo. We have three awesome boys and one new daughter-in-law. Mike, 26, and his new bride Aleisha live in Lafayette, Indiana. Matt, 11, is excited to move to 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Discovery this year. Nick, 8, will be in 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Centennial this year. Although I was a paid member of PTA when Mike was in school, I did not become involved in PTA until Matt was in Kindergarten. Since then, I have enjoyed the numerous leadership, social, and volunteer opportunities that PTA has provided me and my family. Thanks for the opportunity to run for my second term as VP of Leadership.

\* The North Dakota State Convention/Meeting is just around the corner and the NDPTA Nominating Committee has been busy at work recruiting for PTA leaders interested in serving on the State Board. There is a great slate of nominees so far and they look forward to Convention when nominations will be taken from the floor along with the above nominees and then elections will be held during the Annual Meeting/Convention on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Please take time to vote! Have a voice in the leadership from the North Dakota PTA.

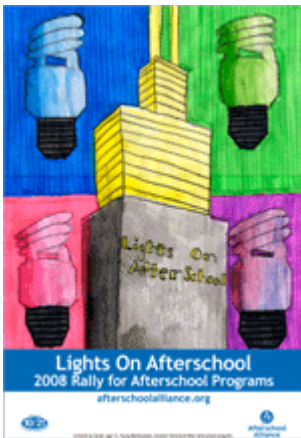
The Nominating Committee is seeking nominees for the following position:

..... North Dakota PTA

➤ **Health & Welfare Chair ( 2 year term)**

If you are interested in serving on the State PTA Board or you know of a person who is, please contact our state office at [ndptaoffice@702com.net](mailto:ndptaoffice@702com.net) or 701-297-9168.

# Lights On Afterschool



The Empire State Building will be lit up in yellow again this year for the **9th annual *Lights On Afterschool* -- October 16, 2008**. 1 million Americans will participate in 7,500+ *Lights On Afterschool* celebrations across the nation. Don't be left out -[host an event](#) in your community, [find an event](#) to attend or help [get the word out](#) about *Lights On Afterschool*!

[Register today](#) to make sure you get your free *Lights On Afterschool* promotional posters, event planning emails and updates and to be included on our online list of events and raffle drawings.

This year are proud to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers! We encourage you to celebrate this 10th birthday in your plans.

New [Lights On items](#) are now available to order for your events - get a jump on the shipping rush and order today.

*Special thanks to all of the afterschool programs who submitted artwork for our Lights On Afterschool poster contest. This year's winning submission, featured above, was created by Sarah, age 13, Young Rembrandts, Greater Cleveland-West afterschool program. Look out for announcements for the 2009 poster art contest.*

# North Dakota PTA WEBSITE NOW MORE USER FRIENDLY

[www.ndpta.org](http://www.ndpta.org)

When was the last time you went to the North Dakota PTA website? If you haven't visited in a while, we invite you to now! It has a new look. We've made it easier for you to find information!

While you will see many new items on the site, it is a "work in progress". If you don't find what you are looking for, please contact the North Dakota PTA at [ndptaoffic@702com.net](mailto:ndptaoffic@702com.net) with your ideas.

We hope you will find the new format helpful and encourage you to pass on the information to your local unit members!



## Redesigned National PTA Website

Check out the improved site structure, navigation and layout of [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org). The changes to the site were developed with the input from thousand of local leader's surveys, focus groups and interviews.

An example of the new website is that if you are looking for ideas to smoothly run your PTA, simply open the "Running a PTA" tab and some of the helps you will find are:

- The four quick reference guides that were included in the back-to-school kits from National PTA for the president, membership chair, treasurer (Money Matters) and program planning.
- PTA membership marketing tools for year round membership recruitment.
- Highlights of programs such as
  - Three for Me* in which parents pledge to provide three volunteer hours during the school year.
  - PTA Goes to Work* - your gateway to navigating the ever-expanding world of information for your child's career planning.
  - Healthy Lifestyles* where parents will find resources to help ensure their child arrives at school each day physically healthy which has a significant effect on learning.
- Leadership Training which includes nine different e-learning courses. A sample of the free courses you can take at your leisure are PTA basics, planning and goal setting for your PTA year, and conflict management.
- The Online Membership Data Reporting (OMDR) system used to record your unit PTA members. Coming soon is the OMDR *Plus* that will be powered by JustBetweenFriends and have expanded capabilities for units and extra perks

for individual PTA members.

You can also search the site by topic. For example the “Student Success” topic includes health and wellness information. Under that subtopic there is information on common illnesses, 15 ideas for family fitness, and benchmarks for effective physical education programs.

These are only a few highlights of the new website. Please visit the site and provide feedback because National PTA’s goal is to make the site a living document that will continually evolve as users’ needs change.

Another change for PTA is their introduction of new social networking channels:

Facebook – Stay connected through PTA’s Facebook Fan Page.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Parent-Teacher-Association/16682202028>

YouTube – Watch PTA videos and media moments.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/nationalpta>

Fotki – Photo galleries of PTA events and programs.

<http://public.fotki.com/pta/>

Twitter- Quick updates, perfect for mobile devices.

<http://twitter.com/ptaeditor>