From the Region Director

Susan Brown, GVPTA Region Director, director@gvpta.org, ptasusanb@gmail.com 315-524-4152 (home, not a cell)

Hello. Another cold winter signals that we are halfway through the school year. The fall has certainly flown by for me. Even though we are only halfway through the year, it is time to think about nominating committees. Who will be your unit’s leaders next year? Many units struggle with finding new leaders. A nominating committee can help search out those potential leaders. Some guidelines on the committee:

- This committee should be elected by the membership - not appointed by the board. This is the one committee the President or co-presidents should not be a part of.
- The nominating committee should have representation from different groups within the school. The faces of the committee should be similar to the composition of the school, both culturally and in the neighborhoods they come from.
- Check your bylaws. They specify who should or should not be on the nominating committee, what positions need to be filled, and when elections are to be held.
- Nomination reports should be made public 30 days before elections. Count backwards to determine your calendar.
- A vibrant PTA does not continually recycle the same officers. New people reinvigorate the PTA.

- Make a specific ask of people. People will be more likely to step up if you ask and tell them specifically what the role involves. General job descriptions are in the bylaws. Specific unit ideas should be in procedures.
- There are many opportunities for training of new (and experienced) PTA leaders: NYS PTA Summer Leadership Conference (July 19-21), virtual trainings from national (https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/elearning), regional summer leadership academy (August) and on the spot per request regional trainings. No one needs to feel they do not know enough to do the job.
- Maryland’s PTA put together a great tip sheet to be found at http://www.mdpta.org/documents/QuickTipsaboutPTANominatingCommittees-doc.pdf

If you need help establishing a nominating committee or running elections, please get in touch with us. We are more than willing to help.

I hope that you have a great second half of the year. ■
Looking for a few good men and women

Every year our region board works with units to help them be successful. We cannot do that without new volunteers stepping up and joining our board. If you are interested in helping others within PTA, let me know. In order to do the things we do—trainings, awards, celebrations, and support—we need you to step up and help out.

Please contact Susan at ptasusanb@gmail.com to learn how you can help out. ■

ADVOCATE

Not everyone can go to the state capital or DC to advocate, and not everyone wants to. Nevertheless, you can effectively advocate without traveling to another city. Some ways you can influence our representatives are:

- Get to know the local office staff members. Every state and federal representative has a local office. You can visit and call. Staff members organize information for their bosses and are great ways to share concerns.
- Contact your elected officials: https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials
- Attend local school board meetings, town meetings or other conferences. Visibility is important.
- Call or write your representatives. You can do this through NYS PTAs site at https://nyspta.org/home/advocacy/take-action/
- Offer to serve on local committees or send in information. Representatives cannot be experts in everything. Tell them things they don’t know and share inspirational stories that showcase your concerns.
- NYS PTA’s website has a wealth of information about advocacy https://nyspta.org/home/advocacy/advocacy_tools/ as does the national site https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/advocacy-resources/Advocacy-Training

This time of year school budgets are being put together. You need to know what is being proposed and advocate for what is best for the kids. You can bring in someone from the board to a PTA meeting to discuss the budget. You can identify needs and talk to superintendents and administrators about what the PTA believes is important to help students. It is a great time for advocacy! ■

Treasurer’s Corner

Michael Valicenti, GVPTA Treasurer
treasurer@gvpta.org

Receipts – Remember that PTA cannot reimburse for sales tax paid on a receipt. If someone paid sales tax you cannot reimburse them for that.

Signatures – Remember that all PTA checks must have two signatures. This helps prevent fraud and theft of PTA funds.

Monthly reconciliations – Monthly reconciliations are required by AIM insurance. These monthly reconciliations should be submitted to your unit board prior to an upcoming meeting and “Treasurer’s Report” should be on every PTA unit meeting’s agenda.

The reconciliations insure full disclosure of a unit’s financial condition and also serve to prevent theft of PTA funds.

Thank you all for what you do for PTA and please contact me with any questions. ■

Welcome to our two newest units!
South Seneca PTSA and Keshequa PTSA

CHILD ABUSE

Dorothy Petrie, one of our Associates, provided this link. It highlights concerns about child abuse. The appendix (p. 46-47) has a nice summary of strategies that would be good areas to advocate around. Two strategies PTAs can actively work around are social norms for positive parenting and enhancing parenting skills. What we do matters! It would be great if every PTA had at least one parenting skill program a year: helping with homework, dealing with bullying, how to read to and with your child, drug abuse, and mental health awareness are all areas we can step in and help out children.


Winter 2019 New York Parent Teacher
Vaping and Juuling (pronounced- Jeweling)

The use of these e-cigarettes like the popular Juul brand is spiking among youth, but parents often aren't even sure what they are and many teens mistakenly believe there are no serious health risks. E-cigarette use is rising in kids as young as elementary school. Although NY state prohibits use in public places that cigarette smoking is prohibited, student use is still rising. Perhaps even more alarming, students are using the devices to smoke marijuana in school. Talk with your tweens and teens about this trend. Here are some links to information about this topic.


Reflections Update

Lynn Moulton, ltmoulton@gmail.com

Artists from Brockport, Fairport, Penfield and Victor were recognized at the GV PTA Reflections Reception that was held December 10 at the Brighton Administration Building. This year’s theme was “Heroes Around Me.” The following art pieces were selected to move on to judging with NYS PTA. Artwork selected to advance to National PTA will be announced in March.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Arts Category</th>
<th>PTA Unit Name</th>
<th>Title of Work</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annikka Rao</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Martha Brown PTSA</td>
<td>Hummingbird Heroes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brooklyn Warden</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Penfield High School</td>
<td>My Guardian Angel</td>
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<td>Chloe Robinson</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Martha Brown PTSA</td>
<td>My Heart My Mom My Hero</td>
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<td>Ellyce Tonovitz</td>
<td>Music Composition</td>
<td>Martha Brown PTSA</td>
<td>Actions Shine Brighter Than Stars</td>
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<td>Erick Begishev</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Bay Trail PTA</td>
<td>The Heroes Around Us</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hannah Casler</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Martha Brown PTSA</td>
<td>The Definition of a Hero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helena Painting</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Martha Brown PTSA</td>
<td>Looking Up</td>
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<td>Jane Xue</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Brockport Central PTSA</td>
<td>Three firefighters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Vanderbilt</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Penfield High School</td>
<td>My Cap and Gown Hero</td>
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<td>Katrielle Currier</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Brockport Central PTSA</td>
<td>So Many Heroes</td>
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<td>Lorenzo Amadio</td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Victor Central PTSA</td>
<td>The Power of Voting</td>
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<td>Matthew DeLucia</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Brockport Central PTSA</td>
<td>Firetruck</td>
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<td>Molly McJury</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Brockport Central PTSA</td>
<td>This house is on fire</td>
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<td>Nicole Champlin</td>
<td>Music Composition</td>
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<td>A Villain’s Not a Lost Cause</td>
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<td>Sydney Prescott</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Victor Central PTSA</td>
<td>We Need More Environmental Superheroes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toby Prescott</td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Victor Central PTSA</td>
<td>Heroic Parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony Guo</td>
<td>Visual Arts</td>
<td>Martha Brown PTSA</td>
<td>Working Mom</td>
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If you have any questions or need help with anything PTA, please contact an Assistant or Associate Director, Officer, or the Region Director.

“The Voice of NYS PTA President’s Blog” provides thoughts and commentary from the President of the NYS PTA, Gracemarie Rozea, on topics of interest to our membership. Please click to read the latest message. nysptapresident.blogspot.com/

GVPTA Executive Committee 2018-19

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Additional GVPTA Contacts are listed on the web site
GVPTA.org facebook

Upcoming Events, Deadlines, and Reminders

GVPTA Reflection 2019
“Look Within” is the next Reflections theme. Units are encouraged to start planning and implementing their Reflections program now. There’s no need to wait! Start your advertising now and hold spring and/or summer events. Artwork will be due to GVPTA the second week of November 2019.

Pay Membership Dues monthly

Legislative Summit & Lobby Day
February 10-11, 2019 Albany, NY
Join fellow advocates from around the state to Lead the Way for all children! more...

Founders Day, February 17, 2017

GVPTA Spring Conference
April-May TBD

PTA Members and Leaders:
Did you know that your PTA unit is an advocacy association—not a booster organization? That means your PTA should focus most of its time implementing the PTA’s mission/vision.

https://nyspta.org/home/about/values-mission-vision/
https://nyspta.org/home/pta-leaders/run-your-pta/
#WhyPTA #PTAProud #DoGoodThingsForKids

Are You a New PTA Officer?
The Genesee Valley Region PTA is eager to help you with tips and best practices to make your job easier and more successful.
Don’t hesitate to contact a GVPTA board member or Susan Brown our region director.