Echo Newsletter

Wendell Berry

Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you.

Russell Baker

Too many parents make life hard for their children by trying, too zealously, to make it easy for them.

Ogden Nash

The door of a bigoted mind opens outwards so that the only result of the pressure of facts upon it is to close it more snugly.

James Randi

No amount of belief makes something a fact.

Genesee Valley Region PTA
Region Director: Sonya Verrillo, director@gvpta.org

It's far better to be unhappy alone than unhappy with someone.
—Marilyn Monroe

Some people are fueled by greed. Others by spite or love. My sole career motivation is to someday control the temperature of the place I work.
—Unknown

Genees Valley Region PTA

September 2019

From the Region Director

Sonya Verrillo,
GVPTA Region Director,
director@gvpta.org
voice/text: 585-330-3991

Welcome to this September edition of the ECHO Newsletter! The excitement of those first few days may be beginning to wane, but the school year is still in the beginning stages and the meetings and events that you do now will set the stage for the important work that you will do all-year. I'm excited to serve as your Region Director this year. Installed at our Spring Conference on April 30th, I'm thankful for all the work that our Immediate Past Region Director, Susan Brown, has done over the past three years. She has helped to charter 4 units during that time and led the region board with valuable trainings and discussions that have strengthened our PTA knowledge and our ability to support you, the unit and all PTA members.

By way of introduction, I live in Fairport and have been active in PTA for the past 8 years. I actually first became aware of the Genesee Valley Region PTA when I was trying to find training and information as a brand-new PTA President for a primary elementary unit. Throughout the years that have followed, I've learned so much! I encourage you to take advantage of the training and events provided by our Genesee Valley Region, New York State and National PTA. Our units are stronger and our impact is greater when we take advantage of the opportunities to grow and learn.

Some important things to keep in mind as you begin this year.

• Keep your “Unit in Good Standing” How can you do this? Make sure you’ve paid your AIM Insurance premium for 2019-2020, Pay for at least 25 members by October 31st and make sure to update your bylaws prior to their expiration date. This status will enable your unit to take advantage of all the PTA offers including participation in Reflections, PTA grants and various awards for teachers, students and others.

• Stay connected! One of the main benefits of PTA (I believe) is the fact that with PTA, you’re never alone. You are part of a great association that is working on behalf of ALL children. If you have ANY questions (or just a friendly ear to listen), please reach out to us at the Region PTA. All of us have leadership experience at the unit level. To that end, I’m going to be having various PTA Roundtables throughout this coming year. The first one is Thursday, October 3rd in Port Byron, NY. Find out all the details and RSVP online at http://evite.me/gfB44vqMhM. If we don't know the answer, we'll find it out for you.

I'm looking forward to a great year ahead!

Genesee Valley Region PTA

GVPTA.org facebook
**Membership Update**

Christine LeVey, GVPTA Membership Chair

cmlevey@rochester.rr.com

As I write this message (Sept 29th) I want to congratulate 14 of our Units for qualifying for the Early Bird Award! We are off to a great start to the 2019-2020 school year. Region Olympics will be running from October thru December and Genesee Valley Region will go for the GOLD and prizes for our units too! View the updated Membership Toolkit https://nyspta.org/home/membership/membershiptoollkit/ with great resources and templates to make your marketing efforts more effective.

January 2020 is **Terrific Teacher/Super Staff Scholarship Award** with three $100 Teacher/Staff Scholarships. To qualify for this award you must know how many employees are at your school and enter the number into MemberHub. Identify members with “Yes” in the Teacher/Staff member field or use the Teacher/Staff Member Type in MemberHub. Register and pay state dues for Teachers and School Staff members representing at least 75% of your total number of school employees by January 31.

February 2020 is the **Students Rock 20%+ Scholarship Award**: Qualify to win 1 of 3 $250 Student Scholarships. Register and pay state dues for Students representing at least 20% of your total paid members by February 29. Identify members with “Student” as their Member Type on MemberHub. 

March 2020 – **Students Rock 30%+ Scholarship Award**: Qualify to win 1 of 3 $250 Student Scholarships. Register and pay state dues for Students representing at least 30% of your total paid members by March 31. Units can only win one of the Students Rock scholarships for both February and March. For more details visit www.nyspta.org and click on the Membership Tab.

Overwhelmed by membership duties?
Email or set up a conference call with me and I will try to help streamline your efforts. Thank you for all you do for all children.

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**Bylaws Corner**

Stephany Fuchs, GVPTA Bylaws Chair

stephfuchs1@gmail.com

Thank you to all of you who attended the Bylaws Workshop at SLA. I love any chance to meet with unit leaders in person and I love hearing all of the support, advice, and encouragement you offer each other. I know you will have a successful year!

Speaking of a successful year...now is a great time to review your bylaws and procedures! Bylaws and procedures are the foundation of your unit and help to maintain consistency and define expectations. Making sure your bylaws are up to date also ensures your unit remains a unit in good standing. Bylaws must be approved every three years. Even if you decide not to make any changes to your bylaws, they still need to be submitted for approval with the Region Bylaws Chair and the State Bylaws Coordinator.

If your bylaws are about to expire or are expired, you can quickly and easily update them using the Bylaws Wizard link in MemberHub or under Bylaws/Procedures on the NY State PTA web site. The Steps to Updating Bylaws document that is available on the NYS PTA website has been updated. Please refer to that document when updating your bylaws as it contains helpful information. Please note if you change your membership fees in your bylaws you must also update your MemberHub store to reflect changes.

Creating procedures is just as important as maintaining your bylaws. Procedures document your unit’s daily operations and allow you to describe roles, committee functions, events etc. in more detail than is allowed in the bylaws. Creating procedures can seem like a daunting task. One way to get started is to form a small committee and refer to the NY State Resource guide for examples of procedures.

I am happy to help if you have any questions or concerns about your bylaws or need some tips on getting started with procedures.

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**The NYS PTA's 123rd Annual Convention**

Nov. 8 - 10, 2019 in Tarrytown, NY.

Convention is the NYS PTA’s “Annual Meeting” where elections are held, resolutions passed, and important decisions are made. Registration deadline is October 7th.

2019 Convention Registration Packet

Register for Convention Here

Book Your Hotel Accommodation

[use group code PTA where indicated]

Proposed Resolutions to be heard at Convention

At your next PTA meeting, you may want to discuss these Resolutions with your members, and then vote on whether or not you support them. Then, if your members attend Convention, they can carry that information to inform their vote.
lead to more successful students prepared for college, career and the life ahead. Membership numbers nationally have dropped 26% in the last 8 years and 50% over the past 25 years. Get out from behind the table, go to where the parents are and meet them—they may not come to your meetings. Hold creative events or attend school events and meet people. Posters, banners, e-newsletter, flyers, social media—do it all. People need to hear and/or see things 7 times before they retain it.

At the Reflections banquet, Fairport’s Nicole Champlin from Martha Brown Middle School was among those honored for her work, A Villain’s Not a Lost Cause. Last year’s theme, Heroes Around Me, was creatively revealed through the many artistic pieces presented. For more information about the winners see https://www.pta.org/home/programs/reflections/awards#winners. This year’s theme is Look Within. If you want to start a Reflections program, please contact Lynn Moulton, ltmoulton@gmail.com for help.

A favorite workshops was on transformative family engagement. The focus was to look at programs we currently hold and adjust them to be more impactful. They used the following principles to guide the discussion.

We all hope that you choose to send some of your members to conferences, conventions, and workshops to support your efforts for all of our children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>qualities</th>
<th>examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Embracing and valuing diverse perspectives</td>
<td>- Intentional relationship building &lt;br&gt;- Inviting diverse perspectives &lt;br&gt;- Questioning assumptions</td>
<td>- Notices sent out in the home language of families &lt;br&gt;- Childcare and transportation options explored &lt;br&gt;- Ensure the space is accessible</td>
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<td>Individualized</td>
<td>Meeting the unique needs of every family and child</td>
<td>- Personal invitations &lt;br&gt;- Tailored experiences &lt;br&gt;- Being responsive</td>
<td>- Have students make the invites to a donuts with dad event, coloring and addressing it to the important male in their life. &lt;br&gt;- Translations so everyone understands what is going on. &lt;br&gt;- Surveys to identify what you do right and where you need to improve.</td>
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<td>Integrated</td>
<td>Connecting and aligning with the educational system</td>
<td>- Linking to learning &lt;br&gt;- Putting the “I” in PTA &lt;br&gt;- Going beyond one-time events</td>
<td>- Series of helping your child be successful in school nights &lt;br&gt;- How to understand your report card &lt;br&gt;- How to help with homework program</td>
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<td>Impactful</td>
<td>Empowering families to support their child’s success</td>
<td>- Developing knowledge and skills &lt;br&gt;- Opportunities to proactive and interact &lt;br&gt;- Measuring success</td>
<td>- Coffee and conversations with the principal &lt;br&gt;- Feedback forms &lt;br&gt;- Analyze who came to the event and who did not</td>
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National PTA Convention

Many PTA members do not feel right sending people to trainings and conventions. After all, they reason, they work hard for their money, it should go to the kids. When your leadership is trained, however, they become energized, work more effectively, bring in new ideas, stay on the right side of the law, and are less prone to problems. Three of us from Genesee Valley Region, Susan Brown, Sonya Verrillo, Christine LeVey, attended the National PTA Convention in Columbus this June, and we certainly came back energized, full of new ideas and better able to do our jobs.

The general sessions focused on bylaws amendments, approval and updating of resolutions and a focus on a dues adjustment. National has not adjusted dues since 2011. With inflation, the increased cost of meeting the needs of the membership and declining membership, a $1.50 dues increase was proposed. During a lively debate, the idea of a dues increase was defeated.

As hard as this may be to imagine, at the national level, multiple people vie for each office. If only we had that problem at our local units, we would be more effective at representing our membership and doing the good of the order. A long election process ended with new officers being elected to President-elect, secretary-treasurer, VP of advocacy and VP of membership as well as to the board at large and nominating committee. Our own past NYS President, Bonnie Russel, was elected to the nominations committee (NLC).

We heard a wonderfully moving keynote from singer and songwriter Janiva Magness who shared her story of childhood trauma and recovery. She emphasized how people helped her to crawl out of the pit of despair of her youth to become successful by sharing how compassion, love, courage, kindness, and hope led to healing and how the arts allowed her to share her feelings without words. Her call to the audience was to identify how we as individuals, as diverse people can make a difference to disconnected youths. To identify what hope looks like and share that with the disconnect youth. She shared that relationships, arts, jobs and self-care support and instruction were instrumental in her rise and urged us all to help the young people around us to find these as well.

Past National PTA President, Kathryn Whitfill (1993-95), addressed the delegates with a timely relevant message. She shared that we need to get our message out to more people. Engaged families
National PTA's Reflections Art Program

“Look Within”

Lynn Moulton (ltmoulton@gmail.com) and Julia Hope Anello (hope4julia@gmail.com)
GVPTA Reflections co-chairs

"Look Within" is National PTA's 2019-2020 program theme! The Reflections Program welcomes students of all grades and abilities to explore and be involved in the arts. Students reflect on a theme, create original works of art, and earn positive recognition for their achievements. Any PTA/PTSA that is in good standing may take part in Reflections.

If you DO NOT have a Reflections program at your school, it is EASY to start one. Please email us and we can fill you in and help you get started. If you DO have a Reflections program, please share this information with your Reflections Chair. If you have any questions, please email us. We look forward to hearing from you and are am excited to see the amazing art that our students create this year.

Important Dates

Once a unit has held its own Reflections judging, the selected pieces are due to GVPTA by November 18, 2019. Please contact whomever on the following list is most convenient for you to drop off artwork:

- Spencerport - Lynn Moulton, ltmoulton@gmail.com, 585-820-4124
- Newark - Julia Hope Anello, hope4julia@gmail.com, 585-455-6050
- Ontario - Susan Brown, ptasusanb@gmail.com, 315-524-4152
- Fairport - Sonya Verrillo, director@gvpta.org, 585-330-3991
- Bloomfield - Mary Twardokus, mt2152@hotmail.com, 585-657-7722
- The absolute final collection deadline to have your unit's artwork to us is Monday, November 18, 2019, at the Brighton Administrative Building, 2035 Monroe Ave, Rochester from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- If none of these options are good for you, contact us and other arrangements can be made.

The GVPTA Reflection’s Reception will be Monday, December 9, at the Brighton Administrative Building, 2035 Monroe Ave, Rochester at 6:00 p.m. Those pieces selected to move on to judging with

Important Reflections Links

- Certificates, ribbons, trophies (as well as lots of other PTA/PTSA items): http://www.shoppta.com/ or you are certainly welcome to make your own certificates and have prizes determined by your unit's budget

Treasurer’s Corner

Natalie Melnick, GVPTA Treasurer
treasurer@gvpta.org

Welcome to a new PTA year.

990’s: Thank you to all who have already completed filing your unit’s 990 with the IRS. The deadline is November 15th. Any units that need assistance with completing the 990 please consult IRS.gov or contact myself or another GVPTA board member.

Monthly reconciliations are not only important but required for PTA units. According to our NYS PTA Insurance Risk Management Guide, an annual audit of the books and a monthly bank reconciliation are required for Bond coverage to apply to your Association.

Bank statements should be received by the unit president. The president should initial the bank statement as having reviewed it BEFORE giving it to the Treasurer. The Treasurer then uses the bank statement to complete the monthly reconciliation, which should be sent to the entire unit Board. These monthly reconciliations are vital to prevent fraud and theft of PTA funds, which as we know, is other people's money.

Finally, each monthly reconciliation must be reviewed and signed off on by someone who is not a check signer on the unit's bank account. These steps limit fraud and theft and insure full disclosure of a unit's financial condition.

These monthly reconciliations then become part of your annual audit, making the audit much easier to complete each year. Any units that wish to see an example of a monthly reconciliation please contact me and I will send you one.

Resource Guide: All treasurers, new and experienced, should familiarize themselves with Section 05A Finance and 05B Insurance of the NYS PTA Resource Guide. This guide has a lot of useful information about PTA treasurer roles and responsibilities.

It you have not completed a unit audit, please contact me ASAP. Thanks for all you do for PTA.
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.
nyspta.org/home/about/values-mission-vision/
nyspta.org/home/pta-leaders/run-your-pta/
#WhyPTA #PTAProud #DoGoodThingsForKids

PTA Roundtables
There will be Roundtables throughout the year. Network with PTA officers, bring questions...get some answers.

AWARDS J. Ernst Dubois Teacher of the Year and Administrator of the Year awards—Deadline is October 15, 2019. ...Links to nomination forms
Nominations should be sent to the GVPTA Region Director at director@gvpta.org or by mail to
Sonya Verrillo, 113 Broadmoor Trail, Fairport, NY 14450

Nov 4 GVPTA Partnership Dinner
Save the date! Monday, Nov 4 at the Burgundy Basin Inn 1361 Marsh Road, Pittsford, NY
The Partnership Dinner is an evening of recognition and appreciation for everyone dedicated to our mission. Please invite your entire PTA/PTSA Board and Chairpersons, Principals, Administrators, School Board members, volunteers and general membership. More details to come soon!
Christine LeVey, Partnership Dinner Chair: cmlevey@rochester.rr.com

Sept 10, 2019
The New York Parent Teacher is published periodically by NYS PTA. It includes informative and timely articles written by state Governance Team members and materials taken from National PTA, as well as our cooperating partners in NYS.
—Aimee L Tweedie