

WA/WM PTA Council Councilor

September 2010

President's Letter

Hello All!

As we are all in preparation mode for Back-to-School, I am noticing a trend amongst us. It is a major mental gearing-up for the year ahead, a bit anxiety filled for some, as we realize how many tasks we have agreed to take on and the work ahead of us as a result. Do you already feel stressed out and pulled in too many directions? I want to address this with some, hopefully, sage advice.

First and foremost, if you find that you have genuinely taken on too much, it is important to fulfill your obligations; someone (or a group of someones) is counting on you. If you find that you truly cannot fulfill a task and do it any justice, find someone else who can! Sometimes we must admit that we cannot do something we truly wanted or intended to. Prioritize which things are most important to you, which things you are most passionate about, because these are the things you are most likely to accomplish. Now find someone to take on the item at the bottom of that list. If you cannot find someone to replace you, you may have to suck it up and learn the valuable lesson of saying "no" for next time! In this case, do your best and ask for help. Don't wait until the last minute to tell people you are in over your head!

If you find that any one task that you have taken on seems overwhelming - perhaps you have never done it, been involved in the process before or it has never been done before – I suggest you find help from a small group and hold a meeting ASAP! This should be a brainstorming session to give you some ideas on how to implement your task. If it has been done before, invite a person who has been involved in the past to help point out pitfalls (Council can help find someone at another school even!), but remember, just because it has always been done one way, does not mean you have to continue to do it that way! Don't be afraid to make mistakes!!!

Let me say that again – **Don't be afraid to make mistakes!!** No one is perfect! No one, no matter how long they have been doing this, has all the answers! That's ok!

Designate a cheap notebook to each major task you must perform. I use it to jot down every idea I have regarding that task, whether I eventually use them or not; it keeps them in a nice handy place to refer back to throughout the process. Take it a step further and use a binder with blank sheets of paper and a zipper pouch to hold loose receipts, a spare pen, whatever comes up. Organization can make or break everything we do - it means the difference between succeeding and just



The WAWM
PTA Council
meets the

1st Wednesday
of each month

at the Parkway/
Recreation Center

2930 S. Root River
Pkwy @ 6:30 pm

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Inside this issue:

President's Letter	1
Extensions	3
Convention	3
Transitions	3
Reflections	6

surviving!

Ever sit down at your computer to do all the things you have to do and find yourself completing none? Or simply never even starting because you're so overwhelmed by the number of things you need to do that you just don't know where to start? This kind of stress immobilizes the best of us! Try writing down the things you need to accomplish. Now prioritize them. Is there one you can do quickly? Do it. Now tackle the most important one. The sense of accomplishment you got from completing one task can help get the creativity flowing! If a task is multifaceted, break it down into parts and treat each part as a separate task.

Here's the one that can be the most challenging to us all – try to remove distractions! I am frequently on the phone, responding to an email and fielding questions from my daughter! Thus are the joys of motherhood! From this, I have learned that I need to do the bulk of my work in the evening after my daughter and significant other are in bed. This may not work for you, but try to find a way to focus on one thing at a time that does work!

Schedule your own downtime! You will not be any good to anyone who depends on you if you do not take care of "you", too! Go ahead, read that one again, it's a bit tongue twisty but so important!

We all do what we do in this organization, and in life, hopefully out of passion; passion for our children, passion for better education standards, passion for our families. This passion often leads us into "yes mode"; we get excited about the things going on, or passionate about something we truly feel is lacking. This is what PTA was built on! I want you all to be able to keep that passion and use it to accomplish wonderful things for our children, but we also need to keep perspective on what we truly can do! Please don't forget to ask us for help when you need it! You are not alone!

I look forward to seeing all of you at our Council meetings, the 1st Wednesday of every month, at 6:30 PM in the Park Rec building!

Good Luck!
Jaimie Reyes
WAWM Council President



What would
education in
America look
like

If the PTA
never existed?

CONVENTION



Wisconsin PTA
Convention
April 29 – 30, 2010
Blue Harbor Resort
Sheboygan, WI

More details to come.

Extending the Voice

Tina Walker, WI PTA Extension Chair

As we begin the new school year, be sure to take the time to *extend* your hand to someone you have not asked to join PTA. Ask not only parents, but also grandparents, your neighborhood, and more importantly consider reaching out to your community, including the relationship of your local businesses. We often neglect to reach out to the community...

consider this your challenge! Improve the way your school markets PTA.

Extend a welcoming hand and a warm invitation to all of the members of the community, the local area businesses, and all of the other groups in the neighborhood to come to a PTA meeting and/or event. And do not forget to ask your local elected officials to attend!

Think outside the box when you invite individuals to join PTA; send a postcard, a letter, an email, or make a personal phone call for that meaningful extra touch. A PTA membership *extends* everywhere, stretching miles and miles, from city to city, even state to state, and beyond. Make the connection today and help PTA grow everywhere.

Tips To Building a Strong PTA School and Community Partnership:

- Know your audience
- Know the PTA product
- Connect and build relationships with parents, teachers and staff
- Effective and ongoing communication with your principal
- Reach out to your community and businesses
- Finally – JUST ASK!

PTA is the largest child advocacy association across the nation. *Extend* your hand today to make the difference in PTA from what was done yesterday, to what can be done today, and how it can be changed for years to come.

Transitions

Kim Henderson, WI IPTA President-Elect

Summer is drawing to a close.... It is time to make sure that you leave your incoming PTA prepared for the new year. Transitions from year to year can make or break a PTA. Whatever your position make it a smooth transition into 2010-11.

Steps to remember:

- Make sure all paperwork is turned in to the appropriate person. Financial reports and audits should be completed before the new school year. New officer lists must be turned in to the State PTA office.
- Create a summary of your position including a detailed description of the position and the work you did. List your thoughts on what worked, what did not work, what should be improved and ideas for next year. There should be a Procedure Book (or instruction book) for each position. If there is not one, create one. There is nothing more challenging than starting a new position with no information about what you should be doing.
- Meet with the person replacing you or if you are staying in your position, meet with the new people on the board you will be working with. Share your experiences and ideas with them. Be available if they have questions or give them another resource for information if you are not going to be around.
- Thank those who helped you throughout the year. Whether they are school employees, PTA board members, volunteers, or neighbors a simple thank you goes a long way. Also do not forget to thank your family members for their time and support.
- Congratulate yourself on your PTAs past success and look for more in the new year



FEELING SCATTERED? STRESSED? BUSY?

{ LIFE WASN'T MEANT TO BE THIS WAY. }

Make your escape! Join us for an hilarious and uplifting look at how to stress less and have more fun, amidst the busyness of family life. Jason will inspire us to live a more rich and balanced life. Learn how to have more fun while getting more done. Don't miss this refreshing, positive and upbeat evening!

ALL ARE WELCOME
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 6:30PM

WA Central High School
 8516 W. Lincoln Ave., West Allis

*Admission is free with a current PTA membership
 (\$10.00 without membership)*



JASON KOTECKI, known as "The Champion of Childhood" is a speaker, author, and cartoonist from Madison, WI. He travels the world encouraging people to create Adult-tis-free lives, by embracing strategies from childhood.

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WA-WM PTA Council

Reflections 2010 – 11



“Together We Can...”

- ❖ August/September - Kick off at all participating schools.
- ❖ October/November - students work on projects...all work due to Council Reflections Chair by **December 1** (bring to meeting or drop at my house).
- ❖ December 15, 2010 – Reflections Reception @ Frank Lloyd Wright
- ❖ Judging will take place the night of the event and Council-level winners will be announced during the reception.
- ❖ All entries will receive a participation certificate similar to last year's and all entries will be sent on to state for the next level of judging.
- ❖ Entries will be judged at State level and winners will receive invitations to the Annual State Awards Banquet held during State PTA Conference 2011.
- ❖ Entries will be returned to Council from State following the conference. Please pick up artwork at the May 2011 Council Meeting.
- ❖ All participating PTAs must be in good standing.
- ❖ Stress to student's families the importance of making a copy/taking a picture of the entry. Although entries are handled with the utmost care, entries do travel far and can be lost.
- ❖ More details, forms, rules, fliers, posters, and logos can be found at the National PTA website, www.PTAreflections.org. Click on “Learn More” and look under the heading “Local Participation”.



Still have questions? Need more help?

Contact Gena Kraemer – 414-545-4005, or my e-mail at kraemerfamily93@aol.com.