



Plano ISD Council of PTAs Newsletter

Newsletter

December 2009

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Everyone Has A Story

We're in that time of year when we often pause and think of the things and people for which we are thankful. Most people immediately think of their own families and how lucky they are to have each other, and I know I do also. As PTA members, most of us also think of the other volunteers we rely on to make PTA work, often people who have become close friends, and the incredible school staff members we see working to help our children succeed.

As we volunteer with people who go that "extra mile" to make a program great, or watch the teacher try again to explain something to a child who finally has their "a-ha!" moment, it is easy to forget that everyone has a story. A story of what has driven them to volunteer, become a parent, or dedicate themselves to working with children. Their story likely includes elements we probably haven't even considered. The story of how the financial crisis has impacted them, of a divorce, serious health condition, a traumatic childhood, the death of a child or family member and the way the events or situation has turned their lives, and their children's lives, upside down.

Now is the time for us to remember and reach out to friends, volunteers and staff to show kindness and compassion for their story, even if we don't know all the passages, and gratitude for having them as part of our story. Let's take the time to think about the story of our lives, and consider what we want it to say. From there, all the hours spent in service for our children and community, make lots of sense. And that makes our "story" one worth reading and living!

Thank you for being part of my story,

Cara Mendelsohn
president@planopta.org

Administration Holiday Luncheon

By Leanne Svec, Council Hospitality Chairman



Let's Make a Snowman! The Administration Holiday Luncheon sponsored by PTA Council and local Plano PTAs is on Friday, December 11th from 11am to 1pm.

Are you available to help? I will need volunteers to help with decorations on Thursday December 10th (time to be determined)

Featured Article



2009-2010 Reflections Program

The 2009-2010 Reflections Program has completed the local round of judging. The top 20% of the entries from each school will now advance to the Council level judging, which is scheduled for Wednesday, December 9th. With this year's theme of "Beauty is...", we are looking forward to receiving over 500 exciting entries from our local Plano schools. After Council

judging occurs, the top 10% will advance directly to the state level judging.

All Council judging activities will occur at The Sockwell Center, 6301 Chapel Hill Rd., Plano, TX, (469) 752-4750.

Important dates to remember are:

Tuesday, December 8th from 7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Arts in

Education/Reflections Chairman drop off all advancing entries and associated paperwork.

Wednesday, December 9th from 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Judging occurs.

Thursday, December 10th from 7:30 a.m. - Noon and 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Arts in

Education/Reflections Chairman pick up all entries that are not advancing to the state level.

We wish to thank all of the students for all of their efforts in completing and submitting their entries. We would also like to thank all of the parents and teachers who encouraged the students to express themselves through the arts by participating in the Reflections Program. And I would personally like to thank all of the local Arts in Education chairmen for working so hard to ensure the program's success this year.

The annual PTA Reflections Program is

and help with set-up, serving and clean up on the 11th starting at 8:30AM. This is a great way to show appreciation for our behind the scenes administration staff and meet some volunteers from across the district. I am asking each PTA to help by bringing salad, sides and dessert. That's right, 3 dishes from each school. All items should be in disposable containers (won't be returning your favorite pyrex dish) Curb side drop-off at the Admin building will start at 8:45AM. Presidents or Hospitality chairmen, please let me know what you will be bringing that day by emailing me at mpslbr@swbell.net.

This is the celebration of the year and I can't pull off a feast for 300 without you! So save the date, mark your calendar, iphone, blackberry or any other device you might have and plan to be apart of this Snowman extravaganza. Be on the lookout for more information to follow! Also, if you have any snowmen I can borrow to decorate please use the above to let me know.

Ski Plano

The Plano ISD Education Foundation
Hosts 14th Annual Ski Plano Event

Ski Plano 2010, the annual fundraiser benefitting the Plano ISD Education Foundation, will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2010, at Southfork Ranch in Parker, Texas. Those in attendance will be seen wearing an array of ski attire including ski sweaters, scarves, and hats to warm themselves at this annual event benefitting the students, faculty, staff and schools of Plano ISD.

At least 800 guests, including business and community leaders, school board members, Plano ISD administrators, principals, and parents are expected to attend the event. The evening's activities will feature a seated dinner, entertainment and dancing to the music of Mars Hill, live auction and silent auction. The cocktail hour will include entertainment by "Classic Jazz", a band composed of Plano ISD employees who are outstanding performers!

This year will be the exciting debut of the Neiman Marcus Avalanche. The Live Auction includes unique and exciting items such as a Lexus "Super Model Sampler" 12 month Lease donated by Park Place Lexus, a \$3,000 shopping spree - including a limo and lunch for 4 at Mariposa at the Shops at Willow Bend, a dinner for 10 catered by Central Market's Executive Chef, a Napa wine country tour package, and MORE!

"The uniqueness of this event is its boldness in being a casual gala", says Lisa Raskin, 2010 Ski Plano Chairman. "The timing is in late January after the hustle and bustle of the holidays has waned. People are ready to come back out for an event and the fact that it is casual dress makes the event that much more appealing. Our guests and sponsors help us fund critical programs for our school district as the proceeds from this event benefit our administrators, our teachers, our children...our future."

Please gather your friends and purchase a table!! Information, including ticket requests, is available by calling (972) 248-8252 or visiting the Plano ISD website at www.pisd.edu.

nationally recognized and is designed to enhance rather than replace a quality arts education. The Reflections Program provides opportunities for students to express themselves and to receive positive recognition for their artistic efforts.

An Awards Ceremony for Council award recipients and their families will be held on the evening of Wednesday, April 14th at Sockwell Center. State results will also be announced at this time.

The Plano ISD Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the mission to help all students in Plano public schools achieve their full potential by providing financial support to educators and programs.

Diversity Advisory Committee



Plano ISD's Diversity Advisory Committee is seeking nominations through December 4 for its Ninth Annual Diversity Leadership Award. Winners will be announced at Plano ISD's Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute to be held on January 21, 2010, at Plano Centre.

Nominations Due December 4

Nominations will be solicited from students, staff members and Plano ISD community members. The nomination form may be downloaded in either Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF formats.

<http://www.pisd.edu/news/archive/2009-10/diversity.leadership.shtml>

Mail nominations on or before 5:00 p.m. on December 4, to:
Dee Sampson, diversity and mentoring coordinator
Plano ISD Administration Building
2700 W. 15th Street
Plano, TX 75075

Quick Links...

[Plano PTA](#)

[Area 15](#)

[Texas PTA](#)

[National PTA](#)

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Calling all Historian!!!

I hope you've had the opportunity to take photos at your great school events this first semester. If not; it's not too late to get started. Please take a moment to visit the council website. The requirements for judging scrapbooks have been updated and are available for your use. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to send me an e-mail; historian@planopta.org.



Membership News - December 2009



Getting "Back to Basics" by continuing to recruit more members into your PTAs!

Every year local PTAs have the opportunity to honor extraordinary volunteers, staff or community partners that have made a significant impact on their PTA at the Texas Life Member Banquet. This year our event will be a celebration not a banquet. That means there will be NO dinner. It is past the time to be selecting the members of your Nominating Committee, and past time for having the Award Nominees' names assembled. You should be at the voting process by now with your Nomination Committee meeting to decide. You should know who your honorees are by your December PTA meeting and then notify me of their names and bios through Survey Monkey by January 1st.

Ceremony Details

Monday, February 22, 2009

6:30 p.m. @ Plano West Senior High Auditorium on West Parker Road.

There is no ticket price. Guests will be seated in rows. Honorees are encouraged to bring spouses and of course Principals, PTA Presidents, Membership Chairs and Board members are welcome too. Invitations to the awards ceremony will be sent out the first week of January. Please make sure you get your RSVPs in ASAP after receiving the invitation!

Poverty Simulation Program

Don't miss a program you'll never forget!

January 14, 2010
Poverty Simulation Program

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Administration Building, Board Room
2700 W. 15th Street, Plano, 75075

The community is invited to experience first-hand how those in poverty deal with hunger, disability, unemployment, transportation and much, much more by simulating a month in the life of someone less fortunate. The event is intended to increase the understanding of the struggles of our students who live in impoverished situations. Attend this powerful "Poverty Simulation" program on Thursday, January 14th, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Plano ISD Administration Building.

Admission is free, but pre-registration is required. We recommend a donation of \$5 be given to CITY House, the only homeless shelter for children in the Collin County area.

For more information or to register to attend, please contact: KT Handley at specialevent@planopta.org or 972.758.9757 with your name and email address. Space is limited, so please sign up early.

The simulation will be facilitated by the Region 10 Education Service Center (<http://www.facebook.com/l/344c2;www.region10.org/nclb/ThePovertySimulation.html>), which has facilitated poverty simulations across Dallas, Richardson and Plano. Mayor Phil Dyer will give opening remarks about the changes in demographics in Plano. We look forward to seeing you there!!

Sponsored by the Plano ISD Council of PTAs and the Plano ISD Diversity Advisory Committee.

Recycling during the Holidays

TOP 5 (or 6!) THINGS TO DO TO RECYCLE/REUSE DURING THE HOLIDAYS:

1) Make as many tree ornaments, decorations, table setting items, and gift items as possible using items normally recycled! Even store gift cards can be put into a special hand-made box or holder (made from greeting cards) that can be personalized and special!



2) Make new greeting cards from old ones.

3) Wrap and decorate gifts with Sunday comics, map pages, or reusable shopping bags! Use bows saved from previous occasions, or make bows from magazine pages. Make gift tags from greeting cards.

Instead of actual "products" or "items" to give as gifts, consider:

- a yearly pass that gets one carful of friends or family members into any national park or forest (www.fedrecpass@usgs.gov)
- a gift certificate that's accepted at hundreds of eco-pas around the world (www.spafinder.com)
- a gift membership to an eco-documentary DVD club which ships four movies per month in biodegradable packaging (the giftee gets to keep the DVDs); www.earthcinemacircle.com- a movie-ticket gift certificate for theaters nationwide (www.fandangobucks.com)
- a course at Whole Foods Culinary Centers: organic cooking, gluten-free baking, etc. (www.wholefoodsmarket.com)
- a class on wine, cooking, yoga, or dancing
- a gift certificate to a restaurant or coffeehouse
- a round of play at a golf course or miniature golf course
- tickets to a sports game
- membership to Netflix, a theater, or arts organization (ballet, symphony, etc.), a museum, or a park/conservation organization
- a brewery tour
- organic milk delivery
- a homemade gift certificate to help giftees with chores (waterproofing the porch, washing the windows, etc.)

4) Recycle gift wrap:

- save paper when unwrapping gifts (be careful to cut or tear off tape)
- iron wrinkled paper on low heat
- store boxes for reuse if possible; if not, put them on Craigslist or other sites

5) Buy foods (for holiday dinners) and candies (or other treats) in bulk. Less packaging, less food waste.

6) Be sure that whatever products you buy (and their containers, if possible) during the holidays can be recycled or composted.

AXA Foundation

The AXA Foundation, a Proud National Sponsor of PTA, offers a signature program, AXA Achievementsm, which provides resources that help make college possible through both access and advice.

Access: more than \$1.3 million a year in scholarships

Advice: a comprehensive resource for information to help students and parents plan for college.

Two scholarships are presently being offered through AXA Achievementsm:

AXA Achievementsm Scholarship, in association with U.S. News & World Report

42 \$10,000 scholarships - 10 \$25,000 scholarships
Deadline is December 15, 2009

AXA Achievementsm Community Scholarship

350 \$2,000 scholarships offered each year
Deadline is February 15, 2010
The winners, known as AXA Achievers, are ethnically and economically diverse, but share these qualities:

Ambition and drive
Determination to set and reach goals
Respect for self, family and community
Ability to succeed in college

More information and downloadable applications, which can be filled out online, are available at www.axa-achievement.com <<http://npta.sparklist.com/t/1711889/10357521/353/0/>>.

A key element of AXA's partnership with PTA is AXA's offer of free workshops to PTA units on topics such as planning for college and other financial issues facing families. Visit the AXA website designed exclusively for PTA members, www.axa-achievement.com/PTA <<http://npta.sparklist.com/t/1711889/10357521/354/0/>>, to learn about the workshops that are available, and speak with your local PTA leadership about having a workshop presented to your PTA unit.

Convention 2010

Texas PTA State
Officer Elections will be held at the 101st Annual
Convention

February 26-28 in Corpus Christi.

More information will

be posted to the Web site and sent via e-mail
concerning convention, the election and candidate
biographies in the coming weeks. Please make your plans now to attend convention!

Go to www.txpta.org register!



Public Focus Group Meetings

The City is starting its 2010-2014 Consolidated Plan process which will determine how housing and community development federal funds will be spent. Citizen participation is a vital step in determining the City of Plano's needs and priorities. We encourage Plano citizens to provide input to shape our community.

You can participate by completing an online survey or attending a meeting. Here are the survey links:

English:

<ahref="http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=o53GwMsa1LFLJPUNjS4nLQ_3d_3d">

Spanish:

<ahref="http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=if_2frN3MVoefKslZblhf7Qg_3d_3d">

The City will also be holding public focus group meetings on this topic. Pizza will be provided for all that attend the public meetings.

There are four different meeting times available:

Thur. Dec. 10, 2009, 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Schimelpfenig Library

5024 Custer Road

Plano, Texas 75023

Wed. Dec. 9, 2009, 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Carpenter Recreation Center, art room

6701 Coit Road

Plano, Texas 75024

Tue. Dec. 8, 2009, 6:30pm - 8:30pm

Harrington Library

1501 18th Street

Plano, Texas 75074

Tue. Dec. 8, 2009, 2:00pm - 4:00pm

Harrington Library

1501 18th Street

Plano, Texas 75074

* The meetings are available to all persons regardless of disability. If you require assistance, please call 972-941-7151 at least 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting date. Spanish translation will be available upon request.

For more information about the Consolidated Plan process, please contact: Shanette Brown, Community Services Division-Planning Department 972-941-7151  shanetteb@plano.gov  www.plano.gov

Legislative Advocacy Project

Would you like to have some input into when your child starts school?

Sign our online petition!





<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/txschoolstartdate/>

Our petition simply states:

I support local control of the school calendar.

The current statute that mandates a uniform school start date should be repealed, or at a minimum, the waiver process should be reinstated.

Parents, school staff and residents of our communities should be able to help select a school calendar that works best toward addressing their communities' concerns and enables their students to achieve the highest academic success possible.

10 Reasons Why Plano ISD Council of PTAs Supports Local Control of the School Calendar

1. There should be established processes for involving parents and teachers in the development of the school calendar.
2. Student academic and instructional concerns and local community needs should drive all education policy decisions.
3. A uniform start date is not required by federal guidelines and No Child Left Behind.
4. Our local boards of education and faculties are held responsible for student performance under both state and federal accountability programs.
5. In a high stakes accountability system, it is only fair to allow as much instructional time as possible before student performance is measured.
6. Students graduating at semester should be able to attend college starting in January.
7. Dual credit courses for high school students can be better facilitated with community colleges by having the calendars better aligned.
8. Completion of final exams before the winter holiday is immensely beneficial to students.
9. Only thirteen states currently have a statewide school year start date. Of those thirteen, some have waivers and some are trying to repeal their current statutes.
10. Our local legislators are being pressured by the tourism and hospitality industries that spend thousands of hours and dollars on lobbying.

PTA Advocacy Challenge



Help your State PTA Win the Advocacy Challenge-TAKE ACTION on JJCPA Now!

Reject the Sessions Amendment to Transfer More Youth to Adult Court

everychild.one voice.[®]

This Thursday, December 10th, the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee is expected to consider S. 678, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act (JJDPRA) of 2009.

Senator Sessions (R-AL) is expected to offer an amendment that could undermine JJDPRA by increasing the number of youth tried as adults and/or would remove a judge's discretion to determine whether to prosecute a youth in adult court. Such an amendment would directly contradict the goals and purposes of JJDPRA.

The Sessions amendment would modify current federal transfer law by taking the decision of whether a youth should be prosecuted as an adult for an enumerated list of crimes away from neutral federal judges and instead place the decision with prosecutors.

This amendment would also allow this increased discretion to be applied to youth who are charged with attempt or conspiracy to commit these crimes or for joined or lesser included offenses.

Urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to reject this amendment, as it would harm youth, decrease public safety, and disproportionately affect youth of color.

<http://npta.sparklist.com/t/1713141/10425323/1570/0/>

Visit PTA Takes Action Center, and send an alert to your Senators Today.

PTA Mission

PTA is

A powerful voice for all children,
A relevant resource for families and communities, and
A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

PTA Vision

Making every child's potential a reality.

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