

Welcome Families into Your School

**PTA Take Your Family to School Week
February 11–17, 2007**

**PTA Founders Day
February 17, 2007**

Inside this booklet, you will find

- * An application for an award of \$1,897 for your PTA
- * Family involvement event ideas and planning tips
- * Advice on how to make your events inclusive



PTA was founded in **1897** to take action on behalf of children, support parents, and encourage family involvement in schools. Times have changed, but the PTA Mission is just as relevant now as it was 110 years ago. That's why, today, we celebrate PTA Take Your Family to School Week in conjunction with Founders Day, February 17.



Katharine Saunders



Cee Jai Jones

Tell the national PTA office how your unit plans to celebrate PTA Take Your Family to School Week this February 11–17 and your unit could receive **\$1,897**.

Complete the enclosed application to qualify for

- * A cash award of \$1,897 to support your PTA's work,
- * A visit to your school by a PTA national officer during Take Your Family to School Week, or
- * Recognition gifts for your PTA leaders.

All local PTAs* that return a completed application to the national PTA office by January 12, 2007, will receive one or more of these awards.

***Must be a PTA in good standing to qualify.**

Six Tips

for Planning Family Events

Communicate

- * Talk to the school principal about hosting PTA Take Your Family to School Week. Work with school staff to develop plans, time frames, and goals.
- * Use the school and PTA websites and newsletters, as well as parent-teacher conferences and the local newspaper, to spread the word.
- * Personalize your invitations. Determine the best way to deliver invitations (postal mail, e-mail, backpack express, a phone call, etc.), and if possible, have invitations translated for non-English speaking families.

Recruit volunteers

- * Enlist a team of volunteers to help plan and run your PTA's events. Present potential volunteers with clearly defined job descriptions so they can choose roles that fit their schedules and interests.
- * Thank all volunteers for their help.

Collaborate with your community

- * Health-care groups, park districts, restaurants, faith-based groups, and local businesses are just a few of the many resources to tap for support. They may be willing to contribute volunteers, speakers, goods, or services. Just ask.
- * As employers and community stakeholders, these groups have a vested interest in the success of your school's students and will appreciate being involved in your PTA's work.



Remember, PTA Take Your Family to School Week events don't need to be elaborate; they simply need to make families feel welcome at the school.

Focus on student learning

- * Whether families participate in a lunch date, volleyball game, or science fair project, their involvement at the school helps their children succeed. Share with families how engaging in even recreational activities with their children supports student achievement.
- * Plan fun activities that have a learning component. Scrapbooking can teach students about journalism and employ their creative skills. Playing board games can build students' confidence in their strategic abilities, and develop students' memory skills, math prowess, and vocabulary.

Support parents

- * Plan events that not only build parent-school relationships but also strengthen parent-child relationships.
- * Make a positive and lasting impression by giving a warm welcome to all parents, step-parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, foster parents, and other caregivers. Reach out in particular to those families who are attending their first PTA function.

Involve parents in school decision making and advocacy

- * Organize events that bring parents, teachers, and principals together to discuss important school matters, such as school safety policies, expectations for student behavior, the curriculum, student testing, and the school's goals for the year.
- * Use family events to build support for taking action on school-related issues. Ask families to commit to bolstering the school's arts education program or improving the school's nutrition standards. (Go to www.pta.org/advocacy for information on how to advocate on behalf of children.)

These tips are based on PTA's National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs. To learn more about the standards, visit www.pta.org/standards.

Family Involvement Event Ideas

Student talent showcase



Host an evening filled with theater, music, and dance performed by the students. Host an exhibit of student artwork, photography, and literature in the school library, a multipurpose room, or another gathering place.

Food, glorious food



Ask families to attend a dinner banquet or weekend potluck brunch at the school. Invite parents to visit during the school day for lunch with their children or coffee and tea with the teachers and staff.

School tour



Plan an evening during which parents follow (a condensed version of) their children's daily schedules. Parents will become more familiar with the school staff and environment, and will hear from the teachers what their kids are working on.

The symbols next to each event indicate when the event could take place:



Morning or daytime



Evening



Weekend

Visit the PTA Great Idea Bank
(www.pta.org/greatideabank)
for more event ideas.

Game nights

In classrooms or a multipurpose room, set up board games for families to play in teams or as individuals. Organize tournaments to help families get to know new people.

Invention fair

Provide scrap material and challenge families to invent and build new gadgets from the materials on hand.

Family-student-faculty sports event

Organize games of softball, kickball, volleyball, or basketball. Have parents, students, and teachers compete against each other, or mix the teams up.

Reading circles

Invite local authors, the school librarian, or teachers to host a poetry slam or book discussions for parents and students. Hold these events in the school library.

Scrapbooking

Ask families to contribute photographs, programs, ticket stubs, and other mementos for a school memory book. Host a scrapbooking party and have families work in groups to create pages featuring various school and PTA events. Collect the pages at the end of the party and put them together into a book chronicling the past year. Be sure to put the completed scrapbook on display so all families can see the great events hosted by your PTA.

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Weekend

Tips

for Planning Inclusive Events

- * Hold activities in areas that are accessible to wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers.
- * Offer activities at different times of the day and on different days of the week to accommodate a variety of schedules.
- * Hang welcome signs and directions in multiple languages.
- * Have all participants—family members, teachers, volunteers, etc.—wear name tags.
- * Plan menus with options. Take into consideration vegetarian diets, peanut allergies, religious food restrictions, etc.
- * Personally welcome participants and thank them for coming.
- * Don't let costs keep families away. Seek sponsorships and grants to provide discounted or free admissions for those who may not otherwise be able to attend. Consider having the whole event sponsored.
- * Ask for feedback. Distribute a survey, set up a comment box, or provide an e-mail address to which participants can send comments.



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