



The Beacon

Western Region PTA®

New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.
-Branch of the National-

November 2009

Region Director Report

With leftover turkey still in the refrigerator, we see the winter holiday season has already arrived, as evidenced by the many festively decorated homes and storefronts. Our children are keeping us busy with plays, concerts, activity nights, and teacher conferences. I know your time is precious so my comments will be brief.

Last year we welcomed new faces in politics and PTA. We unveiled new National PTA and NYS PTA web sites and the membership management system, Just Between Friends. Our colleagues at the State and National levels continue to work hard to maintain communication systems and leadership programs for all delegates. As a region we offered two “webinars” to continue training on the Just Between Friends web site. Please stay tuned for additional scheduled times early next year or feel free to e-mail Julia Sheffler at training1@mailjbf.com.

The New York State PTA Annual Convention was held November 13 – 15. Our region was represented by 15 delegates. My most memorable event was the presentation by Byron V. Garrett, Chief Executive Officer of National PTA. His speech was captivating and informative. His book, *The ABC's Of Life*, is for everyone, not just for PTA members. A video snapshot of this book may be found on youtube.com or you may e-mail me and I will forward you a copy.

Next year’s NYS PTA Convention will be held in Buffalo and the following year, in Niagara Falls. Remember to budget to send members to this important and inspiring event. Leadership training is a critical part of PTA and a proper use of your funds.

I remind all members to check National, State, and Region web sites for updates on events, news, awards, etc. In keeping with the times, Western Region has added a Facebook link on our web page. I would also like to remind units and councils to contact your Assistant Director (AD) with any questions or concerns. All PTAs have been assigned to an AD and their names are posted on our Region web page as

well as in this edition of *The Beacon*. I am always available to you as well. I thank all who volunteered to be an AD.

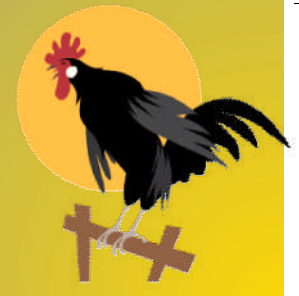
Last but not least, I encourage all units to attend our Region training events. This is a vital part of what your dues cover.

Wishing you all a safe and happy Holiday Season!

Maria Eagen
Region Director
Western Region PTA

Congratulations PTA Membership Early Bird Award Winners

Kenmore East HS
Heim Middle
Hamburg Central
Springville Elementary
North Collins Elementary
Thomas Jefferson
Transit Middle
Big Tree Elementary
W. Seneca West Elementary
Enterprise Charter
Anthony J. Schmidt Elementary
Pine Hill Primary Center



Reflections 2009-2010

"Beauty Is. . ."

On December 3rd Western Region will be collecting all of our Reflections entries from around the region. I am so excited to see what our talented students create this year! Categories include Visual Art, Musical Composition, Dance Choreography, Film Production, Photography, and of course Literature. Entries will be sent out for judging during the month of December. Western Region winners will be announced in late January or early February. I would like to thank all of our unit Reflection chairs - you have done an outstanding job, as always!

Our Western Region Reflections reception will be held on Friday, April 30, 2010** @ 7pm at Big Tree Elementary School. Look for more information to follow.

The 2010-2011 Reflections Theme has been announced: "Together We Can"

Any comments or questions please contact me at 824-0479.

Diane DeJoseph, Reflections Chair
Western Region PTA



*****Please note this date has changed from a previous announcement.***

North Collins Continues Family Activity Nights

On Oct. 20, the North Collins Elementary School PTA sponsored its second annual Family Math Night. Teachers from each grade level from kindergarten to sixth brought new ways to teach math from the Everyday Math Program currently used in the elementary building. Even pre-kindergarteners visited their teacher for some fun interactive games on a floor mat.

For most families, Everyday Math is an unfamiliar program and much different from the way they learned math "back in the day." Teachers also brought along activities and games like Multiplication Baseball, Factor Bingo and math flash-cards from the program for families to take for practice at home.

Kathy Conners-Meisenburg displayed online math programs and the current games on the Everyday Mathematics Program. In addition to sponsoring the evening, PTA supplied refreshments as well as giveaways of white boards, decks of cards, and dice as door prizes to families in attendance. The event drew more than 75 students and their parents and grandparents.

In all, the evening provided families an opportunity to have fun while learning and spending some quality time together. The North Collins Elementary PTA will sponsor a Family Movie Night and several other family events throughout the school year.

Brenda Musacchio, Vice President
North Collins Elementary School PTA



Blue Ribbon Schools Award

On September 15 2009, the 2009 National Blue Ribbon Schools [were] announced by U. S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan. 314 public and private schools [were] honored at a ceremony in Washington, D.C., November 2-3. Two people from each school, the principal and a teacher, [were] invited to the ceremony. Each school [received] a plaque and a flag to signify their Blue Ribbon School status. *From: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/awards.html> This award of excellence recognizes successful programs leading to higher student achievement. Big Tree's Parents As Reading Partners (PARP), a PTA program, is one of the ways the school succeeds in involving parents. Editor.*

Big Tree Elementary held a Blue Ribbon Day on November 10th, to celebrate our National School of Excellence Award from the US Department of Education. The school had a morning ceremony which included raising of the Blue Ribbon flag, award presentations by Assemblyman Quinn and Supervisor Walters, remarks by Superintendent DeCarli, a musical tribute by Frontier High School Students, and other special surprises. A breakfast followed, and many current and retired staff, administrators, and Board Members were in attendance. The afternoon events included pep rallies, variety shows, and faculty volleyball games. John Corto of the Buffalo Bills added to the excitement. The evening Open House was made all the more special with exhibits of pictures and videos which displayed the history and pride of the school. It was a fun and rewarding day for Big Tree!



Joanne C. Saniewski, Principal Big Tree Elementary School

**Mark Gillen, President
Big Tree Elementary PTA**

Williamsville PTSA Council News

On Tuesday, November 17, the Williamsville PTSA Council hosted their annual Board of Education Recognition. The community was invited to help recognize the volunteer efforts of the nine board members. A reception, featuring refreshments and the musical talents of the Williamsville North Jazz, preceded the regular scheduled board meeting.

The formal program included remarks by the PTSA Council Co-Presidents, Mary Perna Greenwald and Linda Ball, and Superintendent Dr. Howard Smith. Country Parkway Elementary School chorus members sang two songs of gratitude directed to the board members. Each board member was presented with a CD of inspirational songs and music performed at Williamsville Central's 28th Annual Wind Ensemble Festival.

Next on the Williamsville PTSA Council calendar is the 34th Annual Holiday Craft Show on Saturday, December 5 and Sunday, December 6. The two day craft show will feature over 130 local crafters. It will be held at the Heim Schools from 10 am to 4 pm both days. Food will be available, supporting the fundraising efforts of high school clubs. Admission will be \$2.00.

This popular holiday tradition is the PTSA Council scholarship fundraiser. Fifteen scholarships and awards are bestowed annually at the three Williamsville high schools.

The Power of Membership

Our membership can be compared to the electrical lines that carry power- the power of NYS PTA - to shape the future of our children and youth. Our power comes from the strength of our numbers.

Here in the Western Region PTA, this year's membership drive is humming along in all of our units. Each unit has been issued the same challenge goal as last year- to increase your membership by five members over last year's total. In 2008-2009, nineteen of 66 units met this goal and received the High Five Award from State Membership Chairman (and Western Region's own) Kelly Stephenson.

As we move into the second half of the school year, we encourage you to do an "energy" assessment of your current membership. Is there a way to reach out to more parents and possibly grandparents? Are you making progress toward achieving 100% teacher membership? Can we gain the support of community members who share our PTA mission? Check out page 15 in the Membership section of the NYS Resource Guide (also available on line at nyspta.org) for "Ways to Spark Your Membership Campaign".

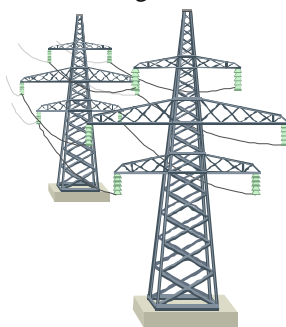
Your unit's membership is connected to the NYS PTA power grid. Let's keep the power turned on!

Thank you to all the units, listed on page 1, who made early bird membership payments.

Congratulations to SPRINGVILLE ELEMENTARY PTA., the Western Region winner for the early bird drawing. This unit will receive a \$25 incentive award from NYS PTA that can be redeemed at the NYS PTA Store.

Congratulations to HERITAGE HEIGHTS PTA, an elementary school unit in the Sweet Home School district. They are our unit with the highest membership growth in 2008-2009 and recipient of a \$50 incentive award from NYS PTA.

**Patty Frazier, Membership Chair
Western Region PTA**



Assistant Directors

The Assistant Director is a Western Region PTA Board member, who acts as a liaison or advisor to a PTA unit or Council. All Western Region Units and Councils have been assigned to an Assistant Director. Your AD will be contacting you this fall to offer help and advice.



Please write the name of your AD in your 2009-2010 Directory.

We thank all those who stepped forward to volunteer for this important Board role:

- Sue Andrijczuk—Frontier Council, Ken-Ton Council, Sweethome Council, Williamsville Council, Big Tree, Cloverbank, Blasdell & Pinehurst Elementary Schools, Frontier Middle and Frontier Central High School, Frontier SEPSTA
 Etta Czaja—Buffalo Elementary School of Technology, Winchester Elementary, West Seneca West Elementary, George E. Blackman ECC #54, Community School #53
 Anne Ehrlich—North Collins, Anthony J. Schmidt, Lakeshore Middle, Springville Elementary, Colden Elementary, Eden
 Patrice Freeman—Transit Middle, Casey Middle, Mill Middle, Maple East, Heim Middle, Williamsville North, South, and East High Schools, Clarence SEPTSA, Williamsville SEPTSA
 George Kimble—Oracle, Community, Enterprise, Maritime, Global Charter
 Shirley Lam—Cheektowaga Central Middle, High School, Pine Hill Pre-K, Union East Elementary, Cleve Hill District
 Linda Leising—Heim, Dodge, Forest, Maplewest Elementary Schools, Country Parkway
 Liz Sloan—Amherst Middle/High School, Smallwood Drive, Sweet Home High School, Glendale Elementary, Maplemere Elementary., Windermere Elem., Heritage Heights, Sweet Home Middle, Alexander Elementary, Akron Elementary
 Kelly Stephenson—Hamburg Central
 Karen Whitelaw—Alexander Hamilton, Ben Franklin, Thomas A. Edison, Charles Lindbergh, Theodore Roosevelt, Ben Franklin Middle, Thomas Jefferson, Kenmore Middle, Kenmore East and West High Schools, Ken-Ton SEPTSA

**Anne Ehrlich, Treasurer
Western Region PTA**

Membership Memo-

Home computer issues have kept the weekly membership memo out of the inbox of unit presidents and membership chairmen. I hope to have this resolved for 2010. In the interim, I would like to hear your membership success stories or offer assistance with your unit membership drive. You can email me at membership@westernregionpta.org. -Patty

Top 10 Reasons for Attending the 113th Annual NYS PTA Convention

- 1 Working with 276 delegates representing all 16 regions of NYS PTA to shape “Where We Stand” on key issues.
- 2 Being inspired and challenged by the words of Byron Garrett, National PTA CEO as he outlined his vision for our national organization.
- 3 Witnessing PTA volunteers and partners at all levels advocating for our children, youth, and families on topics ranging from keeping arts in education to healthy school lunches to drug detoxification programs.
- 4 Attending workshops that in- formed and provided a forum for units to ask questions and share best practices.
- 5 Hearing the newly appointed NYS Education Commissioner Dr. David Steiner give his assessment of our public education system and his planned initiatives for improvement.
- 6 Taking the opportunity to meet and discuss local PTA with our state counterparts at their State Chairmen and Region displays and anytime you crossed their paths throughout the weekend.
- 7 Exploring over 75 proven program and fundraising options in the Exhibitor’s Hall.
- 8 Shopping for all things PTA at the PTA Store- pins, anyone?
- 9 Experiencing the “Wow” talent of NYS students in the Reflections gallery.
- 10 Remembering to save the dates November 12-14 for the 2010 convention to be held in Buffalo!



Patty Frazier
Western Region Membership Chair

Education Update from the 2009 NYS PTA Annual Convention

At the 2009 New York State PTA Annual Convention in Saratoga Springs, the newly appointed NYS Education Commissioner and President of the University of the State of New York (USNY) David Steiner spoke to PTA members regarding current issues in education. Steiner placed great emphasis on the growing need to improve upon the current quality and status of education in NYS.

Steiner addressed the crowd stating that teacher preparation programs must continue to heighten standards in order to produce stronger and more knowledgeable leaders in education. He feels educators should be monitored and held accountable by skills rubrics and performance assessments. He supports the concept that improvement in teacher quality will directly result in stronger student achievement.

A major goal addressed by Steiner is to establish a common curriculum for each of the core academic subjects taught across NYS. With this change, Steiner feels New York’s students will achieve a uniform level of education no matter where they are.

Additionally, Steiner wishes to improve upon the quality of education students will receive, through increasingly challenging state standards. This change will help to raise the bar in student achievement with an end result of students receiving a greater level of education.

As he further addressed the topic of curriculum, Steiner explained that curriculum and assessments have become “too much of the same.” He stated that the “test is important, but it is not the curriculum.” Steiner feels that state assessments have pressured many educators into taking a new approach to teaching their curriculums based on assessments. Here Steiner feels students are missing out on major aspects of academics due to the fact that many teachers skip over subjects and topics that might not be addressed on the state assessments. Overall, Steiner urges educators to approach all aspects of the curriculum in a fair and even manner rather than focusing on the key components of the test.

For more information regarding Education Commissioner David Steiner or NYS Education topics please visit: www.nysed.gov.

Keri Kozak, Education Chair
Western Region PTA

Teen Depression and Suicide

By Mark Nowak, Director of Marketing/Public Relations, BryLin Hospitals

Clinical Depression is a serious illness that can affect anybody, including teenagers. Teen Depression is defined as an illness when the feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and despair persist and interfere with a child or adolescent's ability to function. Depression can affect one's thoughts, feelings, behavior, and overall health. Most people with depression can be helped with treatment, however, most depressed people never seek out or receive the help they need.

About 10% of Americans suffer from a depressive illness. Some experts estimate that 4 - 5% of adolescents suffer from teen depression. Dr. Balvinder Kang, a Psychiatrist and Medical Director at BryLin Hospitals, states, "If someone suffers from clinical depression, they can't just 'pull themselves together' and get better. It is important to seek professional intervention".

If one or more of these signs of depression persist, parents should seek help:

- Frequent sadness, tearfulness, crying
- Hopelessness
- Decreased interest in activities; inability to enjoy previously favorite activities
- Persistent boredom; low energy
- Social isolation, poor communication
- Low self esteem and guilt
- Increased irritability, anger, or hostility
- Frequent complaints of physical illnesses, such as headaches and stomachaches
- Frequent absences from school or poor performance in school
- A major change in eating and/or sleeping patterns
- Thoughts or expressions of suicide or self-destructive behavior
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Self-injury, such as cutting



As the rate of teen depression rises, so does the incidence of suicide. An estimated 80% of adolescents contemplating suicide will give clues that they are suicidal. "If you suspect that your child or someone you know is desperate for help, it's important to seek help for that person immediately. The number one cause of teen suicide is untreated depression", says Dr. Kang.

Suicide is the third leading cause of death in youth aged 15 to 24. More teenagers and young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia, influenza, and chronic lung disease combined. Almost 4,300 young people aged 10 to 24 died in this country by suicide in the year 2002.

Because most depressed children, adolescents, and young adults do not seek help on their own, parents have to recognize the symptoms and seek help. Without proper treatment, their illness can last for weeks, months, years, or a lifetime.

For more information on teenage depression, call BryLin Hospitals at 716-886-8200 or visit www.brylin.com. BryLin Hospitals is Western New York's only private provider of inpatient psychiatry and outpatient substance abuse care with specialized programs for children, adolescents, adults, and older adults.

(Statistics provided by the National Alliance on Mental Illness -NAMI.)

GOVERNOR PATERSON SIGNS GROUNDBREAKING DWI LEGISLATION INTO LAW

Law Strengthens Penalties for Those Who Endanger Children by Driving While Intoxicated; Protects Young Passengers

Governor David A. Paterson on 11/18/2009 signed into law Governor's Program Bill No. 204, the Child Passenger Protection Act, now known as Leandra's Law. The legislation makes it a felony for individuals to drive while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs (DWI) with children in the car. Previously, this was considered a misdemeanor offense and could be treated as a traffic violation. The law also marks the first time that New York State has mandated ignition interlocks for all misdemeanor and felony DWIs.

"When I introduced The Child Passenger Protection Act - now known as Leandra's Law - it was because too often drivers under the influence of alcohol or drugs chose to compromise not only their own lives, but also the lives of our children. Today, we say enough," Governor Paterson said. "This legislation sets some of the toughest DWI penalties in the nation, providing law enforcement officials with the tools they need to prosecute offenders. I thank my colleagues in the Senate and Assembly for working to prevent future tragedies of young lives needlessly cut short."

Lenny Rosado, father of Leandra Rosado for whom the bill is named, said: "Today is a glorious day. I would like to thank Governor Paterson for his leadership on this issue. He is a good and honest man. We spoke parent to parent and I believe in him as a man, a parent and leader. We stand together today to save more lives."

Senate Majority Conference Leader John L. Sampson said: "Drunk driving has cost too many New Yorkers their lives, and the time has come for us to hold drunk drivers accountable. I commend Senators Dilan and Fuschillo for their bipartisan leadership, along with Governor Paterson and the Assembly, in cracking down on reckless behavior and making New York safer."

Senate President Pro Tempore Malcolm A. Smith said: "By strengthening both prevention and punishment, this legislation is a strong step forward in our ongoing effort to eliminate the needless and tragic deaths caused by drunk drivers. Too many lives are put on the line every day through this reckless and thoughtless act, and it is long overdue that we take a tough stance against this unacceptable conduct."

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said: "We have heard from the family of Leandra Rosado, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and law enforcement, district attorneys and concerned citizens from across New York State, who demand the comprehensive protections and punishments that this law will provide. With the passage of this legislation, New York will have the toughest sentences for any first time DWI offense in the nation, including mandatory interlock systems for those convicted of drunken driving. This sends an important message; drive intoxicated with a child, get charged with a felony.

Under the new law:

- First time offenders driving while intoxicated (.08 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) or more) or impaired by drugs while a child of younger than 16 years old is in the vehicle may be charged with a class E felony punishable by up to 4 years in State prison.
- Individuals charged with driving with a blood alcohol level of .08 or greater and with a child under the age of 16 in the vehicle would automatically have their license suspended pending prosecution.
- Courts must order all drivers convicted of a misdemeanor or felony DWI to install and maintain an ignition interlock on any vehicle owned and operated by such driver for at least 6 months, in addition to any term imprisonment. The Department of Probation and Correctional Alternatives will issue regulations that will provide counties with different options for supervising the use of interlocks, so as to ensure that they can determine the most appropriate mechanism for their needs.
- Drivers who drive while intoxicated or impaired by drugs and cause the death of a child younger than 16 in the car may be charged with a Class B felony, punishable by up to 25 years in State prison.
- Drivers who drive while intoxicated or impaired by drugs and cause serious physical injury to a child in the vehicle may be charged with the Class C felony, punishable by up to 15 years in State prison.
- Individuals who are a parent, guardian, custodian or otherwise legally responsible for a child who are charged with driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs while that child is a passenger in the car would be reported to the Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment by the arresting agency.

Deputy Secretary for Public Safety and Commissioner of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services Denise E. O'Donnell said: "Leandra's Law has tougher penalties for those who drive drunk with children in the car and a strong focus on prevention. Those states which require mandatory interlock devices have 35 percent fewer DWI offenses. This legislation will prevent more senseless deaths and will save lives."

Interlock provisions mandate the installation of a device that makes the car inoperable unless the individual demonstrates

(Continued on page 8)



Western Region PTA Calendar – 2009-2010

December 2009

- Thu 3 Reflections drop-off - Greenacres Bldg - Ken Ton School District
10 AM – 2 PM and 4 PM – 8 PM
- Fri 18 Board Meeting and Holiday Gathering - Maria Eagen's House

January 2010

- Fri 15 DEADLINE for Jenkins Scholarship Award (NYS PTA)
- Tue 26 Board Meeting - Oracle Charter School, Buffalo School District

February 2010

- Mon 1 DEADLINE for Youth Humanitarian Award (WRPTA)
- Sat 6 Legislative Breakfast, Millennium
- Wed 10 Founders Day Celebration Dinner
- Mon 15 DEADLINE for Phoebe Appearson Hearst Award (National PTA)

March 2010

- Mon 8 Board Meeting - Ken-Ton School District Building
- Sat 13 Jenkins Scholarship Interviews
- Wed 31 FINAL MEMBERSHIP PAYMENT DUE (NYS PTA)

April 2010

- Fri 23 Reflections Reception - site TBA – 7 PM
- Thu 29 Board Meeting - Hamburg Central High School, Hamburg School District.

May 2010

- Sat 1 DEADLINE for Newsletter, Ruth Huber, Spotlight on Youth awards (WRPTA)
- Thu 20 Spring Conference (WRPTA Annual Meeting) - Ken-Ton School District Bldg

June 2010

- Fri 4 Board Meeting and Picnic – site TBA
- Tue 15 DEADLINE ANNUAL OFFICERS CONTACT INFORMATION ("Form A")
- Tue 15 DEADLINE Leadership (Skzyypek) Award (NYS PTA)
- Mon 21 President's Meeting – site TBA
- Fri-Sun 11-13 National PTA Convention – Memphis, TN

August 2010

- Wed 18 Summer Leadership Conference (WRPTA) - 7PM - site TBA



(Continued from page 7)

via breathalyzer that he or she is not under the influence of alcohol. The installation of such a device as a sanction for a DWI offense was previously left to the court's discretion. Experience in other states has shown interlocks to be an extraordinary effective tool in curtailing drunk driving.

In passing this legislation, New York joins 35 states that have special "child endangerment" laws to impose higher DWI sanctions against individuals who place a child passenger at risk. It joins twelve other states with across-the-board mandatory interlock laws.

Presidents & Principals Dinner, October 15, 2009



Western Region PTA Director Maria Eagen congratulates Presidents & Principals keynote speaker Vito Borrello on winning WR's Community Service Award. Mr. Borrello, the President of EPIC, the Buffalo organization also known as Every Person Influences Children, has been instrumental in developing the partnership between NYS PTA and EPIC.

Thanksgiving

This is my first Thanksgiving without my parents. I know that losing one's parents as an old lady is not as hard as losing them as a young one. Nevertheless, I feel sort of orphaned.

My parents won't be tasting my turkey this year. Thanksgiving has always been my family's favorite holiday. We used to celebrate with another family: a couple my parents became friends with when they were wild and young and on their own in NYC. When the other couple died, their kids inherited the job of family elders but our Thanksgiving tradition did not survive the passing of their parents or the pressures of marriage in the age of divorce.

September 1998, my Mom was diagnosed with lung cancer and, expecting her to be a goner, I insisted on getting a day off on Thanksgiving Friday to travel to make what I thought would be the last turkey cooked under her supervision. (I checked the turkey through carry-on at the airport. I still like to imagine what they thought that child-sized critter in the suitcase was. The age of packing pureed squash in a tote bag is gone. You can't get more than 2 servings in a quart size zip bag.) Although the past decade has been difficult, my brothers and I and our families have enjoyed many jolly Thanksgivings since then. Ten grandchildren will remember their grandparents: old, at home, eating solid food, driving.

So my Dad died in the spring of 2008 and my Mom made it to the new year of 2009. They outlived their parents by a lot. My parents were great advocates for civil rights and they would have been so thrilled to see the inauguration of a man of color. They were rabid Yankees fans and would have loved this year's world series. But they became old folks and had they lived, they would now be prisoners of economic fear. They would also have been terrified of catching H1N1 from one of the grandchildren. They were spared that fear.

So what am I thankful for? I have never seen children so ill with flu as I have seen this year, now that I am working part time at Children's again. Healthy 15 year olds come in with fever and cough and in 1 day, their lungs fill up with whatever it is that makes an xray white. The worst off wind up on a ventilator and the worst of those die.

In my school district, 50% of the kids were absent with "flu-like" illnesses. (The CDC reported one case of confirmed ordinary seasonal flu from April to November. Anyone with a "flu-like illness" in our neighborhood has the H1N1 flu.) None of our kids in my school district were hospitalized. None of them ended up with ruined lungs. None of them died.

When you consider that there might have been 50,000 kids

with H1N1 in Western NY, I give thanks this year that so few became gravely ill. And I am so terribly sorry for the ones who did.

Be thankful for small joys.

**Anne Ehrlich, Beacon Editor
Western Region PTA**

*Call, text, leave a message: 961-8986 or
email me:
anneehrich@yahoo.com .*



PARP - Parents As Reading Partners

Reading is the most basic skill students learn. From school books to game instructions, reading is everywhere in life. Parents As Reading Partners (PARP) was established by NYS PTA over 20 years ago to encourage kids to read well and love to read.

As you being to think about a PARP program this year, remember to keep it simple and keep it fun! To start your reading program, pick a time frame and goal and a fun theme. Once you have that set, the rest is an open book! Whether you chose to have a PARP program for 1-2 months or all year long, it is up to your PTA. The PARP program encourages students to read at least 15 minutes a day, so this can help when choosing a goal. Selecting a theme helps to move the program along and keep the students interested and motivated. A theme can be anything! Some of the programs that have been done include:

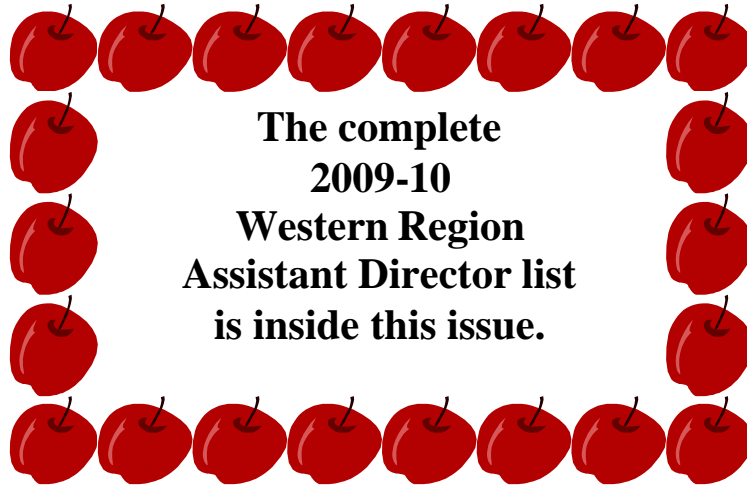
- The Solar System (8 planets = 8 weeks of PARP)
- Candyland
- Passport to Reading (continents)
- What makes you smile?
- Animals (zoo, jungle, endangered, farm, pets).

You can pick a theme that your school is involved in or a special interest, such as music, sports, or art.

Then, decide what you will do with the program. There are lots of possibilities such as family reading night, a big celebration at the end, or rewards or certificates for the students that participate. No matter what your budget, a PARP program can be done. Simple ideas such as using the morning announcements to encourage reading or announce students reaching their goals, are effective and cost nothing.

For help with a PARP program or to share your ideas with others, please email me at tracyconway@roadunner.com. Much success to all of you and remember to keep your ideas handy for when you file your PARP award application. May everyone have safe and happy holidays!

**Tracy Conway, PARP Chair
Western Region PTA**



**The complete
2009-10
Western Region
Assistant Director list
is inside this issue.**

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**WESTERN REGION PTA[®]
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Director: Maria Eagen
Associate Directors:
Diane DeJoseph
George Kimble
Recording Secretary:
Shirley Lam
Corresponding Secretary:
Sue Andrijczuk
Treasurer: Anne Ehrlich
Immediate Past Director:
Etta Czaja

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