**Tips for Involving Everyone in the Community**

**Involving staff**

* Enlist the support of your principal. A principal's encouragement to join can go a long way.
* Provide a breakfast for staff prior to the start of the school year. Use this breakfast as an opportunity to talk to staff about the value and importance of joining and partnering with your PTA.
* Include PTA materials in information packets given to staff at the start of each school year. Include information about possible grants if your PTA offers them.
* Remind staff that PTA is more than a local fundraising group for their school. It is an advocacy organization focused on student success!
* Print out personal invitations asking staff to join.
* Remind staff that for the cost of a few coffees they can support our national organization of more than five million members!
* Award staff with a party or luncheon when 100% staff membership is reached.
* “Stars Walk of Fame”: Place a very visible star on the door with the teacher’s name when they join.
* Provide opportunity drawings for staff who join with donated items, gift cards, prime parking spot for a month, or other incentives.
* Hold membership competitions between departments or between neighboring schools.
* “Show Your Card” benefits: Provide free coffee and pastries for staff once or twice a month for those who show their membership cards.

**Involving students**

• Provide membership invitations in the summer registration packets to incoming students for all students: elementary, middle & high schools.

• Distribute a special survey for students to determine their interests.

• Create a peer-to-peer connection. Invite students from student government or another involvement that students look up to and have them talk to the student body about benefits of PTA.

• Partner with ASB for discounts at the student store or free/discounted admission to dances, etc. PTA/PTSA members can use their membership card as a school discount card.

• Show your PTA card for root beer floats!

• Award “spirit points” for PTA/PTSA membership.

• Offer scholarship opportunities for students.

• Offer discounts for special events or activities to student members.

• Include student performances at your meetings to attract an audience.

• Sponsor a career day, including mock interviews.

• Prepare a resource book for students to inform them of volunteer opportunities.

• Encourage students to fill leadership positions – it looks great on college applications.

• Ask for student assistance when establishing themes and programs.

• Establish a theme for the entire membership year and create competitions among classes.

• Invite school clubs and organizations to be involved, share ideas and events.

• Involve students in the planning of events, such as Staff Appreciation Week.

• Encourage student delegates to attend the Annual Washington State PTA Convention and Washington State PTA Legislative Assembly.

• Include PTA/PTSA meetings, student events and activities on school calendars.

• Send birthday cards to students on their 18th birthdays and include a Voter Registration Card and information on current legislation of interest to youth.

• Review your meeting times to determine if a change will encourage more student participation.

• Set up a PTA/PTSA table on student registration days with PTA information relevant to youth. Use a storyboard to highlight activities that benefit students.

• Include the signature of the student body president on the invitation to join PTA/PTSA.

• Ask civics teachers to promote the advocacy opportunities in PTA

**Involving high school parents**

• Offer a “connected message”; use a phone bank or other communication tool to personally encourage parents to join.

• Knock on your neighbors’ doors, introduce yourself, and put a familiar face on the organization.

• Help students with tutoring or other needs.

• Have a theme for each PTA event. For example, bring in college recruiters, financial advisers and planners. Have one college night for parents and one for students.

• Collaborate with your local chamber of commerce to host a job fair.

• Host a presentation on adolescent development.

• Offer workshops or presentations on bullying and Internet safety, which are very relevant topics for high school parents.

• Host a curriculum night. Help parents understand what courses are needed for graduation, which ones give students college credit, and so forth.

• Ask parents what they need from PTA and provide it!

**Involving community members and business people**

• Write letters to city council, elected officials, school board members encouraging them to join.

• Attend Rotary, Optimist, Kiwanis Club meetings and recruit their members.

• Host a PTA table at any/every community event.

• Partner with community groups on events (police for a bike safety event, local library for a read-athon, area health organization for a health and safety fair) and ask those you work with to join PTA.

• Write to newspapers discussing the importance of membership to the community.

• Invite school board members to join your PTA/PTSA.

• Invite senior citizens to activities (such as school plays) and encourage community partners to supply transportation.

• Invite senior citizens to be readers in classrooms or to be substitute grandparents.

• Distribute PTA/PTSA membership forms to district staff, school site councils, and advisory councils or committees.

• Incorporate local community organizations and businesses into your activities/programs.

• Ask local businesses for discount cards to be used as giveaways – to familiarize the school community with their services.

• Provide local businesses with a PTA member banner, a plaque or a window decal to hang in their establishment.

* Invite your elected officials to every PTA/PTSA event; inform the media that they will be there.

• Ask local elected officials to participate in promoting student performances.

• Remind community members that they do not have to be parents to belong to PTA.

• Invite business leaders to sponsor an activity or event.

• Have students visit the senior center to invite residents to a PTA function – or host a PTA function at the senior center.

• Offer free or discounted tickets to seniors for school sporting events and performances.

• Promote tutoring/mentoring programs that involve seniors and students.

• Ask a local theatre to sponsor a family movie night.

**Involving those who speak other languages**

• Attend an ELL (English Language Learner) meeting with a translator and explain the role of PTA.

• Hold a multicultural event that involves everyone (diversity week, multi-cultural fair or exposition, speakers on cultural competency, cultural assemblies).

• Have a board liaison position to the ELL parent group.

• Have a committee for each “group” in your community.

• Provide interpretation for those that need it. Recruit parents to help with language challenges, recruit translators from the community, provide headsets, hold bilingual meetings, etc.

• Keep parents informed and provide information of value.

**Involving special needs families**

• Have a special education chairman on your board.

• Focus on advocacy to interest special education parents.

• Ask special needs families for suggestions and input on activities and events

• Provide information for special needs families on district, regional and state resources

• Work with other schools in the feeder pattern to help special needs families through the transitions from elementary to middle school, middle school to high school and from high school to beyond.

**Involving men**

Recruiting men as PTA members may mean rethinking how your PTA is run on a day-to-day basis. If your PTA mostly relies on female caregivers, reaching out to men may involve breaking down barriers and trying new approaches and strategies:

* **Communicate directly to dads** – How you and your PTA speak to members and potential members can impact the level of men’s involvement. Simply slimming down language and shortening messages in your communications can be more appealing to male readership. And be always sure to explain and emphasize how men’s unique involvement benefits kids.
* **Just ask** – Nearly half of men who responded to a recent National PTA survey said they haven’t gotten involved with PTA***simply because they weren’t asked***. Those involved said their spouses’ participation led to their own involvement. So encourage women in your PTA to invite the men in their children’s lives to get involved, and take your PTA to places with large male contingents – such as service clubs – to share our message and ask for participation and membership.
* **Create men-focused groups and events** – Surveys also show that men prefer to volunteer for hands-on projects and dad-only events with clear expectations. So organize special events and groups for dads to enjoy working on and being involved with together and define volunteer roles and expectations.
* **Respect men’s time** – More than 70 percent of recently surveyed dads said time was a barrier to PTA involvement, and the majority said they wanted fewer meetings at more convenient times. Make efforts to schedule workdays in mind for all parents and organize results-driven meetings with clear agendas and topics.
* **Celebrate engagement** – When you start getting more men involved, it’s great to celebrate! Letting the school community know will help emphasize and publicize your welcoming environment for all parents and members. Thank dads publicly at meetings and in your PTA communications, and always encourage more male membership – we’re all in it together for our kids!