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Two Leaders for Child Health & Wellness

National PTA History on Federal Child Health and Wellness Policy

PTA® has long sought to improve child nutrition and wellness and prides itself on having been instrumental in the formation of federal policy in this area since its inception in 1897. One of the fundamental purposes of National PTA has always been to preserve children's health and protect them from harm. As early as 1899, PTA, known as the National Congress of Mothers, advocated for a national health bureau to provide families and communities with health information. Its sustained efforts bore fruit when the Children's Bureau was established in 1912 as a part of the U.S. Public Health Service.

In 1923, PTA worked to ensure the provision of hot lunches in schools. In the 1940s and '50s, PTA was involved in the establishment and expansion of the school milk programs. The association also worked to ensure the original passage of both the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act.

First Lady Launches Campaign to Combat Childhood Obesity, Let's Move!

First Lady Michelle Obama has formally launched her "Let's Move!" campaign to combat childhood obesity. This campaign is a comprehensive effort to raise public awareness and take simple, achievable steps to increase the health of our nation's children. The First Lady has outlined her basic principles for this effort by identifying the following four goals:

1. Helping parents make healthy family choices
2. Providing healthier food in schools
3. Helping kids be more physically active
4. Providing greater access to healthy, affordable food

In order to achieve these goals, the Let's Move campaign will seek to bring together a wide variety of stakeholders in child health, including parents, community leaders, the medical community, industry, nonprofit associations, and school officials. The First Lady has shown a dedication to health and wellness since moving into the White House, including planting and maintaining a garden on the South Lawn of the White House with local fifth graders and hosting a Healthy Kids Fair in October 2009 in which the Burleigh Manor Middle School PTA was invited to participate.

**PTA Healthy Lifestyles
& Let's Move!**



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Current National PTA Public Policy Efforts on Child Health

At the federal level, PTA is actively pursuing the expansion and improvement of child nutrition programs through the upcoming reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. In both our 2009 and 2010 versions of our Public Policy Agenda, PTA has prioritized this reauthorization. Our recommendations for the reauthorization include specific ways to improve the content and implementation of local wellness policies, increase access to healthy foods and beverages, limit access to the least healthy offerings in schools, and provide the support needed for those implementing child nutrition programs to improve outcomes.

State and local PTAs have also been active in not only improving federal policies and programs, but in their implementation. In Cobb County, GA, these efforts led the school district to fully embrace the USDA funded National Farm to School Program, and now fresh, local produce is featured in school lunches throughout the district. PTA members all across the country have served on the school wellness committees which developed their federally mandated local wellness policies, and many continue to actively pursue the monitoring, improvement, and implementation of the policies. This effort has led to many permanent, PTA-led school wellness committees nationwide. In fact, Texas PTA partnered with the Texas Medical Association and other stakeholders to enact a law requiring every Texas school district to form a School Health Advisory Council in 2001, three years before the federal government acted.

PTA Healthy Lifestyles Program

The goal of PTA's Healthy Lifestyles program is to promote nutrition and physical activity in order to address the nation's growing childhood obesity epidemic. As a part of this effort, National PTA celebrates **Healthy Lifestyles Month** each November and offers **Healthy Lifestyle Grants** of up to \$1,000 to local PTAs to engage parents, schools and families in the following activities:

- Increasing access to and awareness of healthy foods
- Increasing physical activity for students and families
- Providing healthier food in schools
- Engaging and training family and community members in improving physical activity and healthy eating habits

Since the program began in 2007, PTA has given grants to 107 PTAs in 34 states, impacting over 67,000 students. In 2009 alone, 45 PTAs contributed nearly 4,000 volunteer hours and impacted over 20,000 students in their communities. Learn more at PTA.org/HealthyLifestyles.



Local PTA Success Stories

Increasing Access to and Awareness of Healthy Foods:

On November 14, **Southern Boone County PTA in Ashland, MO** invited the community to participate in a work day for their school garden, the SoBoCo Learning Garden. During the event, over 50 students and family members built greenhouses and learned how to prepare food harvested from the garden.

Increasing Physical Activity:

In September 2009, **Pershing Hill PTA in Fort Meade, MD** began an afterschool running club for girls, called Girls ROCK (Girls Running with Optimism, Character and “Konfidence”). The ten-week program was centered on creating a whole concept of strength: mentally, physically, and emotionally strong women. Forty-seven active duty women from the Air Force served as mentors to the girls in the program and helped them train for a 5K race that was held on the military base where the school is located.

Providing Healthier Food in Schools:

Paul Banks Elementary PTA in Homer, AK provided healthy snacks to their students every Tuesday and Thursday throughout the school year. As the students eat the new fruit or vegetable, students are taught about how the foods are grown, their nutritional benefits, and the different ways that they can be prepared.

Engaging and Training Families and Communities:

Leroy F. Greene in Sacramento, CA conducted Parents in Action training throughout February 2010. The training focused on engaging parents in the improvement of their school's environment, increasing healthy food and physical activity opportunities through school wellness policies, and strengthening parents' leadership and advocacy skills. Information was provided in both English and Spanish in order to reach the greatest number of parents and caregivers possible.

Visit PTA.org/HealthyLifestyles.



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PTA Overview

The National Parent Teacher Association® (PTA®) comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of family engagement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.



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**National
PTA®**

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