

Founders Day is a perfect time to renew dedication to the Purposes of the PTA that were defined by PTA's Founders more than a century ago. Each year in February, PTA honors the three founders as well as past and present PTA leaders. Through special programs and events, PTA also attempts to increase the awareness of its members and the community by highlighting achievements, activities, projects and goals. A portion of the Founders Day freewill offering collected during an observance is returned to the district PTAs to be used to extend PTA's work and develop leadership.

The Founders Day celebration was created in 1910 by Mrs. David O. Mears, a charter member of the National Congress of Mothers founded by Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst in Washington, D.C., on February 17, 1897. The Founders Day observance has continued through the change of organization names in 1925 to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the uniting in 1970 with the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, founded in 1926 by Selena Sloan Butler, to become the National PTA (A Brief History: Working Together for Children Since 1897 1.1.5).

Issues concerning immigrants, homeless children and families, the unemployed and the uneducated, and numerous health and safety concerns still need attention. However, through PTA advocacy to enact and enforce laws, children's health is better protected, and children are better fed, housed and educated, with parents more involved in their upbringing. The vision of the founders has been realized in many ways, and now it is up to current members to continue the vision.

#### **FOUNDERS DAY FREEWILL OFFERING: "PTA BIRTHDAY GIFT"**

Donations collected during Founders Day observances benefit the entire organization: unit, council, district PTAs, state and National PTA. California State PTA returns one-fourth of its offering to the district PTA and retains one-fourth for its work throughout the state. Half of the offering is sent to National PTA (Unit Remittance Form 5.1.7f; Forms, Chapter 9).

#### **District PTAs use the funds to:**

Organize new units and councils and strengthen PTAs and PTSAs. Train leaders through workshops. Offer leadership training and parliamentary procedure courses. Promote PTA publications and special projects. Plan special contacts with teachers and administrators to increase the value of the PTA to school and community.

#### **California State PTA uses the funds to:**

Service new units and councils. Strengthen PTAs and PTSAs. Provide special assistance to district PTAs and councils through leadership workshops. Conduct field services in local areas by California State PTA officers and members of commissions. Perform regional extension work throughout the state. Counsel with individuals and groups.

#### **National PTA uses the funds to:**

Provide requested field services (instructions, guidance and other assistance for California State PTA leaders). Train leaders. Promote contacts with educational groups. Disseminate materials that will further the aims and purposes of PTA. Hold conferences. Provide extension of parent-teacher services throughout the country.

#### **CREATING AN EVENT (CALIFORNIA STATE PTA TOOLKIT, 7.3; FORMS, CHAPTER 9)**

If the event is held in collaboration with community organizations or other PTAs, each participating unit, council or district PTA should follow the proper approval procedures as specified below.

The California State PTA strongly urges units, councils and district PTAs to refrain from serving alcoholic beverages at PTA functions. PTAs may not engage in the sale of alcoholic beverages. (See *Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide*, Red Section.)

#### **PRELIMINARY PLANNING**

- Begin six months in advance, if possible.
- Discuss holding an event and obtain approval from the PTA executive board, principal, or school representative.
- Ensure the event will not conflict with other unit, council or district PTA observances.
- Obtain a vote of approval for the event at a meeting of the association. Include a motion to disburse monies to cover the estimated cost involved.
- If being held off campus, obtain permission for facility use from appropriate manager. If asked to sign a Hold Harmless Agreement (1.3.4a, 5.5; *Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide*), contact the California State PTA insurance broker and your PTA president immediately.
- PTA president appoints the event chairman and committee. Determine the goals of the committee. Articulate what the unit hopes to accomplish with the activities.
- Appoint members to the planning committee. Unit bylaws and standing rules may have information to guide the members. If possible, include the principal or a faculty member, the public relations/publications coordinator (if the unit has one), and a student (Event Planning Worksheet, Forms, Chapter 9).
- Discuss budget needs with president and treasurer. Ideally, the budget should be planned with a line item for the event. The planned activities must stay within the budget. If necessary, the community may be asked to partner by donating materials, hospitality items and perhaps even a grant to underwrite the planned activity or event. Be realistic in estimating the costs. Remember to include possible custodial costs, publicity, and postage.

- Decide on a focus area, if any. Brainstorm ideas with the committee. Decide on activities that have the best chance for good participation from the student-body, the parents, and the community. If the unit has never held this event before, do not overwhelm the faculty with activities.
- Keep in mind past traditions but also investigate new ways to hold an appropriate event which will fit this school and community.
  - The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that disabled persons must be reasonably accommodated by modifying policies, making physical changes and obtaining equipment to assist their participation in an activity. For PTA meetings/events, this could include seating to accommodate an attendant accompanying a member or reserved seating in a location to accommodate a member's special need, providing written handouts to supplement discussion and/or providing qualified readers or interpreters for individuals having a hearing or sight impairment.
- Select a theme as the major focus, and decide on the type of program (e.g., family dinner, musical program).
- Review event material – make copies as needed. Obtain the procedure book, *National PTA Quick-Reference Guide*, *Our Children*, and the *PTA in California* from previous chairman, committee or president.
- Discuss rules and expectations with facility management. Put all agreements in writing. Determine if permission or permits from school district or city are needed.
- As early as possible, check school calendar, and decide on a date.
- Notify parents and community to “save the date” for event. Also send notes to past and present PTA presidents, leaders and award recipients, and school district and community leaders.
- Notify staff, explaining event goals and requesting their support.
- Schedule at least three committee meetings prior to event

#### EVENT DEVELOPMENT

- Begin three months in advance, if possible. Develop a timeline utilizing check sheets.
- Assign committee members to specific duties.
  - Service Providers/Speakers/Program Participants (at least two people): One person should be designated as the contact person on invitation letters; one person should assist with the paperwork (Service Provider/Speaker/Program Participant Check List, Forms, Chapter 9).
  - Publicity Campaign (at least one person): Publicize the event using news releases, PTA newsletter articles, posters for placement at local business locations, radio PSA “spots,” website promotion and e-mail alerts.
  - Handout/Flier (at least one person): Fliers to parents; attendee record form; permission slips, if necessary; service provider station signs.

- Operations (at least one person): Oversee facility, equipment and overall operations; check all speaker/program participant requirements; coordinate with school district and school custodian; ensure all equipment is in working order; consult with appropriate facility management; consider whether expansion is needed for additional service providers, and handle other logistic issues; clean up the event.
- Outreach (at least one person): Organize volunteers and coordinate hospitality. Select service providers to invite within the area. Send a letter of invitation requesting their participation, including a response due date (See *Toolkit*, Hold Harmless Agreement and Evidence of Insurance 1.3.4a, 5.5.2; Forms, Chapter 9).

#### OTHER SUGGESTIONS

- Devise a way to collect the offering, unless the unit chooses to budget a donation to be sent directly through channels. If so, announce this at the event.
- PTA awards may be presented during the event; for example, the Very Special Person Award, Honorary Service Award, Continuing Service Award, Golden Oak Award or the National PTA's Honorary Lifetime Achievement Award. Honor those deserving individuals who have promoted children's well-being. A committee should select recipients following the Awards recommendations (Awards 7.6; Forms, Chapter 9).
- Recognize your PTA milestones.
- Honor community and business leaders who have supported your PTA.
- Prepare remarks to pay tribute to parents and other caregivers, teachers, and student members of your PTA.
- Endow the future of PTA. Consider asking members to make a financial contribution in honor of Founders Day. Make sure to report your efforts.
- Set a membership recruitment goal equal to the number of years your PTA has been in existence. Ask parents, guardians, grandparents, teachers, friends and family to join the PTA.
- Include students in planning and events. Make sure students understand the importance of PTA at their school.
- Publicize the event. Include information about the history of the local PTA, or arrange for a feature about the history of the National PTA (Publicize PTA to the Larger Community 6.2.7).
- Send invitations. Provide a committee member's telephone number and e-mail address to make responding easier and more personal.
- Provide anyone attending the event the chance to join PTA. Involve the membership chairman.
- Plan decorations, nametags, mementos for special recognition in addition to HSA Program Awards, if any, and refreshments. Some units have birthday cakes. Involve the hospitality committee.

- Create a souvenir program. Include program information and PTA information (e.g., list of officers, local PTA history briefs, names of past officers and award recipients).
- Arrange for hospitality committee to greet all guests. Have the response list to identify special guests, and assist the president with introductions. Provide a guest book or page to sign.
- Assign a photographer to capture the event.
- Make large copies of historic photographs and use as place-mats, or enlarge and use as posters to place in the school or in the community.
- Shrink historic items and laminate for use as bookmarks and keepsake handouts.
- Give the publications coordinator information to make a Founders Day special edition newsletter and feature on the website.
- Check setup of the event stations and all audio-visual equipment.
- Welcome the service providers/speakers/program participants, and be sure to give them an evaluations sheet (Sample Evaluation Form, Forms, Chapter 9) that should be collected before they leave at the end of the event.
- Have volunteers sign in, including addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.
- Have at least two designated troubleshooters for the day and make sure that the service providers and volunteers know who they are.
- Clean up the facility and leave it in as good or better condition than it was at the start of the activity.

### AFTER THE EVENT

- Tabulate the evaluations.
- Send thank-you notes to all service providers/speakers/program participants and volunteers.
- Write an event report and place it in the procedure book. Include sample invitations, programs, photos and ideas for changes gleaned from the evaluations and comments from participants. Did the activities help to accomplish goals? Was there good participation from the faculty and the parents? Did the kids enjoy it? What are the recommendations for next year?
- Remind the treasurer to forward the Founders Day freewill offering through channels immediately. No motion is necessary for this action.

### PRE-CRUNCH

- Begin two months in advance.
- Send follow-up letter to confirm service provider participation, including a map of the school and parking location (Sample Participant Response Form Fig.7-1).
- Develop fliers to inform parents and community of event.
- Develop news releases.
- Request equipment from school district or facility manager to meet service provider needs.

### CRUNCH TIME

- Begin one month in advance.
- Be sure to have sufficient tables and chairs, as required by participating service providers. This information will be available upon receipt of response form.
- Provide custodian/facility manager with a detailed drawing of the layout for tables and chairs.
- Plan for access for the disabled.
- Recruit and schedule volunteers.
- Plan refreshments, such as coffee and donuts in the morning or a light lunch, for all participating service providers and volunteers.
- Check to ensure all equipment requirements can be met.
- Distribute event fliers and e-mail announcements to parents and community.
- Prepare service provider station signs.

### DAY OF THE EVENT

- Have nametags ready for all service providers/speakers/program participants and volunteers.
- Check to make sure hospitality area is in order and refreshments are prepared.

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