

Keeping Our Families and Communities Safe

Volume 41, Issue 9

As we reflect on the tragic loss of two young women in our communities, Ninth District PTA expresses our condolences to the Dubois and King families during this time of grief and unimaginable loss.

What we should learn from these tragedies is the need for a commitment to better equip and protect our children and teens. PTA leadership should remind parents and community members about child safety, stranger awareness and safety tips (referenced at the end of this article) and the importance of self defense. Collaborate with local law enforcement to keep current news and tools accessible for parents, grandparents, guardians, and our children.

The Department of Justice Missing and Exploited Children Program as well as the state Department of Justice offer quick access to a National Registry of Sex Offenders and the Megan's Law Data Base both available to the public.

From related research of the Census data base, the Department of Justice, The City-Schools Initiative, and the Blue Ribbon Panel on Children in Foster Care;

- California is home to the highest number of children in the Nation
- California has the highest number of children living in Foster Care in the Nation
- California has the highest number of children living

- in Poverty in the Nation, California is 48th in the Nation in school funding and
- California far surpasses the nation in number of registered sex offenders with a whopping 118,692

This is not a list to be proud of!

It is imperative that instruction, safety tips, tools and information are available to empower and protect our children on all levels.

Below is a brief list of self defense instruction underway across the county:

- Two self-defense instructors in the Poway Unified School District have offered FREE self-defense lessons for teens and pre-teens, and one has offered once-a-month refreshers.
- Rancho Bernardo High hosted a free self-defense program. Play It Safe was held last month for anyone 13 and older.
- In Escondido, the Palomar YMCA offers a free self-defense class for adults, and has added another new and free self-defense class for teenagers. Call the YMCA's teen center for more information at 760-745-7490.
- The city of Escondido is offering a \$15 self-defense class for ages 16 and older at the East Valley Community Center,

scheduled for 6 p.m., April 22 and 29, and a new class for students preparing to leave for college is scheduled for 6 p.m. May 20. To register, call 760-839-4691 or visit Escondido.org/recreation.

- In San Marcos Self-defense classes are routinely offered through the city's community services department, Escondido city council members have asked staff members to schedule a town hall meeting or workshop with representatives of the San Marcos Sheriff's Station.
- The City of Vista has offered self-defense classes for about 10 years and plans to introduce another martial arts class this April. For information, visit VistaRecreation.com or call 760-726-1340, ext. 1571.
- In Encinitas, 4S Ranch and Sabre Springs a Martial Arts Academy hosts classes for women and girls 10 or older.

continued on P.2

Observer April 2010

Inside this issue:

Financial Transition	P.3
Diversity and Inclusion	P.4
College Fairs #2	P.4
Use the News for Civics Learning	P.5
Calcium and our Children	P.6
PTA Resolutions	P.6
Transition	P.7

Ninth District PTA
California State PTA Convention
Orientation

Tuesday, April 20, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

San Diego County Office of Education

Room 401/402

All delegates should attend

PTAs are reminded that *Martial Arts* are a prohibited activity under the California State PTA Insurance Guidelines, listed on the *red light page* of the insurance guide. Self Defense classes and instruction fall under that red light prohibition if they demonstrate, promote or teach any form of body contact. Contact the State PTA Insurance Broker for clarification and guidelines.

Self defense instruction can be part of important protective training for children and youth. Consider collaborating with school districts or a community recreation center, YMCA, or Boys and Girls club to bring instructive classes to your communities not sponsored by the PTA.

Parents and coaches are reminded that children and youth should use the buddy system when out and about. Children should never walk, run, bike, hike or participate in any form of exercise outdoors alone. They should remain aware of their surroundings and they should not allow cell phone or iPod use to disrupt what they can see and hear around them. They should learn how to walk confidently and act assertively.

On the Advocacy front, our local legislators are reviewing statewide laws and multiple layers of the criminal justice system practices to identify any areas that require improvement.

What can you do? As your children get older, they will inevitably be spending

less time under your direct care. As a parent, one of the most important things that you can do is to understand the kinds of risks a child may face; it's important for all to learn how to talk with children, and to equip them with the skills they will need to stay safe.

The Take 25 campaign was created by the **National Center for Missing and Exploited Children** (NCMEC) to help parents better understand many of the dangers that our children might encounter, and help us to talk with them about all kinds of safety issues. The experts at NCMEC remind us that it is important to reassure children, and not scare them. When you talk to children about safety, speak in a positive way. We want to build a sense of confidence and self-esteem. NCMEC has some advice for how we can help prepare children to make the right choices:

- Be prepared. Make sure you understand the information before you talk to children. We need to talk about things in a calm and clear manner.
- Keep the discussion geared to their age level. If they are bored or don't understand, the message won't get across. Try simple visuals or games when talking to young children.
- Don't wait for "the right time" to talk with children. Take advantage of everyday teaching moments such as a relaxed family dinner, or on the way to school to talk with children about safety.

- Encourage children to ask lots of questions. Let them know you care about them and set rules, try to make them feel comfortable. Don't lecture them.

Check out the Take 25 campaign site for more information about how we can talk to children and youth. You will find a list of 25 ways we can make children more safe at home, school, online or out and about. <http://safety.amw.com/family/take-25-and-talk-to-your-kids-about-safety/>
http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/serv-let/ServiceServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US&PageId=178

NetSmartz is an Internet safety resource from the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America that uses the latest technology to create high-impact educational activities for even the most tech-savvy children of any age group.

Finally – as adults we should be fully aware of who lives in and among our children and youth, do not wait for a tragedy, but calendar a regular day and time to review the Megan's Law Data Base: <http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/>

Carolyn Johnson,

President

Rebecca Hernandez

Community Concerns Vice President

Reflections — Beauty Is

The Reflections program began for students in September. Thousands of students, beginning at the local unit PTA level, submitted their work for review. Now, in April, we are ready for this year's final wrap up of this wonderful program. April 14th, we will celebrate the Ninth District PTA winning student's entries at our Awards Ceremony at the County Office of Education. Copies of the winning entries will be displayed as well as the entries that received Award of Merit. We hope that the celebration for

the students and displaying of their art will encourage them to continue to refine their artistic talents. We want to inspire all our PTA leaders in attendance to bring this program to their schools.

Please remember that at the California State PTA convention there will be a display of Reflection entries from all over the state. It's always amazing and a bit humbling to view the work done by our future artists. Set time aside to view the art and be amazed at the talent displayed by the students in California's public

schools.

Next year's theme is **Together We Can...** Look to future articles in the *Observer* to help you have the best Reflections program ever.

We want to thank every Reflections chairman for the outstanding work they did this school year. Because of **you** almost 7000 students had a chance to let their imaginations run free.

Gelia Cook

Reflections Chairman

Incoming Treasurer's Checklist

- Face-to-face, transition meeting held with outgoing treasurer.
Date _____
- Membership per capita – Ensure with outgoing treasurer that all outstanding memberships have been paid.
Date _____
- Outstanding bills that the outgoing treasurer could not pay due to closing of books for audit or late receipt of invoices should be noted by the outgoing treasurer and the list given to the incoming treasurer, who will pay the bills.
Date received _____
- Annual *financial report* completed for past year (2009-2010) by outgoing treasurer.
Date _____
- Audit completed for past auditing period. For most PTA units, this would be semi-annual.
Date _____
Auditor(s) _____
- IRS Form 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N filed for previous year (2009-2010). Confirm with outgoing Treasurer.
- Signature cards on file with bank. Update signatures immediately after school year ends. There should be at least three (3) signers on the account. Check the PTA unit's bylaws to see who these should be.
Date _____
- Budget process –select date and preside at the budget committee meeting prior to the beginning of the new school year.
Date _____
 - Proposed budget presented to executive board and adopted.
Date _____
 - Proposed budget presented to general membership and adopted.
Date _____
- Executive board, member reimbursements - treasurer and president develop a workable reimbursement system and schedule for Executive Board. Emphasize that only budgeted approved expenses will be reimbursed and only with receipts/invoices attached to *payment authorization* form.
Date communicated to board: _____
- Cash verification/payment authorization/request for advance forms are copied or electronically sent for distribution to PTA executive board members.
Date _____
- Bookkeeping method selected - Meet with incoming auditor to discuss how financial books will be organized to facilitate auditing.
- Ensure that all checks are signed by two signers.
- 2 copies of listed items below must be submitted to council PTA and/or district PTA by its due dates:
 - Previous year Annual Financial Report
 - Current year annual budget
 - Year-end audit report
 - Tax return
 - Insurance premium/Workers Compensation form* (form will be provided prior to the due date)
- Review all PTA executive board and PTA association meeting minutes and ensure that the treasurer's report section is correct (i.e., range of checks ratified are consecutive, ending balance from one report is the beginning balance on the next report).

If there are any questions, please contact your PTA council treasurer. If you are out-of-council or are a PTA council treasurer, contact the district treasurer.

A-Quan Watso, Treasurer

MaryAnne Tang, Auditor

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity is a common thread across our school campuses. In California, we are blessed with a variety of ethnicities and cultures.

Inclusion is a commitment to involve the entire school community in planning, as well as enjoying, PTA programs and activities. Bringing in many different views is the key to building a robust and meaningful PTA presence in your community.

We need to ask ourselves these questions:

- Does our membership and leadership reflect the diversity of the community and the children we serve?
- Are our meetings accessible and appealing to a broad range of potential members?
- Are we working to understand and promote respect for the unique contributions of every family?

- Is PTA an effective voice for all children?

Some simple suggestions to foster inclusion of our diverse communities:

- Invite and encourage everyone to be a partner and assure everyone may play a role, because your community is your greatest asset.
- Empower others with information, support and resources focused on students' needs.
- Be responsive to the language needs of others; provide interpretation and translation as needed.
- Remove physical barriers that discourage participation by those with disabilities.
- Include current and emerging issues from all communities on your agenda and in your plans.

- Try a different meeting format such as dividing into small groups for part of your meeting to discuss issues or plan events. People will get to know each other as well as feel more comfortable.

Outreach efforts are successful when PTA leaders can develop community support with meaningful two-way discussions focusing on student success. All PTA members are multi-colored, multi faceted jewels in PTA's crown.

Michele Henry

Member Services Vice President

Adapted from California State PTA *The Communicator*, March 2008, and Outreach: Building Community Unity brochure of the California State PTA

Steps Needed for a Successful College Fair

Once the PTA or high school has decided they would like to host a college fair, here are the necessary steps to take for a successful college fair.

1. Form a committee to plan the college fair. Be sure to include parent volunteers, school counselors and school/district administrative personnel. You will need someone to coordinate the following jobs: facilities, volunteers, college representatives, publicity, hospitality and workshops. The committee should meet on a regular basis and each task coordinator should give an update.
2. Select a location for the fair. You will need a place large enough to fit six foot tables (typically one per college invited) usually high school gyms work well. Scheduling the fair for outside in a quad area many times doesn't work because of lighting needs and weather conditions. If the location itself does not have the amount of tables and chairs that will be required, they will need to be rented.
3. Create a list of colleges that will be invited to the college fair. Input your high school counselors is crucial since they will be able to tell you what colleges their graduates attend. Try to invite instate, as well as, out of state colleges, and private, as well as, public colleges. Include community colleges, trade and technical schools, too.
4. Create a letter or invitation to send to these colleges. Input from the high school counselors is helpful.
5. Set up a procedure to track which colleges will be attending. An Excel spreadsheet works well for this task. One person should be in charge of collecting the responses and communicating with the college representatives.
6. Communication with the administration of the location of the fair is crucial. A representative of that administration should attend your committee meetings.
7. Be sure that there is adequate parking at the location of the fair. There should be an area adjacent to the building where the fair is being conducted, for the college representatives to unload their materials.
8. Create a printed program to be distributed at the event, which lists the names of the colleges attending, workshop information and room locations.
9. Gather feedback from the college reps, workshop presenters, school counselors and administration and volunteers after the fair. This will help you to plan the next fair.

If you have any questions, please contact me at pusdcollegefair@san.rr.com.

Colleen Salzetti

PUSD College Fair Coordinator

Use the News for Civic Learning

Like most children, my two daughters are naturally curious. In any given week, they might ask, "What's an epidemic? How do mosquitoes bite?" and anything else that has piqued their interest from newspapers, books, and other sources. The world is a living textbook for them, and as a teacher, I'm always looking to turn their questions into teachable moments.

In particular, the news is a rich source for teachable moments, and can be an important part of a sound civics education. By informing our children about current events, we can develop their civic and global awareness. Being knowledgeable about the world is a first step in participating as responsible citizens in a democracy.

A great starting place is through conversation. Not long ago, my 9 year old asked me about epidemics because she heard on the news about the spread of swine flu around the world. What followed was a great educational experience for both of us. We made a point of discussing this important scientific phenomenon together as a family, and I learned how to engage her in a new world of ideas.

The second step is to get children to start reading the news. This might sound tough, but it has worked well for my stu-

dents. Look for articles that are kid-friendly, or that you can refashion into a child-appropriate format. When you find news articles and topics that you'd like to discuss with your children—for instance, stories about the discoveries of the Hubble space telescope—look for graphics and photos to go along with them. Read the headlines and image captions with children, jot down their questions, and look up the answers together. This exercise has the added benefit of strengthening literacy skills, including reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing.

There are other benefits of talking about the news. First, you'll familiarize children at an early age with the type of informational reading they will encounter during their education and as adults. Second, it builds their background knowledge on school subjects, such as science, government, writing, and economics, bolstering their intellectual confidence. Third, paying attention to the news at an early age can help children develop an interest in global and civic engagement that will help them mature into active, responsible citizens who contribute to their communities. Encouraging children to think globally is incredibly important. Our world is becoming smaller, and our children will

need to learn to thrive in global settings to build successful careers.

Of course, it is also important to have fun! Learning should be something that children enjoy and look forward to doing regularly. Work on the crossword puzzle in your newspaper with a child who enjoys language and vocabulary. Practice writing your own "joke columns." Better yet, try producing your own print or electronic newspaper together. A child who is artistic might enjoy handling the design or photography. Another child can produce your sports pages. Budding lawyers and doctors can cover health and legal news, and so on.

By using the news as an educational tool, we can inspire our children to form a greater connection to the world. In the process, we'll help them develop good reading habits and an intellectual curiosity to last a lifetime.

Jennifer Zaheer

Education /Parent Involvement
Article reprinted from <http://pta.org/3805.htm>.

Author Suri Roth is the founder and executive editor of [The Current Events - The National Newspaper for Kids](#), as well as a former school teacher and reading coach in New York.

ABCs of Membership

Assess the needs of your members, what they expect from the PTA, and their special interests and abilities.

Boast of the accomplishments of your local unit and set new goals.

Communicate parent, teacher, and community concerns by providing well planned programs and activities.

Demonstrate knowledge of how state and National PTA dues are used and by whom.

Encourage parents, teachers, and community members to work together on important issues.

Fathers are an important part of PTA.

Generate enthusiasm, and soon others around you will be inspired.

Help is at hand from your PTA district, and through California State PTA and National PTA resources.

Involve new and current members in activities.

Joining a PTA enrolls you as member to

automatic membership in the local, state, and National PTAs.

Kick off your year-round membership campaign by publicizing it through all local media.

Listing members as they join and keeping an up-to-date roster is most important.

Membership is open to everyone throughout the year.

New ideas that come from brainstorming keep members out of a rut.

Open house is an opportune time for recruiting members.

Projects that are meaningful keep people interested and involved.

Question your members about their concerns and where they feel PTA should be putting its efforts.

Report on membership at each executive board and each general association meeting.

Share information with your members about legislation, health and education issues, and the progress of the many

California State PTA *The Communicator*, January 2010

state and National PTA projects that have an effect on all children and youth.

Target dates for your enrollment campaign should be set; telephone contact is most effective at this time.

Uphold and be prepared to explain the National PTA Purposes and Mission.

Volunteers are ready to help; sometimes they are just waiting to be asked.

Without dues, the PTA cannot develop resources, publications, or services.

Please be prompt when submitting your dues to your state PTA.

X number of membership cards are provided to each unit PTA. Be sure each member gets one.

Your active volunteers are an integral part of a PTA. They provide that "personal touch"

that is essential for a PTA to thrive.

Zealously promoting PTA and being welcoming and inclusive will lead to a strong membership.

Calcium and our Children

There is a health crisis occurring with children that could cause them to face serious health problems in the future. What is this health issue? It is lack of calcium intake by children, especially between ages 12-19 years of age. Only 13.5% of girls and 36.3% of boys in this age group living in the United States get the recommended daily amount (RDA) of calcium. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) has sponsored a campaign called "Milk Matters". The purpose is to increase awareness in the need for an increase in consumption of calcium. Calcium deficiency has major effects that can be easily prevented. Osteoporosis is a pediatric disease with geriatric consequences according to Dr. Duane Alexander MD, director of NICHD. He further

states, "With low calcium intake levels during the important bone growth periods, today's children and teens are certain to face serious public health problems in the future". By seventeen, 90% of adult bone growth is established. Teenagers need twice as much calcium as children younger than age nine. The RDA of calcium is 1300mg per day. Just three cups of low fat or even fat free milk contains 900mg of calcium. Children are drinking less milk and more citrus drinks. There is an increase in bone fractures among children and young adults. What can parents and caregivers do? Milk is a great source of calcium as well as nutrients vitamin D, vitamin A, B12, potassium, magnesium and protein. Other sources include dairy products such as dark green leafy vegetables and foods

with added calcium.

Keep grab and go items like string cheese, cereal bars, breads with calcium, pudding, yogurt, or even almonds. Also, have calcium fortified orange juice, Tofu with calcium sulfate, soy beverages with added calcium, or over the counter calcium supplements. This health issue is real and parents should make sure that their children are getting the calcium needed by their growing bodies. For more information go to www.nichd.nih.gov/milkmatters. Brochures, booklets, fact sheets, colored books, stickers, and posters are available through the NICHD.

Debra Fraser RN

Health Vice President

Resolutions Help PTA Speak for Every Child with One Voice

Have you ever felt strongly about an issue concerning your child? You probably have and you've probably been able to resolve the issue on your own. What about important issues that affect children throughout our nation? Who should speak up for them?

The answer is YOU with the help of National PTA. This association was created by mothers who were willing to take on the challenge of bettering the lives of all children. Yes, you can stand in support of all children through National PTA's resolutions process.

The definition of a National PTA resolution is as follows: "A National PTA resolution is an official document that outlines the opinion, will, or intent of the association to address national problems, situations, or concerns that affect children and youth and require national action to seek resolution on the issue."

This is how it works. Let's say there is an issue you feel very strongly about concerning the safety of the children at your school. After doing some research, you learn that your concern seems to be an issue at schools throughout your state and the nation. You decide something must be done to help these children. At this

point, you would begin to write a resolution.

You can get other PTA members involved in the research and writing of your resolution. Detailed information regarding resolutions, including instructions on how to develop your resolution and a sample submission, can be found at pta.org. Your local PTA then needs to vote to adopt the resolution; because it is national in scope, your local PTA likely would decide to send it to National PTA to be considered for organization wide adoption.

Your resolution will be checked by the National PTA Resolutions Committee to see that it meets all the necessary requirements. This committee then forwards it to the National PTA Board of Directors for approval to be submitted to a general vote at the PTA's Annual National Convention. Convention delegates from every state have the opportunity to hear from you about your issue and resolution. New convention rules should make the process more empowering than ever.

Can you imagine your voice speaking for more than 5 million members? This is what happens when National PTA adopts your resolution. It becomes an official document and helps to define what PTA

stands for. Resolutions with a legislative intent become a resource for advocacy by the National PTA regarding the specific issue. State and local PTAs also have the resolution as a guide to help them advocate for children.

What other child advocacy group can offer this type of grassroots, member-driven meaningful involvement? Where else can a parent be an integral part of standing up for children on a national level? Just think of the difference your voice can make for children through National PTA.

When you have a heartfelt desire to help children with an issue, consider writing a resolution. Whether it is to support increased education quality or a safe and nurturing school environment, it is important to let your voice be heard through National PTA.

Shawna Straw

Chairman of Council Presidents

Adapted from Feb. Mar 2010 PTA *Our Children*, by Gina C. Armor, chair of the National PTA Resolutions Committee.

Transition Time is Crucial

Now that elections have been held or are about to be held, it's time to think about the transition. *Transition time is crucial to the PTAs survival.*

If you are a member of the outgoing board—gather materials and arrange a time to meet with the person who will have your position in the coming term. I love this process, because I get to pass along all my treasures. Please tell the person who will hold the position next time the things that went well, the things you would recommend changing and any other helpful tips. Remember you still hold the position until the end of the term, so don't slack off now, but work with the newly elected officer or appointed chair to insure a smooth transition.

If you are a new board member and haven't been on a board before, seek advice from the current board. Volunteer to work on a project or committee, so you can get a feel for how things work. Read all available information on your position and ask questions.

If you are changing positions on a board, outgoing Vice President of Programs to incoming President or outgoing historian to incoming secretary, you need to fulfill your current position and make plans for your upcoming position. Help the person who will take over for you and seek out information from the person whose position you will take over.

I love transition time. I can always think of lots of things I didn't get a chance to do and exciting new things I will do in my new position. I love to clean out and get rid of the paper that I kept for my current position and dig into new stacks of information for my new position. Don't become someone who has a hard time letting go.

Transition Time can be an exciting and inspiring time, if you keep a few things in mind.

1. The objects you have pertaining to the PTA position belong to the PTA. Notebooks, paperwork, equipment etc... need to be given back to the PTA. Don't hold on to the talent show decorations, pass them along.

2. There will be things left undone—don't hold on to finish up things you won't get done. If you have been meaning to reorganize the historian's notebook—set a deadline and do it. But don't hold on to information that a new officer needs because you didn't get a chance to put it in a plaid folder. Get it together. Meet with your predecessor and share with them your ideas, insights and information and then let them do their job.
3. Keep doing your job. Historians have end of the year reports to finish and turn in. Presidents have reports, final meetings, events etc...
4. Once the new officer is in position, let them do their job. Even if they are not doing it the way you did. It is their job now. You may offer suggestions, but don't take over.
5. Get trained. Come to California State PTA convention, Ninth District

PTA Summer Leadership conference and PTA council trainings. A job is more rewarding when you know what you are doing.

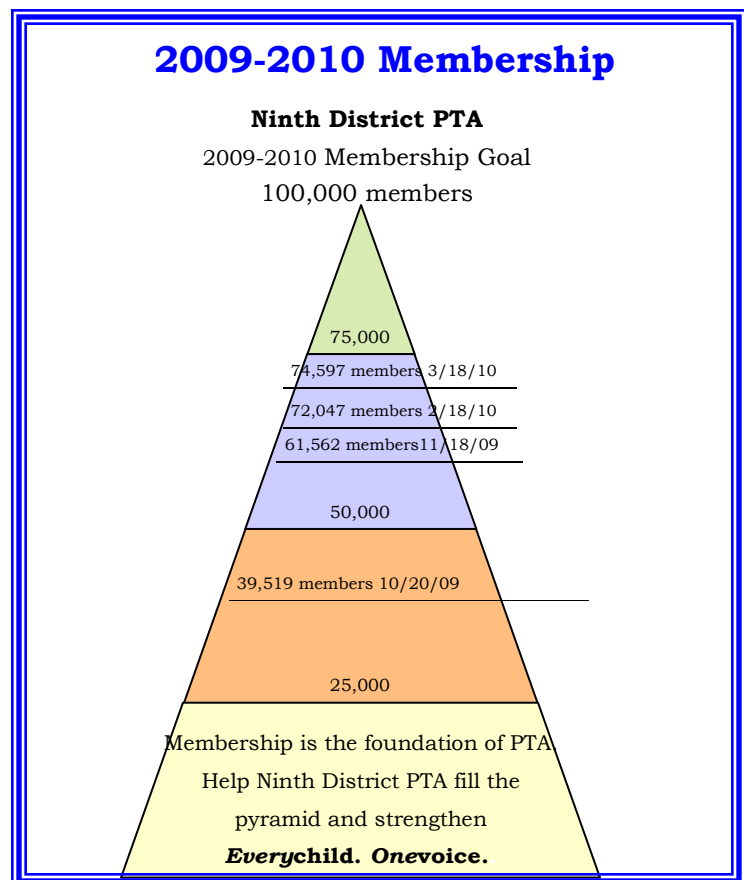
6. Always keep the goal in mind. We are part of PTA to support and advocate for children and families and that should always be in the forefront.

The most important thing to do is send your PTA council and Ninth District PTA the list of new officers. We can't help you if we don't know who you are. Great materials and information are sent to PTA leaders over the summer and it is important that we be able to contact you.

Call if you have any questions. Enjoy this time!

Carol Green

Leadership Vice President



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Calendar

Meetings

April 20 Ninth District PTA Board Meeting, 9:30 am, Room 401, SDCOE
 Council Presidents Meeting, immediately following board
 meeting, same location
 April 20 Ninth District PTA Orientation for California State PTA
 Convention, 7 pm at the SDCOE rooms 401/402

Due Dates

Due Mid-Year audits — copies forwarded through channels

Save the Dates

April 14 Ninth District PTA Awards Celebration
 June 5 Ninth District PTA Summer Leadership Conference –TBD

Plan Ahead

May 2010 California State PTA Convention, April 29– May 1,
 Sacramento

Past Due

Unit and council end of fiscal year audits –copy forwarded
 through channels
 Unit and council adopted annual budgets - copy forwarded
 through channels
 Unit insurance payment of \$227 and council insurance
 payment of \$145 due to Ninth District PTA through channels
 Unit and council workers compensation report
 Unit and council Tax filings—copy forwarded through channels