

Benefits of PTA and why your school should be a part of it

PTA is the largest volunteer voice for child advocacy in the State of Utah and Nation.

Why have a PTA?

- The number one reason to have a PTA is to benefit your child
- Get connected to what's happening in your school
- Discover available resources
- Join a network of parents and teachers to voice ideas, concerns, and experiences
- Access to collaboration with admin and teachers
- Ability to bring forth positive change to school environment
- Opportunity to volunteer, gain knowledge, and communication skills learned to benefit school community

Utah PTA provides:

- Leadership Training
- Leadership Convention
- Utah PTA Handbooks
- Training and support for Presidents, Treasurer, and local leaders
- Financial Training
- Assist with IRS filings
- Maintains Charitable Solicitation Permit for locals
- Protects and maintains nonprofit status for local units

Advocate for children:

- Education, Health, Safety, and Community
- At the Capitol during the legislative session
- Coordinate School Trust Lands for beneficiaries

PTA Programs:

- Reflections
- PTSA Battle of the Bands
- PTA Take Your Family to School Week
- PTA Three for Me
- PTA Day at the Capitol/Student Track
- Advocacy Conference/Student Track
- Teacher Appreciation

Awards, Grants, & Scholarships:

- Utah PTA Awards
- LEAP Awards
- Arts Grants
- National PTA Awards & Grants
- PTSA Student Scholarships

Why I'm a Member of PTA

A few weeks back I came home from the Utah State Capitol, discouraged at what seemed to be a direct assault on Public Education. As my husband was at meetings and my children were spending time together, I went on-line to read a few Facebook posts.

One caught my eye, by a mom who was preparing to rally at the State School Board meeting against the renewal of the ESEA waiver. She commented that in her dislike of [Utah PTA's](#) endorsement of Common Core, her sign would read, "My Voice, My Child." I believe her statement and the sentiments of those like her, are the root of many of our issues in Public Education today.



I am a member of PTA because I desire to join in a collective voice for ALL children, not just mine. When I ask the question, "Who is my neighbor?" --I recognize that my neighbor is anyone who needs someone to help them out. My voice is there to represent the child whose parents are unable to speak for them, maybe through a language barrier or a culture that has never promoted parent involvement. My voice is there for the special needs child and for the youth who end up in the juvenile system. I believe every child needs the benefit of safety, health, and a strong education system.

I do not pay my \$6.00 membership fee for PTA to pay for the donuts at Guests and Goodies. I pay my membership fee to be a part of something bigger that will benefit all kids. I am a member of PTA because PTA believes in all kids having a good education, all kids having safe environment, all kids being protected, not just mine.

PTA endorsed Common Core because all students should have high standards. Did Utah need higher standards? Absolutely! We moved here from another state 8 years ago. My children were a year ahead in math, and my son had to retake an entire year out of the same science book he had just finished. Did you know that your Community Council has money to spend each year on YOUR school because the voices of Utah PTA worked to make the state accountable for the Trustland Funds? Instead of that money being wasted, it now is watched over and invested and given back to YOUR school ... because of Utah PTA. Did you know that since 1897 PTA has worked to improve the lives children by helping create child labor laws and the juvenile justice system.

I had been involved in PTA for 10 years when I moved to Utah. Imagine my surprise, when I hear at the membership table, you can pay your \$6.00 and be a member or you can just make a donation to the school and all the money will stay here. When did MY school and MY child start to outweigh the need to join together as parents for ALL children?

I believe PTA creates a safety net across the nation. It joins parents with other parents, and parents with teachers and administrators. It joins my school with your school and our schools with other schools in the district and the state and the nation. Membership at the local level gives voice at the State level and then gives voice at the National level. The collective voices of Utah Parents can change things at the National level, but only if Utah Parents are willing to join together -- For Every Child. That net of safety has huge gaping holes right now. Each time a parent says I'm not joining PTA because all of my membership fee doesn't stay in MY school, or each time parents at a school say, we're not going to have a PTA because we want to benefit OUR students, another hole is created in the net. The holes in the net have created an environment of animosity towards public education and will hurt those students who have no voice. The holes in the net have created openings for intrusion into local schools and districts both federally and from our state legislators. We need parents who will join together and fix these holes. Let's seal up these holes and protect public education for all children. What does your sign say? Will you use your voice to advocate for EVERY child?

from 2014 - LeAnn Wood is a mother of 5 children. She is currently the Davis Region 3 Associate Director for Utah PTA. She has served as a parent representative on the USOE Graduation Task Force, the SAGE Parent Review Committee, the State School Board Nominating and Recruiting Committee, and the Grades 6-8 Science Standards Committee. Update: 2017 - LeAnn is currently the Education Commissioner for Utah PTA and sits on several Utah Education Boards.

Why I Volunteered For The PTA (Even Though Everyone Told Me Not Too)

By Molly Shalz – Used with permission. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/molly-shalz/why-i-volunteered-for-the_b_7851066.html



I can't believe the reactions from people when I tell them I volunteered to be the PTA President at my sons' elementary school. I mean, I didn't exactly have plans to become the president of our school's PTA. But I had a phone conversation with the former PTA President who told me that NO ONE else was stepping up to the plate. I thought that was very sad and felt compelled to volunteer as the new president.

Alright, alright. So I have a bit of trouble saying no when I know my help is needed. Especially when it's something which benefits my children — and even more so when it benefits their education!

So far, when I share I'm in charge of the PTA I am met with horrifying facial expressions and less than stellar words of support.

"Ughhhh, I would never do that."

"Ughhhh, why in the world did you volunteer for the PTA?!"

"Ughhhh, that would be a nightmare."

(yes, it always starts with ughhhhh.)

Okay, I get it. I get over the years the PTA has developed a bad reputation. Maybe you've heard from family and/or friends it was a nightmare for them. Maybe you think it's just a bunch of stay-at-home moms with nothing else to do. But I'm inclined to believe most of these thoughts come from a lack of education on what the PTA actually does. As well as rumors or hearsay from parents who can't or just plain won't volunteer.

Well, I'm here to quell any of the bullcrap you've heard before, as well as tell you why I volunteered for the PTA.

1) Funds raised by the PTA directly support your child's educational experience.

I know it's different for each individual school — but money raised by the PTA pays for many of the events and activities your children enjoy on a weekly basis. At our school we have something called the reader feeder. This is a small library where children can go to buy gently used, reasonably priced books. Have you ever been to a book store? Say, Barnes & Noble? Some of the children's books are \$20. Most lower-income families cannot afford to buy one new book let alone provide an at-home library! This PTA-sponsored book store promotes literacy and is one of the most-loved things at school for the students.

2) PTA membership fees are one of the cheapest things you'll buy all year to support your child's school.

Have you ever become a member of an organization and you're like, WHOA, why are the dues so expensive?! PTA memberships are very reasonable and at our school, there are different levels such as individual, two adults/two kids, two adults/3 or more kids and business memberships. When I joined I was like, ummm, that's it? And our family was provided with cool perks, like free entry into school and PTA-sponsored events. You don't have to ask me twice! A portion of your membership fee helps your children have a better, well-rounded school experience.

3) You don't have to volunteer for every single event.

I understand you work 40 hours a week. I understand your job is a commute and you're not close to the school. I understand you have to find a babysitter for your younger children. Guess what? Buying a membership doesn't mean you have to volunteer AT ALL. You can choose to buy a membership and that's it! You're done! Or you can look at the PTA-sponsored event calendar and decide if you're interested in volunteering for something that sounds interesting. There are so many events throughout the school year. We have fundraisers (hella important!), bingo night, fall and spring parties, and a carnival. Surely something will float your boat. Contrary to popular belief you don't have to do it all. Pick one (or two!) things and I promise you, your time will be appreciated!

4) I'm teaching my children volunteering is a good thing.

I used to volunteer for everything before I had kids. Then I had three children and was like, LEAVE ME ALONE I HAVE TO KEEP TINY PEOPLE ALIVE! It's no surprise the things I was passionate about got pushed aside. The passion was still there but the time and energy were not. I completely understand, parents of young children, when you have to say no to volunteering. But now that my youngest is 18 months I am feeling the push to get involved. One of the main reasons for this is I want to be a good role model for my children. I remember my mom volunteered for Meals on Wheels when we were growing up. I will never forget going on those rides to drop off meals for those who couldn't leave their homes. It made a lasting impression on me. When I told my boys they were going to see me at their school events a lot more they were SO excited. I explained to them why I'm helping — because I care about them and I care about public education. They thought I was pretty cool (I totally am, duh).

5) Change things instead of complaining about them.

Your PTA might have a bad reputation because things are actually bad. But instead of complaining or saying you "hate" the PTA — why don't you try to change just one thing. Attend a PTA meeting, join a committee, become the chair of an event. One of the reasons I volunteered is because I had ideas on how we could make a particular event better. Now instead of complaining about it (which, ahem, is what I did last school year) I have the ability to suggest changes and make them happen. Be positive and influential. The high road has a great view.

All I'm asking is for you to put away those old feelings and realize the PTA exists to benefit your children and their education. When someone posed it that way to me? Well, you already know what happened. I stepped up. Like I said, I'm not asking you to become the president like me. I'm asking you to buy a membership, attend a PTA meeting to share your thoughts and/or volunteer for one event.

I promise you, in the eyes of your children, it will be worth it.