

TACOMA SPECIAL NEEDS PTA

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Welcome to the start of an exciting year for Tacoma Special Needs PTA! Last year was a whirlwind getting our PTA up and running, organizing and promoting meetings, connecting with parents and educators and learning everything we could about managing a successful organization. We are constantly striving to improve what we provide while keeping current with our community's wants and needs. Your input is heard and respected, your support is necessary, and your participation and membership is desired. Our mission is to build bridges in our community--between parents, educators, and administration--the ultimate goal of which is, always, improving the lives and education of our children. – Sue Leusner, PTA President

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Holly Richart, Treasurer

Our ability to serve our community gains momentum with each person and family who joins. Membership gives each of us a seat at the table. Here is a quick glance at what we have available for scholarships:

Membership Scholarships: Through funding and specific donations from members, we are able to offer scholarships for anyone who wants to join, but is unable to pay for the expense. If you would like to join and are in need of assistance, please let us know so we can support your membership.

School of the Arts Scholarship Fund: A generous donation from an early member was earmarked to ensure it would support SOTA families and educators.

Sponsored Teachers: We receive donations requested for teacher & educator memberships. The support from teachers is invaluable, providing growth in our perspectives, teamwork and support for all we serve.

Our growth and ability to provide resources and services is developed through the power of what we actively do, and the generosity of donations. We're growing steadily and will stay focused on how to give back to you.



USING CARE TO BUILD BRIDGES
TACOMA SPECIAL NEEDS PTA

Upcoming Events

Teal Post, Vice President

October 10 School Transitions Panel

Do you have questions about what school will look like for your child when they transition to their next school level? Can you meet your child's teacher/s in advance? How will they learn how to navigate a new school with higher expectations? Tacoma School District's Student Services Admin team is bringing their panel of experts to answer your questions. Jason Lee Middle School 6:30-8:30pm.

October 14

Lap-A-Thon at Lincoln High school (page 3)

November 14

DDA Services and How to Apply
JL Middle School, 6:30-8:30

December 12

PTA Meeting
JL Middle School, 6:30-8:30

January 9

The Birds & the Bees Talk with Amy Lang
JL Middle School, 6:30-8:30

More Important News

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Jenn Hill, Membership Chair

Tacoma Special Needs PTA (TSNPTA) is a district-wide PTA that serves Pre-K through age 21, as well as private, charter, and homeschool students. We have a diverse membership that includes parents, teachers, community members, grandparents, neighbors, etc. When you become a TSNPTA member you have a VOICE and VOTE in all that we endeavor to accomplish.

If you were a member last year it is time to renew, as last year's membership expires on October 31st. You may sign up in-person at any of our monthly meetings. We accept cash, checks, and cards or visit our website at <http://www.tsnpta.org/membership>.

In addition to having a voice and vote, membership gives you access to significant discounts at area businesses such as: FedEx Office, Great Wolf Lodge, Sylvan, Hertz, and much more. In order to give our community something extra, our PTA has partnered with some very generous local businesses to give more discounts. Each member will receive a TSNPTA Membership VIP card, which gives exclusive discounts at Cutter's Point Coffee (Pearl St. location), Artco Crafts, Hello Cupcake, and Bubbles Tea Shop. These discounts expire on 12/31/17, so be sure to join soon and take advantage of this offer!

BRIDGE THE GAP

Carly Absher, Secretary

For many students with Special Needs, there are barriers to experiencing academic enrichment or fully accessing education. The learning needs can vary dramatically from one child to another. In response to this challenge, the TSNPTA has created a program called "Bridge the Gap." The purpose of this scholarship fund is to serve as a resource, alongside the school district, to help equip Tacoma educators as they accommodate the diverse learning barriers of Special Needs students enrolled in Tacoma Public Schools, private school and home schools. The scholarship can be used for:

- Toys, games, sensory materials, technology, etc.
- Assistance for other domains such as social/emotional/behavioral, adaptive, etc.
- Field trip or settings in home school environments

How do you access this fund? Easy! Any teacher, therapist, parent, Para educator, etc. will be able to fill out a simple request form and submit it to the TSNPTA via email or through our website. Your request will be processed by the committee in a timely fashion and funds allocated based on availability. We will have three submission deadlines per year. Our very first deadline will be January 1, 2018. For more information, visit <http://www.tsnpta.org/bridge-the-gap.html>

In the Community

Did you know that four times a year all of the principals in the district attend the Superintendent Advisory Breakfast? They get to bring along three parents to this breakfast, which includes a great info session from the district and community partners on issues affecting students. TSNPTA will be there, and we would love to see you. Ask your principal for more information on attending on one of these dates:

November 16, 2017
January 25, 2018
March 29, 2018
May 24, 2018

How You Can Get Involved

LAP-A-THON

Emily Pico, Family and Community Chair (FACE)

The Tacoma Special Needs PTA is excited to announce the Bridge the Gap Lap-A-Thon. Our PTA has seen the need for teachers, staff, parents, and students to be able to find creative ways to overcome barriers to learning, and we want to help them do it. Help us kick off this new program by participating in the Lap-A-Thon! Join us on 10/14/17 from 1-3pm at the Lincoln High School Track. To participate as a fundraiser e-mail tsnpta@yahoo.com to receive a packet. All participants will receive a prize, with Seahawks gear, movie tickets, a miniature drone, and more for the top fundraisers! If you can't participate in fundraising please join us to help cheer on the participants and meet members of our community.



Thank You So Much

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Washington State PTA and Tacoma Council PTA for their leadership and expertise in assisting us with the formation of the Tacoma Special Needs PTA. We would be remiss if we didn't thank certain people who went above and beyond with their knowledge and support of our endeavors. Thank you to **Sharon Pfeiffer**, former Area C Vice President for your leadership and guidance. Thank you to **Sheree Cooks, Tracy Marander, and Breeayn Douthit** for helping to give us a voice and sharing our message in the community. And last but not least...**Janet Stewart**-- we could not have done this without you. You were there at the very beginning and continue to actively support us and guide us as we learn how to give TSNPTA the strongest foundation possible. We appreciate you!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Jana Hautala, Teacher Liaison

Hi everyone! I am 1. Excited to be a teacher liaison for TSNPTA for a second year and 2. Unusually grateful for autocorrect because despite this being my second year, I'm still struggling to spell 'liaison.'

In all seriousness, I am proud to be heading up our Student Spotlight program that aims to capture the diversity of families we support, from learners in preschool to community based transition, home school to private school. And because we are a Parent and Teacher association, we are eager to build our capacity in supporting not just families but the many types of educators there are in the south Puget Sound area. Please do not hesitate to tell me how we can better support you in the short term and long term.

To our families, I encourage you to let me know what educators have gone above and beyond in their work with the next generation. To educators, know that you do not have to be a member to nominate a student for our spotlight (<http://www.tsnpta.org/student-spotlight.html>), but membership definitely has its perks. Happy Autumn!