

MT. BETHEL PTA MEMBERSHIP

GOAL: The PTA's goal as it related to membership was three-fold. First, we strove to achieve 100% membership among our families, teachers, and staff in order to earn the Platinum Membership Certificate, and the Oak Tree Membership Award. We were committed to initiating relationships with parents and staff to empower them to be even greater advocates for not only their children but for *all* children. This ideal was reflected in our theme "Our Children. Our Future." Second, we set a goal for our PTA to again earn the Partnership Membership Award. Third, we wanted to convey to our members the benefits of becoming a member of a large organization that advocates for children. We wanted our community to feel part of an even larger voice for children as members of the Georgia PTA and the National PTA.

MEMBERSHIP: The Membership committee encouraged our families, staff, and community to join PTA. On August 10, 2005, our PTA held "Meet and Greet" Throughout the day, the membership committee collected dues and distributed membership cards. To encourage teacher and staff membership, the PTA also held a luncheon in our Media Center. Pre-order information is distributed to the teachers during their pre-planning week. The Membership chair followed up by letter with the teachers and staff that still had not joined, in order to meet our goal of 100% participation. The committee members later went into the community to ask local businesses, including our Partners in Education and residents to become members. **Resources:** The committee chair, and two volunteers worked together to meet our membership goals. Expenses were minimal. The Membership Chair kept and filed the names, addresses, and phone

numbers of all members. **Results:** This year, we earned several awards for our membership achievements including the Centennial Pin, the Centennial Early Bird, the Early Bird, Platinum Membership Award, the Oak Tree Membership Award, and the Partnership Membership Award.

MEET & GREET: In April prior to the August Meet & Greet event, the PTA distributed **pre-order forms** to all of the Mt. Bethel families. Again, parents were able to have the ability to review the pre-order information which included PTA membership, supplies, spirit wear, directory, yearbook, school calendar and an option to make a family donation to the PTA. The letter that accompanied the form explained how the budget was spent to enhance the students' educational experience and encourage parents to make a donation to the PTA. Included, too, was the school supply list, PTA contact information, important 'back -to-school' dates and a 'Volunteer Opportunities' sign-up form that generated over 100 responses that filled over 300 volunteer positions on various committees. We have found the pre-order forms to be a success. In addition, the pre-order process started our membership drive by producing over 1,200 members! During the summer, Meet & Greet "Save the Date" flyers were posted at all entrances leading to Mt. Bethel. Two weeks prior, a large sign announcing the date and time of the event was posted on the main street in front of the school. At Meet & Greet, volunteers explained to parents the different volunteer opportunities in our 50-plus committees. Parents joined the PTA and volunteered for one or more of the various PTA committees. Representatives from the lunch program, ASP, Kid Chess, and scouting programs offered information and registration.

The resources for Meet & Greet included about 80 parent volunteers who worked shifts of 2 to 3 hours. Fifth grade students acted as guides in the hallways. Parent volunteers processed APTA memberships, sold school supplies, and explained PTA volunteer opportunities. Families that did not buy supplies in the pre-order mailing were able to buy yearbooks, calendars, directories and school supplies at Meet and Greet. The covers of the calendar and directory incorporated our theme, “our Children. Our Future.”

NEWSLETTER: *The Bugle*, our monthly PTA newsletter, was another excellent tool to promote parent involvement. The ten to twelve page publication kept parents informed about upcoming PTA and school-sponsored events, volunteer opportunities, student achievement, program and workshop registration, and Georgia and National PTA news. Each issue’s front page listed our website and our Partners in Education. Within *The Bugle* were articles from the school staff (the Principal, Counselors, Nurse, and the Phoebe Hearst teacher), the PTA co-presidents, and various PTA committees reporting upcoming events or past results. Articles highlighted PTA activities and priorities and addressed issues relevant to parents and the community. Excerpts from National PTA web site shared parenting tips and information. One focus was Healthy Habits articles in several issues. We distributed *The Bugle* to our Partners in Education and fellow cluster schools in addition to Mt. Bethel families, one per family. The PTA purchased the software and paid for all printing costs associated with publication. *The Bugle* proved to be the most effective way to communicate all the school-related activities to families.

WELCOMING: The Welcoming Committee provided a friendly environment to new families of Mt. Bethel. Newcomers were invited to coffees held twice during the year. Packets about our PTA, volunteer opportunities, the East Cobb community, and our

Partners in Education were provided. Our Principal, Assistant Principals, Counselors, PTA Executive Board, and available Committee Chairs all attended. Each discussed his/her responsibilities. Many of the Committee Chairs present were also new to the community and could share their experiences. New families were given the opportunity to acquire memberships, calendars, and directories at the meetings. Parents could also sign up for E-Minders, were given Room Rep information to make the transition to the classroom seamless, and could also sign up for many different volunteer opportunities. Parents had the opportunity to ask questions about the PTA and the school in a relaxed and inviting setting. Two chairs and nine volunteers worked on this committee. Our second coffee was not only for newcomers, but was opened up to Kindergarten Parents. This was a need expressed the prior year so that those parents can become more comfortable with school procedures as well as better understand what the PTA means to their families. We opened the floor for questions that were directed at PTA, school staff, and administration. This was a huge success and we plan on adding a coffee for parents of 5th grade students to discuss Middle School. Both coffees were well attended.

PTA-SPONSORED MEMBERSHIP EVENTS:

Night in the Park(ing Lot): This fun-filled Friday night event took place in September. It was an opportunity for PTA members to socialize and introduce themselves to the Mt. Bethel community in a relaxed atmosphere. Families were encouraged to bring a picnic dinner and lawn chairs or blankets. Teachers and staff were also invited to attend. The PTA and our Partners in Education provided refreshments and desserts. **Resources:** A volunteer sign-up sheet at Meet & Greet yielded about ten volunteers for the event.

Results: Night in the Park(ing Lot) was a success as evidenced by more than five hundred children in attendance. Feedback from the event was very positive.

Spring Thing: Spring Thing was an evening of music, dancing, and fun that promoted school spirit and camaraderie among Mt. Bethel families and staff. There was music, dancing, food, photo opportunities and fun.

Resources: Two committee chairs and ten volunteers worked together to plan this financially self-supporting event. Their responsibilities included food, decorations, ticket sales, publicity, entertainment, set up, and clean up. A nominal ticket price of \$5.00 covered the costs of the event. **Results:** This event proved to be a fun, family outing with over 500 in attendance. Students, parents, and staff enjoyed the activities and fellowship.

MISCELLANEOUS: We started the school year with two **Open Houses** to welcome families back to school. At these events, “Membership Minutes” were added to the agenda of all our general meetings. The **Mt. Bethel PTA web site** was another mode of communication to promote membership. It contained useful information concerning the school’s events, classes, and organizations. It provided a way for parents to contact teachers and administration as well as links to other helpful sites. On the “PTA...Join Us!” page, membership updates and benefits are highlighted and a membership application is available. There are also links to Georgia PTA and National PTA.

In Conclusion: The Mt. Bethel PTA used a variety of successful tools to promote and facilitate PTA membership. We provided opportunities to enroll through our pre-sale order form, Meet & Greet activities, welcoming coffees, and newsletter communications. The Night in the Park(ing Lot) and Spring Thing were fun events that fostered PTA membership. Our website further encouraged PTA membership.

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