

Torrance Council of PTAs
2335 Plaza del Amo
Torrance, CA 90505

Communicator

Torrance Council
PTA
everychild.onevoice.®

Thirty-Third District PTA, California State PTA

www.TorranceCouncilofPTAs.org

Inside this Issue:

Superintendent's Message	2
AAP Safety Tips	3
Torrance Education Foundation	3
PTA: Developing Community Unity	4
Torrance Police Department	4
Nominating Committees	5
Straw Ballot Sample	6
Honorary Service Award	7
Torrance Council H.S.A. Search	8
Getting Ready for College	9

**Volume XLXVII, Issue 2
November 2009**

**Denise Mandel, President
Cindy Wermers, Editor**

President' Message

Giving Thanks to Volunteers!

The PTA organization recognizes and celebrates the voice of the volunteer. Our volunteers offer their time, their talent, and their concern to improve the quality of public education for all children. PTAs, by design, are led by a board of fellow volunteers, working as directed by the membership of the association in partnership with their schools administration.

Each volunteer offers a unique perspective and contributes something special to our units, and our organization is strengthened by those contributions. Volunteers make up all levels of PTA, from local unit through the national level. Our voices unite to form the largest advocacy group in the nation. Welcome all to participate and work on behalf of children.

As Thanksgiving approaches it reminds me of things in life that I have to be thankful especially for all that you do – for the many hours you spend making the lives of children a little brighter, a little more pleasant and a little more fun. In these hard times you make a difference.

As always I am amazed at the things PTAs do for the children in the Torrance Unified School District. The list of activities is endless but all of these give our children a reason to smile.

Thank you to the many volunteers in this community and especially in the schools of Torrance.

Denise Mandel
Torrance Council President

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." ~John Fitzgerald Kennedy



Upcoming Dates:

NOVEMBER:

- 22-28 Natl Family Wk
- 25-27 Thanksgiving Holiday
- 26 Thanksgiving Day

DECEMBER:

- 04 End of Trimester - Elementary School
- 21 1st Day of Winter
- 21-04 Winter Break

The Census: A Snapshot

Census 2010 is fast approaching. April 1, 2010 is census day in the U.S. and it is important to have 100% participation so that all U.S. residents – people of all races and ethnic groups, both citizens and non-citizens, can be counted. Please visit www.2010census.gov to get more information and be sure to complete your census questionnaire when you receive it.

Education Matters:

CitiCABLE, Time Warner – Channel 3 and Verizon – Channel 31

Every week, CitiCABLE's "This Week In Torrance" program showcases the *Education Matters* segment, covering news stories and school events around Torrance Unified School District. Please tune in every week at 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. A new show starts every Thursday at 6:00 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP INVITATIONS:

December is a great time of year as it's another opportunity to talk with your school community and families at the December Association meeting. Please attend your meeting with flyers, brochures and envelopes on display to bring in more new members into your PTA. PTA elections will be in the Spring, now is the time to actively recruit your school community members to be a part of something great....PTA! Also, folks must be a member for 30 days to accept a nomination for PTA office. Another win-win! And another invitation to those High School Seniors...All seniors applying for PTA scholarships must be a current member of PTA. Scholarship applications are due to counseling offices soon. Now is a great time to deliver flyers, brochures and collection envelopes to your high school counseling staff.



**Lincoln Elementary's
60th Anniversary**

**Special Meeting of the
Board of Education**

December 16, 2009
7:00pm

Bond Construction Update
Location: TUSD Board Rm
Educational Materials Bldg
(EMB), 2nd floor
2336 Plaza del Amo
Torrance, Ca 90501

For more information, contact
Tammy Khan
tkhan@tUSD.org

To subscribed to the
TUSD Online Newsletter,
go to
<http://www.tUSD.org>



**Middle School
Leadership
Conference**

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

One year ago it was my pleasure to thank Torrance voters for their overwhelming support of Measures Y and Z – the comprehensive bond measures to modernize and renovate our aging school facilities. A year later, it is with great excitement that I report a highly successful first year of planning, design, and construction. So much has happened since we passed Measures Y and Z last November. Construction on all four high school athletic fields has been completed; Hull Middle School is completely demolished and on its way to begin construction early next year in order to be completed by September 2011. We have had numerous community, planning, and design meetings for South High, Magruder Middle, and Walteria and Fern Elementary Schools, and are on schedule with planning and design for those sites. Another exciting development in our bond process is the recent credit upgrade TUSD received from Standard & Poor's credit agency, which translates in a \$12.8 million savings for tax payers over the life of the bonds. TUSD is proud to be a financially stable District even during these difficult economic times.

Unfortunately as we continue to make progress, the state's revenue projections continue to falter. According to reports from the Department of Finance, the state's first quarter revenues (July-Sept) are \$948 million below estimates on which the current budget is based. The federal ARRA funds we received helped us for the current and next school year, however these were one time funds and the 2010-2011 school year will have no stimulus dollars. We once again move towards uncertainty because of the state's inability to manage their budget. We continue to communicate with our representatives in Sacramento and voice our concerns over this ongoing budgetary crisis. I will continue to provide updates to parents and community members as I receive them. As we continue to "do more with less" I urge parents and community members to remind their state leaders that education cannot afford any more financial hits.

During these difficult economic times everyone is making cutbacks. However, Torrance is fortunate to have strong community partners – businesses, service organizations, and parent volunteers. Organizations like the Torrance Rotary Club, which donated over \$13,000 to the high school music departments; Henessey's Tavern, which donated \$8,000 to South High for teacher development and supplies; and ExxonMobil, which provides a myriad of monetary and professional development support – are but a few examples of the community commitment to education in our city. Our Torrance Council of PTAs is yet another resource, without which programs like red ribbon week, the annual college fair, and elementary art programs would not exist. I sincerely thank all our partners and volunteers for their continued support of TUSD and the education of our kids.

Dr. George Mannon



American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



The following health and safety tips are from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Feel free to excerpt these tips or use them in their entirety in any print or broadcast story with acknowledgement of source.

This tip, plus many others can be found at <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/augschool.cfm>.

TRAVELING TO AND FROM SCHOOL:

- All passengers should wear a seat belt and/or an age- and size-appropriate car safety seat or booster seat.
- Your child should ride in a car safety seat with a harness as long as possible and then ride in a belt-positioning booster seat. Your child is ready for a booster seat when she has reached the top weight or height allowed for her seat, her shoulders are above the top harness slots, or her ears have reached the top of the seat.
- Your child should ride in a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle's seat belt fits properly (usually when the child reaches about 4' 9" in height and is between 8 to 12 years of age). This means that the child is tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with her legs bent at the knees and feet hanging down and the shoulder belt lies across the middle of the chest and shoulder, not the neck or throat; the lap belt is low and snug across the thighs, and not the stomach.
- All children under 13 years of age should ride in the rear seat of vehicles. If you must drive more children than can fit in the rear seat (when carpooling, for example), move the front-seat passenger's seat as far back as possible and have the child ride in a booster seat if the seat belts do not fit properly without it.
- Remember that many crashes occur while novice teen drivers are going to and from school. You should require seat belt use, limit the number of teen passengers, do not allow eating, drinking, cell phone conversations or texting to prevent driver distraction; and limit nighttime driving and driving in inclement weather. Familiarize yourself with your state's graduated driver license law and consider the use of a parent-teen driver agreement to facilitate the early driving learning process.

"It isn't what you have in your pocket that makes you thankful, but what you have in your heart."

Unknown Author

TORRANCE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

SAVE THE DATE


Torrance Education Foundation

Barnes & Noble BOOKFAIR

**Monday—Wednesday
December 7—9, 2009
All Day**

Barnes & Noble
Del Amo Mall
21400 Hawthorne Blvd.
Torrance
310/370-5552

A percentage of your Barnes & Noble purchases will benefit our school / organization.



A percentage of your Barnes & Noble purchases will benefit our school/ organization.

PTA IS DEVELOPING COMMUNITY UNITY

Congratulations and thank you to all thirty PTA units for being a part of the Big Turn In Friday Oct 2nd. Additional congratulations are in order as all thirty units have achieved Thirty Third District's Early Bird Award (15+ members) and Chairman's Club Award (50+ members) in addition to our Torrance Council Membership Foundation Award (50+ members at the Big Turn In). Congratulations to Calle Mayor, Howard Wood and Magruder for achieving the Sun Shine Award (surpassing last year's final total) and the Unity Award (exceeding last year's total by 5%) as of the beginning of October. We have challenged our units to many fun awards this year and hope every unit continues through out the year to Build Community Unity and let our membership numbers shine! Our award goals are as follows:

Road Work The road to success lies right in front of you. When your principal, entire PTA Board AND at least one member of your school's business partner join PTA, you've arrived at this award.

Foundation Communities start with a strong foundation. Submit 50+ members at the Council 'Big Turn' In, Friday Oct 2nd, 2009 and receive this award

Bridge PTA can bridge community gaps. This award is for 100% full time teacher membership.

School No community is complete without a school. Achieve one membership for every student enrolled and this award is yours.

Sun Shine The sun is shining and the sky is blue when you've surpassed last year's membership total and receive this award.

Building This challenge builds on last year's total membership figure for the largest percentage increase overall. This will be awarded to the top three units.

Community Community is the heart of our schools. This award is for the highest percentage over student enrollment. This will be awarded to the top three units.

Unity A united community is strong in its membership. This award will be given to each unit that increases by 5% over last year's total. This is also the State PTA challenge.

Awards can be achieved in any order through the beginning or March. When you reach an award, email Karen Cristy kristy@socal.rr.com so your hard work can be highlighted in our next Communicator article.

A Big Membership Community Thanks

Thank you to the Torrance City Council and TUSD Board of Education for recognizing October as Membership Enrollment Month. The support of these two vital community bodies is a wonderful booster for our PTA. Thank you to Mayor Scotto for challenging the city council members as well as our community to get involved and join all thirty of our units. Thank you to Mr. Muratsuchi, School Board President and School Board members for your continued support and involvement with PTA. Thank you Dr. Mannon and so many our school district personnel for showing your support with your generous memberships as well. We are proud to continue to Build Community Unity with your support!

Karen Cristy
2nd Vice President
Membership Chairperson

PTA Holiday Luncheon, it's a Car-oling Event

Don't worry, you don't need the ability to carry a tune for the Holiday Luncheon; it's at the Toyota Car Museum December 2nd 2009. This annual event benefits the Torrance Council of PTAs Scholarship Fund as well as the Torrance Police/Fire Department Holiday Toy Drive.

Making a List, Checking it Twice....

It's that time of year, but not that kind of list. We're talking Membership List. Now is the time to complete your membership database list. Excel templates have been emailed to the Membership Chairpeople and Presidents in July and again September with specific instructions. Please remember these lists are important to the business of your PTA and are required as part of your unit's 501-c3 requirement. A current list should be given to the President and recording secretary on a regular basis with an additional copy on file in the Membership Procedure Binder. Please email (not hardcopy) your membership list to Karen Cristy at kristy@socal.rr.com during the month of December and as your list is updated w/ new members.

TORRANCE POLICE DEPARTMENT

VACATION SECURITY CHECKS

With the holidays fast approaching, and everyone gearing up to travel, the Torrance Police Department offers a little piece of mind.

The Torrance Police Department offers Vacation Security Checks to all Torrance residents. While you are away on vacation, officers from the Torrance Police Department will periodically stop by your home to check for open doors, broken windows or any other suspicious circumstances. This is another added security precaution you can utilize to safeguard your possessions and assure your peace of mind while you are on vacation. This is a free, but invaluable service provided by the Torrance Police Department to the citizens of Torrance.

To request this invaluable service, just visit their website at <http://www.toronet.com/97.htm>, click on On-line Services, then Vacation Security Check. Fill out the form and you're all set.



You can follow us on Facebook

[Facebook.com/TorrancePD](https://www.facebook.com/TorrancePD)



You can now follow us on Twitter
[Twitter.com/TorrancePD](https://twitter.com/TorrancePD)

NOMINATING COMMITTEES

Members on the Nominating Committee must be elected at an association meeting at least 2 months prior to the annual election. For most units, that means: At your **December** Association meeting, elect your unit Nominating Committee. Send out straw ballots to your association (See example below.) When you form the Nominating Committee: **Set the date and time for the first meeting** of the Nominating Committee. In **late December and early January**, the Nominating Committee should meet, as often as necessary to fill your slate of officers. In **January**, the proposed slate of officers should be posted. At your **February** Association meeting, most units will hold their elections to elect next year's board of officers.

Who can serve on the Nominating Committee:

There is a good list of qualifications in the PTA Toolkit: <http://www.capta.org/sections/management/nominations.cfm>. Basically, anyone can serve on the Nominating Committee: student, teacher, parent, experienced in the PTA or not. Exceptions are -- Your PTA president cannot serve on the Nominating Committee. Anybody who served on the Nominating Committee last year cannot be on it this year (even if your bylaws state otherwise). Your unit Parliamentarian is not expected to serve on the Nominating Committee (unless elected to be on it). Your parliamentarian should get the committee started, explain the rules (listed below), oversee them electing a chairperson, and then leave the room.

Here are the rules for the Nominating Committee:

Anything that is said in the room - stays in the room! **CONFIDENTIALITY** is essential.

Tell the committee which positions need to be filled by the Nominating Committee. Namely, all Elected Officers (not appointed officers, and not chair people). Check your bylaws: "Article V – Officers and their Election." You may wish to list who is currently serving in their first term, and who is serving in their second term. People in their first term may be asked to serve again. There is no office that has more than 1 year term...they must be re-elected each year! People in their second term may not be asked to serve in that position again, but they may do something else.

An office may be filled for a maximum of 2 consecutive years. That means that a treasurer who has served for 2 years, then takes a year off, can come back and be a treasurer again. However, a treasurer who has served for 2 years, and wants to do it again for a 3rd straight year may not.

There is a rule in the Torrance Council that an individual may serve as the president of only one PTA/PTSA unit at any given time.

Explain the timeline. Give them the election date, and the date for posting the roster (30 days prior to the election). Recommend that rumors about whether or not someone is willing to serve in a position are not fact. If they are considering somebody for a position, they should make the telephone call and hear directly from that person. Rumors are often incorrect.

Here are the items that you should gather before the first meeting.

PTA Toolkit Section 2.2: Nominations and Elections: <http://www.capta.org/sections/management/nominations.cfm>

Your PTA's Bylaws and Standing Rules

Any job descriptions that you can find either in the toolkit, <http://www.capta.org/sections/management/job-descriptions.cfm>, or in your PTA's files.

Your PTA's Membership list

A current PTA board list, with phone contact numbers

Calendars for the next meeting date!

Want more info/questions/comments:

Terry Ragins, Torrance Council Parliamentarian

ragins@socal.rr.com

STRAW BALLOT SAMPLE

**School PTA Straw Ballot
For the PTA Board for the 2010 – 2011 School Year**

The nominating committee for the _____ PTA will be meeting in the near future. To help this committee in making selections for nominations, would you please give them your ideas for officers for our PTA? Please take a few moments and write your suggestions below, fold your ballot, and place in _____ [Nominating Committee Chairperson's] mailbox in the office on or before _____ [Dec. 1 or the date of the first Nom. Comm. Meeting]. You may suggest more than one name for an office or you may leave some slots open.

President _____

Executive Vice President _____

1st VP (Programs) _____

2nd VP (Ways and Means) _____

3rd VP (Education) _____

4th VP (Hospitality) _____

Recording Secretary _____

Treasurer _____

Financial Secretary _____

Auditor _____

Historian _____

Please remember this is only a **Straw Vote. It is not binding.**

It serves as a way to help the nominating committee in its deliberations.

Thank you for your input and help.

Please fold and seal this Straw Ballot, and place in _____

**SCHOOL BOARD
ELECTION
RESULTS:**

Thanks to all of you who voted in the TUSD School Board election November 3, 2009!

Three seats of the 5 person board were up for election, with 7 candidates on the ballot.

The apparent winners, by popular vote reported (results to be verified and officially certified at the end of November) are (in order of votes received):

Al Muratsuchi for his second 4 year term.

Mark Steffen for his second 4 year term.

Michael Wermers for his first term, a new-comer.

We wish them well in the coming tough years, sure to be full of amazing challenges for our schools.

HONORARY SERVICE AWARD SEARCH

It's that time of year.... To begin the Honorary Service Award search.

Honorary Service Awards (HSA) are available to recognize the service and dedication of both individuals and organizations. The applicants being considered should be recognized for outstanding service to children and youth and not for routine, assigned responsibilities or for retirement. Remember to consider those who work behind the scenes quietly and efficiently serving youth.

H S A's may be awarded only by unit, council, district PTA and the California State PTA and should be presented by duly authorized PTA representatives at PTA sponsored meetings or at functions of allied groups

Funds contributed to the HSA Program provide resources for the California Scholarship and Grant Program.

The committee should be:

- Appointed early in the officers' term to allow time for planning and ordering awards.

- Composed of different members each year.

- Representative of the school's community.

- Composed of an uneven number (five is suggested).

The unit HSA chairman, with a committee appointed by the president, shall

- Study the various types of awards, the donation amounts and the criteria for selecting honorees for specific awards.

- Publicize to the membership that the HSA selection committee will be meeting and ask for suggestions for honorees. (A flyer may be distributed requesting names and information.)

- Meet for the specific purpose of selecting honorees. All proceedings must be kept confidential. Budget allocations must be observed.

- Order specific awards using the order forms in the California State PTA Toolkit . Pins may be ordered at the same time. (Allow four to six weeks for delivery.)

- Arrange for presentation of awards at a meeting as determined by the executive board and the program committee (e.g., at a Founders Day program meeting or end-of-the-year luncheon).

- Devise an innovative way to present the award(s) using a poem, skit or other unique way to praise the honorees' accomplishments. Be sure to mention that the donation made to the California State PTA scholarship and grant program in the honoree's name assists in the education of other individuals.

- Arrange for families and friends of the honorees to attend the presentation.

- Give a copy of the biographical presentation to the honoree. Assign a committee member to take pictures for the honoree. Retain copies of the pictures, programs and biographies.

- Write a summary of the event and place it in the chairman's procedure book.

- Maintain accurate records of all awards in a permanent file.

Debbie Russell
Torrance Council of PTAs

TORRANCE COUNCIL HONORARY SERVICE AWARD SEARCH

**PTA HONORARY SERVICE
AWARD PROGRAM**

Each year the Torrance Council of PTAs recognizes individuals whose efforts have enhanced the lives of the children in our community. The committee would like to ask for your nominations at this time. Please send in your nomination(s) for someone you feel deserves recognition for his/her outstanding service to children and youth. Feel free to recommend more than one individual.

Honorary Service Award (HSA) – May be given to an individual in special recognition of outstanding service to children and youth.

Continuing Service Award (CSA) – May be given to an individual in special recognition for continued service to children.

Golden Oak Service Award (GOSA) – The most prestigious PTA award in California. This award may be given to an individual who has made significant contributions to the welfare of children and youth in the school or community.

Please submit no later than Sunday, December 06th, 5:00 p.m., to Caren Dutton
2076 Santa Fe Avenue, Torrance, California 90501 Attention: "Honorary Service" or Email to:
poohspta@earthlink.net

Name of Nominee: _____

Reason for Nomination: _____

GETTING READY FOR COLLEGE

Article provided by the California State PTA

What's more exciting, demanding, and time intensive than the Junior- Senior Prom? Preparing for the leap from high school to college! Taking entrance tests, searching out scholarship and loan opportunities, finding just the right college, making sure you have all the courses you need to qualify for admission—the list can seem overwhelming. Planning for college early can tame the anxiety beast, and enlisting the help of your high school counselor and your family can help you make a successful transition from high school to college. The California State PTA has gathered together some resources that will help students and parents begin the journey to college, and continue on through their senior year so that "college-bound" can become a reality.

Making the College Decision

Here are some helpful links to help you think through the decision to go to college, including some issues to think about regarding your future after high school.

[College.gov](#)

College.gov is being built by the U.S. Department of Education in collaboration with students. This site is intended to be the go-to source for information and resources about planning, preparing and paying for postsecondary education (such as two- or four-year colleges and universities, as well as vocational or career schools).

[Career Colleges and Technical Schools](#)

This website gives you some questions you'll want to ask before enrolling in a career college or technical school.

[Sallie Mae College Answer: Assessing yourself](#)

Assessing your personality, interests, and skills now will help later when it's time to choose a career.

[NPR Admissions Tips](#)

NPR provides a series of articles on the college admissions game.

Scouting Out Colleges

Your school counselor can help you pick a list of potential colleges and universities to consider. California has an excellent state college system and a university system that is known throughout the world. Don't forget to consider community colleges as well. Use the links below to explore the options in California and throughout the United States.

[College Navigator](#), [California Colleges.edu](#), [California Postsecondary Education Commission](#), [University of California](#), [California State University](#), [CSU Mentor](#), [California Community Colleges](#), [California private colleges and universities](#), [Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities](#)

Testing ... Testing

Different colleges and universities have different requirements for entrance. Check out the links below to find out what tests are required, and check with your school counselor to find out when these tests are offered.

[University of California entrance requirements](#)

[California State University entrance requirements](#)

[ACT test information](#) and [SAT test information](#)

[National Merit Scholarships PSAT/NMSQT](#)

Note: Community colleges don't require the ACT or SAT, but most require on campus Math and English placement tests.

Show Me the Money

College can be a pricy proposition, but there are a number of ways that students can obtain financial aid. The links below will help you explore some of the options.

[Student Aid on the Web](#), [California Student Aid Commission](#), [California Chafee Grants for Foster Youth](#), [FAFSA: Free application for federal student aid](#), [Sallie Mae College Answer financial aid tools](#), [Fin Aid Guide to financial aid](#), [College Board financial aid tool](#), [The Campaign for College Opportunity](#), [Latino College Dollars](#), [Federal Student Aid Gateway](#), and [Resources in Spanish](#)

A Final Word

Your school counselor is an excellent source of good information on all of the above topics. Be sure to use your time with your counselor wisely to gain all the information you need to continue your education. And don't forget to visit your local public library reference desk, another good source of information.