

President's Update...

Dear Wake County PTA Leaders,

Spring is here and its time to start planning for next year! It's a challenge to continue to implement all of the important programs and projects you've already got going on, while also looking ahead and ensuring that your leadership pipeline is in place for the coming year and you're equipping new leaders with the knowledge and skills they need to make great things happen at your school.

We hope that your PTA team will take advantage of several training opportunities that we have coming up in the next several months to support you:

[New Officer Training](#)

In addition, don't forget about all of the great resources available online from NC PTA and PTakit.org that can help make planning and carrying out officer duties less daunting.

A big welcome to Wake County's newest schools and PTAs—Beaverdam Elementary, Oakview Elementary, Pine Hollow Middle, Pleasant Grove Elementary, and White Oak Elementary. Wake PTA Council is working with principals and parents at the WCPSS schools opening Fall 2016 to get their PTAs started.

Thank you to all of the Wake County PTAs that supported the WAKE Up and Read Book Drive this year. All of the books are in, sorted, and boxed. Now the exciting and most rewarding part—getting the books in to the hands of excited kids! Lots of volunteers are needed to help out at distribution events at schools, taking place between April 23 and June 9. What a joyous time it is for children as they choose books to take home and for adults who experience the look on their faces as they realize these are THEIR books to keep.

Volunteers are needed for various time slots. Please click on this link to see the specific dates and times. Thank you for helping with this very important work. Your time and efforts will help put books directly into the hands of children, support literacy, and help prevent summer learning loss.

We appreciate all of the time, energy, and enthusiasm you put in to supporting our schools, teachers, and kids. You make a difference.

Best, **Hardin Engelhardt Wake PTA**



WCPTA Welcomes FIVE New Units In Wake County

As you may have read on our Facebook Page, over the month of April, Wake County PTA Council has assisted five new schools in Wake County with forming their PTA/PTSA units for their inaugural year of operations in 2016-2017. We are pleased to announce new units formed at:

Pine Hollow Middle School,
Beaverdam Elementary School,
Pleasant Grove Elementary School,
Oakview Elementary School, and
White Oak Elementary School.

These PTAs have adopted uniform bylaws and begun to work to charter as PTA/PTSA units. They have elected officers and are already making plans for the programs and services they'll be providing in the coming year. Please join us in thanking the PTA Pioneers that will make 2016-2017 a great year for these new school communities.

Please also know that our PTA voice is strong in Wake County, across the state, and on the national level. Every unit and every member is vitally important in making that happen. Together, we unite to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

Wake Schools and a Student Earn AHA's Healthy Schools Awards



On April 27, Advocates for Health in Action (AHA) announced the 2016 Brains and Bodies Award and Sneakers and Spokes Award recipients – individual Wake County schools going above and beyond, to support healthy environments and behaviors at school for students and staff. WCPSS School Board Chair Tom Benton and Supt. James Merrill presented the awards and celebrated the winning schools' accomplishments. The AHA Brains and Bodies Award and the Sneakers and Spokes Award are the only awards in Wake County that recognize healthy schools.



Eight schools earned the Brains and Bodies Award, and 10 earned the Sneakers and Spokes Award, with two schools winning both awards. Five schools won the Brains and Bodies Award for overall wellness at the Gold level designation:

- Brentwood Elementary (Raleigh)
 - Davis Drive Elementary (Cary)
 - Penny Rd. Elementary (Cary)
- Sanford Creek Elementary (Rolesville)
 - Wendell Elementary (Wendell)

Hunter Elementary and Powell Elementary, both in Raleigh, and Laurel Park Elementary in Cary won the Bronze award.

Sneakers and Spokes Awards specifically recognize active transportation—walking and biking to (or at) school.

Winners are:

- Davis Drive Elementary
- Farmington Woods Elementary
 - Forestville Rd. Elementary
 - Highcroft Drive Elementary
 - Hunter Elementary
 - Laurel Park Elementary
 - Lead Mine Elementary
 - Martin Middle School
 - Rolesville Elementary
- Sanford Creek Elementary

Student Arya Pontula, a sophomore at Enloe High School in Raleigh, received AHA’s Student Wellness Advocate Award in recognition of her interest in and dedication to school wellness, and AHA awarded a Staff Wellness Champion Award to Centennial Middle School for its excellence in health promotion for staff.

“I congratulate the winning schools and applaud their outstanding efforts to emphasize healthy habits and to create a healthier school environment for students and staff alike,” Merrill said.

Benton agreed. “It’s wonderful to be able to recognize schools across our system that are making these strides. I hope that schools across the county will be inspired,” Benton said.

Resources are online at www.AdvocatesForHealthInAction.org and www.healthiergeneration.org so that schools can adapt ideas and programs that fit their school.



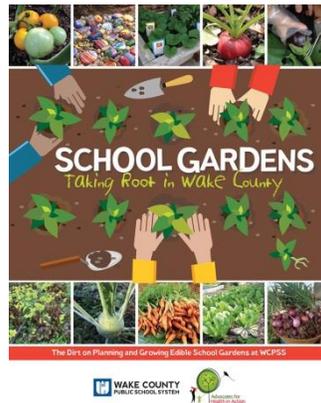
Digging in to School Gardens!

[Advocates for Health in Action \(AHA\)](#) and [Wake County Public Schools System \(WCPSS\)](#) staff partnered to produce a new resource for school staff, parents and students interested in incorporating edible gardens into classroom instruction and student life: [“School Gardens—Taking Root in Wake County.”](#)

This handy resource has “all the dirt” on planning and growing edible gardens at WCPSS, including helpful Q&A about what’s permitted and expected from schools, and in which situations you need approval from WCPSS Central Office for gardens.

Research shows that edible school gardens significantly increase science achievement scores, have a positive impact on behavior, and increase interest in eating fruits and vegetables, among other benefits.

AHA has a wealth of resources on [school gardens](#) at its website.



Advocacy in Action

From NCPTA... PTA members are invited to join NCPTA leaders for Advocacy Day at the North Carolina General Assembly on June 14 beginning at 8:30 a.m. We will meet in the Legislative Auditorium located in the main **Legislative Building at 16 West Jones Street in Raleigh.**

Advocacy Day gives members the opportunity to learn firsthand about the State legislative process, make appointments with legislators, and discuss short session hot topics. NCPTA will discuss our special 2016 focus on increasing educator compensation in North Carolina. Register [HERE](#) today!



Nominations... WE NEED YOU!!

...to help us make WAKE COUNTY PTA COUNCIL successful in 2016-2017!

Have you considered what it might be like to become involved in the work of PTA on a countywide basis? It's a fun thing to work at the district level on PTA matters affecting schools throughout the County, and you can accomplish this work (in most cases) in less time than it takes to run the PTA unit at your school.

Our Nominating Committee would love to have the opportunity to speak with you about your skills, your talents, and where you might be able to make an impact countywide for 2016-2017.

Drop a line to any member of our Nominating Committee - we're happy to chat through opportunities for committee chairs, and committee members with you!

[Sarah Martin \(Chair\)](mailto:sbmmom@gmail.com) - sbmmom@gmail.com

[Julie von Haefen](mailto:julievonhaefen@yahoo.com) - julievonhaefen@yahoo.com

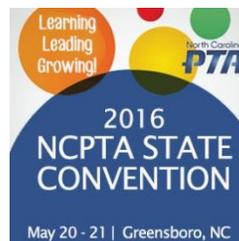
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[Lauren van Hemert](mailto:onlylaurenart@gmail.com) - onlylaurenart@gmail.com



Reminder – NC PTA State Convention...



May 20-21, 2016
North Carolina A&T University
New Academic Classroom Building
1600 Bluford Street
Greensboro, NC 27411



Wake County PTA Council leaders are often asked: "Why should we send our PTA volunteers to training?"

Check out this blog post below about employee training in the corporate world:

<https://lineshapespace.com/importance-of-employee-training/>

Then think about how that translates into your PTA world. Your PTA is a business too - and your PTA leaders deserve to have appropriate training to do their jobs well.

Wake County PTA Council thinks training for PTA leaders throughout the County is super important, regardless of how long your unit has been operating and regardless of how long your leaders have volunteered with PTA.

Give it some thought. Then check out this upcoming FREE training event we are offering:

May 16th

New Officer Training

9:30am - 11:30am

at Crossroads II - Room 1400

110 Corning Road, Cary

You'll find links to a flier with more details on this workshop, and the flier contains RSVP links, on our website:

<http://www.wakepta.org/spring-2016-training/>

We hope to see you and other leaders from your PTA unit there! RSVP is required. Please share this training opportunities with other leaders at your school. Come join us!

Questions? Email Sarah Martin, Wake County PTA Council Leadership VP, at sbmmom@gmail.com.

Investments in Teacher Innovation

For more than 30 years WakeEd Partnership has invested directly in Wake County Public School System through grants to teachers to support instructional innovation.

Grants in the amounts of \$1000 for an individual teacher to \$3000 for a collaborative grant support innovation in instruction and teacher leadership from the classroom to the entire school. Grant categories include the arts, literacy, entrepreneurship, STEM, and exceptional children with autism. Grants are available for application NOW with May 2 as the deadline for submission. Grants are read and scored by community members to ensure impartial evaluation.

We welcome a grant application from every WCPSS school! For more information, visit <http://www.wakeed.org/programs/>, or contact tpierrie@wakeed.org.



HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL (Wake Forest, NC)

A Different Take on Spring Break

Students are learning about global issues and preparing for a unique, perspective-changing world travel experience this spring through an innovative program at Heritage High School.

(WAKE FOREST, NC) - This month more than a dozen Heritage High School students and teachers will embark on an eye-opening journey to a very different part of the world. They will travel to the West African nation of Ghana as part of the school's international service-learning program, Project Wisdom. The 2½-week trip will span spring break and several days around it.

The program is designed to combine global studies, experiential learning, and community service. So while in Ghana, students will partner with schools, medical clinics, and international charities. Upon return, they will commit their time and their education to working with these Ghanaian partners to solve important global issues.

This is the second such trip for Heritage students. After the first, in 2014, participants returned and put their learning experience to work. They raised more than \$3,000.00 for their global partners, including Wisdom Academy, a school in Kitase, Ghana, that had recently seen its kindergarten destroyed in a severe storm. They launched a student club that now claims dozens of members at Heritage High with partnerships at Heritage Middle and Elementary.

Heritage High English teacher Miles Macleod leads Project Wisdom and the upcoming "Global Expedition" with his wife Erin, a counselor at the school. Macleod and a pair of friends started the non-profit organization after volunteer teaching at Wisdom Academy in 2005. It now operates with a student-majority board of directors shaping the organization's direction.

"These young leaders gain first-hand experience as they oversee the day-to-day operations of the organization," Macleod says. "The choices they make and the programs they help build aim to have a real and lasting impact on global communities in need."

Students have been raising money for the trip and other Project Wisdom efforts through sponsorships and donations, raffles, contests at HHS basketball games, t-shirt sales and events including an upcoming clothing/yard sale and a craft fair. They leave for Ghana on March 18.

More information is available on the [Project Wisdom website](#). Learn about the students and the Global Expeditions trip at this link. Supporters can give to the program from the donations page. To coordinate opportunities to talk to students as they prepare for their trip, contact [Mr. Macleod](#) via email or 919-649-1200.



Reflections... What an Awesome Event!!

Major shout out to Leah and her committee for another AMAZING Reflections program. It takes a TREMENDOUS amount of coordination, planning, attention to detail, vision, time, and commitment to pull off this program and celebration. Also thank you to Cary High School's staff, volunteer students, and PTSA, the county judges, WCPSS, Sweet Tomatoes, Brian Mullins Photography, Kimco Realty, and Strawbridge. This program and celebration would not be a success without your support of arts in education!

PTA Reflections is a nationally acclaimed student recognition program to encourage artistic creativity in the classroom and at home. Students of all grades and abilities participated and explored the arts based on the 2016-2017 theme: **What Is Your Story?**



InfoGraphic – Get your PTA Service Ready!



Hispanic Cultural Night @Washington Elementary

On April 12, the Washington GT Magnet Elementary School PTA hosted a Hispanic Cultural Night as a learning event for students and a community building and family engagement event for school families. Washington Elementary is one of the most diverse schools in Wake County. One of the goals of the Washington PTA is to increase diversity on its board and at all PTA and school events.

Last year, the Washington PTA was one of fifty schools nationwide to be awarded a grant from the National PTA for events during "Take Your Family to School Week" in February 2015. As part of the grant, Washington planned a first ever Cultural Night where they hosted a Holi celebration and learned about the culture of India. The event was a huge success and resulted in more Indian families becoming involved in PTA and in school activities. The event was also covered by the News and Observer.

Because of the overwhelming success of this first event, the PTA hosted its second annual Cultural Night, this year highlighting the many Hispanic countries represented at Washington. To begin planning for the event, the PTA brought together over 20 Hispanic families during an evening event and dinner at the beginning of March.

"It was extremely important to involve the Hispanic families at our school in the planning," said Julie von Haefen, PTA President. "We wanted them to feel empowered and excited about sharing their culture with their own children, with their children's classmates and with the school community as a whole." At the planning dinner, four Spanish translators lead brainstorming groups so the families felt comfortable sharing ideas about what the night should include. "Many ideas were shared and excitement began to grow among the families. One parent said that she was 'so happy just that someone asked' her to share her culture and ideas, and that no one had ever done that before. It was really heartwarming and inspirational to hear this interest in becoming more involved with a school event from someone who had never felt empowered to do so before."

To get Washington students excited about the event, the PTA made a presentation to all students the Friday prior to the event, teaching them about what Hispanic culture is, where Hispanic countries are located, and showed them videos of some of the groups who would be performing. Two Hispanic parents, who became leaders on the planning committee, came to speak to the students in Spanish and taught them about their home countries of Peru and El Salvador. "After the presentation, students were enthusiastic and went home to tell their families about the upcoming event, which helped increase attendance and excitement about Hispanic Night."

As a direct result of the brainstorming meeting, the PTA decided to highlight four areas of Hispanic culture. The event included the following activities and performances:

Music: Professional Latin folk music and dance group "Flor y Canto" performed, along with Mexican singer Valeria Fernandez. Washington students performed traditional songs and dances that were taught during specials in music and dance during the school day. Students also made make-and-take musical instruments.

Dance: Sube Ritmo, the Latin dance team from NC State performed a salsa and bachata dance. An amazing dance group from the Takiri Academy performed Latin American folk dances.

Food: Many Hispanic families prepared and served a free buffet of delicious and authentic food, drinks and desserts from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Peru, Honduras and more. The PTA purchased additional food to supplement the donated dishes, including desserts from a local Mexican bakery and authentic pupusas from a local vendor.



Art: Mexican artist Cornelio Campos displayed his painting and demonstrated his techniques. The PTA also provided many crafts for kids, such as paper flowers, coloring sheets and cut paper banners. Hispanic parents handmade 100 mini pinatas which were available for children to decorate. A display of artifacts was also available with items brought by families from their home countries.

Many Hispanic families wore traditional clothing from their home countries and Washington students were invited on stage to show the community where they were from so that the students could see how diverse the school is. The students also participated in a scavenger hunt at the event, identifying flags of the various Hispanic countries which were hung in the cafeteria as well as other artifacts and foods. Washington also invited a member of the Mexican Consulate in Raleigh to attend as well as other local Hispanic dignitaries. The PTA also reached out to the Latin sororities and fraternities at NC State University and members of those organizations volunteered at the event, serving food and helping with crafts. WCPSS Parent Academy also came with information about WCPSS programming for Hispanic families. At the end of the evening, the PTA raffled a large pinata to attendees, which generated excitement and was a great end to the event.

The evening was a huge success and the attendance was very large. "The event engaged our Hispanic families in the educational experience of their students, made them feel welcomed and comfortable at Washington and they know that they are a valued part of our school community. We were also excited to teach our non-Hispanic students and families about this wonderful culture and, of course, to have fun!"

If you are interested in planning a similar event at your school, or have questions and want more information, please contact Julie von Haefen, Washington PTA President at julievonhaefen@yahoo.com

