

# Happy Birthday PTA!

February is the month in which we celebrate the founding of the PTA. There are many birthday's to celebrate. **National PTA** is celebrating **113** years of existence. It was on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1897, that about 2000 people gathered in Washington DC to speak on behalf of the needs of children. Out of this meeting came the National Congress of Mothers later to become the National PTA. The co-founders of this effort were Alice Mclellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst. We also recognize Selena Sloan Butler who founded the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in 1926, which merged with the National PTA in 1970. In 1897 three fourths of all American children dropped out of school before reaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade to work in mines, factories or farms.

**Ohio PTA** became the 5<sup>th</sup> state to join NPTA in **1901**. Our **Hamilton County Council of PTAs** is celebrating **89** years of existence. It started representing 9 school districts, but now is comprised of 7 (Finneytown, Forest Hills, HCDD Services, Northwest, Oak Hills, Southwest, and Three Rivers).

Our local Finneytown units, although a bit younger, have much to celebrate and be proud of also. **Finneytown Elementary PTA** established in 1963 is **47** years old and **Finneytown Secondary PTA** founded in 1980 is **30**.

Here are some highlights of PTA:

- 1899, called for the creation of a national health bureau
- 1901, advocated supervision of motion pictures and vaudeville because of their influence on youth
- 1941, was integral in the establishment of nationwide school lunch programs
- 1951, called a national conference on narcotics and drug addiction
- 1954, helped field test and win acceptance of the use of the Salk polio vaccine
- 1966, established a project on the issue of smoking and its overall effects on health
- 1977, NPTA opened Office of Government Relations in Washington, DC to lobby
- 1980s, OPTA Seat Belt Safety (started with Northwest with HCC)
- 1984, NPTA started National Teacher Appreciation Week in May
- 1985, OPTA instrumental in passing NPTA resolution "A Rating System for Records, Tapes, and Cassettes" (started with Oak Hills with HCC)
- 1986, released AIDS education kit and begins AIDS education project in conjunction with the CDC
- 1990, released "Common Sense: Strategies for Raising Alcohol- and Drug-Free Kids"
- 1990s, Nutrition in Schools campaign (started with Forest Hills with HCC)
- 1994, worked with National Cable TV Association to launch critical viewing workshop "Taking Charge of Your TV"
- 1996, launched [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)
- 2000, publication of "Building Successful Partnerships; A Guide to Parent and Family Involvement" to share successful programs. Workshops are still given.
- 2005, Public Service Announcements (PSA) released and given to units to encourage parent involvement, partnered with the National Ad Council
- Since their inception our Finneytown PTAs have provided support for our staff and students through coordinating volunteers, providing "extra" educational materials, providing enrichment opportunities within school and after school programs, helping to educate and inform parents and teachers through newsletters and programs

Celebrating each of the levels of PTA together is very fitting because it reflects the connection we have as evidenced by PTA's official emblem, the oak tree. The trunk represents National PTA, the main branches are the states and congresses, the smaller branches are the districts and councils, the twigs are the local units, and the leaves are the millions of members (currently over 6 million). The acorns represent the accomplishments which are many. It is the integral connection of the members all the way to National PTA that gives us strength in advocating and sharing of knowledge. This unity inspired the PTA motto of *Everychild.Onevoice*.

All we do is to be in support of our PTA Mission:

- A powerful voice for all children
- A relevant resource for families and communities; and
- A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

You should feel a sense of pride in your participation in this great organization. Happy Birthday to PTA and pat yourself on the back for helping to make a difference!