



October 2020

To learn more about what we do, visit our [website](#).

Dear Community Members,

Welcome to the 2020-21 school year! We hope that you and your families had a healthy and safe summer - with a little fun sprinkled in. Like you, we find it incredible that we started this school year not far from where we left off in June - living in a pandemic with much uncertainty and few answers. Still, the PTSA executive board has been working hard throughout the summer to plan for the year ahead and how we can support you - our members. Together we are striving to make the best of an unprecedented school year for our children.

Our goal is to publish this newsletter regularly - about once every six weeks - as we have done in the past. We'll keep you informed about the work that we continue to do, the administration's initiatives that we have supported, and upcoming events/opportunities. We're also keeping our fingers crossed that something that you read here will spur you to action too - to join us as a member, to volunteer on a committee or to bring a fresh idea to the table.

In this time of being bombarded daily with information, we hope that you find this newsletter interesting and helpful.

Best,
Melissa Sbrega and Kerri Jew
Co-Presidents

In Progress 2020-2021 School Year PTSA Funding and School Support Initiatives

- Hastings on Hudson Schools COVID Response Fund: Amid the COVID-19 global pandemic, HEF, PTSA and SEPTA are taking timely and collaborative action to provide emergency funding to the district via a pandemic response fund to enhance efforts to reopen safely and effectively. This fund will be allocated to the strategic use of outdoor spaces to support physical distancing measures; to procure web-based resources that support student engagement, collaboration, and creativity; to augment current social-emotional learning curriculum and practices; and to provide access to on-going professional learning to strengthen remote instruction. Donations to the pandemic response fund will help support all of Hastings students and educators during this unprecedented time. The fund has raised over \$30,000. We deeply appreciate the community coming together to support this effort! For more information, please contact hoh_pandemic_relief_fund@ptsahastings.org and to donate, please go to: <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/hohschools-covid19-response-fund>
- The PTSA has already funded a variety of school and teacher requested grants this year. These include support for the outside classroom at Hillside, support for Hastings RISE to provide racial equity workshops to the community, a 3D printer for Hillside, and a number of grants for student specific supplies for subjects where supplies have traditionally been shared.

In Progress and Already Completed 2020-2021 School Year PTSA Community Support and Membership Initiatives

- Hillside Scavenger Hunt: Before the start of the school year, the PTSA board designed a scavenger hunt around Hastings for Hillside families. Families were encouraged to put color coded birds on display and then able to travel around Hastings to see what other Hillside families have on display. With our current social distancing reality, this was a great way for families and students to feel more connected to the Hillside community.
- Newcomer Support: PTSA board members reached out to many of the families new to the district to offer support and answer questions. At Farragut, many of the new students were buddied up with returning students to learn a little more about the student community.
- Online Spirit Wear Shop: This year, our spirit wear store is all online! Hastings families have snapped up the spirit wear and even offered to help deliver it to each other. Because the online store can only be open for limited periods at a time, our back to school session has closed. Please keep an eye out for the announcements of our holiday store later in the fall!
- Membership Drive and Calendar Delivery: Also this year, we moved our membership drive online. The PTSA calendars have been mailed and hand delivered as parents and teachers have joined the PTSA. Keep an eye out for emails with updated calendar pages as schedules are changed and updated! There is still time to join here <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/hoh-ptsa-membership-2020-21>
- Posting Mental Health Resources: In recognition of the stress and challenges of the current climate, local parents and mental health professionals have compiled a list of mental health resources for parents and families. Please visit the PTSA webpage for the link to this list. We will continue to update it as new resources come to our attention or become available.
- Supporting Superintendent's Chats: The PTSA has provided ongoing support for the superintendent's chat series, including moderation and sorting of questions.
- Office Hours: PTSA board members held weekly online office hours during September.
- Back to School Nights: PTSA board members participated in the Back to School Nights.
- Masks for District Employees: The PTSA has provided a Hastings logowear face mask for all school employees.

Upcoming Initiatives

- PTSA Parent Meetings: The PTSA will continue to host regular parent meetings at each school this school year. These meetings will, of course, be remote! Please check your daily email for the links. The next meetings for each school are as follows
 - Hillside -- October 26th 6:30 PM
 - FMS -- November 9th 6:30 PM
 - HHS -- November 23rd 6:30 PM
- Pizza Friday: The Home Edition is a program designed to support our local pizzerias while also raising funds for the Hastings on Hudson PTSA. Please purchase 4 pie vouchers (either cheese or with 2 toppings), which you can redeem anytime between November 13th and January 31st by placing an order with your preferred local pizzeria - Pizza Grill or Slices. Here is the link to participate: <https://pizza-friday-the-home-edition.cheddarup.com>
- Halloween Used Book Fair: It's back - for one day only! Hastings PTSA's beloved Used Book Fair will be set up in the Hillside parking lot and circle. Find some real treats this Halloween from 11-3. Sign up for a timed entry slot at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hastings-ptsa-used-book-fair-tickets-126099036613> or walk in. Fill up a bag for \$10 - no change will be given. Enjoy the opportunity to buy new (to you) books and games and help support our schools.
- Save the Date: New Book Fair! The PTSA will host our annual [New Book Fair online](#) starting the week of November 9th, hosted by Main Street Books. More details coming soon!

Community Initiatives and Advocacy Opportunities

- Request for federal funds for COVID relief for school districts: The Westchester Putnam School Board Association has organized a letter writing campaign asking for federal funds to help public schools as they struggle with the costs of Covid. Our district budgeted for \$250K in COVID expenses. They already exceed \$1 million. To send your own letter go to <https://www.wpsba.org/domain/57>.
- Interested in becoming more involved with our PTSA? Our Executive Board is searching for committee members and volunteers for our newly created Communications, Events/Hospitality, Fundraising, and Advocacy positions. Being a PTSA volunteer is a fun, social way to feel connected and get involved with your community schools. Any amount of time that you have to offer is greatly appreciated. For more information, see our letter here: [volunteer](#)
- Hastings WAY invites you to attend the 2020-2021 K.N.O.W. 2 Prevent Virtual Speaker Series! K.N.O.W 2 Prevent is a collaboration of 19 Westchester County organizations working together to empower parents with the essential tools to raise resilient & confident children, help strengthen relationships, and reduce risky behaviors. With the inability to host live speaker presentations in our individual schools and communities, the group was formed to offer FREE monthly virtual presentations by nationally-recognized experts. Speakers will focus on issues relevant to parents now and be a resource to ALL Westchester families so that they can learn together. Registration for these FREE virtual events can be found at KNOW2Prevent.org.
- Are you a PTA/PTSA member that is interested in becoming more involved in your community, in connecting with people from other rivertowns and/or helping to bring great programming to the community? Then maybe you would like to be a part of Rivertown Parents, a Consortium of the PTSA's of Ardsley, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson, Irvington and Tarrytown/Sleepy Hollow, along with Mercy College. Our mission is to promote and foster communication in the rivertowns among parents, children and schools, and to provide educational resources to the community at large. To see the events we've hosted please click here. If you'd like to learn more, please contact us at sleepyhollowabode@yahoo.com.



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