

# VALLEY VIEW ELEMENTARY PTA



## ROOM REPRESENTATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

### START OF SCHOOL YEAR

- Meet with the teacher at the beginning of the school year to find out his/her needs and expectations for the room representative.
- Help gather contact information for the classroom and PTA directory.
- Introduce yourself to parents and explain your role in PTA and the class.

### EVENTS

- Organize parents from your room to volunteer for school-wide events.
- Help organize classroom events and projects, and coordinate parent volunteers.
- Class photographer, and remind fellow parents to take and share photos.

### ON-GOING

- Represent your room in the PTA.
- Report pertinent information from PTA back to the parents and teacher.
- Voting meetings are mandatory for Room Reps.
- Assist new families in their acclimation to the class and school.
- Coordinate the purchase and/or making of items for the class and teacher.
- Maintain a phone and email list, and disseminate information throughout the year.
- Foster a feeling of inclusion within your classroom and the school.

## START OF SCHOOL YEAR

- [Meet with the teacher at the beginning of the school year to find out his/her needs and expectations for the room representative.](#)

Your role in the classroom is entirely guided by the TEACHER'S NEEDS. Ask the teacher to fill out the getting-to-know-you form prior to your meeting. Please be sure to touch on the following points in your meeting:

- **In-Class Volunteers:** Some teachers want parent volunteers during instruction time to help in computer lab or with special projects, or volunteers for at-home prep work. Some want no parental involvement in the classroom at all. Find out what kind of help they need.
  - **Field Trips:** Check with the teacher to see how he/she handles volunteers for field trips and how you can help to organize.
  - **Celebrations:** Ask the teacher how she/he handles holidays, parties and celebrations throughout the year. Some teachers welcome any and all celebrations, others prefer to keep it simple.
  - **Classroom Items Wish List:** In our current budget situation, our classrooms are often lacking convenience items, office supplies, art supplies, etc. We ask our parents to donate these items.
  - **Classroom Photo Website:** Ask your teacher if he/she has a photo website, or offer to create one. The LAUSD official school website will have a classroom page for each teacher, and this would be separate parent site. In past years, the photo website for classrooms have been great for community-building.
- Be a good listener for the teacher. Make notes of his/her suggestions regarding PTA support activities.

- [Help gather contact information for the classroom and PTA directory.](#)

You must have contact information for all parents in order to communicate properly.

Directory forms will be in welcome-packets for new families and sent home at the beginning of the year. You can fill in the gaps by sending home individual personal notes in the backpack requesting missing information. Never distribute contact information outside the classroom. If you have a roster on your classroom photo website, it must also be a members-only page.

We are aiming for **100% participation** in every classroom.

- [Introduce yourself to parents and explain your role in PTA and the class.](#)

Ask the teacher for a few minutes at **Back to School Night** to introduce yourself to your fellow families.

This is a good opportunity to:

- Mention volunteer opportunities
- Summarize class fund needs
- Collect any missing contact information
- Answer any questions about school activities
- Have available directory forms, PTA membership envelopes, volunteer opportunity forms, a list of last year's grade-level field trips, and a list of any classroom activities and field trips already planned for the year if provided by the teacher during your meeting.

Consider coordinating a **start-of-school social event**, such as a picnic or a park playdate or even just cappuccinos in the PTA room after the bell. Invitations can be via backpack, email, phone or mail.

## EVENTS

- Organize parents from your room to volunteer for school-wide events.

**Spring Fling** is the biggest coordination responsibility of the year for you as a PTA room rep. This involves collecting donations of concessions items and bake sale items from the parents. Items will also be requested for the classroom raffle basket, which you will need to assemble or organize.

The festival also features a game booth for each classroom, and you will need to find volunteers for set-up, running and clean-up of your room's booth.

You could also consider suggesting an equivalent cash value for parents who would rather write a check and cannot spend their time volunteering or gathering items.

Before you begin work on collecting donations and volunteers for the Spring Fling, speak to the teacher about their usual methods for solving these resource problems.

Much more detail will become available as events draw near, and the Room Rep Coordinator will update you at PTA meetings as well as through emails.

Some other PTA events for which you might be asked to coordinate volunteers and/or donations from your classroom include:

- **Pajamarama**
- **Scholastic Book Fair**
- **Valley View Calendar sales**
- **Move-a-thon/Team Valley View**
- **Staff Appreciation Luncheon**
- **Big Sunday**
- **Talent Show**
- **Family Field Day**

**Offer a range of ways to pitch in.** Recognize that parents have different levels of giving.

There are many ways to volunteer, and your job as a room rep is to help encourage participation from as many parents as possible in all school activities. Of course we love seeing the same faces at these school events. But there are untapped resources right in your classroom, and we need YOU to help find them!

For some parents, an empty sign-up list is intimidating. Send a **separate email to individual parents** to ask for their participation. Try being specific when asking for donations or volunteers (i.e. can you bring 2 dozen cupcakes, or can you work the booth from 1pm to 2pm).

Use the "week before" **reminder system**. Email or send out notes to make sure your volunteers remember what they signed up for.

**Thank your volunteers.** When parents know they have made a difference, they'll be more willing to help in the future.

- Organize classroom events, projects and field trips, and coordinate parent volunteers.

Throughout the year, you could be called on to enlist volunteers to assist in special projects for the teacher, chaperone field trips, read at family reader day, help with the Thanksgiving feast or graduation (K/ 6), or assist in a class party.

You might be asked to get donations from your parents to supply the classroom with the teacher's wish list, goodies for parties, etc.

These responsibilities will be outlined by the teacher at the beginning of the school year or could even change as the year progresses, and are **solely at the teacher's discretion**.

- Class photographer.

Remind parents to **take and share photos** at class events, field trips and school events.

Digitally share photos, if possible. It's a good way to get parents involved and interested in what's happening at school when they see their child's participation.

Share photos with our PTA Yearbook committee.

Check with the teacher to see if he/she has a website that is open for parents to share photos. If not, you can put together a simple photo-sharing website for your classroom on a free site such as Shutterfly.com or Weebly.com. The photo page of any Valley View classroom website must have a members-only log-in (as does the classroom roster). If you need any help, please feel free to ask the Room Rep Coordinator (Bonnie.George@valleyviewelementary.org).

## ON-GOING

- Represent your room in the PTA.

We need to know what the parents and teacher need in order to make PTA work.

Be positive and approachable to the parents so they feel comfortable asking questions and bringing up concerns. Share those concerns with the PTA and advocate for your class's needs.

Make a point of seeing the teacher regularly so that you can advocate for his/her issues at PTA meetings.

Check your email frequently so that you are accessible to the parents and teacher.

**Topics you'd like to discuss should be emailed to the co-presidents for inclusion in the weekly meeting agenda by Mondays at 5pm.**

You are the Voice of your classroom!

- Report pertinent information from PTA back to the parents and teacher.

Decisions made in the PTA meetings directly affect the parents and teacher in your room.

It is your responsibility to make sure they are informed regularly.

If you make a website for photo sharing, consider adding a PTA column with regular updates from the meetings that particularly affect your classroom.

**Make sure the teacher is updated regularly about PTA decisions and discussions.** Some teachers provide their own classroom newsletter, and your information will be helpful to its accuracy.

You are the Ears of your classroom!

- Voting meetings are mandatory for Room Reps.

If you absolutely cannot attend a particular voting meeting, please find a PTA member from your class to stand in for you.

Your presence at the meetings means your classroom is represented and their needs are addressed. Without you, the communication process breaks down.

We will endeavor to respect your time by keeping meetings organized and on task.

- Assist new families in their acclimation to the class and school.

As new families enter the school, either at the beginning of the school year, or mid-school-year, you will be asked to help make them welcome. Both children and parents entering a new school are apprehensive, and our goal is to make that transition as easy as possible.

The PTA Hospitality committee will host a School-wide Summer Picnic which will include new incoming families.

We will have veteran Valley View families in attendance, hopefully with children from every grade, so the kids can enter school a bit more comfortably and parents can have their questions answered.

The PTA will host also a **Kinder Playdate** before school begins to facilitate transitioning Kinders and their parents into their new school. A few veteran Valley View parents will be in attendance as well to answer any questions to make the parent transition easier as well. Kinder parents are often more apprehensive than their kids! Our goal is to make the parents feel part of our community and show them how to become involved. We need to harness the energy of the Kinder parents, tap into their talents, and earn their seven years of involvement in Valley View. After school begins, the Kinder room reps will continue this by planning a few playdates throughout the year.

The new **Parent Mentor committee** this year in the PTA is intended to help new families find their footing in a new school. Parents of first-time students will be introduced to a family with a child in their grade level, who will be available to answer questions. As a room rep, you are already a member of this committee!

- [Coordinate the purchase and/or making of items for the class and teacher.](#)

Coordinate the collection of money and purchase of and/or creation of class gifts for the teacher and classroom aide(s):

- **Birthday**
- **Holiday**
- **Teacher and Staff Appreciation day**
- **End of Year**

This is where that getting-to-know-you form might come in handy. Have the teacher fill this out at the beginning of the school year to help you with ideas.

Also, at the teacher's request, ask parents to donate **teacher's "wish list" items** to help keep the classroom stocked with requested convenience items, office supplies, art supplies, or whatever the teacher might need.

Please be delicate when requesting money from parents. List "suggested donation" amounts in your requests. It's okay to follow-up, but remember that no one is required to give.

- [Maintain a phone and email list, and disseminate information as needed throughout the year.](#)

Beyond the initial directory information, if parents change contact information throughout the year, please make a note of it, update your classroom directory and the teacher.

You must have contact information for all parents in order to communicate properly.

Periodically, the PTA will ask you to send important information to all the parents in your room. For example, there will be Spring Fling volunteer and donation requests as well as other special requests during the year. Parents tend to read emails sent directly from the room rep more thoroughly than the school-wide newsletters.

The teacher may ask you to pass on class information to the parents or he/she may prefer to communicate with parents directly. Please be aware of his/her needs.

- Foster a feeling of inclusion within your classroom and the school.

We want all parents, from established VVE families and new families alike, to feel welcome, to have their ideas heard, and to contribute to the success of the educational environment of our school.

Starting at the classroom level, we want to be the friendliest and most welcoming school available, with the feeling of community and small-town spirit that drew many families here in the first place.

Please help us to squelch the rumor mills that are inherent to schools. Distribute information appropriately. Recognize what topics should remain personal. Lead by example.

Please try to find use for ALL volunteers. Be open to new ideas and suggestions.

Thank your volunteers and let them know their contributions are valuable.

**Thank you!**

Your involvement in your child's classroom and in the PTA as a whole really does make an impact. Thank you so much for being a Room Representative!