



Don't be left out of the loop! Subscribe to *Parent Network*

Why reinvent the wheel when you can learn from what parents across the District are doing to improve and support their children's schools? *Parent Network* is PEN's new monthly e-zine, highlighting the many ways parents participate in public education for the benefit of all students. Each issue will focus on a different aspect of parent involvement, with examples from individual schools plus links to additional materials, District resources, and more. Subscribers also will be able to access contact information for parents in key volunteer and leadership positions across the District. More than a newsletter, *Parent Network* is a forum that allows subscribers to share challenges and solutions with other involved parents.

**Subscribe for only \$4.50/month, or make a one-time donation of \$45 and enjoy full subscriber benefits through August 2012.**

Parent Network subscribers also have access to PEN's entire library of subscriber resources, including updated school fact sheets, guides for how to evaluate schools and what to look for on a tour, audio files of our programs, parent engagement tips, parent program materials, and past issues of *Parent Network*.

**The September issue of Parent Network** looks at how room parents support teachers and keep other parents informed – and what some schools do to coordinate and support their room parent program. Also featured: meet the staff of the District Welcome Center. (See over for excerpt.)

**Other Topics Planned for 2011-12:**

- ***Supporting School Communications*** - Websites, newsletters, phone & e-blasts, bulletin boards and more strategies to keep your school community informed. Coping with language barriers and making use of informal networks.
- ***What is the Single Plan for Student Achievement? (And why do I care?)*** - What School Site Councils (SSCs) do and where parents plug in; ideas to help SSCs work with parent leaders (and staff) to engage all groups in achieving goals and having input into planning.
- ***Fundraising*** - How PTA "ways and means" fundraising differs from Annual Funds; plus resources and related topics like PEF, Buy In PUSD, Townloop, teacher-driven grants, and more.
- ***Parents as resources and resources for parents*** - Basic rules and best practices for recruiting and motivating volunteers; plus making the most of your campus parent room.
- ***Creating Community*** - Who do you "see"? Who "never shows up"? Practical suggestions for expanding the scope and strength of your school community.
- ***ABCs of Special Needs***
- ***Parent Involvement at the Secondary School Level***
- ***Reaching out to the Community***
- ***YOUR SUGGESTIONS AND IDEAS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!***

**Why wait? There's no risk, no obligation! Subscribe to PEN's *Parent Network* today!**  
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### **Resources:**

Room Parent

[Recruitment flyer & job description](#) - (Willard)

Sample Room Parent [introduction letter](#) - Eng/Span (McKinley)

Sample [Room Rep handbook excerpt](#) - (Willard)

Room Parent [Teacher Survey/Interview](#) - (Willard)

[Volunteer Form & Job Descriptions](#) - [English](#) / [Spanish](#) (Hamilton)

Dear Involved Parent,

**Welcome** to *Parent Network*, PEN's new monthly e-zine for busy PUSD parents. Our goal is to promote the great work parents are doing to support their schools, and to help you work smarter, not harder, by sharing ideas, tools, and tips with your counterparts at schools across the District.

In this first issue, we focus on Room Parent programs. One "accidental room parent" defined her role as "holding things together" - supporting the teachers with whatever needed doing. As she became familiar with the "rhythm of the kindergarten day," she found herself becoming the parent that teachers relied on and that other parents turned to for information.

We've sampled just a handful of schools for this month's article, but we hope you'll respond with examples of your own. Each month's article, along with contact info and links to sample forms, flyers, tools and other resources, will be archived on the PEN website. In this way, we hope to create a living library of best practices, and an ongoing forum for parents to share their experience, challenges, and solutions.



Here's to **not** reinventing the wheel!

Susan Savitt Schwartz, Program Director, PEN

## ***The Pivotal Role of Room Parents***

It can start with an offer to staple decodable books, stuff the weekly folders, or put a classroom roster together. There may be many eager moms (and dads) vying for the job, or no one doing it at all. At their most effective, Room Parents serve as double points of connection: between families and their children's teacher, AND between that same set of families and the school community as a whole. But as with any volunteer job, failure to establish clear expectations can result in a frustrating experience for everyone. How to make the most of this pivotal role? [[Read more...](#)]

## ***Meet the staff of PUSD's Welcome Center***

The Parent and Community Resource Center – or "Welcome Center" - is the District's main point of entry for parents and community members. Part of the Office of Student Support Services, Center staff handles: permits/open enrollment; student records & transcripts; volunteer processing; parent engagement. **Theresa Doran** ([doran.theresa@pusd.us](mailto:doran.theresa@pusd.us)) is the Center's Coordinator. Individual WC staff act as liaisons to the parent councils and school sites. (See below for their assignments.) [[Read more...](#)]