

## TEACHER APPRECIATION

**In other words: Happy Teachers equal Happy Students**

National PTA usually sets aside the first full week in May as National Teacher Appreciation Week. A local PTA may choose to do an all-out appreciation effort that week or throughout the year.

People respond to appreciation three ways:

1. Giving things (clever little gifts)
2. Giving words (verbal or written praise)
3. Giving touch (pat on the back or a hug)

If you choose to give gifts to show appreciation to teachers, be sure the gift is meaningful. Let it reflect the respect and love PTA has for the sacrifice of self our teachers give. They are notoriously underpaid and overworked. This is not an unconscious decision, most teachers continue teaching because of their love of learning and desire to aid students in a quest for full potential. Accompany gifts with messages of appreciation.

There are so many reasons to thank our teachers throughout the year for the role they play in children's lives. Here are a few to think about before you plan your year of thanks.

✧ Teachers provide quality education for our children. We all love to receive compliments on what we do best. Thank them by giving them positive feedback on their teaching. Notes in their mailboxes, such as "Thank you for . . ." or "We appreciate . . ." will show them how much you care.

- ⊗ Teachers play important roles of providing and maintaining order and discipline in the classroom. These are important social skills our children need to develop for use later on in life. Support teachers' efforts by reinforcing their rules outside of the classroom.
- ⊗ Patience, understanding, and kindness are constantly required to nurture a class full of young minds and personalities. It takes a lot to give a lot. Remember those little, often overlooked qualities that make teachers such special people in our lives. Be sure to show your appreciation.
- ⊗ Quality time spent with our children is just as important for teachers as parents. Help the teachers spend more time with the important aspects of their job. Assign a PTA volunteer to each teacher as a PTA classroom assistant. First meet with your principal or PTA teacher representative for ideas and rules that govern what parents are allowed to do in the schools. Be aware that comparing students' performance or behavior or discussions with the teacher should remain confidential.
- ⊗ Offer to develop a brochure jointly with your local teachers group or school public relations association to suggest ways parents and teachers can work together to help children succeed in school.
- ⊗ Create a resource file of parents with special talents and experiences, that can provide teachers with a co-instructor for special projects and activities. Let teachers know the PTA wants to help!
- ⊗ Honor retiring teachers by making a donation to a teacher education scholarship in their name.

### Teacher Appreciation Ideas

1. Remember the birthdays of the administration, the teachers, and the support staff. (Many people make a school run.) Give the teacher a surprise birthday party.
2. Spotlight teachers. Post notices of their awards.
3. Involve the community in teacher appreciation. Get the city to make an Official proclamation for teacher appreciation. Let the city put up banners proclaiming Teacher Appreciation Week.
4. Plan a "listening session" with teachers to hear their brainstorming on educational reforms. Communicate with legislators on teachers ideas and views.
5. Give teachers a survival kit filled with items such as: post-it notes, red pens, mints, pencils, instant soup for a fast lunch, adhesive bandages, lifesavers, felt-tip markers, tissues, wash cloths, calendar, candy bar, and reward trinkets.
6. Give teachers a special luncheon or breakfast. Provide volunteers to monitor classes while teachers attend the luncheon. During this time the volunteers in the classroom can have students write notes of appreciation for teachers. Gather the notes and present them to the teachers.
7. Provide corsages for the teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week.
8. Plant a tree in honor of a teacher.
9. Arrange to have volunteers decorate the teacher's classroom door after school.
10. Have students bring fruit during Teacher Appreciation Week to keep a basket filled with fruit on the teacher's desk.
11. Give the teacher a gift certificate to the local bookstore.
12. Give the teacher movie passes to the local movie theater.

13. Place colorful balloon bouquets on teacher's doors on a dreary, winter day.
14. Have students create a booklet of personal thank-you notes to the teacher.
15. Simply tell the teacher "thank you" for a job well done.
16. Prior to Teacher Appreciation Week, ask each teacher to complete the phrase, "If I had only one wish, it would be . . ." Provide large sheets of paper and have each class or small group of students draw or paint a mural that describes their teacher's wish.
17. Plan a school assembly or program to honor your teachers. Have the PTA work with groups of students to write, direct and act out skits that portray " what a typical day would be like without Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ or Mr. \_\_\_\_\_." Some original, humorous, and endearing scenes are sure to emerge.
18. Work with the students to develop a personal list of five nice things to do for their teacher. Have each student pledge to do one thing each day during Teacher Appreciation Week. Be sure to help them identify realistic attainable activities.
19. Give teachers candy bars throughout the year on their birthdays with notes that could include:

Almond Joy: It's a JOY to wish you a Happy Birthday!

Mars: We'd fly to MARS to wish you a Happy Birthday!

\$100,000 bar: You're worth \$100,000 to us...Have a Happy Birthday!

Symphony: You run your classroom like a beautiful SYMPHONY...thank you for all you do. Have a Happy Birthday!

M & M's: You're MARVELOUS and MAGNIFICENT...Have a Happy Birthday!

Salted Nut Roll: We're NUTS about you and hope you have a very Happy Birthday!

UNO: UNO, we wish you a Happy Birthday, and hope you have a great day.

Rollos: We're ROLLING OVER to wish you a Happy Birthday!

Milky Way: You're OUT OF THIS WORLD, and we hope you have a Happy Birthday!

20. Host a school breakfast or a potluck luncheon for the teachers, substitute teachers, teacher' aides and other school support staff. Extend invitations to the parents to take the opportunity to honor their children's educators.

21. Present a small basket of gifts to each teacher during the first day of Teacher Appreciation Week. Ask students to give suggestions for the gifts and then to write and attach a note to each gift to explain on what day she or he should use it and how.

22. Send a notice home with all students to request that each parent take the time to write a personal note to their children's teachers thanking them for the special time and effort they have provided throughout the year.

23. Do something every month of the year. For example:

**August:** Welcome Back to School Survival Kit. Fill a basket, or sack, full of goodies that will help the teachers get off to a good start for the year.

Give the janitor and kitchen staff things that pertain to their particular jobs like sponges, washcloths, spatulas, and soap. Give the secretaries staples, tape and paper clips.

**September:** Give an apple with a note:



**October:** Give a can of Root Beer:

We're ROOTING for you because you're great!

**November:** Give a Kara's Mint Truffle:

We KARALOT about you and appreciate all the TRUFFLES you went to during Red Ribbon Week!

**December:** Give a liter of Sprite with a big red bow tied on it: We hope your holidays are MERRY and SPRITE!

**January:** Give a bag of peanuts: The PTA is NUTS about you; thanks for all you do to make our school great!

**February:** Give a valentine card with a chocolate heart: We love you and appreciate all you do!

**March:** Give some Shamrock cookies with a note: You bring our school good luck!

**April:** Give a Reese's Easter Egg: We can't REESEST thanking you for all you do...you're EGGSTRA special!

**May:** Give a potted flower: For all you do, this BUDS for you!

**June:** Give a small tole painted sheep: Thank EWE for a great year...have a great summer!

These are just a few appreciation ideas. Other ideas are included under the section of volunteer recognition that may be adopted to fit teachers also.

Remember that whatever you do, if done sincerely, will help teachers know of PTA's appreciation for them.

