

# Freebie Funds!

By Tammy Coburn (Tel 425-235-3190)

A local PTSA accumulated nearly \$20,000 in new funding they didn't have the previous year, without begging their members for additional cash. They increased revenues by using outside programs set up to support non-profit organizations and they decreased expenses by scrutinizing how existing funds were used.

## Here are some ideas for increasing revenues:

- ✓ **eScrip program [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com):** Supporters go to the website and sign up their Safeway and other club cards (the PTSA can also sign up club cards for them). Supporters can also put in their debit and credit card information (captures purchases outside of Safeway). For purchases made at participating stores, 1% to 8% of their purchases will be electronically transferred to the PTSA checking account on a monthly basis. Safeway alone will donate up to \$7,500 annually (not including promo's).

Have contests for members who can gather the most Club Card supporters.

Ask your local Safeway if you can put collection cans at the registers to collect eScrip receipts for special promotions.

Ask your local Safeway if high school students can obtain community service hours by collecting eScrip Club Card supporters in the store. Hand out the website info or gather their information for later input.

Go to the website for promotional ideas.

Contact the local eScrip rep for upcoming workshops and network at the workshop to find other ideas for free fundraising.

Have information on little tear-off sheets so parents can quickly grab and signup at home, or drop off filled form in a PTA box.

Call 1-800-723-3929 to get your Safeway Club Card Number if you don't know it.

E-mail the eScrip information to your volunteer list and ask them to forward it to their friends and relatives, and they in turn forward it to their friends. Let them know it's supporting the children and list some of the programs that will benefit from the funds.

- ✓ **Albertsons** has a program running with their Club Card which is independent from the eScrip program. Once a participant is signed up, each time they use

their Club Card, up to 4% will go to your PTSA. A check will be mailed quarterly to the PTSA.

Go online to [www.albertsons.com](http://www.albertsons.com). Click on “In The Community” for the Community Partners logo link. The PTSA will receive an acceptance package from Albertsons to help get you started.

You can also call 1-800-696-6419 to speak with an Albertson’s fundraising expert.

- ✓ **Cartridges for Kids:** Used cell phones, printer and copier cartridges as well as laptops and PDS are collected. The area rep is a phone call away and will swing by, pick up the items and a check will follow in a few months.

You can contact them at [www.cartridgesforkids.com](http://www.cartridgesforkids.com) or email: [contact@cartridgesforkids.com](mailto:contact@cartridgesforkids.com) or use 1-800-420-0235.

Send reminders to parents around Christmas time that you are collecting used cell phones, cartridges, PDA’s and laptops. You’ll be surprised how fast the collection bin will fill.

- ✓ **Employee Giving Programs:** Anyone making charitable donations through payroll deduction can designate the PTSA as the beneficiary. Some companies will also match these funds to the PTSA. Your PTA could receive funds from the United Way (Via Boeing and other employers), Washington Mutual and Microsoft, to name a few. Employees need to initiate the donation by going through their employee benefits coordinator. You will need to supply the employee with your PTA’s Federal Identification Number.
- ✓ **Corporate Gift Matching:** Cash donations to the PTSA or payments to the PTSA in excess of fair market value for items purchased, qualify for corporate gift matching. You must keep documentation to support these donations and generally the donations must be \$25.00 or more to qualify for matching.

Add to the fundraiser donation form a place to check if they have corporate matching available. Also, add a place to check if they have included their completed matching form or have supplied to the PTA verification of their online request.

Keep a list, alphabetically, of past donors with corporate matching. If you see they have made a donation and you haven’t received a corporate matching form, send them a reminder.

Look through auction purchases, if you see donations from individuals with corporate matching; send them a reminder to apply for the match. It may not be too late to go back and ask donors to apply for matches from your Spring

Fundraisers. Some companies will allow up to 1 year from date of donation to apply for the matching funds.

Add a note to your auction receipts and catalogs stating “payments greater than fair market values are considered a cash donation to the PTSA. Donations are available for corporate matching and may be deductible for Federal tax purposes”.

Most companies would like employees to file matching electronically, here are a few sites:

Boeing [boeing@easymatch.com](mailto:boeing@easymatch.com), or call 1-888-531-4438

Microsoft [MS@easymatch.com](mailto:MS@easymatch.com) or call 1-800-480-4438

- ✓ **Starbucks Community Volunteer Program:** Contact your local Starbucks and see if there is an employee willing to be a Community Volunteer Coordinator for your school. The Starbucks program will donate \$10 per volunteer hour (any volunteer), up to 100 hours (\$1,000) in any 3 month period. Potentially \$4,000/yr.

The Starbuck’s Employee Coordinator is the one doing the paperwork with Starbucks. Get the Coordinator the required IRS 501C-3 documents.

Plan ahead! It takes 3 Starbucks employees at the event. Give them time to round up people and schedule in your event.

You’ll need to have volunteers write down time, date and hours volunteered.

- ✓ **Microsoft Volunteer Program:** Similar to above, start with a Microsoft employee willing to be the Coordinator.
- ✓ **WaMoola for Schools:** Our school only had 198 debit cards registered yet it earned \$1,009.

Go online to [www.wamoolaforschools.com](http://www.wamoolaforschools.com), find your school and register your current Washington Mutual debit card.

A check from WaMu is presented to the School in the spring each year.

For elementary schools, see if the PTA can be part of the WaMu School Savings program. Once a week kids can make deposits at the school and earn cool prizes for every other deposit. It only needs two volunteers a week to run the program. Kids learn how saving can be rewarded and it is another link to the parents that you may not otherwise have.

- ✓ **Box Top\$ for Education:** Collection of the labels and bonus register receipts provides cash to the organization. [www.BOXTOPS4EDUCATION.com](http://www.BOXTOPS4EDUCATION.com) .

During the summer, there was a General Mills promotion that gave cash register receipts of \$2.00 each towards Box Tops\$. If you had collection boxes at the store, points could have been accumulated for your organization.

- ✓ **Campbell's Labels for Education:** Product labels that are acceptable are: any brand Campbell's, Swanson canned products, Franco American, Pepperidge Farm (soup labels, UPC code from boxes), Prego sauces, Pace salsa (Lids), V8.

Place a container at the school for collection of labels.

Once labels are mailed to Campbell's your points are entered into your account and the points will carry forward from year to year. You can view your points online.

Contact stores to obtain certificates directly from them. They will often give them out if you do volunteer work for the store. These certificates can be worth 1,000s of points.

This is a great opportunity for kids to earn community service hours by counting, cutting and bundling labels.

Campbell's has a catalog of items that can be purchased with the points.

- ✓ **Office Depot, Staples etc....:** Ask to join their rewards program and give out the ID# so everyone can be earning points for your organization.
- ✓ **Sell Advertising Spots and Ask for Sponsors of Events:** Everyone has a newsletter and most have a website and auctions to place ads.

Send out PTA membership applications to businesses and attach a letter asking them to advertise in your monthly newsletter, sell them a website link, put their ad in the auction catalog or have them sponsor tables at the auction. Price each one separate so they can pick and choose.

Show the sponsors what activities the PTA is involved in within the school and community when you are asking for support. They will be generous when they see where the money goes.

- ✓ **Outside Grants:** Try for outside grants from your city, community foundations, and other charitable organizations. Give it a try and you may be surprised at the support you will receive.

Over the years our PTA received grants for library books, math challenge program, emergency container and items for the baseball field.

Some grants are available to the PTA because of its 501(c)3 status and may not be available to the ASB or school.

- ✓ **Product Sales:** If you are doing product sales tell the buyer how much of their purchase is a charitable donation. Tell them the donation portion could qualify as a corporate match and as a deduction on their tax return. In addition, always give them space to make a flat cash donation.

If I know that every dollar I spend 40 cents will go to the PTA I can apply for a corporate match and I can also take the 40 cents off on my tax return as an itemized deduction for charitable donations. So if I spend \$100.00 on products \$40 will go to the PTA and a corporate match of \$40 (this gives the PTA \$80, twice what they would have received). I'll have a receipt from the PTA showing the charitable donation that I can now deduct on my tax return.

If I don't want the items being sold, at least you have given me the option of making a cash donation that can be deducted on my tax return and is available for corporate matching.

Attach a letter showing why the PTA needs funds, show what the PTA sponsors at the school and how the funds could be spent. I can guarantee they don't know all PTA is doing for their children or what is no longer provided by the school district.

- ✓ **Put Idle Cash in Interest Bearing Accounts:** After your Spring Fundraiser, you have a fairly good idea how much funds will be carrying forward to start the next year. Put these funds in a 3 month or longer CD. Transfer funds between your savings and checking account regularly to maximize your interest income.
- ✓ **Support Your School(s):** If your school is already signed up for these programs then support and help them earn funds. If the school is not signed up, then it's a great place for the PTA to earn extra funds. Our elementary was enrolled in the WaMoola for Schools, Campbell's Labels, Box Top\$, and Office Depot programs. The PTA administered the Campbell's program for the school and was involved in most of the other programs discussed above.

#### **Here are some ideas for reducing expenses:**

- ✓ **Ask for Tax Exempt Purchases:** Anytime you are purchasing items that will be sold for fundraising it can be excluded from sales taxes. Arrange ahead of time and supply the vendor with a resale certificate.

If you are selling tickets to the annual auction dinner and there is a small amount of profit on each dinner ticket, that profit is considered a charitable donation to the PTA and the entire cost of the meal can be excluded from sales taxes. Include

on the ticket how much of the price is considered a charitable donation. A PTA saved about \$800 on the meal by excluding sales taxes.

If you're selling pre baked pizzas at an event and you're making a profit on the pizza, ask to have the taxes taken off.

If you sell spirit clothing a few times a year and you make a little money on each item, you can exclude the sales taxes. This does not apply to a student store where items are regularly sold.

- ✓ **Allocate Copy Charges to Committees:** We require the committees to use our copier or the School District print shop. They are required to get prior approval before using any other sources or they won't be reimbursed.

A PTA was spending over \$3,000 more than it should have been by not using the cheapest sources. When you have over 50 events during the year and over 450 students things can add up fast. Someone may feel running to UPS and making copies only cost them \$30 more. That's true, but multiple that by 50 events and several times a month and you have a disaster!

Try this or a similar method to track copying costs. Have your accounting system be able to aggregate how much your PTA spends on copies (including paper) and how much the individual committees' spend. In the accounting details you should be able to see the total spent on copying and what a committee spent at a quick glance. In Quicken, we post all copier costs to the "copier costs" account and then have a sub account "allocated copies" where we can back out the committee copier costs and post the costs to the committees. This method allows us to see what the entire organization is paying for copies (including paper) and places the costs into the individual committee budgets.

Have committees log their copies at the machine. Audit the monthly to insure copies are being logged in and there isn't unauthorized use of the machine. Allocate copy costs (including paper) monthly to committees from the log in sheets.

- ✓ **Ask to Help Make Purchases for Grants Awarded to Staff:** If the PTA is making the purchases it can shop around for the best deals. Often times the grant recipient doesn't have the time to shop around and they will go to the internet and make the purchase.

A PTA saved over \$2,500 by waiting for sales. It bought 30 flash drives saving \$900 and 15 microphones for the computer lab saving \$685 from the internet quotes provided in the grant applications. Because the PTA had a connection with the publisher of Puzzle Wise math books, the books cost \$2 each rather than \$7.50, saving \$495 for the 90 5<sup>th</sup> grade books.

The PTA also received store credit to use on future purchases because it used the PTA store reward cards when making the purchases.

- ✓ **Use a Computerized Accounting System:** Obtain easy to use software that is inexpensive to update and provides enough tools to analyze your PTA for budgeting and reporting purposes.

We use Quicken because it's **free** with a Turbo-Tax rebate and it is easy to use. Don't get into something so complicated the next treasurer won't use it. The historical information is invaluable in controlling costs.

When entering in information put in as much detail as possible. Show in the memo field how many cases of pop the Carnival used, how many water bottles you gave out at the fun run etc. If someone did a poor job on their committee binder it is a breeze to pull a report which shows everything the committee purchased last year or in any previous year.

When it comes time to budget, pull a historical profit and loss report. Compare the committee activity for the last 5 years. Those years with large variances look at the itemized details, see what happened and how you can improve next year.

- ✓ **Don't Use the Same Vendor Without First Comparison Shopping:** Compare prices, shipping and handling costs on the internet for prizes, trophies, spirit clothing and other needs of the PTA.

A PTA Chairperson found the "curly/stretchy" shoe laces for 1/3 the cost the previous vendor was supplying them. Switching vendors saved over \$400 to purchase the prizes.

- ✓ **Use Pre-Sale Tickets for Events:** Some will buy tickets even if they don't plan on attending.

**Give** an incentive for buying early.

Put advertising on the tickets for upcoming events, eScrip, how to become a member....

**Communication is Required to be Successful:** Below are some ideas to let everyone know what the PTSA does.

- ✓ **Have a Banner Made That Reads "This is a PTSA Sponsored Event".** Display the banner at every sponsored event. If you are paying for the family reading night, science fair, math night, or an assembly, you need to let parents know their funds are making the event possible.

- ✓ **Place Posters in the School Listing What the PTSA Does:** One of the biggest problems facing PTA's is communicating the benefits it provides to the school, children and the community. If you show what the PTSA does, individuals are more likely to become members and support your fundraising efforts.

These posters should be in plain view so when parents are touring the building during conferences, at the dance, music performance or waiting for their kids, they can see what the PTSA does. Sandwich boards or easels work great! Fill a display case.

Place the information in the newsletter. It makes a big impact if they can see, all in one place, what the PTSA plans to do during the year.

See "Money Matters" attached, for an example of what a PTA placed on their posters and in their newsletter. Make your poster big and colorful!

- ✓ **Thank School Staff:** At the end of the year, send a letter to the school staff (e-mail too) thanking them for allowing the PTA in their classrooms and school during the year. Include items which informs them how hard the PTA worked and how much financially the PTA helped.

See the attached example for what one PTA sent out as a year end thanks to the staff.

- ✓ **Advertise Your Website:** Have your website listed on all documents. Make it easy for individuals to become members, volunteers and involved with fundraising
- ✓ **Share Your Ideas and Help Other PTA's Become Successful.**

(This is a "show me the money" article! Consider placing something like this in your PTSA newsletter so your members SEE where their money goes!)

# Money Matters

By: (Treasurer name)

Because of the generous support from people like you, our PTSA provides volunteers or funding for over 50 activities within the School. It takes 100's of PTSA members, thousands of volunteer hours and a budget of over \$xxx,xxx to provide these activities within the School and the Community.

Some of the activities your PTSA is involved in this school year are:

Carnival	Dance	Mustang Math Challenge
Basket Bonanza (silent auction)	Fun Run-Fall Fundraiser	Family Math Night
Pancake Breakfast	Science Fair	Family Reading Night
WAMU School Savings	Talent Show	Hearing & Vision Screening
Make-a-Wish (needs for kids or classes)	Assembly-Play <i>Sosu's Call</i>	Starlight Starbright Toy Drive
New Library Books	Magician-L. Foxx	Emergency Container Supplies
New Gym Equipment	Holiday Food Drive	Holiday Clothing Drive
Reflections Art Program	The Play	Bochinche Music Assembly
Reading Express Program	Newsletter	Staff Appreciation Events
Student Directory	5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Field Day	Fifth Grade Recognition
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Fundraising	Mustang Clothing	Commemorative Brick Projects
Golden Acorn Award	\$2,000 in Alumni Scholarships	Outstanding Educator Award
50/50 Raffle	Technology Grants	Spring Auction Fundraiser
Classroom Reimbursements	Academic Support	Pacific Sci Center 5 <sup>th</sup> Gr Camp-In
Donations to Communities In Schools	Book Author: Reed Parsley workshops	
Wonderglobe Assembly, "Toys and Tales..."		

## Your PTSA also:

- ◆ funds Safety Patrol recognition
- ◆ maintains a website [www.pts.org](http://www.pts.org)
- ◆ funds Learning.com secure website for classroom academics
- ◆ funds the Reading Express Consultant who helps with technical materials for the program
- ◆ grant monies were made available for teachers, staff, and parents to request needed items or services

**Classroom Reimbursements and Academic Support** committees provide reimbursements to classroom teachers for out-of-pocket expenses and funding for grade-level projects proposed to the PTSA. The Academic Support Committee acts as a liaison between PTSA and School Staff members.

**Art Resource Committee** provides the basic resources to support school-wide art programs. These items include clay, glazes, paints, colored markers, oil pastels, scissors, colored construction paper and many other supplies.

**First Day of School Committee** helps organize volunteers for the first week of school who in turn help parents and students find their way to their classroom and buses.

**Health & Safety/Emergency Preparedness** members keep emergency container supplies replenished annually and also provide volunteers for the hearing and eyesight screening.

**Legislative Representative** keeps PTSA members aware of the laws being considered in the legislature and how the PTA whole body can impact those decisions. The Representative attends conventions and heads to Olympia to discuss issues with lawmakers, along with other state representatives.

**Service Club Committee**, comprised of fifth grade students, allows them to earn service points helping at PTSA and school events during the year. You may have seen the hard working students throughout most of our events this year.

This does not include everything the PTSA does during the year, but it gives you a glimpse! Funding for these activities comes from two major fundraising events, The Fall Fundraiser/Fun Run and the Spring Auction. We do not ask families to sell any fundraising products during the year, but instead rely on your generous donations.

We also ask for your participation in these "Free to You" programs: Corporate Matching , eScrip Program, Cartridges for Kids, Starbucks Community Volunteer program, Albertson's Communities in Schools, Employee Giving Programs including United Way and Boeing Good Neighbor, Box Top\$ for Education, Campbell's Labels, Office Depot and Staples Rewards. The eScrip and Albertson's programs are nationwide, so please use your email lists and get all your friends and relatives to sign up and help your child's school. Go to the PTSA website for more information.

We rely heavily on these "Free to you" programs to funds our activities and they brought in over \$ XXX to the PTSA last year.

Thank you for the support you provide! Without you, it simply would not be possible to fun the needed items and services for all our children. It is amazing what we can all accomplish together.

*(Sample letter to send to teachers and staff at the end of the school year.)*

A special thanks to our school staff; the PTSA wouldn't be able to bring these great programs without **you!**

Because of the generous support from people like you, the School PTSA has completed its 43rd year as a supporter of the School. The PTSA has contributed over **\$1 Million** in funding in just the last 18 years. With over XXX PTSA members this year, we have provided volunteers or funding for over 50 activities within the School, thousands of volunteer hours and a budget of over \$XXX,000.

Here's a sample of what the PTSA has provided this year:

Academic Support for Classrooms	\$ 4,500
Classroom Reimbursements	8,600
Classroom Bonuses	9,300
Grants Awarded	21,312
Technology Grants	2,000
Art Supplies	3,500
Assemblies (Sosu's Call, Wonder globe, Author Reed Parsley, Bochinche music	3,100
Reading Express Program	5,000
Learning.com website/learning program	4,950
Family Reading Night	600
Family Math Night	1,000
Math Program	2,125
Reflections Art Program	570
Science Fair	600
Books for the Library	1,800
Gym Equipment	350
Safety Patrol	450
Scholarships for school alumnus	2,000
Summer School books for LAP	750
School Dedication	1,050
Staff Appreciation	700
Community Services (food & gifts)	1,000

Of course we can't forget all the fun times we had at the Carnival, Pancake Breakfast and Basket Bonanza, Auction, Fun Run, Weekly WaMu School Savings, The Retirement Party, Talent Show, Dance, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Camp-in at the Pacific Science Center and Field Day along with the new benches provided by the 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

The Yearbooks, Student Directory and Service Club were brought to you by the PTSA as well as volunteers for the vision and hearing testing and the class photo days. Did you know the Emergency container supplies are purchased and maintained by the PTSA?

Thanks for allowing us into your daily schedules and we are looking forward to another great year ahead. We look forward to your enrollment as a continuing PTSA member next year. Have a great summer!

(School) PTSA Executive Board