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Grassroots Advocacy Efforts Receive National Honors

National PTA Announces Winners of 2010 Outstanding Advocacy Awards

CHICAGO (January 21, 2010) – National PTA® is honoring advocacy efforts at state, local, and individual levels with its 2010 Outstanding Advocacy Awards. This year's recipients are: Florida PTA; Language Academy PTSA, San Diego; and Rick Tyler, Temple Hills, Md.

Outstanding Advocacy Award recipients were chosen for their dedication, leadership and sustained efforts to positively affect child related policy, regulation and legislation.

Florida PTA is being honored for their efforts while facing proposed education budget cuts. The state PTA formed a coalition with major education groups during these efforts. Florida ranks near the bottom in the country in school funding. But Florida PTA's initiatives created sustained advocacy and generated new-found enthusiasm for parents and local PTAs to work together for education funding for Florida children. Advocates sent more than 3,000 letters of protest to the Florida Governor and state legislators, held regular conference calls with regional and local PTA's, developed an advocacy toolkit and held one of the largest rallies at the state Capitol steps. As a result of Florida PTA's efforts, Florida legislators did not reduce education funding as proposed.

Language Academy PTSA is receiving an award for advocacy initiatives at the local level. The PTSA rallied students, parents and teachers after the San Diego Unified School Board proposed to cut transportation funding for magnet and urban area schools—a supposed \$10 million line item cut. With school bus cuts affecting 57% of their student body, Language Academy PTSA organized town hall meetings, media campaigns and protests to grab the attention of school board members. The end result: the proposed cut was voted against and transportation funding was secured so that students can continue to be transported to school.

Rick Tyler is being honored with the prestigious Shirley Igo Advocate of the Year Award for his 20-year commitment to the advocacy efforts of Maryland PTA. As a National PTA federal legislative chair, Tyler has advocated for increased funding for Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs), implementation of ESEA provisions at Title I schools, school funding, and school modernization. Through his leadership, Tyler has energized child advocates to take action on important legislation affecting Maryland schools; his work has benefited tens of thousands of students across his state and the nation.

“This year’s recipients of the Outstanding Advocacy Awards truly represent what it means to take action for all children,” said Charles “Chuck” Saylor, National PTA President. “In their long term commitment to PTA, we are proud to honor Rick Tyler, Language Academy PTSA in San Diego and Florida PTA for their tireless efforts to advocate for children from the state to the local level.”

About National PTA

National PTA® comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of family engagement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.