National PTA Honors Parents, Youth for Grassroots Advocacy Efforts

ALEXANDRIA, VA. (January 30, 2013) – National PTA® today announced the recipients of its 2013 Outstanding Advocacy Awards, which honor state and local PTAs, as well as individuals for their dedication, leadership and sustained efforts to positively affect child related policy, regulation and legislation. In addition, a student will be honored this year with PTA’s first annual Youth Advocate Award.

This year’s recipients are:

• PTA Outstanding State Advocacy Award
  The Florida PTA is being honored for their comprehensive advocacy campaign related to Florida’s Parent Empowerment Bill. Florida PTA’s success was rooted in the concept of educating as many of their members about the bill as possible. Advocacy efforts included regular legislative updates to County Councils and local units, and grassroots activation which encouraged members to send action alerts, e-mail campaigns and participate in phone-a-thons. Additionally, Florida PTA actively engaged the media and created forward-thinking advocacy tools, including a legislative blog and legislative plan of work that is open to anyone through calling a conference call line.

• PTA Outstanding Local Advocacy Award
  The 15th District PTA in Kentucky is being honored for their efforts to educate parents on the Common Core State Standards in their state. More than 11,000 parents received training and resources on how the standards will impact their children. In an effort to reach as many parents as possible, the 15th District PTA worked with community partners to ensure that families from various ethnic backgrounds received the information in their native language and used social media effectively to reach additional families and community members.

• Shirley Igo Advocate of the Year Award
  Justin Raber from West Virginia is being honored for his commitment to West Virginia’s state and federal advocacy efforts. Serving as West Virginia PTA’s President-elect and Federal Legislative Chair, he spearheaded efforts in the last Congress to encourage the West Virginia delegation to cosponsor the Family Engagement in Education Act. Additionally, Raber authored numerous op-eds related to the devastating impact of sequestration on education programs and the importance of nutrition standards for the National School Lunch Program. Raber also increased awareness of PTA’s legislative priorities by organizing workshops on federal advocacy
and training West Virginia PTA members on how to be effective advocates at the local, state and federal levels.

Past National PTA President (2001-2003) Shirley Igo was a model of public service and volunteerism throughout her life. She was an impassioned and compassionate leader, dedicated to moving PTA forward and committed to ensuring that others would follow.

- **Youth Advocate of the Year Award**
  
  Megan Gardner – a member of South Valley Junior High PTSA in Liberty Missouri - is being honored for her outstanding display of advocacy related to the issue of distracted driving. As a student representative for her local PTA unit, she worked with other student representatives in Missouri to draft a resolution on distracted driving that was passed by both Missouri PTA and National PTA. Gardner spoke at both Missouri State PTA and National PTA conventions to urge delegates to support the resolutions. Additionally, she mobilized members by hosting a booth at the Missouri PTA Legislative Forum for attendees to sign a pledge to avoid distracted driving and is now working with students across Missouri to create a PSA on the issue of distracted driving.

“The recipients of the Outstanding Advocacy Awards represent what it means to take action for all children,” said Betsy Landers, National PTA President. “From universal kindergarten to securing hot lunches for students, PTA advocates have been at the heart of our nation’s greatest advances for youth. Today, we speak up for family engagement in education; safe, healthy and technologically advanced schools; and equal opportunity for all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background.”

The recipients will be recognized during the [National PTA® Legislative Conference](http://www.pta.org) (March 12-14) in Washington, DC, where hundreds of parent leaders from across the country gather for an in-depth look at the latest National PTA Federal Public Policy Agenda, hone their advocacy skills and visit with Congressional leaders to advocate on behalf our nation’s children.

National PTA’s public policy agenda features four key areas: education; child health and nutrition; juvenile justice and delinquency prevention; and school safety. The 2013 National PTA Federal Public Policy Agenda can be viewed at [PTA.org](http://www.pta.org).

**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 parent involvement 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.