

# THE PTA OBSERVER

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## Thoughts from an Observer

Statistically speaking, each year 45% of adults make a New Year's resolution for themselves. I've noticed that much like my hips, my resolutions broaden over time. A long while ago I resolved to learn gourmet cooking. A short while ago it was simply "to cook." And as this crazy year wound to an end, I found myself not worried at all about culinary ingredients, but rather on finding the ones necessary to cook up some personal peace... (perhaps because the whole cooking thing didn't work out, but a more noble pursuit nonetheless.)

I came across "29 Gifts" a short while ago. I can't remember how or why, but that's more a sign of my age than the importance of how it came to be in my life. The premise: Give one thing away each day for 29 days. Why? "Because to see your world change, you have to do something to change your world."

'Um. I'm broke,' you say. Yup. Who isn't? You can give anything -- food, old clothes or toys, a compliment, a smile, a kind word or thought... or your time. Why each day? "Because the best way to attract abundance into your life is to be in a *perpetual* state of giving and gratitude."

29 Gifts began with a woman who was suffering from debilitating MS. She found that the impact of giving caused miraculous shifts in her health, happiness, prosperity and energy. Her goal: "...to create a worldwide revival of the giving spirit in the world." That's just too much for me, personally, to take on. I would, however, gladly participate in a challenge that brought goodness to myself and to my family through the spreading of goodness to others.

Now, if this were an infomercial, I'd tell my son it was too good to be true and that the widget would never work. However, I've bought in. I began. The other snowy day I waited at the end of the driveway with hot tea for the garbage men. I expected to find that the high point was watching them pull over to daintily sip their Earl Grey, but it was actually the extra bounce I had in my knuckles as I later took to the keyboard, knowing I interrupted the mundane (theirs and mine) with a little cheer that would last a lot longer than the downing of a warm beverage.

Isn't that why we're all "here"? To live those moments? I had a 100 year old neighbor once who would sit on her

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porch each evening and watch the world go by. I asked her what her secret to a long life was. She said she liked being alive. Pretty simple, no?

Why the diatribe? Well... if you're at all like most people I know, including myself, you've lost a little vitality along the way — whether it be from the pressures of work, health, or endless other worries. So consider the challenge... to benefit all from regularly giving and receiving with gratitude — and to look at giving as an experience rather than a duty. And sure, helping out the PTA certainly counts... *I'm glad you asked ;)*

*For more info on this inspiring challenge visit <http://www.29gifts.org/>*

## Treasurer's Report

In these challenging financial times, when creating the proposed 2009/10 budget, the Executive Board kept our estimates low and our fingers crossed! We are pleased to share that we have been pretty much right on track for the budget that was provided to, and voted on by, parents on Meet the Teacher Night (addl. copies avail. in the office.)

In terms of fall fundraising, we came in slightly above our estimates (8%) which helped stock our rainy day fund should our spring fundraiser not meet expectations. Hopefully we will not need to say no to wonderful opportunities, like we had to last year, with our Cultural Arts Program.

So far these fundraising efforts have gone to amazing uses this year. Here are some of the details of what the money went towards:

\$2,400 has been spent on Cultural Arts Programs this year, sponsoring many programs throughout the year.

\$1,400 has gone towards subsidizing parents' costs for Field Trips. So far this year the children have gone to great places and had wonderful presenters, such as: Kindergarten to Wells Hollow Farms and

an in-school presentation by Jean Mai — "Brr" (Winter Animals). 1st grade went to Blue Jay Orchard and to the American Institute of Indian Studies, 2nd grade to Stepping Stones Museum, and 3rd and 4th grade had in-school presentations from the CT Audubon Society and Art Horn respectively.

We helped all teachers including art, computer, library, music, the nurse, etc. purchase some "extras" for the kids like items for the classrooms — including pencil boxes, crayons, reward items and stickers, books for the library, items for the music room, and so forth.

Over \$1,200 in expenses so far has gone towards Kindergarten Birthday Books, Playground/Recess Equipment, Teacher Appreciation Days and the expense no one can get out of paying ~ Insurance!! We are in the planning stages of Fifth Grade Field Day and All School Field Day, both of which are 100% funded by money raised as a result of our fundraising efforts.

We hope you continue to support the fundraising efforts this spring and if you ever have any questions regarding where fundraising money goes, please feel free to ask at a PTA meeting or email me at [treasurer@bungayschoolpta.org](mailto:treasurer@bungayschoolpta.org).

## Observations from *the PTA's* Holiday Fair

I spent a day at the Holiday Fair “selling” wares to our little ones. Very cute... and extremely entertaining. As any good school will ensure of its activities, the kids of course learned “stuff”—to make and tackle lists... to budget... to categorize... to weigh decisions... to accomplish tasks within time-frames... to use math in “real-life” ways... and last, but hopefully not least, to think about giving, as opposed to receiving, in winter’s material-centric months.

It so amused me to notice that they all, even at their young ages, already seem to have a certain shopping style:

...the “Go-Getter” whose goal is to get in and get out as soon as possible with each and every item on their list accounted for. These kids have a plan and there is absolutely, positively, no time for small talk. They shop with a mission—their list... a thing to conquer;

...the “Social Shopper” to whom the experience of shopping is of equal importance to any purchase. These are the kids who are just as interested in whose mom or dad is manning a table as they are what is on the table. They giggle their way through the fair (and purchase a few gifts along the way);

...the “Analyzer” who painstakingly debates: ‘to buy, or not to buy’. They generally take to pairs so as to better bounce their thoughts quickly off of each other. They do not, however, like an adult’s recommendation. (We

couldn’t possibly know what a mom would like); and

...the “Straightforward Shopper” who will entertain a purchase since they’re there anyway.

When the children finish their shopping, they sit together as a class and show each other what they’ve decided upon. The Go-Getters proudly announce that all items on their list were purchased, under budget, and in record time. The Social Shoppers talk about whose mom gave them change. The Analyzers ask their friends if they like what they got. And the Straightforward Shoppers oblige the previous discussions.

It is really a privilege to get these glimpses of our kids’ “days and ways” throughout the year. I encourage you — take an afternoon off and join us for a bit. We all make time for the dentist... and this is certainly more fun, and dare I say, just as good for your health... ;)

*PS: The Holiday Fair is a “break-even” event. If the money made exceeds the money spent, the surplus is rolled into the spring event costs. It, as with all PTA events, is strictly sponsored for the experience it offers.*



### Help Wanted (Needed!)

Person faster than a speeding bullet, able to wrangle cookie dough and candles in a single bound, to assume PTA Fundraising position for 2010/11 school year. Candidate should be interested in making an incredible difference for our kids. Training provided. Rewards include superpowers commensurate with a seat (and say) on the PTA’s Exec. Board and any unclaimed cookie dough at the end of the season. Please inquire w/VP of Chairpersons, Carrie Hunnicutt: [chairpersons@bungayschoolpta.org](mailto:chairpersons@bungayschoolpta.org)

### If You’re on Facebook...

Parents — become a Fan of the Bungay Elementary School PTA Page for links to the website ([www.bungayschoolpta.org](http://www.bungayschoolpta.org)), a discussion board and reminders of upcoming events.

## What’s Going On?

### Upcoming PTA Sponsored Events:

February: After-School Program

March: Book Fair

April: Diabetes Walk-a-Thon and Bingo

May: Plant Sale and Donate-a-Book

June: Field Day and 5th Grade Class Day

### Ongoing PTA Sponsorship:

Cultural Events Programs

Teacher Appreciation Days

Classroom, Library and Nurse Contributions

Awards / Scholarships

Offsetting of Field Trip Costs

Friday Flash

### Upcoming PTA Sponsored Fundraiser:

February: Yankee Candle

### Ongoing PTA Fundraisers:

Target’s Take Charge of Education

Box Tops for Education

Campbell’s Labels for Education

Silvano’s Pizza

### Help Wanted (Needed!)

Steadfast indiv. w/ good math skills (we’ll take fair, or even passable) to assume PTA Treasurer position for 2010/11 school year. Must be willing to give a little to get a whole lot back. Training provided. Rewards include keeping your math skills honed so you can keep up with your kids’ homework, a comfy seat (and say) on the PTA’s Exec. Board and quite excellent Karma. Please inquire w/VP of Chairpersons, Carrie Hunnicutt: [chairpersons@bungayschoolpta.org](mailto:chairpersons@bungayschoolpta.org)

## — Bungay PTA’s Mission Statement

**To promote the welfare of children** integrating home, school and the community; to bring into closer relation the home and the school so that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently and effectively in the education of children; and to develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children the highest advantages in physical, mental and social education.