



## Los Alamitos PTA Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is PTA?

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is the largest volunteer child advocacy association in the nation.

The Los Alamitos PTA works with parents, teachers and administration (principals) to enrich our school programs and offer support to our students and school in a variety of ways. The Los Alamitos PTA is proud to sponsor and provide funding for

- Science Program
- Art Vistas
- Music Program
- Technology
- Robotics

PTA also pays for

- Assemblies
- ALL field trips
- Safety patrol gear
- Sunshine Birthday club for students
- Recess athletic equipment
- Drinks for children when they take state tests
- Start-up costs for teachers to help them prepare their classrooms each school year

The Los Alamitos PTA is linked to the state PTA and National PTA, forming a nationwide network of members working on behalf of all children and youth.

Because of its connections to the state and national PTAs, the local PTA is a valuable resource to its school community with (1) access to programs to benefit children, youth, and their families, and (2) the recognition and size to influence the formulation of laws, policies, and practices—education or legislative.

### 2. Should one or both parents join PTA?

The cost of joining the PTA is only \$15 per person. Your membership money goes directly to your child's classroom to help your teacher purchase items he/she needs through the year. Anyone can join the PTA. If a child has two parents, it is beneficial for that child's classroom to have both parents become PTA members, so each child's class can benefit financially as much as possible. Also, each additional member strengthens our power as an organization that is working on behalf of all children.

### 3. What happens with PTA money?

As stated in question #1, PTA money is used to support music, art, science, technology, robotics and many other programs at Los Alamitos. State and district funding is limited and our school

relies on PTA funding for many of our programs. \$11.15 of your \$15 dues goes toward your child's classroom for that school year. The balance is sent on to our Council, District, State and National PTA to help fund their activities. Their board members support our unit activities and they work to influence the formulation of educational and legislative policies as they relate to all children.

**4. What do I have to do if I become a member?**

You are not required to do anything as a PTA member. You do not have to attend meetings or volunteer to work on committees. However, once you pay your \$15, you have the opportunity to participate in PTA in several ways if you choose to do so.

You are welcome to attend a monthly PTA meeting to hear how the PTA is distributing funds and how this benefits your child's education. The meetings also offer you an opportunity to hear updates from teachers, administration and committee members regarding school programs and curriculum. You can also participate on a committee if this is something you would like to do.

**5. How do I get involved in PTA?**

There are several ways to get involved in the Los Alamitos PTA.

- You will receive a form at the beginning of the school year, listing all of the PTA committees that need

volunteers. Complete the form and return it to your child's teacher. You will be contacted by a committee member.

- Contact the PTA president and let her know how you would like to volunteer. She will find the best possible volunteer opportunity available for you. Our current president is Simone Nelson, cell phone 515-1766 or email [simonenelson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:simonenelson@sbcglobal.net).

**6. When are PTA meetings held and can I bring my child?**

PTA meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm in the school's library.

You may bring your child(ren) to a PTA meeting as long as they are not disruptive. We encourage your child to bring a book or quiet activity to keep them busy during the meeting.

**7. How long do meetings last and can I come late?**

The PTA meetings are generally limited to one hour and follow an agenda to keep the meeting on schedule.

It is ok to come late to a meeting. We understand that evenings can be difficult with dinner, homework and parents coming home from work. It is not unusual for someone to walk in a few minutes late to a meeting.

**8. How do I get PTA information if I cannot attend meetings?**

There are several resources to access PTA information specifically related to Los Alamitos.

- We will post the minutes from our monthly membership meetings on the Los Alamitos website, where there is a page devoted to our school's PTA: <http://www.losalamitos.org/pta/index.htm>.
- The Cottonwood Tales is a monthly PTA newsletter that comes home in your child's envelope.

**9. Why do you have monthly meetings?**

PTA meetings are held for two reasons. First, the national PTA organization requires local PTAs to hold meetings as part of their membership requirements. Second, Los Alamitos holds PTA meetings to keep parents and staff informed of how our PTA is functioning and distributing funds at our school. They also give members the opportunity to give their input and to vote on the direction of our PTA.

**10. How big is the PTA membership at Los Alamitos?**

Los Alamitos is proud to boast one of the largest PTA memberships in our district. In the 2007-2008 school year, we had 554 members. This was only 4 less than the highest High school membership. We earned

a Council PTA Award for this accomplishment.

**11. How does our PTA raise money for the school?**

Our PTA raises money two ways. First we raise money with our PTA membership dues. Our second and ONLY major fundraiser is our annual walk-a-thon and silent auction, which are held the first weekend in October. This is the only PTA sponsored event we hold all year in which we ask parents to support our school financially. All money raised at the walk-a-thon and silent auction is used to fund programs throughout the remainder of the school year. Without your support, the programs that make our school the special place that it is, will suffer.

**12. What other money will I be expected to donate throughout the year?**

You will have opportunity throughout the year to donate for non-PTA related activities and/or items. All donations are voluntary and not required.

- **Back-to-School Night** – Back-to-School-Night is held at the beginning of the school year and gives parents a chance to meet their child's teacher. Each teacher has a "wish list" of items needed for their classroom.
- **Grade Specific Fundraisers** – Fourth graders raise money for their fifth grade science trip.

- **Student Council Fundraisers** - Each year they will hold fundraisers for charitable organizations, where all funds are donated to a specific organization, most notably, Coins for Cancer
- **Teacher Gifts** – Some classes will give a group gift to teachers before breaking for the holidays and on the last day of the school year to thank the teacher for their hard work. Many parents choose to contribute to a class gift and some choose to give their own gift.
- **Yearbooks/Supply Packets** – Yearbooks may be purchased at the end of the school year, as well as School Supply Packets if you feel like saving a trip to the store in the fall.

items in our budget that can accommodate a donation of this kind. We appreciate any and all support of programs like Science, Music, Technology, and Art.

**13. How can I donate more money to PTA?**

You may make a donation to the Los Alamitos PTA at anytime during the school year. Please make your check payable to "Los Alamitos PTA," and bring your check to the school office. All donations are tax deductible.

**14. Can I earmark my donation for a specific school program?**

If you have a special preference for where you would like an additional tax-deductible donation to go, please contact the PTA President for more information. She will be able to give you a thank you letter that includes our Tax ID number. There are restricted fund line