

PRESIDENT'S Letter

New Year, 2010



I love “beginnings.” They are a time of great hopefulness. With each New Year, we ring in a fresh set of resolutions and goals.

As our organization celebrates its 30th year, there are “new beginnings” as well as exciting opportunities. When I began my tenure as the new President of NYC-Parents In Action this past September, I was excited by both PIA’s goals and the opportunity to collaborate with a team of talented and interested parents. Now that it is January, we can reflect on what we have accomplished and what goals remain as we enter the New Year. As PIA is now fully “green,” we must rely on getting our message out online and by word of mouth. We invite you to log onto our Web site at www.parentsinaction.org to find out about upcoming events and the various ways you

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can become involved. Please think about friends who might be interested and share our information with them.

Looking Back:

It has been a busy fall for NYC-PIA. We were honored to present Anna Quindlen as the keynote speaker at our 30th Anniversary Benefit Luncheon, where she inspired over 300 supporters with her talk. Our first School Rep luncheon featured Dr. Jennifer Havens and Dr. Robert Feiguine who presented a provocative discussion on teens’ emotional health, touching upon the tough realities of teen drug and alcohol use. We at NYC-PIA believe that parents are integral to helping teens make healthy decisions when it comes to drugs and alcohol. Parents can support teens by talking openly about the dangers of alcohol and drug use, being present in a meaningful way when teens are socializing, and answering questions honestly, while not providing too much information

about the decisions we made as teens. After all, the drug and alcohol landscape that our teens face is far riskier than the one we may have experienced.

Our seminar on Internet safety provided a wealth of new information. I fear many think they have “heard it all before,” but the electronic world is changing at a breakneck pace. Our four experts spoke candidly on the risks and rewards of communication via social networking sites, offering specific advice for parents. They emphasized that “privacy settings do not work,” and further noted that the danger for kids who reveal themselves online grows exponentially as they mature socially.

Looking Forward:

January: Calling all Fathers!!! Drs. Ralph Lopez and George Lazarus will address the specific challenges and opportunities for Dads today at a special fathers-only evening event on January 12th. Please join PIA to learn from the experts and to share thoughts on parenting. It is sure to be a great event—I only wish I could go.

January will mark the kick-off of our online Community Forum, and will provide parents with a venue to comment on topical and interesting parenting issues. We’ll launch the Forum with topics focused on developmental variances during puberty and the growing business of test preparation. The Forum will be monitored, will not function in “real time,” and will respect the privacy of all. No individual names or school specific information will be posted. We hope this interactive site will offer parents a useful tool with which to share ideas and learn from one another. Watch our Web site for details.

February: Moms and Dads—please plan to join us for Teen Scene on February 8th. We are back at Trinity School with this year’s panel of New York City independent school teens, as they talk frankly about their academic and social lives.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER CONTINUED

This event is always a sellout, so RSVP now at seminars@parentsinaction.org.

April: We are often reminded that communication with our children begins when they are toddlers, so begin talking and listening early and often! Jeanette Friedman, Substance Abuse Educator/Consultant and a member of our advisory board, will speak about these issues at our next School Rep luncheon on April 28th. Please contact your School Rep if you are interested in attending.

All year: With over 250 ParentTalk facilitated discussion groups scheduled, our team of over 100 trained facilitators has been actively at work in your schools. These meetings are your chance to come together with other parents to learn, share and create a parent network. Thank you to those who have already participated, and thank you to the School Representatives in our 45 partner schools who are critical to maintaining an ongoing relationship with schools.

Thank you, also, to the many individuals and schools who contribute to our annual fund.

As always, we are very grateful for your gifts of support, as we rely on them to continue to bring to you our ParentTalks, publications and programs, all free of charge.

Finally, please let us know how NYC-PIA can support you as a New York City parent. Is there a speaker you'd like us to present or a particular topic you'd suggest for the Forum? If so, please tell us. We at PIA actively seek to foster a community of people who can share opportunities to listen and learn from one another. Your input will help us accomplish that goal.

Happy Beginnings to you and your children,

MARY BETH HARVEY