



New Jersey PTA[®]

Local PTA Founder's Day Handbook

A digital version of this handbook and all other Local PTA Handbooks can be found at www.njpta.org/resources.

Table of Contents

Founder's Day Candle lighting	Page 1
Founder's Day Examples	Page 2

Leadership Resources:

In the “Resources” section of the New Jersey PTA website you will find resources available exclusively to PTA members. This page contains Leadership Packet materials, Financial Guides and a variety of resources for PTA officers and members. Call the NJPTA office at 609-587-0100 if you have any questions.

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PTA Vision

Every child's potential is a reality

PTA Mission

To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

FOUNDERS DAY CANDLE LIGHTING

Founders Day is the time to pay tribute to our Founders and to the many men and women who have shared the responsibilities of making life safer, healthier and happier for children and youth.

It is also the time to encourage PTA members to give a voluntary birthday gift – a gift that will help to promote PTA programs and activities and to strengthen parent-teacher associations as they continue to serve the family and the community.

May the candles you light to honor the past, evaluate the present, and look to the future, glow in every corner of the world to widen the circle of caring.

Alice McLellan Birney stated, “What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must be what PTA wants for all children.”

FOUNDERS DAY CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONIES
LIGHTING CANDLES for HOME, SCHOOL, and CHILD

Remember when you were a youngster, and you played a game of “make believe”? I wonder if our Founders ever believed in their wildest imaginings that their efforts would become one of the great American customs; just like accepting the inevitable, you become a parent, you join the PTA.

Even if we took just the number of PTA members in New Jersey and compared it with the 2,000 who attended that first meeting in Washington, D.C., it would be staggering –think of it! Almost half a million in little old New Jersey. When you tell people that, they too, are amazed. Yes, we are a big production –and our product is the most marvelous thing in the world. You can’t buy it, replace it, or exchange it: our priceless children.

Cultural Arts are now a very popular part of our programming; some PTAs provide opportunities for parents to participate in art workshops. They make ceramics, pictures, and many other things. Yet each one of us can do more than that! Each one of us can be a sculptor and mold the character of our most precious possession. We can paint a background of good surroundings for them to grow in. We can protect them with law and order. We can nurture them with love and understanding. We can do so much good for them.

Think of it! - a half-million men and women, fathers and mothers, teachers and citizens, all working for the same thing. What a glorious harvest we can reap for our own and for the future of America. Let’s teach them how to live, work, and play safely, provide spiritual guidance and moral training; physical fitness programs are not enough.

Provide activity at home to help keep them trim. You, as parents, should set an example in your attitudes, actions, and conversations. Yes, our Founders had a dream, a wonderful dream that has become a glorious reality. We must hold fast to that dream. In the words of General Mark Clark, “I am fearful of the future of tomorrow’s citizens. Not when there is an organization like the PTA serving as trustees for their welfare.”

As I close, may we light three candles for PTA:

The first candle is for the home. (Light the candle.)

Here, the child learns all the joy of family life. Here, the child receives his first knowledge of the world in which he is to live. May the enduring light of the home cast its glowing rays throughout the world, shielding children everywhere from darkness of want and misery, giving them instead, an abundance of health, happiness, and love.

The second candle is in tribute to the schools of our land. (Light the candle.) This candle stands equal with the home, sharing, but not supplanting the great responsibility of guiding and helping our children and youth. We seek for our schools the best in education our country has to offer, in order that they may develop more intelligent and useful citizens. We desire that our schools be a bright and shining light, guiding our children to knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.

Now the home and the school are shining brightly, the parents and the teachers –the two parts of our great organization. But there is something lacking. How futile, how empty, how meaningless are our efforts, if there is not the love and interest of children in the center, binding the two in a common cause. Our Founders spoke wisely when they said, “The child is the hope of the race.” As I light this candle for the child, may I urge you to remember the object of the founders. (Light the candle.)

**TO PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE HOME, SCHOOL,
PLACE OF WORSHIP, AND COMMUNITY**

Then you will, indeed, be a true PTA member, one of which our Founders would be proud.

“The birthday gift honoring our Founders serves to create rare opportunities for parent-teacher service among a countless number of persons. It represents acceptance of our responsibility to the future of our nation – to strengthen homes, improve schools, and safeguard communities. It represents a tribute of love and respect to those who have gone before us. It is an important expression of faith in the entire movement.

Prepared by Mrs. Arthur Laird Davis, Past President, New Jersey PTA

FOUNDERS DAY PROGRAM

“A key, we might say, is an open sesame to the most valued of our possessions.” Many years ago, our Founders, Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst gave us such a key – a key to the better understanding of children and youth. Theirs was the belief that “what is right and good for the most favored child is right and good for all children”. They also realized that the education of children couldn’t be carried on successfully in segments, but that an active, sympathetic partnership between home and school is a very real necessity. Thus, the parent-teacher association began as an instrument “to bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the training of the child”.

As we pay tribute to our Founders by the lighting of this candle, let us remember the key bequeathed to us by our Founders has been faithfully cherished, and the finest tribute we can pay them is to pursue their ideals with determined labor for full accomplishment.

(Light one large candle on head table)

Our New Jersey Congress accepted this day of challenge over a century ago. Since then, the organization has answered the challenges of an ever-changing and ever-demanding world. The progress made through these intervening years is in a large measure reflected in those contributions that constitute an imperishable record of the steady purposes of the organization towards its single aim – the welfare of children. We are privileged to have with us this evening the key person in our State Congress in regard to Founders Day, our State Founders Day Chairman.

_____ (This could be any person from the State Congress) will honor us by lighting the candle representing the New Jersey Congress and speak to us of children.

(Representative from State Congress lights candle on head table)

Our Founders Day Banquet provides the opportune time to give praise where praise is due and that we may recognize in our present success the consecrated struggle, the leaders, who have paved our way. The most significant key on our county key ring belongs to the President. A president must be the leader, the arbitrator, the peacemaker, the optimist, the philosopher – to name a few of her attributes especially when she has _____ local PTAs to watch over. Tonight, we have as our guests, those who served in the capacity of President of _____ County Council. As I call your name, I would like you to accept a small token of our sincere appreciation that symbolizes what you have done to secure better homes, schools, and communities for the children and youth of _____ County through the years.

(Light each president’s candle as name is called, giving also year or years they served as president. Present each past president with a PTA key ring as a token of appreciation.)

Let us now light a candle in loving memory of the presidents who gave gone on –

(Give the name of the president deceased, the year or years served, and light a candle as the name is called.)

Many PTA members have received the treasured key for outstanding achievement – a State Life Membership. Let us recognize all of the Life Members. This is surely an honored key for it may not be purchased, but given for services rendered to your home, school, and community. To you, Life Members, cherish this key for it is the highest recognition that can be bestowed upon PTA workers in our state.

As our membership in _____ County keeps growing steadily every year, more and more members are inheriting the key of experience. Today, we have _____ 25-Year members. To 25-Year members, keep sharing your wisdom and experience, your funds of knowledge and understanding, so that we may better serve and enrich the parent-teacher services for children and youth.

We also have others in our county who have received the most precious key available in the National Parent-Teacher Association – a National Life Membership.

(Give their names, and if still serving, give their positions.)

Our Founders Day Banquet always affords us the pleasure of saying “Thank You” to the key people of our educational system – our superintendents and principals. How many superintendents and principals do we have with us as guests of their respective schools? It is our educators’ responsibility to secure the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education for the youth of _____ County. An educational system isn’t worth a great deal if it teaches boys and girls how to make a living and doesn’t teach them how to live. Into your hands, superintendents and principals, we place the key to educating the future leaders that they may learn to live in a world of peace.

We would like to express our gratitude to another very important key in our school system, the person who holds the key to the classroom – the teacher. How many teachers are present tonight? We know you have dedicated your lives to hold aloft the light of learning. But, many of our teachers, along with all of their classroom tasks, are as active in parent-teacher work. Into your hands, teachers, we place the key of molding these young lives that are placed in your care every day.

Tonight, we would like to give special recognition the key persons in our _____ local PTAs for a job well done of interpreting the PTA to its members – the local Founders Day Chairmen. How many local Founders Day Chairmen do we have with us this evening? This gives me the opportunity to thank you for fulfilling to the best of your ability an appropriate observance of Founders Day in your local PTA and for emphasizing the importance of our Founders Day gift. As of today, we have received gifts from _____ local PTAs, totaling \$ _____. _____ PTA has sent the highest contribution amounting to \$ _____ and _____ PTA was the first to send their contribution. Immediately following your meetings, please send me your contribution so that we may have 100% this year and be able to send it into the State Office before the due date.

You may have noticed that one candle on our head table is not lighted. We haven’t forgotten it, but feel our observance should be climaxed with a memorial tribute to our friend, the late _____ (this could be any outstanding person, giving name and position, within your county who may have passed away).

A TOUCH OF PERFECTION

*What a wonderful place this world would be
If God could find in you and in me
A touch of perfection in all that we do
Whether the task be routine or new.*

*How much we would add to peace and joy
If a touch of perfection we could employ
With a helping hand, a smile or deed
Regardless of a brother’s color or creed.*

*What joy it must be at the end of the road
To know we have helped with another’s load
What peace we would find at the end of life’s way
If we lived with a touch of perfection each day.*

We light this candle in loving memory of _____ whom we feel had the *TOUCH OF PERFECTION*.

Prepared by Mrs. Harry Conrad

A NEW DAY

Properties: 1 Blue Candle, 1 Yellow Candle, 1 White Candle Participants: 3 Readers

READER #1:

We celebrate the birthday of our organization and do honor to our Founders, not as performance of duty, but because we are grateful for their vision, their high purposes, their hopes and aspirations. They were possessed of a great idea – the idea that the future welfare of our own country and the world depended upon what could be done for children and that what could be done for children depended upon the understanding and wisdom of their parents and teachers. The PTA grew from a seed ...the seed of an idea planted ____ years ago in the minds of American motherhood. It was organized as the National Congress of Mothers, but since 1924, it has been known as the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and is popularly called the PTA. It has been led by a succession of devoted national presidents, the list headed by the Founders, Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst. It was and still is dedicated to the high purpose of promoting the welfare of children by enlightened effort on the part of the parents and the educators of the Nation. It has become established within a single generation as a major force in the life of the great American community. It was needed yesterday...it is needed today...it will be needed tomorrow; needed wherever there are children and youth to be guided into responsible adulthood and effective citizenship.

READER #2 (Light Blue Candle)

This blue candle we light in tribute to yesterday...to the Founders who freely gave of their time and their labor; onward they pressed in their pioneer way, urging the claims of the child – of ALL children, nurturing hope for a dawning new day. They dreamed and they planned for the youth of their morrow, endless their efforts toward goals brave and clear, rising to meet the challenge of every obstacle, standing assured that youth's new day was near.

READER #3 (Light Yellow Candle)

We light this yellow candle in tribute to today...to today's leader in the National Congress, the State Congress, the County Council, and the Local PTAs...all of today's leaders who are bearers of banners flown high by the Founders...who unite in the tribute their victories inspire – who inherit the kingdom hard won by their toiling, learn of their spirit; build higher and higher. Who dream as they dreamed, for the youth of tomorrow, endlessly striving toward goals brave and clear. Who build together with steadfast devotion being assured that youth's new day IS near.

READER #1 (Light White Candle)

This pure white candle we light in tribute to tomorrow...the open road that leads to new adventures. On Founders Day we celebrate the anniversary of a beginning. Our thoughts gather around something that happened in 1897. But let us go farther than that...farther forward...and think of what is beginning today; it is, if we will it so, the opening of a road which leads to new adventures in PTA leadership and responsibility. Tonight we stand together looking down that open road offering devoted service to childhood, to youth, to parent, to teachers, and to leaders...to home, school, and community. Let us remember the vision, the high purposes, the hopes and aspirations of those pioneers who opened the way. Let us continue to strive toward goals brave and clear; let us rise to their stature and build to their measure; let us stand in the faith that a new day IS HERE.

Adapted: 1964 by Mrs. K.W. Lathrope
Past President, New Jersey PTA

CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

READER: Tonight we celebrate a birthday. The Parent-Teacher Association was born on February 17, 1897. (Enter bearers with birthday cake; proceed to platform, and place cake on desk or table in front of PTA president.)

READER: Since its humble beginning, _____ years ago, this organization has grown to over 6 million. We, of the _____ School are junior members, taking our place with the hosts that have gone on before. (Music as all leave platform except PTA president.)

PRESIDENT OF PTA: The first candle on our birthday cake will be lighted by _____ (State or County Officer).

LIGHTER OF FIRST CANDLE: I light this candle in tribute to Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst, whose love for children and concern for their welfare moved them to form the parent-teacher association. Their inspiration kindled a spark that still glows bright in the hearts of us who follow in their footsteps. Little did they dream that their great foresight would ever blossom into the powerful organization for good that the PTA has become. (Lights candle.)

PRESIDENT OF PTA: I light the second candle in tribute to the officers, both past and present, of the _____ PTA. Unselfishly, they have given of their time and of themselves for the betterment of their school. The tasks they have undertaken have been labors of love, and the progress we have made in _____ years speaks well for efforts. May the lighting of this candle speak to us anew of our duties and of our responsibilities to our children and to our school. (Light candle.)

PRESIDENT OF PTA: The third candle will be lighted by _____ (A Parent).

LIGHTER OF THIRD CANDLE: I light this candle in tribute to the parents of the _____ School. As the flame from this candle valiantly seeks to dispel the gloom in its small way, may the flame of our devotion to our children seek to dispel the doubts and fears that beset them. May we earnestly endeavor to guide them along the best pathways of learning. May we cooperate to the best of our ability with their teachers so that through our concerted efforts, our children may gain the utmost in their education. (Light candle.)

PRESIDENT OF PTA: The fourth candle will be lighted by _____ (Principal of School).

LIGHTER OF THE FOURTH CANDLE: I light this candle in tribute to the teachers of the _____ School. We, too, have a gigantic responsibility in the molding of these young lives that are placed in our care. As this fourth candle glows, may it be an inspiration to us to continue to face our daily tasks. May we see our children with new eyes and with new understanding. The things that we do will go a long way in determining what the future of our children will be. May we seek to cooperate fully with their parents in the fulfillment of our mutual duty. (Lights candle.)

PRESIDENT OF PTA: The fifth candle will be lighted by _____ (A Child).

LIGHTER OF FIFTH CANDLE: I light this candle in tribute to the children of the _____ School. We cannot fully understand the meaning of everything that has been said here tonight. We cannot fully appreciate all of the things that you represent. But this is our school; you are our parents; you are our teachers. We look to you for training. We look to you for guidance. We look to you for education. Some day, we will be sitting where you are sitting tonight. If you live up to your obligations to us, we will be inspired by your leadership, and we will continue in your footsteps. (Lights candle.)

PRESIDENT OF PTA: The candles on the birthday cake are lighted. Now it is time for the birthday gift. While the cake is being cut, we will collect your contribution. Please be as generous as possible, as these gifts are gifts of love for our children. (Music while birthday gift is collected)

Program prepared by Milton C. Carson- Quarter Mile Lane School PTA, Bridgeton, N.J.

FOUNDERS DAY CANDLE LIGHTING

In solemn tribute to our Founders, let us keep their memory alive by giving meaning to their visions and ideals.

Let us bring our goals and objects to the community at large so that everyone understands our principles and objectives.

Let us bring the light of learning into every home, for all children who are ours to cherish.

Let us re-dedicate ourselves to the growth, progress, and perpetuation of the PTA goals.

Let us light our FIRST candle in memory of our own _____.

For a dream that took deep root
A thought that did not stray
A plan worked to fulfillment
Time honored PTA.

Our SECOND candle is lighted, let us plant deeply in the hearts of our youth today, the seeds of tolerance and respect.

Let our LAST candle spread the light that shines on the promise of future days.

Our children are our tomorrow.
Let us make it a better tomorrow.

Prepared by Mrs. Arthur Berman
Hudson County

FOUNDERS DAY

- F I light this candle for our FOUNDERS and for the faith they have passed on to us.
- O This candle I light for our OBJECTS; may we ever uphold them as our beacon light.
- U This candle is for UNITY of purpose and action at home, at school, and in our ever-growing community.
- N This candle I light for our NATION and for its leaders whose birthdays we also celebrate this month, in the hope that our efforts may be equal to their greatness.
- D I light this candle for DEVOTION to children - - our responsibility today, our hope for tomorrow.
- E This candle is for EDUCATION and for our teachers, our principal, our superintendent, and for the ideals they represent.
- R This candle is for RESOLUTION, that we may increase our efforts to make the world a better place in which to live and grow.
- S I light this candle for SERVICE to all children and youth, that none may go needy, neglected, or unloved.
- D This candle is for the DEDICATION of the (use name of local association) Parent-Teacher Association to uphold the Objects set forth by our Founders.
- A This candle is the ACHIEVEMENT of purpose in action both great and small.
- Y This candle I light for YOUTH, youth the world over; may they carry the torch in the future as we do now.

Kentucky Parent-Teacher Association

FOUNDERS' DAY CEREMONY
Key Ceremony

Founders Day reminds us of the significant role that PTA has played in the tremendous advancement of children's rights, and in supporting parental involvement on local, State and National levels. It is a time for us to reflect and take pride in the fact that the National PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the United States. It is also a time to renew our commitment to be a powerful voice for all children, and a strong advocate for public education.

Every year we hear about PTA's founders, Phoebe Apperson Hearst, Alice McLellan Birney and the founder of Georgia's Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Selena Sloan Butler. But have we honestly ever given thought to what children's lives might be like if there hadn't been woman of imagination and courage? Or if they hadn't taken action and worked beyond the "accepted" barriers that women of their time faced? I doubt we have. Their ideas have literally changed the lives of children all over the world. PTA still strives to achieve their goals.

Today's PTA still lives on through the imagination and courage of all it's members, we hold the keys that will help us to better the lives and opportunities available to all our children. And so tonight, we pay homage to these ideals as we hold our Candle lighting Ceremony.

State President or Rep –lights this candle for the National PTA. The National PTA holds the key to leadership. It is from the National PTA that we learn ways to improve the quality of life for all children.

NJPTA Region Director or Rep –lights this candle for the State PTA. The State PTA holds the key to guidance. They set the paths for us to follow and give the locals stability.

Past County President or Rep –lights this candle for the County PTA. The County PTA holds the key to partnership. They work closely with the Locals to keep them strong so they may continue to work on behalf of all our children.

Current County President or Rep –lights this candle for the Local Units of the PTA. The Local Units hold the key to opportunity. It is the Local PTAs who open the doors of opportunity to the children of every community.

Student or Rep –lights this candle for the Children of PTA. The Children hold the key to our hearts. It is the wish of every PTA member that their children are afforded all that life has to offer. May their wishes come true.

Past County President or Rep –lights this candle for the County Presidents who are no longer with us. The Past Presidents hold the key to the Past. They serve as a beacon to remind us of all that the PTA has done and will continue to do for children of all nationalities, races and religions, all over the world.

Thank you all for participating in our candle lighting ceremony.

Created by: Linda A. Karcic
Hudson County Council of PTAs
March 31, 2004

FOUNDERS' DAY CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY

For more than a century the National Parent Teacher Association has provided support, information and resources to families focused on the health and education of children. The organization was founded by Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst in 1897 in Washington DC and was known as the National Congress of Mothers. Whatever name it has been known by, the National PTA was created to meet a profound challenge: to better the lives of children.

Founders Day is a reminder of the substantial role that PTA has played on behalf of all children and families. It is a time to reflect and take pride in our many accomplishments, and to renew our commitment to be:

- A powerful voice for all children
- A relevant resource for parents, and
- A strong advocate for public education

And so tonight we pay tribute to our founders and their ideals.

(as first candle is lit)

_____ (name) lights this candle for our Founders –

Women of vision – to see the future

Women of determination – to pursue their ideals, and

Women of courage – to fight for what they believed in.

(as second candle is lit)

_____ (name) lights this candle for our Founders' Goals –

To advocate for better health and safety and education for all children, regardless of race, color or religion.

(as third candle is lit)

_____ (name) lights this candle for our Founders' Achievements –

The enactment of laws, immunizations, safety regulations and education requirements throughout the world for the betterment of children.

(as fourth candle is lit)

_____ (name) lights this candle in recognition of PTA's Past –

The pride of knowing that PTA members all over the world have come together for the protection of children and that they have accomplished what seemed to be insurmountable goals.

(as fifth candle is lit)

_____ (name) lights this candle in recognition of PTA's Present –

Over 100 years after our founding, the PTA continues to improve and change laws that protect our children, to ensure their future.

(as sixth candle is lit)

_____ (name) lights this candle in recognition of PTA's Future –

The hope that what began as the vision of two women, will continue to be the vision of this and all future generations, to improve the lives, education and safety of all children.

(as seventh candle is lit)

_____ (name) lights this candle for Children –
It always comes down to the children . . . May they live long, healthy and happy lives, due in part, to the laws and legislation passed in the last 100 years of PTA Advocacy.

Thank you to all our Past County Presidents and Honored Guests for their participation in this candle lighting ceremony.

In closing, I'd like to leave you with a thought.

When you get home tonight, whether your children are still young and asleep, or older and awake, kiss them . . . hug them . . . and tell them how much you love them. And if they are even older yet and either married or on their own, call them and tell them how much you love them. Because the truth is, you may never have that moment in time again to tell them . . . and the bottom line is . . . Children learn what they live!

Linda Karcic -Hudson County, 2007