

# GALWAY PTSA NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2020

## *Happy Holidays*

We made it to December. The end of 2020 is in sight - what a year! Of course, we're all dealing with the impacts of COVID in our daily lives. We had the first cases in school. It was inevitable. Our school district acted swiftly by switching everyone to one day of virtual learning to do contact tracing and cleaning. The classes with COVID positive students were placed in quarantine for two weeks, along with any siblings. I can speak from personal experience (my daughter was in one of the quarantined classes), there was an almost seamless transition to virtual learning by in-person students. Yes, there will always be technical glitches, slow internet speeds and lots of pet introductions. But the school has prepared students for just these circumstances. I was impressed to hear my daughter's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class following directions to split screens, log into various google classrooms, educational websites, take tests and submit assignments. And for those who experienced problems, classmates offered technical support, musical accompaniment, and much needed interaction with familiar faces.

Picture retake day was November 10. And we finally have a picture day for virtual students on December 4. Thank you to everyone who made this possible. Special thanks to our volunteer coordinator Christine Gauss who has worked on this since July. She also gives up her time to be in school for all 5 picture days to facilitate the event and make sure everything goes smoothly. At this point, if you have any questions or issues regarding school photos, they should be directed to the picture company, Adirondack School Portraits. 518 792 7919. We love working with this company.

All Fundraising orders should have arrived by now. If you do not have yours, please contact us so we can track it down. We really appreciate the support of Galway CSD families to continue our events, whatever form they take this year. Speaking of which, as with so much in 2020, PTSA's Holiday Gift Shop is cancelled. Also, in keeping with this year's need to adapt and find alternatives, PTSA is giving every JHE student a kit to make a special holiday craft. These can either be kept by the student or given as a gift. Some have already gone home the rest will appear shortly. Delivery was interrupted by quarantine and there are still six ceramic snowmen taking an extended road trip. Sometimes you must accept you have no control over things and just roll with it.

PTSA would like to wish everyone Happy Holidays, whatever and however you celebrate.

*Emma*

Emma Obern, PTSA President.

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<https://www.facebook.com/galwaynyptsa>

Visit our PTSA pages on the Galway School District website:

<https://www.galwaycsd.org/community/galwayptsa>

**THERE IS NO DECEMBER MEETING**

### WHAT HAS PTSA DONE IN THE LAST MONTH?

- Picture Retake Day
- Holiday Craft Kits given to every JHE students
- Virtual student Picture Day
- Extra donated Halloween treats distributed to our students.

### UPCOMING EVENTS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- PTSA raffle & Spring Fundraiser
- After Prom planning (TBC by Galway CSD)

Are you interested in helping to organize events next year and beyond? Is there something you think PTSA should be doing? We are always looking for volunteers and ideas. Contact us at [galwayptsa@gmail.com](mailto:galwayptsa@gmail.com)

### REASONS TO BECOME A MEMBER AND WAYS TO SUPPORT PTSA

- **You do not have to come to a meeting – ever!** But we will keep you informed about our events and volunteer opportunities.
- \$2 of your \$6 membership fees stays with Galway PTSA. The rest goes to the NYS PTA. We are part of their organization. We get our insurance and our 501c3 status through NYS PTA.
- The NYS PTA website is <https://nyspta.org/>. Your membership to Galway PTSA makes you a member of the State PTA. You can find information about their programs, events, and advocacy efforts, as well as member benefits available through the National PTA from this website.
- Designate us as the beneficiary of your Amazon Smile account and 0.5% of eligible purchases will come to Galway PTSA. It's just the same as regular amazon shopping, but you need to go through <https://smile.amazon.com/>. When asked to choose the beneficiary for your purchases, search for Galway PTSA. Our official title is: PTA New York Congress 12-070 Galway PTSA. Once this is set up, you do not have to do anything more. Amazon smile is now available through the mobile app.

To become a Galway PTSA member, go to:

<https://2020-2021-ptsa-membership.cheddarup.com>



### SPIRIT WEAR IS AVAILABLE TO ORDER

We offer a range of Galway Eagle clothing for all the family. This can be shipped to your home or we will arrange a local pick up. PTSA makes a minimal amount on each order to cover some (but not all) expenses. We do not use this as a fundraiser. Please understand these orders are not immediately dispatched to our vendor when you place them. Our volunteer coordinator waits until she has several, because we are asking for custom orders, in small quantities, year-round. The vendor has also experienced delays to their supply of garments because of COVID. Once completed, our volunteer collects the orders and arranges deliveries to suit you. She has also taken a lot of time to set up the website to make ordering easier for everyone. Please be patient.

**Online Store** <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/galwayptsaspiritwear>

## Why I joined the PTSA - real talk from a parent.

“Would you like to join the PTA/PTSA?” DUN DUN DUNNNN!!! The question many moms and dads fear. When my son started school, I was right there in that group of people who would have responded with a big NO WAY! Fast forward five years and here I am, Vice President of the PTSA in Galway, and I absolutely love being a part of it. So... how did I get here?

We moved to Galway half way through my son's kindergarten year, we were coming from the district where I had gone to school, where I knew every parent, teacher and person and they had all known me my whole life. My kindergarten teacher was still teaching in the school when my son started his first year. To say I was comfortable with the school and people in it, is an understatement. My friends were teachers there and I was well established as a lifelong resident. My husband and I decided to make the move and a short eight weeks later we were living in Galway.

Only having been in Galway school once or twice before, I will never forget the heartbreak I felt when I left my son with a strange teacher in an unfamiliar place. It was right then and there I decided I wanted to be a part of the school. I wanted to know the people, places and things in Galway CSD, so I could feel more comfortable and confident sending my son to school. It quickly became so much more for me...I was able to truly learn just how important the PTSA is and how much personal fulfillment I would be able to achieve.

I attended my first meeting and listened to what they had to say. I will 100% admit (as a first time Mom to a kindergartner) I was really confused and maybe slightly overwhelmed with all of it. So many topics, events, budgets, committees, and dates! So, I just listened and chimed in to offer my ideas when I saw a moment to offer any words of value. After the meeting I asked the then president for a few minutes of her time to talk and I was met with one of the kindest and friendliest people (Crystal Walker I'm talking to you!). I was able to talk to her about what I would like to accomplish personally through the PTSA, and she was able to help me navigate where to start.

The rest was history! From then on, I was able to volunteer at every event I could and through doing this I really was able to see the workings of the school and get to know the staff and other families. I am more than thrilled with my choice to join. I was able to get so much more time with my child and really become integrated into his schooling. My son loved me being around as well. From year to year I have been able to build so many relationships within the school and the community. I now truly feel like an important part of the Galway community and school.

Now more than ever, with these insane times, we must come together and support our children, school, and families. The PTSA is still here and we are doing as much as we possibly can for the kids to try and keep things somewhat normal for them. No, we are not doing huge events BUT we still have things we are doing throughout the year. We also are still in need of volunteers. Like I said it is not as scary as you may think and no it's not a full-time job (we all know you were thinking it - ha-ha!). Volunteering can be as much as heading up a committee for an event or as little as cutting out some papers for a craft. You are not required to attend meetings and you don't even have to be a member to help (although being a member means you're the first to hear about volunteer opportunities).

The PTSA really is a fun thing to take part in, and this year we would like to open our doors and pull back the curtains so we can get to know you and you can get to know us. It's so important that we stay strong and provide support during this time to keep our children grounded and happy. At the end of the day I really feel like the people of Galway put the kids and school at their heart and center and I am so thankful to be a part of it.

Barbara Mead

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Mom, Galway PTSA Vice President & School Banking Coordinator