

Have you heard, “What’s your why?” My “why” began with a question while my husband and I were hanging paper monkeys for our PTA carnival. “Have you thought of being a PTA officer?” Despite teaching and other work experience of the past, my initial response was, “No, I haven’t – I don’t think I’m qualified.” Well, that was years ago and I’ve learned that PTA is the perfect place to learn on the job! The support, training, and mentoring others have generously shared, has given me so many opportunities to grow! My goal as Area E Vice President is to continue this practice of empowering and serving my fellow volunteers as we work for the common goal of advocating for and providing positive experiences for our children – all children!

When I went back to college for my teaching certification, I did it because I wanted to be in a profession where I felt I could make a difference for good. I loved working with kids and had the weird appreciation of the ridiculous that middle school teachers need to survive. My first year, I started a journal about the inequities and challenges I was seeing firsthand with kids. I saw situations educators were trying hard to address but with restrictions and legislation slowing things down – in part because of policies set by people who’d never been in a classroom before or just weren’t thinking to see students as individuals. However, as often happens, my idealism and energy began to take a back seat with the day-to-day reality of working with my students and making sure I could provide the best I could for them and their learning with each new lesson or activity.

I’d been a part of a parent group as a teacher, but I hadn’t seen the parent side of PTA until my son started school. At first, I started slow. I made a mean crockpot of soup and was happy to provide it for events. I helped in the classroom. Then, like I mentioned above, I was asked one day about being an officer. As I’m here now running for Area E VP, I think you know the outcome of that question. It wasn’t until the WSPTA Convention in Yakima, that I really started getting the bigger picture of PTA beyond our Fall Fundraiser or Carnival or the extra tech we were able to provide for our school. Sitting in an address by one of the WSPTA leaders, just after I’d been asked to join the Region 7 Service Delivery Team, it hit me! Maybe PTA, not just teaching, would be the way I could really make an impact on education and helping kids. My “why.” I’ve been able to help more families, students, and schools since volunteering with WSPTA. For me, PTA was the best route to fulfill my “why.” I am committed to serving the best I can to build other up and to help other leaders find their own “why.”