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National PTA Names Healthy Minds and PTA Connected State Champions

ALEXANDRIA, Va., (May 24, 2023)—National PTA is pleased to announce that 12 PTA leaders from across the country have been selected to serve as state champions for the association’s [Healthy Minds](#) and [PTA Connected](#) initiatives. As state champions, the PTA leaders will educate other PTA leaders in their states on National PTA’s Healthy Minds and PTA Connected initiatives, as well as help empower families in their states with resources and tools to help them make mental health a daily priority and interact safely in the digital space.

The Healthy Minds state champions are:

- **Erin Doering** (South Dakota)
Erin Doering currently serves as vice president of Mike Miller Elementary School PTA in Aberdeen, S.D. and also serves as secretary for South Dakota PTA. She has been a leader in her school community for several National PTA programs and is passionate about continuing to be an advocate for all children.
- **Shaniqua Gray Garcia** (Florida)
Shaniqua Gray Garcia is a board member for the Carrie P Meek/Westview K-8 Center PTA in Miami, Fla. Outside of PTA, she is a clinical social worker with a focus on mental health for children and adolescents. Her passion is to provide support to families regarding mental health issues.
- **Chantel Jacobs** (Oklahoma)
Chantel Jacobs has volunteered with several PTAs, including serving on a committee for Oklahoma PTA. She also volunteered and became a board member with The Care Center, a nonprofit that helps children who have been abused. She is passionate about being an advocate for children and families and particularly providing much needed resources to children and families in Oklahoma who have experienced abuse.
- **Jessica Latin** (Louisiana)
Jessica Latin serves as secretary for Judson Warrior PTA in Shreveport, La. She also is a licensed professional counselor in the states of Louisiana, Texas and Georgia and provides mental health counseling services with a specialization in perinatal mental health. She has a passion for helping and educating people on mental wellness and strives daily to enhance the mental health field and reduce stigma in the community.
- **MariaRosa Rangel** (North Carolina)
Dr. MariaRosa Rangel has over 25 years of educational experience, serving in a variety of positions. Currently, Dr. Rangel serves as the director for family and community engagement for the Wake County Public School District and is responsible for planning, developing and coordinating family and community activities, events and programs to improve students’

academic achievement. She also oversees the District Family Academy which offers free workshops and educational events for families in various schools and community sites throughout Wake County.

- **Thuy Ros** (Minnesota)
Through her involvement in various PTAs and parent/teacher groups, Thuy Ros has worn many hats, including serving as a representative to a district PTA council, secretary, president, member of a Special Education Community Advisory Council, membership chair for Minnesota PTA and federal legislative chair for Minnesota PTA. She also works as a personal care assistant, clinical support associate and substitute paraprofessional for her district. She is passionate about empowering parents and helping children.
- **Julee Seibel** (Washington)
Julee Seibel is a current vice president for Bellevue PTSA Council in Bellevue, Wash. and has served as health and wellness director for four years. She also serves as co-president for Sammamish High School PTSA. Seibel is an active advocate, consistently facilitating strong partnerships with schools and school district leaders to improve awareness of mental health issues and find solutions to improve mental health support for all students at all levels. She is also a trusted resource for families.
- **Stephanie Swanson** (Kansas)
Stephanie Swanson is a fourth-year board member for Nelson Elementary School PTA in Haysville, Kan. When she took joined the board for the PTA in 2019, the PTA only had participation from 16% of the school staff and four parents. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Swanson and the PTA co-president rebuilt the PTA's relationship with school staff and came up with creative ways to be present while social distancing. This year, the PTA has 100% staff participation and 25 active parents.

The PTA Connected state champions are:

- **Betty Gibbins** (Washington)
Betty Gibbins has been an active member in PTA for 15 years, serving in many different roles in many different schools. She is passionate about supporting teachers, students and parents; helping build future leaders; and helping improve programs, activities and processes.
- **Cecily Goulange** (Massachusetts)
Cecily Goulange is president of Farmington River Elementary School PTA in Otis, Mass. As president, she has led year-over-year growth in membership, developed critical partnerships with the school administration and staff, and championed programs that build community within the school district.
- **Vernon Kochmaar** (South Dakota)
Vernon Kochmaar is serving in his fourth term as president of Wilson Elementary PTA in Rapid City, S.D. and is president-elect for South Dakota PTA. He is passionate about engaging with students, teachers and staff in the school and being a part of bringing families together in ways that many wouldn't otherwise.
- **Cathleen Pittman** (Texas)
Cathleen Pittman has served in numerous positions at the local and council levels of PTA. She has also served as a Texas PTA field representative for the past four years and served on Texas

PTA's membership committee and charter services team. She is passionate about training PTA leaders and helping them become more successful and values the importance of digital safety for our youth.

"We are thrilled to select these PTA leaders to serve as state champions for our Healthy Minds and PTA Connected initiatives," said Anna King, president of National PTA. "They represent diverse backgrounds and experiences, and they are exceptional leaders who are passionate about and committed to supporting students and families in the areas of mental health and digital wellness, which is more important now than ever."

National PTA's Healthy Minds program provides tools for families and PTA leaders to help raise awareness about the value of mental health and social and emotional learning and equip families with information they need to make mental health a daily priority and build healthy minds and healthy lifestyles. National PTA's PTA Connected initiative connects families with tools, research and support to help them navigate the digital world and have proactive, open and ongoing conversations with their children to help keep them safe online and build good digital habits. As state champions, the PTA leaders will support other PTA leaders in their states in conducting Healthy Minds and PTA Connected programming for families in their communities.

"At PTA, we are committed to bringing knowledge, tools and resources into the lives of families through our programs to support their health, safety, well-being and success," added Nathan R. Monell, CAE, National PTA executive director. "The state champions will play an important role in supporting PTAs and families across the country in the areas of mental health and digital wellness and ensuring they have tools and information to navigate challenges and thrive."

The work of the state champions is funded by the Proud National Sponsors for National PTA's Healthy Minds and PTA Connected initiatives.

About National PTA

National PTA® comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of family engagement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth. For more information, visit [PTA.org](https://www.pta.org).