

An exciting turn is around the corner as the Virginia PTA begins the process of converting to the new OMDR Plus communications software program. During this transition, we encourage all units that are currently using the original OMDR system to continue inputting member data into the system as your information will roll over into the new system. If you are a unit that does not currently have OMDR access, we ask for your patience. As the OMDR conversion is vastly approaching, the Virginia PTA OMDR Support team is working hard to complete the background work required by the software firm to allow Virginia units to make a smooth transition in late fall.

The Virginia PTA will not be adding any more local units to the original OMDR system at this time. Please look forward to hearing more about the sign-in process for local units in late fall.

More Information on OMDR Plus:

JustBetweenFriends (JBF) in its current form starts with an existing set of internet based services, and incorporates the current functionality found in OMDR. The combination of the two is OMDR Plus. Soon, and continually over time, there will be even more capabilities added so that the whole will be far greater than the sum of the two.

Currently JBF has several capabilities already in production, including:

- 1) A very robust communication system for getting out critical information to parents in the school. This communication system has many features, such as automatic reminders that go out via email on a pre-set basis; the ability to easily select which audience should receive which emails (i.e., a specific class, a whole grade, or the entire school) and a way for parents to access the information even when they don't have email access. Parents can even use the system to easily communicate with each other.
- 2) An events and announcements section, automatically populated with the content of the reminder emails, giving PTAs and school administrators two ways to reach parents with critical info
- 3) Very robust directory capabilities that automate the creation of paper directories, significantly reducing the time and efforts traditionally needed for this task. It also creates online directories that are private and very secure, with very powerful searching capabilities. The online directory also has many other features, allowing for things like multiple last names in the same family, multiple contact phone numbers and email addresses, parental choice of what information will be shared and what will not, and much, much more.
- 4) A unique method in which you can designate which PTA leaders and volunteers can use which parts of the system – to make sure that you can share the tasks while restricting volunteers to their own area.
- 5) For the members of the unit- and busy parents in general- there are several valuable functions as well, including: 1) giving them one place to go for

- information from all of the groups to which they belong (both school and non-school related – such as scouts, sports teams, Indian princesses, band, etc.), 2) giving them one place to go for membership directories & rosters for all of those groups, 3) giving them a way to get reminders of events, deadlines, etc. for school and PTA happenings as well as from the other groups to which they belong, 4) giving them tools to facilitate communications with other parents in the PTA and those other common groups, 5) giving them a way to get email reminders of important personal events in their life – birthdays, anniversaries, etc., 6) giving them a tool to track cards and gifts they give and receive, and 7) giving them a tool to help automate the sending of their holiday cards
- 6) Volunteer management capabilities just became easier. This section of the service allows units to more easily manage the task of recruiting and scheduling volunteers based on the needs of the unit, the interest areas of the volunteers, and the available time of the individual volunteers.

As OMDR migrates to OMDR Plus, all of the member management capabilities in OMDR will be available in the easy to use interface of JBF. All data already entered into OMDR will automatically be transferred into OMDR Plus, so no previous efforts will be wasted.

It is important to note that, when the above system is put in place, that will not be the end- in fact, it is really only the beginning. National PTA has a three year plan mapped out for OMDR Plus and will be counting heavily on your feedback and ideas to further enhance the system to make it even more valuable to unit leaders and PTA members everywhere. To enable this process, there will be an OMDR Plus User's group- to which any PTA member anywhere will be welcome to join- and an OMDR Plus steering committee- which will be made up of PTA leaders willing to volunteer some of their time to help shape the continual development of new OMDR Plus functionality.

Contact Info:

Look for more information on OMDR Plus on the Virginia PTA website at www.vapta.org. Inquiries or questions about OMDR or OMDR *Plus* can be sent to omdr@vapta.org.

Sincerely,

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