



“GUIDE TO GIVING”

Prepared by the TJ PTSA

<http://www.tjhsst.edu/supportingtj/ptsa/>

Revised April 2012

Guide to Giving to TJ
Understanding the PTSA, TJ Partnership Fund and Booster Organizations
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Introduction

This guide has been written in response to many TJ parents and other community members, who have expressed confusion about the purposes and structure of the three main parent support organizations which separately solicit donations and volunteers from TJ families. These three organizations are: the PTSA, the TJ Partnership Fund and the Booster Organizations.

Fairfax County Public School system does not fund all needed equipment, supplies, registration fees, and other expenses required to keep the associated student activities and teams operating. The PTSA, TJ Partnership Fund and Booster organizations have been formed to support the many academic, sports and extracurricular programs at TJ. Below is a brief description of each of the support organizations at TJ, together with information about membership dues and/or typical contribution levels. Of course, higher levels of financial support are always appreciated from those whose resources permit larger contributions! Donations to all of these organizations are tax-deductible to the extent allowable by the law. Please consult your tax professional for details.

The organizations do overlap somewhat in the support they provide to TJ. However, in simple terms, the difference between the organizations is their focus:

- PTSA helps with the day-to-day needs of the school
- TJ Partnership Fund helps with the longer-range, bigger-ticket needs of the school
- Booster organizations help with the needs of specific interest activities (e.g., sports, academic clubs, music)

In addition to donations, all these organizations need volunteers. Detailed information about the specific purpose(s) and operation of each organization is available on the organization's website, referenced below.

Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA) (<http://leadership.tjhsst.edu/ptsa/>)

The PTSA provides the essential connections between the parents, teachers, students and the school. Its mission is to contribute to, and enhance, the academic and overall educational experience of all TJ students. Additionally, we support programs that deal with the overall health and well being of our students, which results in a happier, more well-balanced high school experience for our children. The PTSA cooperates with the school's teachers, administrators and staff; provides assistance to the TJ Partnership Fund and the TJ Alumni Association; and coordinates activities with other groups that contribute to the TJ community. Membership is voluntary and is open to everyone.

The PTSA is a membership-driven organization that supports a wide variety of school activities by providing committed volunteers and targeted financial support derived from member dues (currently \$15 per member per year), donations, and limited fund-raising activities such as sales of the annual Student Directory, grocery and other vendor programs (“free money” from companies such as Amazon, Giant, Safeway, and others), and recycling programs.

PTSA funds are used to support TJ students and TJ staff activities, including teacher training and conferences, the Science Fair, the Shakespeare Festival, and equipment for teachers and students. The PTSA volunteers help the TJ community in a number of other areas, including the following:

- Solicit volunteers to help with the many volunteer opportunities at TJ including JLC, career center and front office (as well as staff our own active board and committees)
- Assist with communications and advocacy for school related issues
- Provide support and assistance for various events at the school including the Back to School Bash, Back to School Night and numerous awards ceremonies and faculty events.
- Communicate with the TJ community through TJ PTSA’s website, monthly newsletter and e-mail updates
- Welcome new students through our spring cluster parties
- Serve as the liaison to other groups in our community with an interest in TJ, including state legislators and other Governor’s School parents
- Work with TJ to identify and work on our upcoming building renovation and landscaping
- Run a TJ prep class for underrepresented populations
- Plan and run the All-Night Grad Party (ANGP). The All Night Grad Party takes place at TJ right after the graduation ceremony and continues throughout the night. The party is staffed by parents of all grades and is funded through ticket sales and donations by parents, friends of the TJ community, and local businesses. Funds raised by individual classes during their four years at TJ are used to pay for prom and graduation, but not All Night Grad Party. For more information, please visit the ANGP web site: <http://information.tjhsst.edu/gradparty/index.html>
- Provide healthy snacks for students during their morning AP exam breaks
- Offer a “Navigating TJ” forum for parents of Freshman students in the fall, where long-time TJ parents share their experiences, and the experiences of their TJ students, along with helpful advice
- Spend countless hours collecting used ink cartridges for our recycling program, which yields thousands of dollars in Staples coupons each year
- Support the PTSA Reflections program which showcases our students’ creative side
- Support and provide numerous volunteers for our very successful STEMBassadors outreach program

- **TJ Partnership Fund** (<http://www.TJPartnershipFund.org>)

The mission of the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Partnership Fund, Inc. is to support the unique learning opportunities, specialized curriculum and innovative research experiences available for TJ students. As a nonprofit foundation, we pursue our mission by engaging in partnerships with, and soliciting private donation from, corporations, parents, alumni and friends of TJ in the STEM community.

PF funds have been used to purchase equipment for TJ's labs; to fulfill technology or other classroom needs; to make possible special events such as the tjSTAR research symposium; to enhance faculty support and professional development opportunities; and to fund initiatives such as the Principal's "One Question" grants.

The PF recently launched "TJ 2.0," its Capital Campaign to support TJ's long-awaited renovation, slated to commence in early 2013. Capital Campaign funds are essential so that the new building provides not just the larger, more useful and attractive space that FCPS funds will support but also the state-of-the-art research equipment and sophisticated technology that meets TJ's unique needs and goals.

The PF has three constituent boards: The Parent Board reaches out to current and alumni parents, grandparents, and friends; the Alumni Board is the conduit for TJ alumni to support their school with pride; and the Corporate Board seeks to cultivate relationships with corporations and foundations. A new committee supports the TJ 2.0 Capital Campaign, and the Communications Committee gets the word out about what we do.

The PF consists of a volunteer-led group of current and alumni parents, alumni and corporate representatives. As an organization that is almost completely dependent on volunteers, we constantly need and welcome new volunteers in all capacities.

The PF works in close collaboration with the administration, lab directors and faculty to maximize our support of TJ. We employ a Development Manager, Ellen Smith, who acts as a liaison between the PF and the School and assists us in reaching all of our constituents.

Through our work, we aim to build a better school and a stronger community. Every contribution makes a difference, is appreciated and is recognized. All contributions are tax-deductible. Please join us.

Academic Boosters (<http://academics.tjhsst.edu/aboosters/>)

Academic Boosters supports our outstanding academic teams towards their various pursuits. Some 20 academic teams compete in local, state, national, and sometimes international events. Because financial resources are not available from FCPS, the Academic Boosters asks families to join the organization at various financial levels, which are also tax-deductible. This enables Academic Boosters to pay student registrations as well as teacher travel expenses to chaperone at events. We also purchase textbooks and other supplies needed by academic teams. Even with Academic Boosters support, academic team members pay their own way with travel, room, meals, and other related expenses.

TJ teams include: Biology Olympiad, Botball (Robotics team), Certamen, Chemistry Team, Chess Team, Computer Team, Cyber Patriots, Debate Teams (Lincoln-Douglas, Policy, Public Forum, and Forensics), Future Problem Solvers, Japan Bowl, Math Teams, Model United Nations, Odyssey of the Mind, Physics Team, Quiz Bowl (“It’s Academic”), Rubik’s Cube Team, Science Bowl, Science Olympiad, Team America Rocketry Challenge (TARC). Our website, <http://academics.tjhsst.edu/aboosters>, provides updated information about each of the teams.

Academic Boosters promotes team achievements on the booster web site, gathers information about team achievements for the PTSA newsletter, maintains a bulletin board with information about academic teams, recognizes family memberships, promotes academic teams at orientations and open houses, and organizes a year-end awards ceremony.

TJ academic teams’ achievements have always been a source of pride for the entire TJHSST community, and the cornerstone of our national reputation for academic excellence. Everyone is welcome (and encouraged!) to join TJ Academic Boosters by making a donation, either by check or online with credit card. Funding comes primarily from family memberships and is supplemented with food and merchandise sales. Recommended donation levels start at \$50 per year. 100% of the money raised is used to support TJ’s academic teams.

Colonial Athletic Boosters (<http://www.colonialathletics.org/index.cfm?action=main.boosters>)

Colonial Athletic Boosters (CAB) supports our TJ Athletic Program by organizing events, financing uniforms/equipment and providing a forum for parents to communicate ideas and recommendations to the athletic administration. CAB is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation - all proceeds are used to fund TJ athletics. The organization’s goal is to create the best sports experience for the TJ community – students, parents, fans and coaches.

Each year TJ fields 44 teams in 19 sports at the freshman, JV, and varsity levels. It takes about \$120,000 annually, beyond what Fairfax County provides, to fund TJ athletics. Booster membership, along with gate receipts, concessions and TJ gear, are the primary sources for this funding. Fairfax County pays only for coaches’ salaries, utilities and some transportation. Everything else -- the balls, helmets, uniforms, nets, scoreboards, grass seed and fertilizer, mowers, professional development and trophies, etc -- is paid for from CAB funds.

CAB actively encourages all families of athletes to support CAB at least financially by joining as a member, which includes free game passes and requires no time commitment. Opportunities for greater involvement as a volunteer either seasonally or annually can be found on the TJ athletics website. This level of support from parents ensures that TJ continues to provide a broad high school experience for all its students as both fans and athletes.

Note: County regulations limit CAB support to Virginia High School League (VHSL) sports. Club sports, such as crew, must be self-supporting.

Band Boosters (<http://www.tjhsstband.org/>)

The *TJHSST Band Boosters, Inc.*, provides the volunteer help, financial aid, and moral support required to achieve a band program of musical excellence. The Boosters' goal is to support the band director, band students, and the TJ band program. The TJHSST Band Boosters are solely supported by the volunteer hours of its members, fundraisers, and charitable donations. Parents of band members are automatically considered Band Boosters; there are no membership fees.

The Fairfax County Public Schools budget provides only enough funds to purchase some curricular instruments and to provide some curricular bus transportation. Remaining funding needs for both the curricular and the extra-curricular band program comes predominantly from two sources: direct fees to parents for each program in which their student participates and fundraising efforts by students and parents through the Band Boosters fundraising programs.

Funds raised by the Band Boosters are used in a variety of ways, including:

- ♪ Competition fees and festival fees
- ♪ Building use at TJ
- ♪ Transportation of students to concerts, competitions, and pep band events
- ♪ Rental of trucks to carry equipment
- ♪ Curricular Bands, Marching Band, Drum Line, and Guard adjunct instruction
- ♪ Marching Band and Concert Band uniforms
- ♪ Sheet music purchases

Donations are accepted in any amount. Fundraisers planned for the current school year include virtual tag day, citrus (fruit) sales, pie and dessert sales, gift wrap, ham and turkey sales, holiday greens, customized license plate frames, White House holiday ornaments, scrip, TJ band apparel, and restaurant promotions.

In addition to donations, volunteering is essential to the success of the band program. There are many areas in which parents can volunteer.

- ♪ Chair and staff the boards and committees of the TJHSST Band Boosters, Inc.
- ♪ Organize and participate in fundraising activities for trips, instruments, marching show arrangements and instruction, competition fees, and other operating expenses
- ♪ Provide service, as needed, for musical events and supporting activities

To subscribe to the Band Booster Yahoo group, go to: tjbandboosters-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Choral Boosters (<http://tjchoir.org/>)

The TJ Choral Boosters is organized to provide assistance to the Choral Program and its director. They lend all possible support, both moral and financial, to the vocal music programs in the school. They serve as a means of communication to keep parents of chorus members informed as to the activities and project of the chorus. Finally, they provide for the chorus members those things not provided by the school, such as refreshments; banquet(s); awards (in keeping with school policy and approved by the Executive Board and Chorus Director); funds for any projects, activities, or trips that might be proposed and approved.

Crew Boosters (<http://sports.tjhsst.edu/crew/>)

The Thomas Jefferson Crew Boosters provide the resources necessary to conduct a successful crew program at TJ. Although crew is a varsity sport (students may "letter") at TJ, the Fairfax County school system provides no financial support since it considers crew a club sport. The Crew Boosters are responsible for raising the money to pay for the entire program, including the racing shells, coaches' salaries, boathouse rental, and equipment. In addition to the dues paid by team members, the Crew team also raises money through the sale of Sally Foster wrapping paper and grocery gift cards and by holding

fundraising events (such as the annual yard sale and craft fair held at TJ every fall). Donations are also welcome to support TJ Crew.

Orchestra Boosters (<http://arts.tjhsst.edu/orchestra/booster.php>)

The TJ Orchestra Boosters is comprised of parents, Orchestra alumni and musical friends who provide supplementary funds and volunteer support for the TJ Orchestras under the skilled leadership of Ms. Allison Bailey. The funds and volunteer efforts are used to support music, equipment & instrument purchases, scholarships for orchestra trips, recording of concerts, pre-concert dinners for musicians, as well as assisting the orchestra students and Ms. Bailey in hosting the popular Viennese Ball for TJHSST. The Viennese Ball is a winter formal with music by the orchestra, dancing and delicious international foods provided by orchestra families. It is the main fundraising activity of the Orchestra.

All parents are welcome to support the TJHSST Orchestras by joining and participating in the Booster organization. Meetings are usually on a Tuesday or Wednesday a couple of weeks before each concert at 7:30 p.m. at the school. Please see the Orchestra Website for the current schedule of meetings and events.

Theatre Boosters (<http://arts.tjhsst.edu/theatreboosters>) □

The TJ Theatre Boosters support the TJ Drama Program and its director and the TJ Shakespeare Troupe and its sponsor, through both financial and volunteer assistance. With cash contributions from Booster members and money raised from concession sales at performances, the Booster organization provides supplemental funding of costumes, sound and lighting equipment, choreographers as well as pre-rehearsal and pre-show snacks/dinners for cast and crew, covers partial expenses for parent chaperones for the annual Virginia Theater Association (VTA) weekend competition, expenses for Troupe's Shakespeareance!, a dinner for the student Cappies judges, and an end of the year Drama Awards Banquet. Anyone looking for another way to support the arts at TJ – including all TJ parents and TJ alumni – is encouraged to join the TJ Theatre Boosters. Any contribution of time and/or money is much appreciated.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I have to join the PTSA to be included in the TJ Directory?

No, although we encourage everyone to join the PTSA and to submit their contact information for the TJ Student Directory.

2. Why and how do I submit information for the TJ Student Directory?

Every year, the TJ PTSA publishes the TJ Student Directory, which includes contact information about students and their families. Since TJ's students are from Fairfax County as well as six other local jurisdictions, the directory is very useful for obtaining information about, and enabling communication between, students and families. In addition, the PTSA uses the e-mails submitted for the directory to send out TJ and PTSA updates. Of course, parents may opt out of the directory and submit their e-mail information for PTSA use only. Enter your information at <http://leadership.tjhsst.edu/ptsa/login.htm>.

3. Can I write one check instead of separate ones to each group?

No. Because each organization is separate and maintains its own accounts, separate checks are required.

4. Why do I have to sign up for the Keep In Touch (KIT) , Blackboard/Naviance/Family Connection, and the PTSA e-mails?

TJ communicates with parents using three primary email systems. To ensure that you are well-informed regarding your student's high school career, it is advisable to update your contact information in all three places:

1. **Keep In Touch (KIT):** Messages primarily from the **Principal (and FCPS)** use the KIT system. Parents can update their contact information by either calling the school, or updating their emergency contact card information online through the weCare@school module found on their Parent View Blackboard account under "weCare@school".
2. **Blackboard/Naviance:** The **Department of Student Services** (including the Director of Student Services, Counselors, and the College and Career Center) use an email list obtained from a separate module known as Naviance/Family Connection found on Blackboard. Parents should update their contact information in the "My Information" section found on their Parent View Blackboard account to update their information in Naviance, **in addition** to the "weCare@school" section also found on their Parent View Blackboard account to update Keep in Touch. (Note: Parents must update Naviance themselves in "My Information" on Blackboard - the school is unable to update the Naviance module.) **Parents will only receive emails from the Department of Student Services if they have a Parent View Blackboard account, and the email address is current.**
3. **PTSA Database:** The **PTSA** maintains its own database to communicate with parents, since TJ uses Keep in Touch primarily for messages from the Principal's office. Many important communications related to specific classes and activities are sent through the PTSA, including Freshman Lock-In, Senior Graduation activities, Proposed Changes to Curriculum Requirements, PTSA events, TJ events, and many other issues relevant to your students' academic and social lives. Please log in to <http://www.tjhsst.edu/supportingtj/ptsa/login.htm> to update your contact information in the PTSA database.

Don't Forget to add TJ to your KIT Subscription!!

Finally, parents also should **update their KIT subscription** to include TJHSST (look for "Jefferson HSST") as a school from which it would like to receive communications. For directions, go to <http://www.fcps.edu/kit/index.shtml#update>.