



## PTA Membership and Meetings

### Purpose –

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship;
- To raise the standards of home life;
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth;
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth;
- To ensure such united efforts between parent and educator will secure, for all children and youth, the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

**Membership** – PTA Membership is an excellent way to support your school and your student. Your PTA membership makes you a voting member of our PTA, and your dues help add to the income that is used to fund the below listed activities for our students. Studies show that involved parents tend to have safer and higher achieving students. Being a PTA member is one way to be an involved parent. Becoming a member insures your ability to have a voice in the activities that are sponsored by the PTA. Also, your local membership connects you to the state and national PTA's.

**Meetings** – The VOE PTA has general meetings and board meetings. All PTA members are invited and encouraged to attend the board meetings. Your thoughts and contributions are always welcome. General meetings are held in connection with some other type of school program.

Please refer to the PTA and School Events Calendar for meeting times and dates and see the PTA Board Roster in this packet for contact information about PTA committees.

### PTA Sponsored Communications –

Methods of receiving school and PTA information

### Websites -

- The VOE PTA website can be found at [www.valleyoakspta.com](http://www.valleyoakspta.com). The website provides you with up-to-date information on board and committee members, current fundraising efforts, access to our online store, PTA forms, PTA calendar, and more.
- The school also has a website which can be found at <http://voe.springbranchisd.com>. This website has a school calendar, district information, and it also links to the PTA website.

**Eblasts** – Email communications are sent out almost every week. They will provide timely information regarding important reminders, information about upcoming events, announcements, and much more regarding the school and PTA. All PTA members will receive these communications automatically if an email address is provided. If you are not receiving these emails, please contact our e-communications chair.

**PTA Board Meetings** – All parents and teachers are welcome and encouraged to attend the PTA Board Meetings. They are an excellent way to learn about everything going on at the school and upcoming events. Please check the calendar for specific dates and times.

**Marquee** – Watch the electronic marquee located in front of the school entrance along Pech for reminders about upcoming PTA and school events.

**Friday Folders** – All students at Valley Oaks are sent home on Fridays with a “Friday Folder”. This folder contains information or flyers specific to your child's class or grade level. The folder will also contain flyers about upcoming PTA or school events.

**Directory/Calendar** - The school directory, compiled and sold by the PTA, contains contact information for students, a PTA roster, an event calendar, teacher and staff contact information and class lists. Parents may purchase both a hard copy and

electronic access on a computer or smart phone. The directory Advertising from our community sponsors can also be seen in the directory.

**Room Parent Emails** – Each class has a designated “Room Parent” who will gather email addresses of parents in each class and send out emails periodically that are grade or class specific. Examples of class or grade specific information are class parties or teacher requests.

**PTA Sponsored Enrichment Programs –**

The PTA enriches the programs provided by the school and the school district with additional programs that supplement the learning and social environments of each student.

**Beautification** – The school district pays for very little grounds maintenance, so the PTA utilizes funds and volunteers to make sure our campus is maintained and inviting. We are always in need of help and interested in new ideas. If you want to volunteer in any way, please contact our Beautification chair.

**Cultural Arts** – Each year the PTA sponsors several presentations of music, theater, and other fine arts performances to supplement the education of VOE students. The chair works with the school administration to identify the types of programs needed, identify artists, make arrangements, and coordinate activities the day of the performance.

**Field Trips** – Most student field trip entry fees are not provided by the school district but are paid for by the PTA. Over the course of the year, VOE students visit many different area attractions sponsored by the PTA, such as The Children’s Museum, the Houston Museum of Natural Science, Main Street Theater, the Houston Zoo, San Jacinto State Park and Monument, and the Edith Moore Nature Sanctuary.

**Odyssey of the Mind** – OM is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Team members apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. They then bring their solutions to competition on the local, state, and world level. Teams are coached by parent or teacher volunteers. Additional information about Odyssey of the Mind can be found on their website at <http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/>. Valley Oaks has entered several teams over the years and those teams have enjoyed great success. If you are interested in coaching a team or have a child interested in joining a team, please email our OM chair.

**Parent Education** – This committee brings important programs to help educate parents on a variety of topics. Please watch for announcements regarding upcoming events and opportunities.

**Reflections** – The National PTA Reflections Program is an arts recognition and achievement program for students. The Reflections Program provides opportunities for students to express themselves creatively and to receive positive recognition for original works of art inspired by a pre-selected theme, while increasing community awareness on the importance of the arts in education. Please watch for details on this year’s program.

**Reading is Fundamental (RIF)** – RIF is a national program created to encourage children to read. Twice a year, the PTA allows students to choose a new book to take home as their own. Our PTA provides the funds to pay for the books, and the RIF committee distributes them to the students to read. There are several ways to volunteer for RIF both at home and school. Please contact the RIF chair for more information.

**Visiting Authors** – Several times each year, Becky Reese, our wonderful librarian, arranges for authors of children’s books to visit Valley Oaks and speak to the students. This is not only a fun event, but also serves to encourage reading in kids.

**PTA Sponsored School/Faculty Programs & Community Support -**

The VOE PTA provides outreach services to our campus community and community at large. We also provide funds and services to directly benefit our teachers and staff.

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Event** – At the end of the school year, the 5<sup>th</sup> graders have an off-campus event to celebrate the end of elementary school.

**Back-to-School Fair (BTSF)** – This event, held each August just before the beginning of school, provides students an opportunity to tour the VOE campus and meet their assigned teacher(s). While at BTSF, students can also learn about activities for the school year; purchase school spirit items, student directories, and yearbooks; and pick up pre-ordered school supply

packs. There will also be information provided on bus schedules, the online payment website for school lunch program, and after school programs.

**Food Drive** – Our PTA sponsors a fall, canned food drive for our local food pantry. Please look for email, flyers, and eblasts about this important event.

**Hospitality** – Valley Oaks is so fortunate to have wonderful teachers and staff. The PTA shows its appreciation for these important people by holding luncheons to honor teacher and staff birthdays. We also hold a Welcome Breakfast for the teachers at the beginning of the school year. During Teacher Appreciation Week each May, the PTA honors our teachers with special surprises each day.

**Lost and Found** – A lost and found bin is provided by the PTA to collect items left at school by students. All remaining unclaimed items will be donated to a local charity at the end of the school year. Volunteers are sometimes needed for sorting.

**New Parents** – We were all new to VOE once! Our New Parent Coordinators help to provide information and guidance for new parents as they navigate our school. If you are new to VOE and have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our New Parent Coordinators.

**Outreach** – In addition to sponsoring activities for VOE students and families, PTA funds are also used to assist VOE families in need. Under the direction of Karen Doudican, our school counselor, the PTA has established this program to help coordinate and assist with any emergency needs of VOE families. Also, under this program is our established **Sister School Program** designed to help schools with no PTA. We use a portion of our PTA funds to help Shadow Oaks Elementary. For information on how you can help or to volunteer, please contact our Outreach chair or Sister School chair.

**Volunteers in School/Office** – Many of the programs the PTA sponsors would not be possible without our wonderful volunteers. Volunteer hours are logged and reported to the district each month by the Volunteers in Schools/Office chair. Please make sure to report your hours volunteering outside of school to the chair.

**Yearbook** – Every year the PTA publishes a school yearbook which is distributed in May. The yearbook may be purchased at the Back-to-School Fair or online through our store. Dedications are sold in December and January.

**PTA Sponsored Fundraising –**

The PTA's ability to sponsor the programs listed above depends greatly on our parents. There are quite a lot of needs not provided by the school district that many of us would consider essential. While fundraising is not the primary purpose of the PTA, raising money is necessary to enable the PTA to provide all these wonderful programs which so greatly enhance the educational and community environment at VOE. None of this would be possible without the generous support of our VOE families. Listed below are some of the fundraising activities sponsored by the VOE PTA throughout the year.

**Auction** – The VOE PTA holds its Dinner and Auction event every fall. This is a chance for VOE families to get together for an evening of fun, food, and fundraising. Along with actual items for auction, families can bid on parties, top spots, and more. You won't want to miss!

- **Sign-Up Parties** – These are parties for children, adults, and families that are available for sign-up at the Auction. The parties are always fun and a great way to get to know other students and families outside the school environment.

**Book Fair** – The PTA holds a Book Fair every year in the VOE library. Students have an opportunity to visit the book fair with their class during school hours. The Book Fair is also open in the mornings before school, after school, and for special evening hours during the VOE Open House. Volunteers are always needed! So please contact the Book Fair chair.

**Box Tops for Education** – Our school collects Box Tops for Education to raise money for the PTA activities. For each box top collected, our school receives \$0.10. Please collect your Box Tops and look for information about our contests and collection times throughout the year.

**Jamboree** – Our school carnival, held every March/April, is called Jamboree. Students and teachers look forward to this fun-filled day which brings VOE families together to play games, crack confetti eggs, spray silly string, enjoy treats and more. Many volunteers are needed to make this event happen. Please watch for more information.

**Kroger Card/Dining Fundraisers** – One simple way to help raise money for VOE PTA is to link your Kroger card to our school account. Once you link your card, every time you shop and present your Kroger card, you will raise money for VOE. We also have occasional dining fundraisers at local restaurants, such as Chic Fil A Spirit days. When VOE families eat at these restaurants on specified days and let the restaurant know you are with VOE, 20% of the sales that day go to the VOE PTA. Please watch for information about upcoming events.

**Running for the Arts** – This is a district sponsored fun run that raises money for the arts programs and art related field trips for the district. Please look for information about this event in the spring.

**Spirit Store** – Each year the PTA offers a new VOE t-shirt and other VOE spirit items for families to purchase. Students are encouraged to wear their VOE shirts on field trips and on Fridays to show their school spirit. Items are available to purchase at BTSF and through our online store. If purchasing online, please allow a few weeks to receive your order. It will be sent home in your child’s backpack.

**Underwriting** – Our Underwriting Committee coordinates all efforts to seek corporate underwriting and community sponsorship for the PTA. This includes directory ads, event sponsors, and more.

## **Volunteering**

**Register as a Volunteer** - Before you first volunteer at Valley Oaks, even in your child’s classroom, you must fill out the “Volunteers in School” form on the Spring Branch ISD website. This form lets the district do a background check to ensure our children’s safety. Go online to [www.springbranchisd.com](http://www.springbranchisd.com), click on the “For Community” tab then click “Be a Volunteer”. Follow the instructions for the link to register. All volunteers must register annually beginning on June 15<sup>th</sup>. There is always a rush at the beginning of the school year, so the sooner you complete this, the better.

**On Campus** – Anyone who comes on campus for any reason will be required to sign in at the office and obtain a volunteer/visitor badge. Be sure to bring a valid driver’s license or ID for each visit and the office staff will print your sticker.

**Off Campus** – Be sure to log any additional volunteer time by recording and sending your volunteer hours served outside of school to the Volunteers in School/Office chairman. Time volunteered outside of school will not be captured by the on-campus computer system. Thus, they need to be logged manually. Our accuracy depends on each volunteer remembering to record and log their hours.

