





Introducing National PTA's OMDR*Plus*

Powered by Just Between Friends

A Powerful new tool for local PTA units, compliments of your National PTA.

NPTA is pleased to present to all PTA units across the country an exciting new tool that will help your unit run more efficiently and effectively.

Inside this packet of information, you will learn how to use OMDR Plus to:

-  Make communications to your members very easy, flexible and powerful**
-  Create online directories, in various combinations and permutations, as well as automate the publishing of paper directories**
-  Increase your PTA's membership and the success of your fundraising efforts**
-  Make life easier for PTA parents**

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What is OMDR Plus?

Once upon a time, National PTA had a vision to create a set of web-based tools that would make it easier for local unit leaders to run their PTA while adding value to the individual members of the unit. To enable this vision, a new system was born- OMDR (Online Member Data Reporting).

The first version of OMDR created an easy way for units and states to get member information to National, while providing some communications capability at the same time; but it doesn't end there. So this fall, OMDR is transforming into OMDR Plus, powered by Just Between Friends.

OMDR Plus is starting with the challenges of running a PTA unit on a daily basis and growing it into a strong, meaningful organization, but is also taking the perspective of the individual PTA members, who are trying to manage very busy lives. Anyone with multiple children, in multiple schools, and participating in multiple activities knows the challenges of keeping track of where they have to be, and when, with which child, and what equipment. OMDR Plus helps with this challenge as well.

The functionality of OMDR Plus will generally fall into one of these two categories- functions that will help you “run my PTA” and “personal tools” that will help members manage their busy lives on a day-to-day basis.

And, as you would expect, there is no charge to anyone for all of this capability. The cost of development and ongoing support will be borne by National PTA, Proud National Sponsors of PTA, and other family friendly companies that support PTA's mission.

Why Use OMDR Plus- The Unit's perspective?

There are two high level reasons for a PTA unit to want to use OMDR Plus: 1) it will make it easier and less time consuming to perform many of the administrative tasks needed to run a PTA unit and 2) it will provide a great way to drive membership and increase the success of fundraising efforts.

Run My PTA

As a volunteer based organization, National PTA appreciates the time people have donated and recognizes it has a duty to its local leaders and members to try to minimize the amount of their time needed to run and grow the units. To That end, OMDR Plus will automate many of the administrative tasks that take up that time. The first version of OMDR Plus will give your unit:

- ✚ 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 create any number of logical groupings (a district, school, grade, individual class, teams, troops, etc, etc) and easily select which audience should receive which emails. Parents can access the information from a private, secure account even when they don't have email access. Parents can even use the system to easily communicate with each other.
- ✚ 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.
- ✚ Very robust directory capabilities that automate the creation of paper directories, significantly reducing the time and effort traditionally needed for this task. It also creates online directories that are private and very secure, with very powerful searching capabilities. The online directories also have 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.

- ✚ 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.

Driving Membership and Fundraising

The concept here is very simple-provide a service to all parents (regardless of whether or not they are a member of PTA) that, simultaneously, is both valuable to the individual parent and also gives you- the PTA leader- the ability to communicate to them about all the great things PTA does and why their support is important (and how they can support the PTA).

Because OMDR Plus also takes the perspective of busy parents and, as such, has a number of capabilities to help manage a very hectic lifestyle (see the parent's perspective section for a more detailed listing of these tools), they will want to use the system.

VERY IMPORTANT: There are two very important points to bring out:

- 1) The more groups a parent belongs to that use the system, the more useful the system becomes to that parent. The value increases exponentially with each additional group. Therefore, once your PTA unit is up and running, an effort should be made to get other local groups (scout troops, sports teams, religious organizations, booster clubs, Indian Guides/Princesses etc) to sign up to use the communications, directory, and social networking parts of the system. Ask your members what other groups would make the system more valuable for them!**

2) Many of the same time saving and productivity enhancement features and benefits you get from using the tools in OMDR Plus, will also apply to any other group that uses the system. The PTA will be providing a valuable service to these groups, at no charge to them.

In addition to making the system more valuable for your current members, it is almost certain that some members of these other groups will not be members of PTA. If these non-members start using OMDR Plus, local PTA leadership can then use the system to let them know about all of the important work PTA is doing for all the kids in the school- not just kids whose parents are members of the PTA.

Because PTA does not discriminate when it comes to kids participating in PTA programs, it is important and appropriate that all parents (especially non-members) be informed about all the value the PTA brings to your school; and they should also know how important their support is- whether they join the PTA or even just support by purchasing the goods and services offered by the PTA fundraising efforts.

Getting Started Happens Like Magic

Features and Functions for the Unit

Thanks to the Group Start up wizard, you can get your unit signed up and organized in a matter of minutes by simply answering a few questions and hitting the submit button.

Key Concepts:

- ✚ One time only start up process that will take less than ten minutes
- ✚ All members of your leadership team, with appropriate permission levels, will be set up
- ✚ Great user experience –easy to use

Key Features/How It Works:

Simply go to this: website www.justbetweenfriends.com/2008quickstart and click the start now button. You will be lead question-by-question through to the end. Information you will need to answer the questions will be things like:

Quick Start for 2008-2009 school year – PTA Groups

Here's what you'll need to complete the start-up process for your PTA. Please have each item available when you go through the wizard, because if you close your browser before completing the wizard, you'll need to start again.

1. **The Local Unit ID # of your PTA Unit or Council.**
 - This is the unique number issued to you by National PTA. If you don't have this, please contact your state PTA to obtain it.
2. **Contact info for you and your school**
 - Include address, phone and your own email address. If you are running a PTA Council, include include info for your school district or coverage area instead of a single school.
3. **Number of students in your school** (You can approximate.)
 - For Councils, use the number in your district or coverage area.
4. **Number of Families/Households that have children in your school** (You can approximate.)

- This is the number of families living in one household that have at least one child in your school. (A split home with a father separated from a mother would be considered one household.)
 - For Councils, use the number in your district or coverage area.
5. **A person who will act in your place if you are unavailable.**
- (Name, address, phone, and email.) You'll create usernames and passwords for both of you to use the system.

The following info is optional. If you can enter it, you'll enhance the value for you and the parents in your PTA.

1. **Name of your school Principal** (if you're a unit),
 - Or your school district superintendent (if you're a council).
2. **Your PTA Officers – name, title, phone, and email.**
 - By including them, you'll be able to give them access to the parts of the system that will help them do their PTA tasks better -- and thereby make your job easier too. You'll be able to customize their permissions to use only the parts of Just Between Friends and OMDR Plus that apply to their PTA position.
3. **Classes in each of your school's grades.**
 - You may also set up the system to show **the classes in each of your school's grades**. This allows you customize your school directory by class and even setup communications and newsletters by class. You can include teacher name, room number and class size.
4. **Other groups within your school**
 - If you want to enable communications with or directories for parents of students in **other groups within your school** (such as school teams, clubs, orchestras, etc.), you'll also need the names of those groups.
5. **External groups**
 - If there are **external groups** (not directly associated with your school or PTA) whose memberships overlap yours – such as local sports associations, theater arts groups, etc. – you'll have the opportunity to make it easy for your members to see the events from these

- groups on the same calendars as they see your PTA and school events. Simply enter the group names when prompted. (If you know the leaders of these groups and can enter their phones or email addresses, that would make it even easier – and add value to your PTA.)

Once you have collected the information you need, it should take you about 10 minutes to complete the start-up process, after which we'll send you information about how you can learn to use the system.

Everything is detailed on the website!

Once your unit is set up, you will then be approved by your state PTA and then you will be ready to get your parents signed.

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PTA President and President-Elect



President-Elect

Beyond Member Management

National PTA and Just Between Friends have merged the functionality of OMDR into the enhanced user experience of Just Between Friends, creating a new, better way for you to manage your membership and run your PTA better than ever before.

Key Concepts:

- ✚ Merges "member management" into a comprehensive management tool for PTAs
- ✚ Seamless transformation from OMDR into OMDR Plus
- ✚ Great user experience – easy to learn and use
- ✚ Training & support that suits your needs

Key Features/How It Works:

Member data will be entered into the JustBetweenFriends system one time, but will be used for multiple purposes- directory creation (multiple directories can all be fed from the same source), email communication, and reporting to National PTA. For reporting needs, this data will automatically be transferred to the National PTA member database- no more complicated spreadsheets or templates to fill out and transmit.

All current OMDR functionality will also be included in this module:

- ✚ printing of member cards
- ✚ capability for unit or member to control mailings/benefits received from national
- ✚ a membership database that holds member data on a local level

- ✚ **There will also be many future enhancements, such as:**
- ✚ the option to take payments online (if a unit wants to) for dues and fundraisers
- ✚ the ability for members to automatically renew online
- ✚ the ability to input and change member information online in real time

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-  OMDR Champion
-  Directory Chair

This Year, Your School Directory Takes 90% Less Time To Create

School/student directories are great – but normally time consuming and often riddled with errors- but not this year, because you have the JustBetweenFriends Directory Creation and Update Tools – courtesy of National PTA and OMDR Plus.

Key Concepts:





- ✚ addresses the fact that most parents belong to more than one group (even more than one PTA), requiring them to manage and keep up-to-date multiple directories/rosters/class lists
- ✚ eliminates the problem of paper-only directories being static (becoming quickly outdated) and not easily changeable
- ✚ eliminates the issue of paper-only directories being easily lost (and the fact that they can only be in one place at one time)
- ✚ addresses the issue that publishing paper directories is a time consuming, arduous task

Key Features/How it works:

- ✚ The parents of each student can create their own listings and keep them up-to-date
- ✚ Parents with children in multiple schools (elementary, middle, high) and multiple activities can use a single listing to keep all their directories up-to-date – and their listings follow their children between schools and activities
- ✚ You can import listings from OMDR, spreadsheets, or manually enter them for those who don't have computers
- ✚ Directories can be printed in various formats to meet the needs of your PTA and School
- ✚ You can create a printed directory or parents can login to a secure, private, searchable version of the directory
- ✚ Parents can control which of their household information is seen by which directory
- ✚ The online version of the directory has clickable email links that hide the email addresses to eliminate the risk of spam

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Plain Ol' Email Becomes a Dinosaur With Just Between Friends PTA Communications Tools

Email is great – but not perfect. It sometimes isn't received; and email addresses are hard to keep up-to-date. On top of that, you sometimes want multiple people to reach the parents in your school or school district.

Enter "Just Between Friends Notices", part of the Just Between Friends Communications Tools provided to you by National PTA.

Key Concepts:

- ✚ addresses the fact that most parents belong to multiple groups (again, even more than one PTA), requiring them to manage/keep up-to-date their email addresses with multiple groups
- ✚ addresses the issue of parents wanting to get appropriate information from the right sources, yet protect their privacy and not expose them to the risk of spam
- ✚ eliminates the issue of email being the only way to get info- a real problem if parents don't always have easy access to their email accounts
- ✚ very robust, automated reminder capabilities

Key Features/How it works:

- ✚ In just a few clicks more than email, you can simultaneously make your notice available for the parents in both email form and in a secure, online account – so you don't have to worry whether the email reaches the intended recipients
- ✚ You can schedule automatic email reminders, at the same time the original email is sent, for events and deadlines. Parents can turn the reminders off if they've already taken action or simply don't want the reminder
- ✚ Parents can submit notices to you – that you can review, edit and send out at YOUR discretion.
- ✚ Notices for events and deadlines are placed on a calendar – customized for each parent, so he can readily see conflicts

- ✚ You can empower PTA officers, school administrators, teachers, homeroom parents, and other group leaders (coaches, band leaders, scout leaders, etc.) to use the communications tools by granting them permission. You can also limit their permission to a specific group, class or grade.

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Social Networking becomes Socially Acceptable for more than just teenagers (even for people who actually have teenagers)

Hanging out online, creating new relationships, and making new friends is great for kids, but parents have a tough enough time just trying to manage all of the current activities and events in their family life- figuring out which kid has to be at which activity and with which equipment and hoping the conflicts are minimal

Enter "Just Between Friends Social Networking for Households", part of the Just Between Friends web-based Tools provided to you by National PTA and OMDR Plus.

Key Concepts:

- ✚ the social networking phenomenon is leading the web 2.0 charge, yet the first mainstream internet users are now have families of their own and have different needs not met by these social networking offerings
- ✚ the needs of busy parents are not for online “entertainment” (as offered by Facebook and MySpace) as much as they are for real tools to help them manage the groups, events, and activities in which they already participate.

Key Features/How it works:

- ✚ Gives any number of different groups an easy way to get started and allows and gives parents any easy way to link their account to any group to which they belong.
- ✚ Gives parents a single private, customized page online that shows them all their family events and activities related to the groups to which they belong.
- ✚ Gives them one single smart calendar that highlights potential conflicts
- ✚ Gives them an easy way to connect with the people involved in those events and activities by providing a consolidated set of directories and rosters related to those groups as well as a private email-based communications system.

- ✚ Gives them valuable tools to manage and remember important personal events, including smart-reminders for birthdays & anniversaries, ways to record card & gift exchanges, and ways to simplify the process of sending greeting cards, invitations, thank you notes, etc.

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Volunteer Management and Parent Involvement

National PTA wants to help you increase parental involvement, so built into OMDR Plus is a set of volunteer management capabilities that you can use to help match volunteers to your PTA's needs. The parents in your school can use it to enrich their lives and connect them better with the activities related to their children.

Key concepts:

- Parents can match their volunteer desires with the needs of your school and PTA
- Parents can submit notices to PTA leaders to share with their children's school, grade or class – or for parents on various committees

How it Works

- You give each parent a keyword – we call them "tokens" – to register & connect to the volunteer groups in which they are interested
- After they sign-up and verify their email address, you approve them into each specific group.
- That's it- they automatically start receiving information and requests from that committee chair.

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Why Use OMDR Plus- The Parent's perspective

Most parents can identify with this scenario- having multiple children in multiple schools (which usually means multiple PTA's) with each child in multiple school and non-school related activities (i.e. sports, scouts, religion, arts, music, dance, etc), resulting in mass chaos, confusion, and logistical nightmares on an almost daily basis.

Although Just Between Friends has not solved the space/time continuum to allow parents to be in two places at once, it does provide a very good set of tools to help parents manage this very stressful situation.

The concept behind these tools is very simple- give parents one place to go for all of the information from all of the various groups to which they and their children belong; consolidate all the events into one calendar, and make it easy; parents don't have to enter any of the information- each participating group enters their own information and it automatically populates the parents' calendar.

In the same place, parents also have individual directories and rosters for each of these groups, making it easy to arrange for carpooling, coordinating snacks, equipment transportation, etc.

Finally, make it as fail safe as possible so that parents can get their information two different ways- via email in their regular email account of, or by logging into their own private, secure account.

Features and Functions for Parents:

For busy parents and individual members of the PTA unit (or any group, for that matter)- there several valuable functions included in OMDR Plus. Specifically, parents now have:

- ✚ 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.)
- ✚ One place to go for membership directories & rosters for all of those groups
- ✚ A way to get automatic reminders of events, deadlines, etc. for school and PTA happenings as well as from the other groups to which they belong
- ✚ Tools to facilitate communications with other parents in the PTA and those other common groups
- ✚ A way to get email reminders of important personal events in their life – birthdays, anniversaries, etc.
- ✚ a tool to help automate the sending of their holiday cards

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