

# The SEPTA Express

Get on board with  
the Brick Township  
Special Education  
PTA



## SEPTA Executive Board Officers 2007/2008

**President**  
Brenda Calderone

**1st Vice President**  
Jeanette Smith

**2nd Vice President**  
Tim Doyle

**Recording Secretary**  
Kim Vaccaro

**Corresponding Secretary**  
Sharon Long

**Treasurer**  
Candy Fredericks

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## President's Message

On behalf of the Brick Township Special Education PTA, I would like to wish you and your families a very healthy and successful school year. The Brick Township Special Education PTA, now in its fourth year, has set some very high standards for their Executive Board. Our PTA has made so many great strides over the past three years and of course could not have achieved this success without the support of our members and wonderful Executive Board. Our first year was not easy, starting from scratch and trying to put together a Special Education PTA, which was a new concept for Brick Township. Our first President, Diana Gerlach, had her work cut out for her but with the help of a fiery bunch of parents, teachers and paraprofessionals, Brick SEPTA managed to get off the ground. Melanie McGackin was our Programs Chairperson then and is still with us, always raising the bar a little higher every year. Melanie has already started the new school year off with a bang. We had our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meet and Greet on October 22<sup>nd</sup> and its success was mostly due to Melanie putting together a forum which included eight special needs providers. Our evening also included a presentation by Michele Battista, the Grant Director of Training, concerning the Governor's Initiative for Special Education. Thank you to all who attended and participated in an evening which meant so much to us.

Teaming up with Brick Challenger for our Halloween Fest, Melanie went beyond any expectations by including inflatables, characters, cotton candy, popcorn, hayrides, pumpkin patch and pumpkin painting. It was a fun filled day and the kids loved it. Challenger has a special place in our hearts and it was a great idea bringing us together. Thanks again Melanie and Challenger for a wonderful day. Two years ago we had a spectacular gift auction which was headed by Annette Arthur, our Ways and Means Chairperson. We raised enough money to put us on the map as an official PTA. - Thanks Annette! She is still keeping us afloat and this year we will have our second gift auction on Friday, March 7, 2008.

Thank you to our officers past and present, some have gone and some are still with us, like Kim Vaccaro, who has held a few officer positions and is now our Recording Secretary. Candy Fredericks, who not only founded the Brick Township SEPTA, but has stayed with us throughout the years holding many executive board positions, most notably as our Advisor and Treasurer last year and again this year. Of course getting the word out about our PTA has brought us many acknowledgements from the community, along with many new members and we owe it to Barbara De-Jessa, our Public Relations and Newsletter Chair and Valerie Gray, our Website Chair. Valerie just received word that our PTA will receive an award for our website from the New Jersey

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## President's Message Continued:

Please check it out at [www.bricksepta.org](http://www.bricksepta.org) and see what an outstanding job she has done. Congratulations Vall! Barbara has taken our newsletter up many notches since she became the editor and will continue to produce an exceptional piece of work in the year ahead. Of course every PTA could not survive without a Hospitality Chairperson and Vinny Muti is just the right person for the job. Vinny charming and very giving personality has been a welcome addition to SEPTA last year and this year to come. He has also taken on the position of Fatherhood Initiative Chairperson which will be an ongoing effort to try to increase father involvement in the PTA. We have no doubt he will do well. We have three new kids on the block and we welcome them as our new additions, Tim Doyle, our 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, Sharon Long, our Corresponding Secretary and Mary Tara Wurmser, our Juvenile Protection and Safety Chair. Their combined experience will come in handy. We provide many wonderful children's programs and events as well as adult information and speakers, but without the work of our Legislation Chairperson, Jeanette Smith we would not have the tools we need to be advocates for our children. The information she gathers is worth its weight in gold and as a bonus, she's our 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President this year as well. Of course we at SEPTA believe one can never be "too informed" and Pat Marsden will keep us well informed on Board of Education issues, meeting agendas and schedules. So far she has given overviews of the past two board meetings and will continue to do so for the rest of the year. Thank you Pat! Each year we have increased our membership and last year was our most successful year yet, thanks to our Membership Chairperson, Joyce Neafsey! We received two awards for membership from the New Jersey PTA - Good job Joyce!! This year we set the goal even higher with hopes to increase our membership by at least 10%. We of course cannot do this without the support of parents, teachers and community. So, please help us to help our kids by supporting our efforts and build our PTA! We have a very special group of people and they give so much of themselves, but we can't do it alone. We need your help too. Become a member of the Brick Township Special Education PTA and work with us to support parents, guardians, teachers and paraprofessionals and most importantly help us, help our children and put a smile on their face!

Sincerely,

President, Brenda Calderone



## Committee News

### **Membership**

#### **Joyce Neafsey, Chairperson**

We currently have a total of 145 members, and hope to increase our membership to top last years total of 211. All parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and guardians are invited to join our group. Membership is only \$6.00. Help us get the word out, "**MEMBERS WANTED!**"

### **Ways & Means**

#### **Annette Arthur, Chairperson**

We are pleased to announce that as of last summer we have opened an account at a local consignment shop. We are gladly accepting donations of children's clothing and toys (indoor and outdoor) to

be offered for sale at the shop. All money received from sales will enable SEPTA to continue to fund events for our special education children and their families. Please note that clothing should be in good condition (clean and free of stains/tears) and toys in working condition with no missing pieces or broken parts.

Plans for our gift auction are coming along nicely. The gift auction is planned for Friday, March 7, 2008. Any volunteers and/or donations are always welcome.

Please contact me at (732)701-1343 or email at [psalmon@comcast.net](mailto:psalmon@comcast.net) if interested in helping with either of these fundraisers.

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## Committee News Continued:



### Programs

**Melanie McGackin, Chairperson**

#### SEPTA CHILDRENS PROGRAMS

We would like to extend our thanks to the Brick Challenger League staff for all their hard work with this years joint Halloween program. The Halloween Festival was a great success and everyone seemed to especially love the pumpkin picking hay-ride, inflatables, food, and balloon art. The smiling faces made it worth while for all!! Thanks again to everyone who volunteered their time, especially the Brick Recreation Dept, Kiddy Parties, Cheryl Schwendel "Loon E" , and all the friends and families that helped pitch in to make this event so successful. It couldn't have happened with you!!

#### ADULT PROGRAMS

SEPTA is excited to announce that we are working together with POAC (parents of Autistic Children) , The Family Support Center Of NJ, and Mrs. Annette Becklund for our first Parent Program of the year., "Date Night" presented by Annette L Becklund, MSW, LCSW on November 20th.

Any suggestions for future topics for adult programs please feel free to email me at [bricksepta@aol.com](mailto:bricksepta@aol.com), we would love to hear from you!!

### Website

**Valerie Marsden-Gray, Chairperson**

It is with great pleasure and pride that I announce that the Brick SEPTA website has been awarded the Outstanding Website Award by the New Jersey PTA. The award will be officially presented in November at a banquet in Atlantic City. The award is presented in recognition of an outstanding website that effectively communicates its mission and programs to their members and community. Please visit [www.bricksepta.org](http://www.bricksepta.org) often. It is updated quite frequently. If you have suggestions for the site, please email [bricksepta@gmail.com](mailto:bricksepta@gmail.com).

### Legislation

**Jeanette Smith, Chairperson**

The National PTA considers advocacy to be a very important asset to strengthening the education and protection of our children. As the SEPTA Legislation chair, I encourage all special education parents to become educated on issues affecting education and their children. Here is a list of our elected officials and their contact information as well as some helpful websites.

#### Senators

##### Federal

**Frank Lautenberg** (Democrat)  
One Gateway Center, 23<sup>rd</sup> Fl.  
Newark, NJ 07102  
(973) 639-8700

**Robert Menendez** (Democrat)  
One Gateway Center, 11<sup>th</sup> Fl.  
Newark, NJ 07102  
(973) 645-3030

##### State, District 10

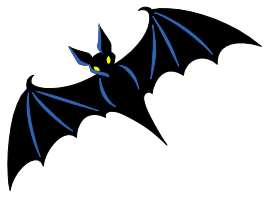
**Senator Andrew R. Ciesla** (Republican)  
852 Highway 70, Brick, 08724 (732) 840-9028  
**Assemblyman James W. Holzapfel** (Republican)  
852 Highway 70, Brick, 08724 (732) 840-9028  
**Assemblyman David W. Wolfe** (Republican)  
852 Highway 70, Brick 08724 (732) 840-9028

#### Websites

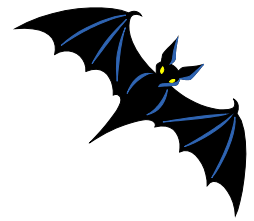
[www.njleg.state.nj.us](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us)  
New Jersey State Legislature  
[www.oceancountyclerk.com](http://www.oceancountyclerk.com)  
Ocean County Clerk  
[www.state.n.j.us/education](http://www.state.n.j.us/education)  
New Jersey Department of Education

#### Newspapers

[www.app.com](http://www.app.com) - Asbury Park Press  
[www.ocobserver.com](http://www.ocobserver.com) - Ocean County Observer



# Brick Challenger Teams Up With SEPTA for a "Spooktacular" Halloween Festival



Above, from Brick SEPTA Joyce Neafsey, Membership Chairperson & Annette Arthur, Scholarship & Ways & Means Chairperson.

Below, Spongebob Squarepants, Scooby Doo & a Power Ranger gather to entertain the children.



Above, Don Warn, Dan Santaniello & Kristeen Havanki. Don & Dan from Brick Challenger, have a special place in SEPTA's heart.



Above, Christine Rytlewski, a teen volunteer for Challenger & SEPTA. We can always count on Christine at all our events!!!



Above, Darrin, Logan & Kendal McGackin and Vincent & Vinny Muti, Hospitality & Father's Initiative Chairperson, enjoy this year's hayride.

**Don't Miss Brick Challenger's Upcoming "Christmas Party"**  
At Brick Recreation Office on December 22nd from 5PM-7PM  
Refreshments will be served and SANTA will have gifts for the children.  
Please RSVP by December 7th at 732-262-1165.