



***“GUIDE TO GIVING”***  
***Prepared by the TJ PTSA***  
***<http://leadership.tjhsst.edu/ptsa/>***  
***Revised July 2009***

**Guide to Giving to TJ**  
**Understanding the PTSA, TJ Partnership Fund and Booster Organizations**  
**Revised July 2009**

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**Introduction**

With budget cuts continuing to loom, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJ) staff and students may be relying even more in the future than they do currently on funding from the Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA), the many TJ Booster organizations, and the TJ Partnership Fund. Many TJ parents and other community members have expressed confusion about the purposes and structure of these different organizations, which separately solicit donations and volunteers from TJ families.

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. 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, letter jacket sales, 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!
- 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 building needs and landscaping
- Run a TJ prep class for underrepresented minorities
- 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>

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

The Thomas Jefferson Partnership Fund is a non-profit, volunteer-driven, charitable foundation that exists for only one reason – to help bridge TJ’s huge annual funding gap of \$750,000.

TJ may be the #1 public high school in the nation, but it can only continue to meet everyone’s great expectations through private charitable contributions from corporations, foundations, TJ parents and alumni.

TJ looks to the Partnership Fund for the acquisition of equipment -- gas chromatographs, EEG systems, centrifuges, mass spectrometers -- and other technologies, including software, chemical reagents, and lab equipment. Examples of gifts to TJ generated by the Partnership Fund include Orbital’s support for the construction of a space satellite, new technologies from Northrop Grumman, technical and engineering support from ExxonMobil, Google Earth technology, support for the annual NCSSSMST Conference and additional funds for faculty training.

The Partnership Fund generates resources for TJ in several ways:

- Gifts of cash or stock
- Donations of equipment, software, curriculum supplies
- Corporate matching gifts
- Contributions by charitable foundations.

For a number of years after its inception in 1999 the Partnership Fund was an all-volunteer effort, managed exclusively by TJ parents. However, in 2004 the Fund determined that the challenge of bridging the huge financial gap required a professional effort. Now the Fund employs an individual (Gary Bottorff) with nonprofit fundraising expertise to help identify potential donors, broker partnerships with the school, and help manage awareness of the school’s priorities.

Parent financial support is essential to TJ’s ability to maintain its reputation for educational excellence. Contributions are tax-deductible. Also, volunteers are always welcome.

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

Academic Boosters exists because Fairfax County Public Schools does not provide financial resources to TJ’s academic teams. Academic Boosters provides financial and other support to approximately 20 TJ academic teams, including: Math Team; Freshman and Senior Computer Teams; Physics Team; Biology Olympiads; Chemistry Olympiads; Chess Team; Botball; Quiz Bowl; Model UN; Future Problem Solving; Debate; Certamen (Latin); Japan Bowl; Science Bowl; Ocean Bowl; and Odyssey of the Mind.

Academic Boosters pays registration and other fees for dozens of in-school and out-of-school academic competitions. It reimburses teachers for their travel expenses to chaperone student academic teams. It pays for textbooks and other supplies needed by academic teams. And, to the extent possible, it pays other academic team expenses. Even with Academic Boosters support, TJ academic team members pay their own travel expenses, and sometimes pay registration and other required fees.

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

Anyone can join TJ Academic Boosters, including members of the community, by making a donation (by check or online with credit card). Funding comes primarily from members’ cash donations and supplemented from sales of food and merchandise. 100% of the money raised is used to support TJ’s academic teams. Recommended donation levels start at \$50 per year.

**Colonial Athletic Boosters** (<http://sports.tjhsst.edu/boosters/index.php>)

Colonial Athletic Boosters (CAB) supports TJ's athletes by providing financial and volunteer support for the many needs associated with TJ's athletic teams. CAB is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. Fairfax County Public Schools' funding of high school sports is limited primarily to salaries, utilities, and some transportation. Therefore, any comprehensive Fairfax County high school athletic program must rely on the generosity of its individual supporters.

At TJ, it takes an additional \$80,000+ annually to equip the 25 Varsity teams, 20 JV & First-Year teams and 17 different sports. Less than half of this additional money comes from gate receipts (mostly football). CAB funds also come from: membership, food concessions, merchandise sales, spring physicals, invitational track meet, and millennium courtyard bricks.

Funds raised by CAB go to uniforms and helmets, balls and nets, training supplies, recognition events and awards, event entry fees and charter transportation. In addition, the CAB funds go to the repair, replacement, and acquisition of equipment and facilities, such as weight room equipment, glass backboards, training room furniture, spirit banners and trophy cases, field renovations, and grass mowers.

CAB expects all families of athletes to support CAB at least financially, and as they can by volunteering as well. Support from the rest of the TJ community further insures that TJ continues to provide the all-around high school experience for its students.

Note: County regulations limit CAB support to Virginia High School League (VHSL) sports. Club sports, such as crew and the new boys volleyball team, 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](mailto: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 TJHSST Orchestra Boosters provide volunteer support and supplementary funds for TJ Orchestras, under the skilled leadership of Ms. Allison Bailey. This includes, but is not limited to, music, equipment & instrument purchases, scholarships for orchestra trips, recording of concerts, pre-concert dinners for musicians, as well as support for the very popular Viennese Balls.

All parents, particularly those of the new freshman class, are welcome to join and participate in our Boosters organization. Booster Meetings are typically at 7:30 p.m. on the second Tuesdays of the month at the school. The Orchestra Boosters also afford the opportunity to raise funds by the sale of Booster merchandise such as socks, towels and CD cases that directly help support the Orchestra program. The TJ Orchestra Boosters is comprised of parents, Orchestra alumni and musical friends.

**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, the Booster organization provides supplemental funding of choreographers, costumes, sound and lighting equipment as well as pre-rehearsal and pre-show snacks/dinners for cast and crew, as funds allow. 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 both the Keep In Touch (KIT) and the PTSA e-mails?**

KIT is used by Fairfax County and TJ to send news and information to the community. When you sign up for KIT, you can indicate the type of information you would like to receive. The PTSA will periodically send out email "blasts" to inform and remind members of the TJ community about important issues and events. This information is also different from the information received from the TJ support organizations.

### **5. What is a FCPS 24-7 Learning Parent View account and how does it differ from Blackboard?**

Parent View allows parents to access information about your FCPS student online just as students presently access this information through their personal Blackboard accounts. There is useful information provided about the individual student (e.g., classes) and also more general resources (e.g., college placement information). This account may be set up by going to FCPS website and accessing "24-7 Learning". It requires that you log in and set up an account and then go to your school to be verified (bring I.D. and the registration number) and then register online with the password given to you by the school.