

INSPRATIONS

Spring 2008

Illinois Chapter
National School Public Relations Association

Spring to do list:

Enter the DSA, volunteer for the board, register for NSPRA

Think Spring. It will come. When spring break is on the monthly calendar, we know warm weather can't be far behind. I know what some of you may be thinking....spring means BUSY. While spring may be the busiest time of the school year, please remember to include INSPRA in your plans.

Distinguished Service Awards

One of the chapter's biggest annual events is the Distinguished Service Awards luncheon. The Distinguished Service Awards program focuses on people in school districts who spread the good word about schools or enhance the image of education and reputation of a school district through their actions.

This program is a great opportunity to say thank you to deserving professionals and volunteers in your district. Take a few minutes to review the brochure that is arriving in the mail. The time it takes to write nominations will be well spent when you see the beaming faces as your nominees are honored at the luncheon. This year we're making it even easier to nominate by requesting all submissions be sent electronically. Just type, review, and send! For complete details, refer to the brochure.

Get involved

Spring is also the time of year when a new slate of INSPRA Board of Directors is elected. Please consider becoming involved in this organization. It can only remain strong with the participation of its members. The key component of participating on the board is attending the monthly meetings. Each board member chips in by participating in one other aspect of programming or services. For more information, a detailed list of tasks by position is now posted on the website, www.inspra.org/membership/index.html, or contact me (see below) or President-Elect Jennifer Tempest Bova at jbova@dist50.net.

NSPRA bound

I was recently asked to write a letter to a superintendent on the value of the national conference. While I am proud of the programs we offer our state chapter members, the national conference offers breadth and depth of seminars, presenters and ideas that is unmatched. Learn new tactics, develop strategic planning and make new friends. By being submersed with 900 other people who do what you do, a casual conversation between sessions may end up being as valuable as a workshop. It's an opportunity to network, commiserate, refresh and renew. By the way, we know how to have fun, too!

Terry Ryan
INSPRA President
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NSPRA announces new online resource

Last week, the Learning First Alliance, a partnership of 18 leading education associations including NSPRA, launched a new web site: www.publicschoolinsights.org.

Check out the first issue of the new LFA e-newsletter, <http://www.nspr.org/PublicSchoolInsights.pdf>, then sign-up at the new site to become part of the LFA network today. The site offers an avenue for NSPRA members and others to share the good news about public education. Participate by spreading the word about the web site and join the conversation today!

INSPRA Officers

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School District U-46

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Christine Glatz
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Who will be the next PR professional of the year?

In 2007, the INSPRA board of directors decided to create a new category in the Distinguished Service Awards to honor our own. The Public Relations Professional of the Year award was created because we know ourselves. As a group we tend to want to shine the spotlight on others; to make our superintendents look good, to applaud the dedication of teachers, and to recognize the extra efforts of our districts' volunteers.

As a board we also recognized that a lot of good work out there goes unnoticed. It isn't always just a particular campaign, which can be recognized in our golden achievement category of the fall publications contest, but the work as a whole, the influence of an individual that merits recognition. This award will be presented to an individual who exemplifies the professional practices of school public relations and deserves recognition for outstanding work on behalf of a school district and/or INSPRA/NSPRA.

This category, as are all DSA categories, is not self-nominating. This category is judged by the superintendents to avoid any conflicts of interest.

Stacy Holland of Lincoln-Way High School District 210 was the first recipient of the award last year. We hope to continue this recognition for years to come.

Moving ahead to serve you better

The Web Enhancement Committee has been on the move to make INSPRA's web site an effective resource for our members. We have hired a company called Delicious Mission to help make our vision a reality.

The committee recently reviewed a mockup of our new website, and we are making final revisions. The biggest change will be the addition of a member's only section. One feature in this area will include a bulletin board or live post forum to allow members to reply to "Members Need Help" requests so all can benefit from the information. It will also be a place to post sample letters, crisis information, sample press releases and the like. Members will be assigned a user name and password to access this part of the site.

In addition, we are adding a live RSS news feed that brings school-related news to the front page of our website. To pay membership dues and make registering for events and programs easier, we are adding an online payment system. Finally, a content management system would allow our volunteer board members a quick and easy way to post information, so our site can offer members the most up-to-date information in a timely manner.

We plan to launch the site by the end of April, if not before. Once launched, current members will be emailed a user name and password to access the member's only section. We are excited to unveil what we hope will become one of your most valuable resources, available 24/7!

Upcoming INSPRA activities

- Program Change! Due to the commitments of our featured speakers, the original Tips and Tactics topics schedule has changed. March 14 is "Publication Design and Graphics" and April 18 is "Internal Communication."
- New board is seated April 18.
- Annual Blue Ribbon and membership survey will be held in April. Watch your e-mail for an invitation to participate.
- Communications contest brochures will be in the mail in April. Entries will be due in June and the annual event will be held in September.
- Distinguished Service Awards Luncheon is May 16.