

▶ **Market a Professional Image**

The new year is a time for new beginnings. It can be a time for setting a new tone for you and your classroom. Think of it as a clean slate. Your behavior and your interaction with the entire school community can define your image and impact the image of the profession.

Below are some time-tested positive image-makers. Sift through your own personality and knowledge about the community to choose strategies that will work for you.

- Let parents know that you believe that a working partnership with them is best for students. Communicate this in a letter, e-mail, newsletter, etc.
- Send messages home about what parents can do to support learning. Use letters, notes, e-mail messages, newsletters or a Web page.
 1. Mail a postcard home once a week to a parent with a positive note.
 2. Call at least one parent a week to share a positive comment about their child.
 3. Invite parents to join the class and help with school projects.
- Invent ways to give students practical experience with writing. They can write to community leaders about a classroom project that ties into a community organization or activity. They can write letters suggesting a way to deal with a community issue.
- Carry your work around with you. You can grade papers or plan lessons while waiting at the doctor, the laundromat or at the car repair shop. This not only helps you get your work done but it also sends the message that you care about what you do.
- Send home a list of good books for parents to consider buying. Find out when student birthdays are. At the beginning of each month, send a note home to parents suggesting books that can be purchased as birthday presents. This works at holiday time too.
- Send letters of welcome to new students. You could put together a survival kit for new students who transfer to your class in the middle of the year. Include class rules, homework expectations, a list of what has already been covered in your class and what topics will be covered the rest of the year.
- Surround yourself with personal items (within reason). Family pictures, plants and books reflect who you are as an individual, not just a teacher.
- Do business in the community in which you teach. Frequent businesses that your students' families own.
- Design a business card that you can give to businesses and parents. Use the same design on stationery so that when you send notes to parents they can identify you as their child's teacher.
- MEA Communications has developed a training called "Toot Your Own Horn" which takes you step by step creating a marketing booklet to be used at the start of the school year, at open houses or parent conferences. Contact your President or UniServ Director to access this training.