

# Diamond Gems

Volume 11, Issue 2

Diamond Elementary School  
4 Marquis Drive  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

PTA Website: [despta.org](https://despta.org)



Dear Parents, Teachers, and Students,

As late summer weather begins to turn to fall and we head into our second month of distance learning, I hope that this transition is becoming a bit smoother for you and your families. It's definitely not easy, but hopefully being prudent now will enable us all to get back to in-person school in a way that is safe and positive for all students, teachers, and families.

We hope you will join us for our first general membership meeting on Tuesday, October 6th at 6:30. We will hold the meeting via Zoom (see below for meeting info) and will have a special presentation by Mr. Walder on the new Benchmark Reading curriculum.

Becoming a member of the PTA is crucial both to our fundraising as well as to our ability to influence decision-making at the local and regional level and is more important this year than ever before. You'll find more information in this issue of Gems or go to [despta.org](https://despta.org) to join online.

We are still recruiting a few key committee positions, including a Readathon chair and Restaurant Night and Staff Appreciation co-chairs. Please let me know if you are interested or have any questions about these positions.

Thanks for your continued participation in and support for the PTA. Even - and especially - in these most challenging of times, it's important to maintain these community connections.

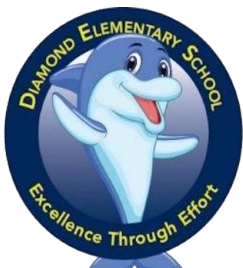
Enjoy the fall!  
Alyson Kozma - PTA President



## Diamond PTA Meeting - Oct 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm

The Diamond PTA works hard every day on behalf of the students, staff and overall Diamond community. In these challenging times, we are constantly looking for innovative ways to engage regularly with families.

We invite you to join the Diamond PTA for its first meeting of the school year on **October 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm**. In addition to our regular business, we will have a special presentation by Mr. Walder on the new Benchmark reading curriculum.



Join us via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81704963847?pwd=eWlYWDBYTTloVU1QOXyYyXlrcElLdz09>

Meeting ID: 817 0496 3847

Passcode: 211759

You can also **join by phone at 301-715-8592** using the Meeting ID and Passcode above.

## DES PTA Links

- [Diamond ES PTA Website](#)
- [DES PTA Spirit Store](#)
- [DES PTA Membership Form](#)
- [DES PTA - Get Involved!](#)

## DES School Links

- [School Supply List](#)
- [MCPS Classroom/Canvas](#)
- [ParentVue](#)
- [StudentVue](#)

## MCPS Links

- [Meal Service Program](#)
- [Zoom Tips & Best Practices](#)
- [MCPS Digital Backpack](#)

## Calendar of Events

### October

- 2 - Early Release (11:30)
- 6 - PTA Meeting (6:30)
- 14 - Restaurant Night
- 15 - Black & Brown Coalition
- 21 - NAACP Parent Council

### November

- 3 - No School (Election Day)
- 5-18 - Virtual Book Fair
- 9 - No School (Prof Day)
- 11-12 - Early Release (11:30)
- 12 - NAACP Parent Council
- 25 - Early Release (11:30)
- 26-27 - No School (Thanksgiving)

### December

- 16 - NAACP Parent Council
- 24-31 - No School (Winter Break)



### Mae H

**Teacher & Grade:** Mrs. Lindsay - Kindergarten

**What's your Superhero name and what powers do you have?** My name is Light Hero and I have the power to turn all the lights on at once.

**What do you want to be when you grow up?** I want to be a scientist of plants. A botanist!

**What makes your friends so awesome?** They play with me and are super nice. They make me smile and happy.

**Tell us one cool, funny or weird thing about you.** I'm a chatterbox and I was born in California and then came to Maryland.

### Mrs. Salabie

New to  
Diamond!

**What do you do here at Diamond and how long have you been at our school?**

I am a third grade teacher and this is my first year at Diamond. I'm so happy to be here.

**If you could be an animal, what would you be? Why?** I think I would be a dove. They work in teams and area associated with peace.

**What is your dream vacation?** I would love to go back to Sicily. I really enjoyed the beaches, the architecture, food and atmosphere.

**Where did you grow up? Which elementary school did you attend?** I grew up in a very small town in PA, about 45 minutes outside of Pittsburgh. I attended Blacklick Valley Elementary School.

**How would you change the world?** I hope to change the world by the strong relationships I build with people and being positive. I like to find the good in all situations and show others that it is all about perspective. I love to be the person that makes others smile. 😊



## A message from the DESPTA Special Needs Committee

Are you the parent, guardian or teacher of a student with special needs? Check out the [Special Needs Representative](#) page on the DESPTA website for special education resources and a [calendar of upcoming events](#) in the area. If you have additional resources or events, please let us know so we can update our page.

See below for some of the informative events taking place this month.

### The Impact & Experience of Online Instruction: Q&A with Sara Wayland, Ph.D. and Two Students on the Autism Spectrum

**Saturday, October 10 from 11am – 12:30pm**



Join the Partnership for Extraordinary Minds (xMinds) for an engaging discussion with students on the spectrum. Learn what they've discovered about online instructions – the good and the bad! Extraordinary speaker **Sara Wayland, Ph.D.** will moderate the discussion and add her own expertise as a parent coach and research psychologist.

[Registration for the free online event](#) is required. More information is available on the registration page. To ensure your questions are answered by the panel, submit them when you register by Oct 8<sup>th</sup>. For additional information about the event, contact xMinds at [info@xMinds.org](mailto:info@xMinds.org).

### Instructional Planning for School & Distance Learning for Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Inclusive Environments

**Thursday, Oct 8 at 2pm**

Your student's day may look very different this year and it is likely that the manner in which instruction is provided may need to pivot during the year. [Register for The Arc School's free webinar](#) to prepare for whatever the 2020-21 school year may bring.



### 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Innovators in Education Virtual Conference

**Sat, Oct 17 from 8:30a-5p**

- The latest on positive psychology, social cognition, motivation and mindfulness
- The science and practical strategies that you can implement at school, at home and in the community
- Connect with mental health and education thought leaders from across the US
- Professionals and families welcomed to [register for this unique event](#)



### SEAC Meeting

**Thursday, Oct 22 from 7-8pm**

SEAC is comprised of parents / guardians, MCPS staff, and representatives of Montgomery County community groups that advocate for students with special needs and serve to advocate for, and advise, the Office of Special Education.

Additional information is available on the [MCPS Office of Special Education](#) site.



Montgomery County  
Public Schools



## Hispanic Heritage Month

This month, please join us in celebrating the accomplishments of our Hispanic community!



Hispanic Heritage Week observance started under President Lyndon Johnson in 1968 and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period from **September 15 to October 15**

In 1565, Spanish explorer Pedro Menéndez de Avilés established the first European settlement in the land later to be known as the United States



- Hispanic inventors invented color tv, CAPTCHA, the modern day ballpoint pen, and oral contraceptives
- Today, more than 136,000 Hispanic soldiers serve in the US military and 60 have won the Medal of Honor, the country's highest military award
- The US Hispanic population is 59.9 million (as of July 2018), making people of Hispanic origin the nation's largest ethnic or racial minority at 18.3%

Hispanic workers are the fastest growing labor force in the United States



Jose Manuel Gallego was the first Hispanic of Mexican descent elected as a Territorial Delegate to Congress



**Cesar Chavez**  
United Farm Workers  
Founder



**Dr. Ellen Ochoa**  
1<sup>st</sup> Hispanic woman to  
leave Earth's  
atmosphere



**Sonia Sotomayor**  
1<sup>st</sup> Latina Supreme  
Court Justice in US  
history



**Jamie Escalante**  
One of the most  
famous educators in  
American history



## Diamond ES Restaurant Night – Oct 14<sup>th</sup>

You and your family deserve a break!

Join all your Diamond friends (*in a socially distant way, of course!*)  
in supporting the Diamond PTA and a local business

**Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup> 11am-8:30pm**

# GET IN THE SPIRIT!

A FUNDRAISER WITH CALIFORNIA TORTILLA

**WHEN:**  
Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup> from 11AM – 8:30PM

**WHERE:**  
[www.CaliforniaTortilla.com](http://www.CaliforniaTortilla.com)  
All orders must be placed online for in-store pickup, curbside pickup, or delivery. 25% of the group's sales will be donated to Diamond Elementary School!

**HOW:**

1. Start an online order on [CaliforniaTortilla.com](http://CaliforniaTortilla.com).
2. In the left column, find and click on the category called "Spirit Night."
3. Click on the avocado labeled "Spirit Night" and add to cart. This will ring up as a \$0 item in your order.
4. Complete the rest of your order and enjoy!



## DON'T FORGET WE CATER!

California Tortilla is happy to cover catering for your upcoming student event, graduation parties, and more! Simply call **855-CALTORT** or learn more at [CalTort.com](http://CalTort.com).





## The Diamond PTA Annual Book Fair Goes Virtual

This year's book fair will, of course, be a bit different than our traditional event. While we'll miss seeing everyone's great smiles in-person, we will still have plenty of fun!!

We are working with our partners at Scholastic to create an engaging program with a few special events. Through it all, we're finding some silver linings:

- We expect the Diamond community to have access to a much wider array of book titles because we won't be limited for space
- There should be very few books that are out of stock as we'll have access to Scholastic's warehouses
- We will be open 24/7 for a two-week period, helping busy parents shop at a time that is convenient

Mark your calendar: **November 5<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>**

Be on the look out for more details soon as we re-invent Diamond's book fair experience while encouraging the love of reading for the entire Diamond community.



### The PTA Needs YOU!

Been wanting to support our school but you're not sure how?

Think your skills aren't useful for the PTA? Think again!! We've got something for everyone!

Your Passion	Committee Match
Social causes	Diversity and Inclusion
Athletics and exercise	Dolphin Dash
Food security	Food Drive
Love of reading	Readathon
Community get-togethers	Restaurant Night
Proud to be a Dolphin	Spirit Wear
Teachers and staff rock!	Staff Appreciation
Tech savvy	Website
Parents & student fun	Pastries for Parents (21-22)
Money	VP of Fundraising

### Diamond Dolphins Spirit Gear

Show your Diamond pride while supporting the PTA. ***Our brand new Spirit Gear Store is open for business!***

We have some **new designs** to choose from, including a limited edition "face mask" logo, just for the 2020-2021 school year.

Every design is available on a wide variety of t-shirt colors, sizes, and styles. Not into t-shirts? You can also get Diamond ES tank tops, hoodies, sweatshirts, even face masks. Not into clothes? You can still get DES stickers, pins, phone cases, mugs, magnets, pillows, tote bags, and more!





## After School Activities

We have an outstanding selection of After School Programs for Fall 2020. Most of them take place VIRTUALLY! The [After School Activities](#) list is constantly being updated so please check out the Diamond ES PTA website for the most current program offerings

**IMPORTANT: Sign up directly with the program providers by clicking on the links below.**

Program Name	Program Description
<a href="#">Busy Bees</a>	Art program exploring different mediums while having fun. New theme for each session
<a href="#">Chess Club</a>	Theme of the week, student games and daily tournaments
<a href="#">Cook Kitz</a>	NEW this fall!!! An all-inclusive, educational and delicious cooking project delivery service, to have the Young Chef experience at home
<a href="#">Creative Kids Drama</a>	An innovative and dynamic literature based drama program. Explore and dramatize specially selected children's stories
<a href="#">Foreign Language</a>	A fun introduction to a new language where children learn and practice speaking with storytelling, puppets, songs, activities and games. Chinese, French and Spanish offered
<a href="#">Girls on the Run</a>	Inspiring 3-5 <sup>th</sup> grade girls to recognize their inner strength and celebrate what makes them one of a kind through running, activities and dynamic discussions
<a href="#">Hoop Education</a>	Learn, Sweat, Play is an outdoor afternoon program where kids can come out, run and play, and get a chance to socialize with other kids and coaches each day of the week
<a href="#">JumpBunch</a>	Focus on all phases of physical growth that include fine/gross motor skills, hand/eye coordination, body balance, agility, and muscle development right from home.
<a href="#">MSA Sports</a>	Social distancing skills based sports programs. Baseball, basketball, golf, soccer, street hockey and tennis offered
<a href="#">MusicStart</a>	A keyboard-based music learning system that balances fun and development of skills. Using familiar songs, it teaches all the necessary basics to get started playing music
<a href="#">Panda Programmer</a>	Online computer programming classes are a great way to learn coding remotely. Experienced teachers create an individualized curriculum for each student
<a href="#">Science &amp; Engineering</a>	Sparking curiosity in children with playful, interactive, hands-on science and engineering activities. Children learn by doing with exciting experiments and projects
<a href="#">Shining Kids Yoga</a>	Children develop strength, balance, and flexibility by learning basic yoga poses and breathing techniques. Kids will learn body awareness and gain self confidence
<a href="#">Silver Knights Chess</a>	Children learn the fundamentals of chess, develop playing strategies, and play practice matches with classmates
<a href="#">Spark Business Academy</a>	Children participate in innovative classes on financial literacy and entrepreneurship, laying the foundation for healthy financial habits early in life
<a href="#">Tippi Toes Dance Academy</a>	We incorporate our original dance music to introduce dancing or to further enhance the dance experience! Pop Stars (grades 1-3) and Hip Hop (grades 3-5) are offered



## Cash for Diamond Dolphins

Here are some of the ways you can help earn money for Diamond Elementary PTA!  
Take a look at some of the partnerships we have. Thank you for your support!



AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know! Same products, same prices, same service, and you can even use your current Amazon account. To get started, **go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select Diamond Elementary School PTA as your charitable organization.** Then, every time you shop at smile.amazon.com. Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchases back to the school.



**Box Tops for Education is going digital!**  
Download the new Box Top mobile app and scan store receipts for instant earnings. Traditional clip tops are being phased out, but are still found on some packaging. If you find a clipped Box Top, keep together and mail to the school.

**PTA - Box tops**  
**4 Marquis Dr, Gaithersburg MD 20878**



**Make a direct donation to the Diamond ES PTA!**  
Navigate to the [PayPal](https://www.paypal.com) page on the PTA website



When you shop Harris teeter brands, a percentage of your purchase is donated to the school that your VIC card is linked to. There is no limit to how much we can earn! **Link or Re-link your VIC card for 2020-2021 today! Re-linking is required every August. CODE:7261**  
Or e-mail [irene.chan.sf.331@gmail.com](mailto:irene.chan.sf.331@gmail.com) with your VIC number.



There are **codes found under the bottles caps or inside cardboard boxes of Coke products** that can be entered online for cash value. You can mail the plastic bottles caps and/or codes from cartons to school. If you prefer to enter the codes yourself, visit <https://us.coca-cola.com/give/> for more information.





## Become a PTA Member Today!

You have your virtual school space ready, you picked up the Chromebook, you *finally* have all the usernames and passwords you need-- back to school is definitely different this year! But one thing that hasn't changed is that we still need YOU to join the Diamond PTA! Our PTA is more important than ever to keep us all connected this year, when we can't come together in-person as a community.

PTA dues this year are unchanged: \$20 for a single membership, a discounted \$35 rate for a 2-member family, \$15 for grandparents or other community members, and \$10 for Diamond teachers and staff. Remember, dues go directly back to Diamond students and teachers!

### What does Diamond PTA do?

- We are brainstorming creative ways to engage the Diamond community virtually, including virtual events!
- We reimburse Diamond teachers for supplies they need to make your child's virtual learning experience great.
- We support staff appreciation to thank our amazing teachers for all their hard work.
- We advocate for Diamond and for all of our children, at the county, state, and national levels. **This includes advocacy around school boundaries and COVID decision making!**
- We connect parents, sharing information and building community and friendships (all virtually for now!)
- We are busy parents, teachers, and staff just like you who want the best for Diamond's kids!

Joining is easy on our website: [despta.org/join](https://despta.org/join). We are encouraging everyone to sign up online rather than providing paper membership forms this year. But, if you are having issues with online signup or would like a PDF form emailed to you, please contact Elizabeth Petraglia at [membership@despta.org](mailto:membership@despta.org).

Catch the wave – join the PTA TODAY!



## Diamond ES PTA Calendar 2020-2021

### October

2 – Early Release (11:30)  
6 – PTA Meeting (6:30)  
14 – Restaurant Night  
15 – Black & Brown Coalition  
21 – NAACP Parent Council

### November

3 – No School (Election Day)  
5-18 – Virtual Book Fair  
9 – No School (Prof Day)  
11-12 – Early Release (11:30)  
25 – Early Release (11:30)  
26-27 – No School (Thanksgiving)

### December

16 – NAACP Parent Council  
24-31 – No School (Winter Break)

### January

1 – No School (Winter Break)  
18 – No School (MLK Day)  
20 – NAACP Parent Council  
29 – No School (Prof Day)

# Diamond Gems

Diamond Elementary School  
4 Marquis Drive  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

PTA Website: [despta.org](https://despta.org)



Click the links to **Stay in the Know**  
and to **Connect with Us!**

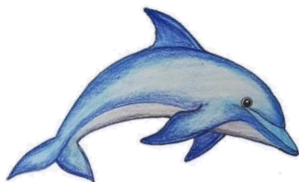


## Get Involved!

Joining the PTA is a quick and easy way to support our school. Simply fill out the online [PTA Membership Form](#).

Becoming an active member ensures that your child (or grandchild!) has lots of fun activities to participate in throughout the year. There are several ways to help:

- **Volunteer for a PTA sponsored event.** Be on the look out for volunteer requests (especially when we return to in-person activities!) on Facebook, Twitter, Remind and all our social media outlets
- **Become a Committee Chair.** Lead one-time or recurring programs. Pick one that requires a brief commitment or one that puts you in charge of a team. With so many committees, there is one that is right for YOU! Check out the full [Committee List](#). **Let us know asap if you're interested in any of these Committee Chairs:**
  - **Readathon**
  - **Restaurant Night**
  - **Staff Appreciation**
  - **Diversity and Inclusion**
- **Join the PTA Board.** Help us set the tone and trajectory for the PTA. Reach out to our current [Board Members](#) with any questions.
  - President: [Alyson Kozma](#)
  - VP - Community: [Chuck Clapper](#)
  - Treasurer: [Jennifer Gribskov Panackal](#)
  - Secretary: [Oksana Agba](#)



## PTA Meeting Info

Virtual meetings will take place each month. We will discuss PTA activities and get updates from school Administration

- Join us remotely by clicking the [Online Link](#)
- Join us by phone: 605.562.0400 (enter access code 239 3963#)
- Review notes, slides, audio recordings and related materials from previous PTA meetings: [PTA Meeting Records](#)

## Fundraising Opportunities

In addition to all of our great programs, activities and events, there are many other ways to financially support the PTA.

- **Direct Donation.** Support the PTA directly by navigating to the [PayPal](#) page on the PTA website.
- **Box Tops for Education.** Find more details [here](#).
  - Mobile: download the app and scan store receipts for instant earnings.
  - Traditional: Send box tops to school with your child.
- **Amazon Smile.** Every Amazon purchase supports the PTA at no cost to you. Simply shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and select Diamond Elementary School PTA.
- **Coca-Cola Give.** Navigate to [coke.com/give](https://coke.com/give), search for Diamond Elementary and scan the code under the bottle cap of [participating brands](#).
- **Harris Teeter's Together in Education Program.** Link your VIC card to 7261 (Diamond's school code).

Do you have an idea or feedback for the Diamond Gems Newsletter? **We'd love to hear from you!** Send your requests and comments to the [Diamond Gems Suggestion Box](#). We'll get back to you asap.



## 2020-2021 PTA Board, Committees, & Chairpersons

Board Position	Member	Email
President	Alyson Kozma	<a href="mailto:President@despta.org">President@despta.org</a>
Vice President – Community	Chuck Clapper	<a href="mailto:Community@despta.org">Community@despta.org</a>
Vice President – Fundraising	Need replacement	<a href="mailto:Fundraising@despta.org">Fundraising@despta.org</a>
Treasurer	Jennifer Gribskov Panackal	<a href="mailto:Treasurer@despta.org">Treasurer@despta.org</a>
Secretary	Oksana Agba	<a href="mailto:Secretary@despta.org">Secretary@despta.org</a>

Committee	Chair(s)
After School & Extracurricular Activities	<a href="#">Dipesha Shah</a>
Andrea Virga Winter Coat Drive	<a href="#">Shannon Phelan</a> <a href="#">Nazzi Kholdebarin</a>
Back to School Social	<a href="#">Kristy King</a>
Book Fair	<a href="#">Elsa Flores</a> <a href="#">Mílva Simões</a>
Box Tops & Giant A+	<a href="#">Irene Chan</a>
Bulletin Board	<a href="#">Elsa Flores</a> <a href="#">Luisa McFate</a>
Cluster Rep – Northwest	<a href="#">Andrea Richardson</a>
Cluster Rep – Quince Orchard	<a href="#">Bonnie Cybulko</a> <a href="#">Allison Fisher</a>
Cultural Arts	<a href="#">Ranjini Iyengar</a> <a href="#">Kristina Sracic</a> <a href="#">Lisa Weinstein</a> <a href="#">Mina Yoo</a>
Curb Appeal	<a href="#">John Rouse</a> <a href="#">Jayson Simmkoveak</a>
Diamond Gems Newsletter	<a href="#">Mílva Simões</a>
Directory	<a href="#">Pegah Borzognia</a>
Diversity & Inclusion	<a href="#">Purvi Desai</a> (Need a co-chair)
Dolphin Dash	<a href="#">Jass Gosal</a> (Need a co-chair)
Facebook Moderators	Executive Board
Family Fun Finn-Go Night	<a href="#">Nazzi Kholdebarin</a>
Family Fun Movie Night	<a href="#">Elsa Flores</a>
Family Fun Valentine Dance	<a href="#">Allison Fisher</a>
Fifth Grade Recognition	<a href="#">Allison Fisher</a> <a href="#">Asawari Ketkar</a> <a href="#">Megha Bavarva</a>
Food Drive	(Need a Chair)

Committee	Chair(s)
Fundraising – Readathon	(Need a Chair)
Girls on the Run	<a href="#">Joanna Crandall</a> <a href="#">Elizabeth Petraglia</a>
Group Moderator	<a href="#">Shannon Little</a>
Group Piano	<a href="#">Bonnie Cybulko</a>
International Night	<a href="#">Nazzi Kholdebarin</a> <a href="#">Reza Emtiaznoori</a>
MCCPTA Delegates	<a href="#">Alyson Kozma</a> <a href="#">Chuck Clapper</a>
Membership	<a href="#">Elizabeth Petraglia</a>
NAACP Parents Counsel Representative	<a href="#">Melanie Jones</a>
Nominating Committee	<a href="#">Billy Newson</a>
Pastries for Parents	(Need a Chair – 2021/22)
Principal's Coffee	<a href="#">Richard Burton</a>
Restaurant Nights	<a href="#">Bonnie Cybulko</a> (Need a co-chair)
Room Parent Coordinator	<a href="#">Sarah Burton</a>
Social Justice and Community Service	<a href="#">Erin Vaughn</a>
Special Needs Representative	<a href="#">Dave Stevenson</a> <a href="#">Maggie Stevenson</a> <a href="#">Coni Nepomuceno</a>
Spirit Wear	<a href="#">Dave Stevenson</a> <a href="#">Adynda Fara</a> (Need a co-chair)
Staff Appreciation	<a href="#">Jamila Denney</a> <a href="#">Swati Dadhich</a> <a href="#">Corrine Lake</a> (Need a co-chair)
Website	<a href="#">Dave Stevenson</a> (Need a co-chair)