



Dear Diamond Community,

I hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving and a few days off with your families. As we wrap up the first half of the year, we give thanks for the continued involvement of parents, teachers, and students in the Diamond community and appreciate your support for the PTA. Now is the perfect time to start or re-start your membership. Greater membership numbers mean a greater voice and greater influence on behalf of all students at Diamond and we hope we can count on you to use the convenient online membership options to join today.

Thanks to everyone who organized and supported our annual Book Fair. While it wasn't the in-class event of solo shopping in the Media Center, hopefully you and your children enjoyed a bit of online book shopping! Importantly, I want to thank everyone who supported our All for Books program and donated to help continue our commitment to putting a book in the hands of all Diamond students, regardless of their ability to pay. Once again, you've shown the caring and kindness of our community.

As we look ahead to the busyness of the next few weeks, I hope that we will all try to make time to appreciate the joys, both big and small, of this time of year and enjoy a much-deserved winter break.

Wishing you all the best,
Alyson Kozma
On behalf of the Diamond PTA



Human Rights Day - December 10th

Every year on December 10th, the world celebrates **Human Rights Day**, the very day when in 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. Rights that are inherent in our nature, without which we cannot live as human beings. It guarantees our rights without distinction of nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, or any other status.

COVID-19 is this year's Human Rights Day theme, which focuses on the need to Recover Better by ensuring human rights are at the heart of the recovery efforts. The global COVID-19 crisis has been fueled by deepening poverty, rising inequalities, structural and entrenched discrimination and other gaps in human rights protection. Human Rights Day is an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of human rights in rebuilding the world we want, with global solidarity, interconnectedness and shared humanity.



We encourage you to talk with your children about human rights. Click on [Globe Trottin' Kids](#) for additional information and resources.

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](#)
- [Chromebook Troubleshooting](#)

Calendar of Events

December

- 1 – PTA Budget Vote
- 3 – Restaurant Night
- 16 – NAACP Parent Council
- 24-31 – No School (Winter Break)

January

- 1 – No School (New Year's Day)
- 12 – PTA Meeting
- 18 – No School (MLK Day)
- 29 – No School (Prof Day)

February

- 12 – No School (Prof Day)
- 15 – No School (Presidents Day)
- 17 – NAACP Parent Council





Tiago M

Teacher & Grade: Mrs. Salabie – 3rd Grade

What's your Superhero name and what powers do you have? Super Goalie and my powers are ball kick, boomerang, glove attack and cage.

What do you want to be when you grow up? A parkour master or a professional hockey player.

What makes your friends so awesome? The thing that makes my friends so awesome is that they are goofy but when it comes to school they are good at it. They are also athletic, joyful and in the moment.

Who is your role model? My role model is my dad. He pushes me to do everything, especially challenges, and he makes me fearless.

How would you change the world? I'd make cars less expensive and I'd make machines that can do amazing things to improve technology

Ms. Ruth

What do you do here at Diamond and how long have you been at our school? I'm the Assistant Principal, but I like to think of myself as a "teacher on special assignment. 😊 This is my 3rd year at Diamond, but I started in MCPS way back in 1996 as a 3rd Grade teacher in Silver Spring!

If you could be an animal, what would you be? Why? I'd be a Zebra because they are interesting and amazingly, beautiful animals! I actually got to pet a wild zebra when I lived in South Africa!

What is your dream vacation? I've traveled to several countries in Africa and Europe, so my next vacation will be to ASIA! I look forward to experiencing the countries and cultures of India and China!

Would you rather be a master at drawing or be an amazing singer? Why? I would rather be an amazing singer because I have seen the power of music, song and dance to unite people in celebration and happiness together!

How would you change the world? I want there to be more peace, harmony and balance so I'm working to recognize, respect and celebrate both the Black and the White of my Zebra Stripes!!



Diamond PTA Cultural Arts

We are disappointed that we have not been able to hold school-wide assemblies like we have in the past. We took a break from planning events this fall to give students a chance to develop an online learning routine with their teachers. Rest assured that the Cultural Arts Committee is in the process of planning for the second half of the school year!

In the meantime, below you can find links to just a few of the many online musical events geared towards students. We hope that you will take the opportunity to sit together as a family and check out some of these wonderful events. Thank you to Diamond's own Dr. Dillion and Mr. Franklin for your suggestions! The Cultural Arts Committee is always looking for virtual events to showcase in the Gems newsletter, if you have ideas please email Kristina (ksracic@gmail.com).



Virtual Ensemble Initiative provides music for flexible ensembles (so it could be "treble clef and bass clef instruments" rather than "violin and cello duet")



2020 American Holiday Festival: virtual events each Friday from Nov 27 through Dec 18 celebrating musical holiday traditions from the US and from around the world! *The US Army Band never disappoints!*



Lunch and Learn series
by the Peabody Institute



Baltimore Symphony Orchestra
Mid-Week Concert Series



National Symphony Orchestra's Reach for the Moon – Young People's Concert is a tribute to the space program inspired by JFK's challenge to land on the moon



River City Brass about beginning brass and **Students Stuck at Home Series** for quirky instrumental music lesson videos. *YouTube has something for everyone!*

2020-201 Concert Season, conducted by Maestro Piotr Gajewski, will be streamed at **no cost** from the stage of The Music Center at Strathmore. Programs feature a mix of classical masters and contemporary composers



Virtual Philadelphia Orchestra: Activities for Families and Kids. *Includes worksheets and musical guides for students!*



Diamond ES Restaurant DAY: MOD Pizza in the Kentlands December 3rd from 10:30am – 9pm

Simple Menu! Endless Options!!

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

Individual, artisan-style pizzas, salads and more. Start with the size, then build from there – sauces, cheese, dressing, meat, veggies. With over 30 toppings, it's easy to make your perfect pizza!

Diamond Elementary Restaurant Day

THURSDAY NIGHT



December 3, 2020

Mention the
Diamond Elementary Fundraiser
while ordering in-store
or over the phone.
Use the code "***GR165658D***"
when ordering online*.

Our PTA will receive
20% of proceeds!



IMPORTANT:

*DoorDash and UberEats
orders will not be
credited to our PTA.

For online orders,
navigate to the official
site: [Mod Pizza](https://www.modpizza.com)



December is for MEMBERS (that's you!)

Nothing about this year is normal, and that includes PTA membership! At this point in the year we usually have about 250 members...this year, we're down to 72 ☹️ This negatively impacts the PTA budget, and also Diamond PTA's advocacy for our school – a PTA with less than a hundred members just doesn't have the same impact as a PTA that is 250+ members strong. Remember that PTA dues are annual. If you paid last year, that does **not** carry over to this year.

If you have paid your membership dues for 2020-21 already, a huge **THANK YOU!!** If you haven't yet, not to worry, there's still time! Join today and pay online at despta.org/join.

MEMBER

As a celebration to our members, we are **giving away two \$20 Amazon gift cards** at the end of this month! One gift card will go to a non-staff PTA member, and one gift card will be especially for Diamond staff and teacher PTA members. All PTA members with **paid** 2020-21 dues before noon on 12/23 will be included in the drawings. Don't miss out – join the PTA **today!**

Questions? Not sure if you're paid for this year? Email Elizabeth Petraglia (membership@despta.org)

Weekly WOW Wednesdays



Snow doubt
about it,
you're COOL!

Staff Appreciation kicked off **WOW Wednesdays** in November as a way for students and families to express their gratitude to DES staff. Thank you for all the *unbe-LEAF-able* creative shout-outs so far!

We encourage everyone to post a shout-out for a staff member **every Wednesday on the DES PTA Facebook page**. Each month we will select one of the nominated staff members to win a prize. **Let It Snow with winter-themed December shout-outs!**

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!





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.

Coffee and Conversations

The Parents' Place of Maryland hosts a recurring series that covers a wide range of topics. It is an online safe place to share ideas, frustrations, get resources and make friends. Check out some of their featured programs and register in advance for those you'd like to join:

Tuesdays at 2pm: [Children Ages Birth – 2nd Grade](#)

Wednesdays at 10am: [Parents of Children Having Behavioral Challenges](#)

Wednesdays at 2pm: [Parents with Children with Complex Medical Needs](#)

Thursdays at 2pm: [Café y Conversaciones](#)



FREE Yoga Classes Online

**Each Saturday
from 3:30-4:30pm**

Enjoy the Howard County Autism Society's weekly FREE yoga classes with instructors from the Yoga Center of Columbia. Each class will open 10 minutes early for participants to visit with one another.

A one-time pre-registration is required. Video conference login and password will be emailed prior to each class.

[Yoga Connections one-time registration page](#)

SEAC Meeting

December 14 from 7-9pm

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is comprised of parents/guardians, MCPS staff, and representatives of MoCo community groups that advocate for students with special needs and serve to advocate for, and advise, the Office of Special Education.

- Connect with other parents / guardians of students with special needs
- Dialogue with special education administrators
- Learn about topics of interest

[Login detail is available on the SEAC site](#)

December Parent Virtual Workshop

December 15 from 7-8pm

This workshop will provide practical strategies and techniques that can enhance comprehension in reading and listening. Strategies will help to strengthen students' ability to predict, summarize, and recall information of what they read or hear with greater accuracy. Modifications and strategies for parents to facilitate expressive communication will also be discussed. RSVP by Dec 11 to receive the Zoom link:

ktsworkshops@ttlc.org



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!

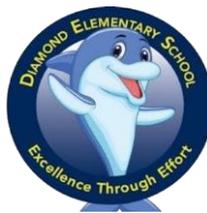


AmazonSmile is the same Amazon you know! Same products, same prices, same service, and you can even use your current Amazon account. To get started, **go to smile.amazon.com and select Diamond Elementary School PTA as your charitable organization.** Then, every time you shop at smile.amazon.com. Amazon 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 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. 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.

Catch the wave – join the PTA TODAY!



Diamond ES PTA Calendar 2020-2021

December	January	February	March
<p>1 – PTA Budget Vote (6p) 3 – Restaurant Night 16 – NAACP Parent Council 24-31 – No School (Winter Break)</p>	<p>1 – No School (Winter Break) 12 – PTA Meeting (6:30p) 18 – No School (MLK Day) 20 – NAACP Parent Council 29 – No School (Prof Day)</p>	<p>12 – No School (Prof Day) 15 – No School (Presidents Day) 17 – NAACP Parent Council</p>	<p>12 – Early Release (11:30a) 17 – NAACP Parent Council 29-31 – No School (Spring Break)</p>

Diamond Gems

Diamond Elementary School
4 Marquis Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

PTA Website: despta.org



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

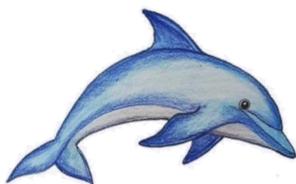


Get Involved!

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**
 - **Diversity and Inclusion**
 - **Website**
- **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 every other 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](#)



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
Proud to be a Dolphin	Spirit Wear
Tech savvy	Website
Parents & student fun	Pastries for Parents (21-22)
Money	VP of Fundraising

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	President@despta.org
Vice President – Community	Chuck Clapper	Community@despta.org
Vice President – Fundraising	Need replacement	Fundraising@despta.org
Treasurer	Jennifer Gribskov Panackal	Treasurer@despta.org
Secretary	Oksana Agba	Secretary@despta.org

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

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