

Diamond Gems

Volume 11, Issue 5

Diamond Elementary School
4 Marquis Drive
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

PTA Website: despta.org



Dear Diamond Community,

Happy New Year! We hope that everyone enjoyed a fun and restful winter break.

As we welcome everyone back to the second half of the school year, we'd like to again remind families and staff that it's not too late to join the PTA. We rely on your membership to support our programming and advocacy and encourage you to join today at <https://despta.org/>.

We hope you will join us for our next PTA Meeting on January 12th at 6:30pm. Please see the Zoom information below.

On behalf of the PTA Executive Committee,
Alyson Kozma, PTA President

PTA Meeting Zoom Instructions:

- Navigate to the [PTA website Log In page](#)
- Click on the "Log In With Google" button
- Log in with an MCPS student or staff username and password. Any account ending in @mcpsmd.net or @mcpsmd.org will work
- Navigate to the [PTA Meetings page](#) for the Zoom link



MLK Day of Service – January 18th

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lived a life in service of others. For the last 26 years, we have celebrated the Civil Rights leader's life and legacy by creating a **national day of service**. MLK Day (observed on the third Monday in January) is the only federal holiday that encourages all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities – "a day on, not a day off".

Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'
~Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

This year more than ever, there are great opportunities to help your favorite causes. In fact, Montgomery County has extended the special event to include an **ENTIRE WEEK!** We encourage you to talk with your children about ways you can support organizations serving those in need.

Never volunteered before? Don't worry. Take 2 simple steps:

1. Sign up with a local charity [HERE](#) (click on the View All Opportunities link)
2. Show up! You'll find fellow volunteers that will welcome you (and your child!) warmly and will show you what to do.

MLK WEEK of Service 2021
January 16-24

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

January

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

February

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

March

- 12 – Early Release (11am)
- 17 – NAACP Parent Council
- 29-31 – No School (Spring Break)





Andrew R

Teacher & Grade: Mrs. Trego – 5th Grade

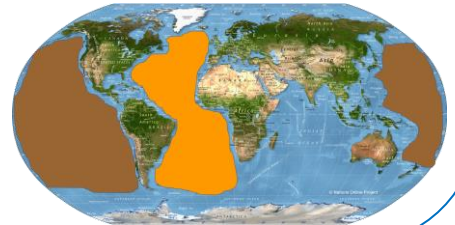
What's your Superhero name and what powers do you have? Glassman! I can turn invisible at will.

What do you want to be when you grow up? I'd like to be a Rover Engineer or I'd like to be the Owner of my own restaurant.

What makes your friends so awesome? My friends are so awesome because they give me support and are very helpful.

Who is your role model? My teachers are my role models.

How would you change the world? I'd make the Pacific Ocean chocolate milk and the Atlantic Ocean nacho cheese!



Mrs. Davis

What do you do here at Diamond and how long have you been at our school? I'm a Special Education Paraeducator. I've been at Diamond for 17+ years. I started as a lunch aide and have been working in the Asperger's program for the last 3 years, first in 5th grade and currently in 1st/2nd grades. All 3 of my children (now 25, 22 and 20) attended Diamond. In fact, we bought our house here because Diamond is the BEST elementary school in MoCo!

If you could be an animal, what would you be? Why? I'd be my cat, Hotrod. He has a great life! My son found him at college a few years ago. He loves to sit in the front window and watch everyone walk by. When in-person school starts, he'll watch all the wonderful Diamond students go by the house!

What is your dream vacation? I'd go to Disney again! I would LOVE to take my adult children to ALL the parks with no limitations and experience the magic with them all over again as adults.

Would you rather get up early or stay up late? Why? Early! The early bird gets the first worm!

How would you change the world? I would make sure EVERYONE gets along! Life is way too short. We all need to enjoy each day as it comes!!



The end of December provides students, teachers and staff with some time to recharge and reconnect with family. We hope that your time away has been happy, healthy and safe.

Now that we're back, it is time to focus on doing our best every day as we work through the remainder of our school year. Over the course of the next few months, MCPS will be making decisions about if, when and how we can return to in-person learning. PTA leadership will do its best to quickly share any pertinent information we receive from MCPS or Diamond.

Weekly WOW Wednesdays



Brighter Days
ahead in
2021!

**Spread smiles with sun-filled
shout-outs for our DES Staff!**

Students and staff alike have loved our new **WOW Wednesdays**. Let's keep the momentum going in January!

Submit your *sun*-sational posts every Wednesday on the [DES PTA Facebook page](#). Each month we will select one of the nominated staff members to win a prize.

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!





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!

We start the second half of the year with routines we've established and a great hope that we'll be back to school for in-person instruction as soon as it is safe to do so. As a reminder, we still need YOU to join the Diamond PTA!

Our PTA is more important than ever to keep us all connected this year, as we continue to navigate in a world where virtual engagement is the only way for our community to come together.

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

January

1 – No School (Winter Break)
12 – PTA Meeting (6:30pm)
18 – No School (MLK Day)
20 – NAACP Parent Council
29 – No School (Prof Day)

February

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

March

12 – Early Release (11:30a)
17 – NAACP Parent Council
29-31 – No School (Spring Break)

April

1-5 – No School (Spring Break)
16 – No School (Prof Day)
21 – NAACP Parent Council

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

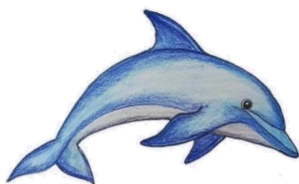


Get Involved!

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](#) (sign in first!)
- 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)