



DRAGON NEWS

A newsletter from Principal Collins and the DES PTA

October 2016

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

DAMASCUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ADDRESS:
10201 Bethesda Church Road
Damascus, MD 20872

PHONE:
301-253-7080

FAX:
301-253-8717

SCHOOL WEBSITE:
[http://
montgomeryschoolsmd.org/
schools/damascuses/](http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/damascuses/)

PRINCIPAL:
Bill Collins

EMAIL:
[William_J_Collins
@mcpmsd.org](mailto:William_J_Collins@mcpmsd.org)

TWITTER:
[@collinswj](https://twitter.com/collinswj)

PTA WEBSITE:
www.damascuspta.com

PTA EMAIL:
desptamail@gmail.com

Hello DES families! Our students and staff are off to a great start to the 2016-2017 school year. We have been working hard to establish classroom routines and determining student reading and math levels in order to best meet their needs. We have many exciting events in store for our students and families. Our first PTA meeting of the school year is Tuesday, October 4 at 7 p.m. in the Media Center. We will also be offering a volunteer training from 6:30-7:00 p.m. for any interested parents. If you plan to volunteer or chaperone a fieldtrip this school year, I highly encourage you to join us.

Parents should have received interim reports to share mid-marking period progress for your child. Parent/teacher conferences will be held on November 11 and 12. If you didn't already schedule an appointment with your child's teacher at Back-to-School Night, please do so soon to secure your conference.

I also wanted to thank our PTA and volunteers for organizing a wonderful family movie night. Even though the weather did not cooperate and we were forced to move the event indoors, many of our families came out to join in the fun!

In addition to our spirit days that will be planned throughout the year, each Wednesday will be DES Spirit Day and every Friday will be Fan Friday. On DES Spirit Days, students and staff are encouraged to wear their favorite DES spirit wear and on Fan Friday's encouraged to wear their favorite team jerseys. Students and staff all really enjoy this and it will help to build a strong DES culture.

We will continue to publish a joint monthly Principal/PTA newsletter in an attempt to streamline our communications to parents. This is going to be a wonderful school year and I am looking forward to serving you, your children and our school community.

*~ Bill Collins
Principal*



Damascus High School Event Reminder

The Damascus High School PTSA welcomes the Capitol Steps on **Sunday, October 9 at 7 p.m.** in the DHS auditorium as they once again dig into the political headlines of the day to create song parodies and skits which convey a special brand of bipartisan, satirical humor. You don't want to miss this event, especially since it is an election year.

Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$40 at the door. Buy tickets now at bit.ly/29Pc1Fj and choose your own seats! See them here at home, for less than it costs in DC and with no metro or parking expenses.

Proceeds will benefit DHS PTSA programs. So, please join us for a fun-filled evening while doing something great for our community.

Pastries with Parents

Come have a cup of coffee and pastry with your DES student on **Monday, October 10, from 8:45 to 9:30 a.m.** Afterward, you can join your child in the classroom for **Parent Observation Day**. The children love showing you how they spend their day at school.



PTA Meeting

If you would like to see what your PTA is all about, please join us on **Tuesday, October 4 at 7 p.m.** in the DES Media Center for our first general PTA meeting of the school year. Everyone is always welcome and free child care will be provided. If you have not yet taken the Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect course online, we will offer it at 6:30 p.m. before the meeting. Everyone needs to take this course before volunteering in the school.

You Can Still Join The PTA

Forgot to send in your PTA membership form? No problem. You will find a PTA membership form attached to this newsletter. You can send forms to the school in your child's backpack. Reminder: only those who join the PTA will receive a DES PTA directory. Don't miss out!

PTA Student Directory

The PTA student directory is currently being compiled. It will be printed and distributed with PTA cards soon. The directory is only available to PTA members, so if you haven't joined the PTA yet and would like a copy, please go to the DES website at www.damascuspta.com to print out a membership form to send in with your child. We only printed a limited number of extra directories so hurry to make sure to get your copy.

PTA Directory Ads Due

Thank you to all the businesses who have already placed ads in our Damascus Elementary School PTA directory. If you would still like to place an ad in our directory, you must turn in your application by **Friday, October 21**.

If you have any questions or need an application, please contact Melissa North at northlandscaping@msn.com or 301-642-1507.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Although we still have the occasional 80 degree day, summer is officially over and the school year is well on its way. I think my three kids are actually glad to have the routine and set bed time. I know I am!

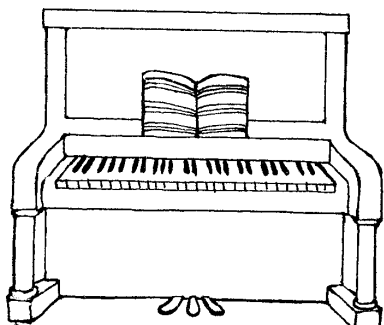
Your Damascus Elementary PTA has definitely hit the ground running! Our fall is packed with a Movie Night, Fall Fun Fest at Char-Lene Farm, Pastries with Parents, and of course the Read-A-Thon. This is only the beginning. I hope to see you during some of these fun family events. Participating in our PTA events is a great way to become a part of this very welcoming school community.

Thank you to everyone who has already signed up to volunteer on a PTA committee. Volunteering through the PTA is truly the best way to take a more active role in your child's school and education. Please feel free to contact me anytime at northlandscaping@msn.com with any questions or concerns. I appreciate your feedback on how we can make DES the best school it can be.

*~Melissa North
DES PTA President*

Group Piano

Group Piano has begun its 2016-2017 student classes. Mrs. Laing is teaching approximately 15 students this year from beginner to fourth year students. Classes began on Tuesday, September 27 and will meet for 29 weeks. Group Piano has been taught in Montgomery County for more than 50 years and is sponsored by the DES PTA. The goal of group piano is to provide the best instruction at the lowest possible cost. Mrs. Laing has been teaching group piano for over 40 years. She is very excited about teaching the new students and returning students this year.



***You make a living by what
you get. You make a life by
what you give.***
~Winston Churchill

Damascus Elementary School PTA Board	
President	Melissa North
VP Finance	Brittany Marshall
VP Communications	Laurie Murtaugh
Treasurer	Lisa Willis
Recording Secretary	Beth Walter
Corresponding Secretary	Tara Owens
PTA Website	www.damascuspta.com
PTA Email	desptamail@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

October 4: Group Piano

Interims Go Home (Grades 1-5)

Volunteer Training, 6:30 p.m.

PTA Meeting, 7 p.m.

October 5: DES Spirit Day

October 7: DES Fan Friday

Parents Helping Teachers, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

October 10: Pastries with Parents, 8:45-9:30 a.m.

Open House, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Mad Science

October 11: Group Piano

Fall Fun Fest Char-Lene Farm (see attached)

October 12: No School for Students and Teachers

October 13: Read-A-Thon Kick Off

October 14: DES Fan Friday

October 17-28: Read A Thon

October 18: Group Piano

October 19: DES Spirit Day

October 21: DES Fan Friday

Parents Helping Teachers, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

October 24: Mad Science

October 25: Group Piano

October 26: DES Spirit Day

Kindergarten Field Trip to Butler's Orchard

October 28: DES Fan Friday

Parents Helping Teachers, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Student Parade, 2:30-2:45 p.m.

Halloween Parties, 2:45-3:30 p.m.

November 1: Group Piano

PTA Meeting, 7 p.m.

November 2: 5th Grade In-house Bar-T Field Trip

DES Spirit Day

November 4: DES Fan Friday

Parents Helping Teachers, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Family Movie Night, 6:00-9:00 p.m.



STAY CONNECTED

Are you receiving emails from the PTA? If not, email Laurie Murtaugh at **laurie.murtaugh@verizon.net** to be added to the list to stay up-to-date about upcoming events and activities. Did you know your Damascus Elementary School PTA has a Facebook page? "Like" us on Facebook to stay up-to-date on PTA news and activities.



<https://www.facebook.com/damascusPTA>

VOLUNTEER NEWS

Thanks to Our Volunteers

Welcome back! I wanted to begin by thanking our volunteers who helped our school year start so well. We appreciate all of your hard work! Volunteers support our school in so many ways. Please remember that if you do volunteer in the classroom, on a committee, at an event, or in any other way that benefits our school, let me know so it can be included in our total hours that are submitted to Montgomery County each month.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to recognize some of the people who have given time and resources during September.

Thank you to Melissa and Roberta who hosted our Back-to-School welcome before the open house!

Thank you Roberta, Maria, Gerry, Melody, and Melissa who supported the kindergarteners during the first week of school. You helped make the transition to elementary school go so much smoother!

Thank you to all who have been able to help with the Parents Helping Teachers workgroup. We have accomplished an amazing amount preparing classroom materials for our teachers.

Thank you to all those who organized and hosted dinner for the teachers on Back-to-School Night.

Thank you so much for all that you

do to make our school a special place. It makes a huge difference!

New Volunteer Training Requirement

Remember that if you are planning to help at school this year, you will need to bring a photo ID to come into the building. Additionally, Montgomery County has a new volunteer requirement that they feel will help to keep our children safe. The new online training on Recognizing Child Abuse and Neglect is designed to help volunteers be aware of signs of potential abuse and neglect and how to handle situations where you might suspect abuse and neglect. This training will be required for adults who would like to volunteer within the school building or attend field trips. The same training is required for any Montgomery County school including Baker MS and Damascus HS.

The training is available online at:

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/childabuseandneglect/

When I completed the training it took me about 25 minutes. At the end you will be provided with a confirmation number and the system will send you an email showing that you have completed the training. You will need to show this email to the office when you come to volunteer. If you have any questions or concerns including

the need for computer access, please let me know and I can work with you to help you get your confirmation of training.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Parents Helping Teachers:

Fridays, October 7 and October 21 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. This is a drop in opportunity where we help make copies and educational materials to help teachers. Please meet us in the main office if you can. No experience necessary.

Class Halloween Parties:

Friday, October 28. Information will be coming home soon from individual room parents on ways you can help make this event special.

*~Christine Derby, Chair
derbyjc@bellatlantic.net*



PARENTS HELPING TEACHERS WORKGROUP

Welcome to our workgroup that helps teachers and staff at DES with office tasks such as laminating, die cutting shapes, scissor cutting for the weekly work, copying worksheets, or anything else the teachers or staff need to accomplish their work with the students throughout the school week. Anyone is welcome, we will teach you whatever you need to know, and feel free to bring your little ones along. We meet every other Friday for two hours and will post the dates in the newsletter as well as email anyone who provides us with their contact information.

Thanks to Roberta Sherwood and Gerry Choulas for helping out on Friday, September 2, and Nina Barbosa, Anna Egan, Nora Hernandez, Karen Heyes, Dawn Schwab, Theresa Tenzer, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out on Friday, September

23. We hope to see you and many other parents/grandparents/family members throughout the next sessions.

Our next two workgroups will be meet on:

Friday, October 7, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

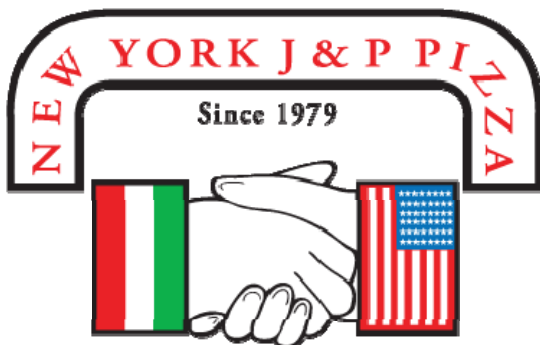
Friday, October 21, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

If your schedule permits, please come. We meet in the front office and either Christine Derby or Gerry Choulas will help you with the assigned tasks for the week.

*~ Gerry McBrinn-Choulas
Co-chair*

FAMILY SPIRIT NIGHT

Take a break from cooking dinner and support your DES PTA on **Monday, October 10 from 5-8 p.m. at J&P's Pizza**. A portion of your bill goes directly back to your school. They are conveniently located in the Weis shopping center.



STAFF APPRECIATION

The staff appreciation committee started off the school year with a catered dinner for the staff on Back-to-School Night. Maggi's Pizza & Deli supplied lasagna, baked ziti and chicken and broccoli alfredo along with salads and desserts. The staff was very appreciative of the meal so they didn't have to travel back and forth from work to home.

We are always looking for volunteers to help and come up with new ideas to show our staff just how much we love them! Our next opportunity to help is coming up in October. If you have time to stuff teacher boxes or assemble their treats please contact Melody Brown, tunes25@verizon.net, Sheila Roark, roarkjsm@aol.com or Kelly Jonas, Kelly.m.jonas@gmail.com. Our big baking raffle happens in November, so please be on the look out to sign up to bake.



Send your box tops and labels into your child's classroom. At the end of each month the class in each grade that collects the most will receive a treat!

PAINLESS FUNDRAISING

Many companies and stores offer money and credits for supplies and equipment to schools based on the purchases of customers. THAT'S RIGHT, you can help OUR SCHOOL support OUR KIDS just by doing your regular household shopping – at no additional cost to you!

Box Tops for Education

Labels for Education

Coke Rewards Points

Amazon Smile

Giant

Safeway

Harris Teeter

Find more information on the PTA website at:

www.damascuspta.com/fundraising/

READ-A-THON COMING THIS MONTH

Mr. Collins has camped on the roof and shaved his head. How can we top that? Our third annual DES Read-A-Thon kicks off on October 13. Our Read-A-Thon committee has already been busy thinking of ways to make this the best Read-A-Thon yet. Thank you to everyone who sent in ideas for incentives. They were all very creative and you will see several made the cut.

We cannot thank everyone enough for the support you have given this publically recognized program. Remember, this is our top fundraiser for the year, raising close to \$9,000 annually. This event has replaced **all** of our traditional fundraising for the PTA. The Read-A-Thon also brings our school community together in ways we never expected. The level of excitement around the school as Mr. Wainwright announces the daily minute totals is unmatched. Most of all we are promoting a love of reading in our students!

Last year we read 166,539 minutes! Do you think we can top 200,000 minutes? We look forward to your financial support and in helping your child meet his or her reading goals! Mark your calendar:

October 13

Read-A-Thon Kick Off Assembly
(during school)

October 17-28

Read-A-Thon



Open Committee and Chair Positions

Thank you to all of the DES parents who stepped up to chair a committee for the upcoming school year. There are still a few PTA committee chair positions available. This is a great way to get to know other DES families and be involved in your child's school. Don't be intimidated – most of the positions require only a small time commitment and members of the PTA board will be available to answer questions and provide support every step of the way.

The list of open committee chair positions is below. Please feel free to contact PTA President Melissa North at northlandscaping@msn.com if you have any questions about the responsibilities and time commitment. You can also share the chair position with a friend – the more the merrier!

Box Tops and Coke Rewards - Collect box tops and Coke Rewards and submit for redemption. School contests can be held to increase participation. This is a great opportunity for those who want to volunteer from home and on their own schedule.

Staff Raffle - Work with the staff to come up with fun activities and organize a raffle to raise funds for our school.

School Photographer – Attend fun DES events and take pictures to be used for the yearbook. We would like to have several people share this position in order to get pictures of every event.

PTA Audit Committee – Meet with the committee in August to review the PTA books.

Directory Advertising – Contact businesses in community to offer ad spots in our PTA directory. A list of current advertisers is available.

Thank to everyone who filled out the “Volunteer Form” from the back to school folders. Your committee chair will contact you closer to the event you expressed interest in.



Get Involved!