

# DRAGON NEWS

A newsletter from Principal Collins and the DES PTA

June 2017

## PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

### DAMASCUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ADDRESS:  
10201 Bethesda Church Road  
Damascus, MD 20872

PHONE:  
301-253-7080

FAX:  
301-253-8717

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

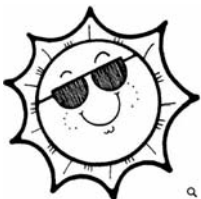
PRINCIPAL:  
Bill Collins

EMAIL:  
[William\\_J\\_Collins  
@mcpsmd.org](mailto:William_J_Collins@mcpsmd.org)

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

PTA WEBSITE:  
[www.damascuspta.com](http://www.damascuspta.com)

PTA EMAIL:  
[desptamail@gmail.com](mailto:desptamail@gmail.com)



I can't believe that the school year is quickly coming to a close! I am so proud of our students and teachers for all of their hard work this year. We have been faced with many challenges and changes this school year, but we have managed to adapt and overcome because the DES community continues to work together as a team!

As the year closes, this will be our final Principal/PTA newsletter to our parent community and I must take a moment to thank each of you for your continued support for our DES students, school, teachers and me. We cannot do this work without your support. Thank you to the PTA and countless volunteers that have supported DES this year!

As we move into the summer months, parents will receive periodic messages and updates. Please make

sure we have your email address on file so that we can ensure that you receive information and updates. We will continue to publish our parent/student packets electronically on our school website this summer. Parents will receive a postcard in the mail with important date reminders and notification of when summer packets will be posted online. Parents will also receive an additional postcard during the third week of August informing you of your child's classroom teacher. We will no longer post class assignment lists on the front doors of the school.

I hope everyone has a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing students at their first day of school on Tuesday, September 5!

*~ Bill Collins  
Principal*

## MCPS Needs Summer Career Hosts

MCPS, in collaboration with Work Source Montgomery, Inc. is hosting the Summer R.I.S.E. (Real Interesting Summer Experience) Program. This is an opportunity for rising juniors and seniors to have an up-close, hands-on perspective of professional career options that exist throughout the county within a variety of fields. It also provides the host with an opportunity to guide and connect with our future leaders. If you are interested in hosting a student, please sign up today at [www.summer-rise.com](http://www.summer-rise.com).

## An Update on the Fiscal Year 2018 Operating Budget

The Montgomery County Council approved an operating budget for Fiscal Year 2018 on May 25. The budget allocates \$2.52 billion to MCPS—a \$62.3 million increase more than the current fiscal year. This budget will allow MCPS to manage significant enrollment growth and build the foundation and structure needed to ensure that all MCPS students are able to achieve at higher levels. The approved budget includes investments in strategic priority accelerators focused on improving student performance while narrowing achievement gaps. The Board of Education will take final action on the budget on June 13. For more information, please visit:

[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/)

## Winners Announced in United We Learn Arts Contest

On May 22 MCPS announced the winners of its first ever United We Learn: Combating Hate through the Arts contest, during the Board of Education meeting.

In March, the district launched the contest with several partners, including the Faith Community Advisory Council, the Montgomery County Office of Human Rights, the Montgomery County Human Rights Commission, the Committee on Hate/Violence, the Montgomery County Council of PTAs, Inc., and Communities United Against Hate—Montgomery County. The contest had a goal of providing students with a creative, structured opportunity to explore issues of prejudice and learn about the values of respect, diversity, and civility. The contest was open to students from all grade levels.

Submissions, which were judged by level (elementary, middle, and high) and by medium, were created by groups of two students or more. The categories were: written word, performance, visual art, and video/audio.

Winning submissions are being published, printed, or broadcast through MCPS media platforms. Visit the contest website to see all winning entries:

[www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/events/unitedwelearn/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/events/unitedwelearn/)

## Summer Read and Learn Program Starts June 10

Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) invites all students to participate in this year's Summer Reading Program, which will run June 10 to September 10. This year's theme is "Build a Better World."

The program features learning activities, book lists, and fun educational events to encourage learning all summer long. Prizes (while supplies last) will also be awarded upon completion of the learning activity tracks. Starting June 10, participants can sign up for the program and keep track of the books they read or have read to them. Registration will be available online and at any MCPL branch library.



## **Una Actualización sobre el Presupuesto Operativo del Año Fiscal 2018**

El 25 de mayo, el Concejo del Condado de Montgomery (Montgomery County Council) aprobó un presupuesto operativo para el Año Fiscal 2018. El presupuesto asigna \$2.52 mil millones a MCPS—un aumento del \$62.3 millones más sobre el año fiscal en curso. Este presupuesto permitirá que MCPS gestione el crecimiento significativo de la matrícula y que construya la base y la estructura necesarias para asegurar que todos los estudiantes de MCPS puedan rendir a altos niveles. El presupuesto aprobado también incluye inversiones en aceleradores estratégicos prioritarios que se centran en mejorar el desempeño de los estudiantes y al mismo tiempo cerrar las brechas de rendimiento académico. El Consejo de Educación tomará acción definitiva sobre el presupuesto el 13 de junio. Por favor visite [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/) para más información. Abajo proveemos un anuncio.

## **Se Nombran los Ganadores del Concurso de Arte Unidos Aprendemos**

Durante la reunión del Consejo de Educación del 22 de mayo, MCPS anunció los ganadores de su primer concurso Unidos Aprendemos: Combatiendo el Odio a Través de las Artes.

En marzo, el distrito escolar lanzó un concurso con varios colaboradores incluyendo el Concejo de Asesoramiento de la Comunidad Religiosa (Faith Community Advisory Council), la Oficina de Derechos Humanos del Condado de Montgomery (Montgomery County Office of Human Rights), el Comité sobre Odio/Violencia (Committee on Hate/Violence), el Concejo de Asociaciones de Padres y Maestros del Condado de Montgomery (Montgomery County Council of PTAs), y Comuni-

dades Unidas contra el Odio—Condado de Montgomery (Communities United Against Hate—Montgomery County). El concurso tenía como objetivo proveer a los estudiantes con una oportunidad creativa y estructurada para que exploren los problemas del prejuicio y que aprendan acerca de los valores de respeto, diversidad, y civilidad. El concurso estuvo abierto a estudiantes de todos los grados escolares. Los trabajos inscritos en el concurso, que fueron juzgados por nivel (elemental, de enseñanza media, y secundario) y de acuerdo al medio utilizado, fueron creados por grupos de dos o más estudiantes. Las categorías fueron: redacción escrita, actuación/interpretación, arte visual, y video/audio.

Los trabajos ganadores se están publicando, imprimiendo, o difundiendo a través de las plataformas de medios de MCPS. Visite el sitio de Internet del concurso para ver todos los trabajos ganadores [montgomeryschoolsmd.org/events/unitedwelearn/](http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/events/unitedwelearn/).

## **Programa de Verano Leer y Aprender Comienza el 10 de Junio**

Las Bibliotecas Públicas del Condado de Montgomery (MCPL) invitan a todos los estudiantes a participar en el Programa de Lectura de Verano de este año, que tendrá lugar entre el 10 de junio y el 10 de septiembre. El tema de este año es "Construye un Mejor Mundo."

El programa destaca actividades de aprendizaje, listas de libros, y eventos educativos divertidos a fin de motivar el aprendizaje durante todo el verano. Los premios (hasta que se agoten) se otorgarán al completar la progresión de actividades de aprendizaje. A partir del 10 de junio, los participantes pueden inscribirse en el programa y llevar la cuenta de los libros que ellos hayan leídos o que alguien les haya leído. La inscripción estará disponible en línea y en cualquier sucursal de MCPL.

## UPCOMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

- June 5: Fourth Grade MAP Testing  
Volunteer Luncheon
- June 7: Career Day  
Fourth Grade Wax Museum
- June 8: Public Library Visit to DES  
Second Grade Butterfly Celebration
- June 9: Donuts with Dads, 8:45-9:30 a.m.  
Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- June 13: Fifth Grade Promotion at Damascus High School  
(arrive at 6:30 p.m. and promotion begins at 7:00 p.m.)
- June 14: Career Project Walk Through (Grades 3, 4 & 5)
- June 15: Fifth Grade End-of-Year Celebration  
Chorus Sing National Anthem at Keys Game
- June 16: Last Day of School for Students  
Early Dismissal  
End of 4th Marking Period



### REMINDER!

**The last week of school (June 12-16) will be manager's choice in the cafeteria.**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Only two weeks of school left! We really are in the home stretch. For me, the end of this school year will be bittersweet. Although I am looking forward to beach trips and summer adventures with my family, this marks the end of my two year term as PTA President. I am excited that Christine Derby will be moving into the role as your new PTA President. She is bright, energetic, and will do an amazing job. While I am stepping down as president, I will have a new role as VP of Communications. You will have another incredible board serving you next year. Beth Walter will remain as Recording Secretary and Brittany Marshall will remain as VP of Finance. Laurie Murtaugh will be serving as Corresponding Secretary. We will also be welcoming Jaime Kemp as Treasurer. Since we know how important it is to have existing board members available to assist the new team, we have created new positions called "Advisory Board Members" which only require a one year commitment. Tara Owens and Lisa Willis will be serving in these positions in order to lend their expertise to the incoming PTA board. We are already talking about ideas for next year!

I still cannot believe how much we have accomplished as a PTA over the last two years. We have continued to bring you many of the same fun and educational programs such as Pastries with Parents, Bingo Night, Reading Incentive Program, Book Fair, Movie Night and Group Piano, just to name a few. It is astonishing how successful the Read-A-Thon continues to be! The camaraderie, competition, and pride we see during the two weeks of the Read-A-Thon is unparalleled.

Over the past few years we have also created valuable partnerships with businesses, individuals, and organizations in our area to bring even more programs to our students and families. The Fall Fun Fest at Char-Lene Farm is a unique opportunity for our families to come together to enjoy a visit to a local farm without the crowds. This year, local businesses and the Damascus Library helped

provide alternatives to "plugging in" during our first "Screen Free Week." Tara Owens, owner of Jazzercise of Monrovia, helped us sweat instead of watching our screens during a "Family Fitness Night" that week. We have also partnered with several Girl Scouts in our area who have been eager to share their talents in various sports with our Dribbling Dragons Basketball Program and Drop Kicking Dragons Soccer Program. This year we added Dancing Dragons taught by parent and professional dance instructor, Dawn Garrish. Former DES parent and board member, Chrystie Kurz, passed the Dashing Dragons Running Program torch to Jaime Kemp and Jennifer Marcano. I love watching the boys and girls, kindergarten through fifth grades, running together and encouraging each other along the way. This is the true spirit of DES. We have so many great resources in our community and our school. I hope we can build on these relationships and add new ones in the future.

I cannot thank everyone enough for all the support you have given me and the PTA during the last two years. Although I am stepping down as president, I look forward to working closely with Christine Derby as she moves into her new role. As someone who never went to a PTA meeting before I agreed to serve as president, I can tell you that volunteering through our DES PTA has been incredibly rewarding. If you are looking to be more involved in your child's school experience, volunteering through the PTA is the best way to do so. We still have open committee chair positions available. Feel free to contact me for more information at [northlandscaping@msn.com](mailto:northlandscaping@msn.com). When you give of your time and talents to such an amazing school community, you get so much more in return!

Have a safe and wonderful summer!

*~Melissa North  
DES PTA President*

## VOLUNTEER NEWS

Wow, it's been an amazing year! From Fall Fest to Holiday Shop, from Book Fair to the Dragon Round-Up, there have been so many amazing volunteers along the way. Thank you for all of your help. It has truly been a memorable year.

I am now collecting May/June hours. We appreciate all of your time and effort. DES is required to submit volunteer hours to the Montgomery County's central office each month. If you volunteer in the classroom, on a committee, at an event, or in any other way that benefits our school, please let me know (Christine at [derbyjc@bellatlantic.net](mailto:derbyjc@bellatlantic.net)), so it can be included in our total hours that are submitted.

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

Thank you to Roberta for all of her help this year with Group Piano.

Thank you to Holly for her work as our MCCPTA representative.

Thank you to all of our volunteers who made field day possible. It literally could not happen without you.

Thank you to Tara, Kristin, Christine, Sherri, and all of the other fifth grade parents who have worked hard to raise money, organize, and prepare for our end of year celebration. It will be an event to remember!

Thank you to Kelly, Melody, Sheila, and everyone who helped make Staff Appreciation Week and Administrative Assistant Week special!

Thank you to Kristin who helped with Picture Day. Thank you Carla, Laurie, Melissa, Gerry, Theresa, and Victor who helped to welcome our future kindergarteners to DES.

Thank you to Melissa, Jaime, and Christine who welcomed our future kindergarteners with the Teddy Bear Picnic.

Thank you to Jaime, Jennifer, Stephanie, and all of our guest runners who are supporting our Dashing Dragons as they prepare for their 5K.

Thank you to Diane who compiles the newsletter and updates our sign, and thank you to Nicole who keeps us up-to-date on social media. Thank you for helping us to know what is happening at school.

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.

Finally, thank you to all who help in the classroom with individual teachers, represent our school, and contribute their time in ways that may not have been mentioned. We appreciate you and all that you contribute!

Thank you so much for all that you do to make our school a special place. It makes a huge difference!

*~ Christine Derby, Volunteer Coordinator  
[derbyjc@bellatlantic.net](mailto:derbyjc@bellatlantic.net)*

*"You gave me your time,  
the most thoughtful gift of all."*

*~ Dan Zadra*

## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

### Parents Helping Teachers:

Friday, June 9 from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

This is a drop in opportunity where we help make copies and educational materials to assist teachers. Please meet us in the main office if you can. No experience necessary.

### Fifth Grade End-of-Year Celebration:

Thursday, June 15

We will be looking for adult helpers to help manage the day's festivities. More information to follow.



I just wanted to take a moment to thank the PTA board members, committee chairs and all volunteers for helping out this year at Damascus Elementary.

Your assistance goes a long way toward bringing so many great activities and programs to our school's teachers, students, and families, and we sincerely appreciate your important contribution. You have all planned such fun events like Passport to Reading Night, the Book Fair, Bingo Night, the Dragon Round-Up Dance and more!

I know how much time and effort is put into planning events, so on behalf of the staff at DES I just wanted to say thank you for your dedication to this school. Our school becomes a better place every day when parents are there to lend a hand!

~ Mrs. Blakley

## Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup

Thanks to Theresa Tenzier, Jody Chapin, Nora Hernandez, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out at the Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup on Friday, May 5. We were able to help out teachers and staff.

Our final workgroup will meet on Friday, June 9. If your schedule permits, please come and join us. We will meet at the front desk.

Thanks to everyone who has come to the workgroup throughout the year, we couldn't make this work without you. You have contributed your time and efforts to help the teachers and staff with their classwork and helped make this workgroup run smoothly. Thank you and have a great summer.

~ Gerry McBrinn-Choulas  
Co-chair

| 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                          | <a href="http://www.damascuspta.com">www.damascuspta.com</a>   |
| PTA Email                            | <a href="mailto:desptamail@gmail.com">desptamail@gmail.com</a> |

## Dashing Dragons Update

We're heading into the final few weeks of Dashing Dragons! All of our kids have been doing an amazing job of training for the race. We have averaged 100 miles run each week by our Dashing Dragons!

Just a recap for folks who are still getting their plan together for the big day. All are welcome to join us!

**Date:** June 10

**Location:** Monocacy Village Park  
409 Delaware Road  
Frederick, MD 21701

**5k Race:** starts at 8 a.m.

**1 Mile Fun Run:** starts at 9 a.m.

**Buddy Runners:** Please sign up by June 2. Each child needs a buddy runner. There is a \$20 fee for Buddy Runner shirts, however you may run for free without a shirt (all children already signed up will receive a shirt).

Email Jaime at [jaimelkemp@gmail.com](mailto:jaimelkemp@gmail.com) by June 2 if you want to join us AND want a shirt, otherwise, just join us at Monocacy Park for Run for Heroes on June 10!



## Thanks for the Memories

If you did not order your DES Yearbook yet, it's not too late. You can send a check payable to "DES PTA" for \$20. Please send it to school in an envelope marked DES Yearbook with your child's name and teacher. Supplies are limited!

## Donuts With Dads

On **Friday, June 9, from 8:45 to 9:30 a.m.** we will be celebrating dads in our DES All Purpose Room. Spend the morning visiting with your DES student while you enjoy breakfast on us.







*"Your Outdoor Project Experts"*

**Ponds ■ Landscape ■ Lighting**

## **Design & Installation**

**Ponds and Waterfalls**

Outdoor Lighting

Landscape Design\* & Installation

Paver Patios & Walkways

Retaining Walls

Drainage Improvements

## **Pond & Landscape Services**

**Pond Clean Out & Maintenance**

Yard Clean Up, Spring & Fall

Lawn Fertilization & Weed Control

Aeration & Seeding

Edging & Mulching

Tree & Shrub Pruning

Tree Removal & Stump Grinding

Mowing & Trimming & Weeding

Leaf Removal

K-9 Clean Up

Snow & Ice Management

Handyman Services

*Call us today for a FREE estimate*

\* Fee for Design Work

**301-253-0475**

[www.damascusenterprises.com](http://www.damascusenterprises.com)

