



School Talk

WEEKLY UPDATE!

December 1, 2023

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The Lost & Found purge has been held off until Friday, December 15th. On December 15th, we will be donating all items left in the L&F to local charities. Please encourage your children to look through the L&F for any missing items. You can help prevent your child's items from ending up in the L&F by **labeling all items** – even those you would think would not be lost easily (such as winter coats).

Announcing MPSA's Nominated Staff of the Year

We are pleased to announce the three staff members who have been nominated as **MPSA's Staff of the Year!** Please join with us in congratulating:

- **Teacher of the Year** nominee, special education teacher **Emily Hall**
- **Support Staff of the Year** nominee, instructional assistant **Shakina Hardy**
- **X-Scale Staff of the Year** nominee, Extended Day supervisor **Leslie Elgendi-Whiteside**

The three were chosen by a vote of their peers here at MPSA and will now move forward as nominees for those titles on the district level. Good luck, friends!



Nominees Emily Hall (L) and Shakina Hardy (R).

Staffing Changes

We have had some staffing changes here at MPSA. In November we said goodbye to our long-time instructional assistant, **Victoria Hardesty-Allen**, who embarked on a new career as a technical writer; and office administrative assistant, **Kaleigh Lowery**, who left to join the City of Bowie (Maryland) police department. We wish them both luck with their new endeavors.

We are pleased to announce **Kevin Miles** as our new part-time physical education teacher. He began teaching PE this past Tuesday, a role he is thoroughly enjoying! He remains an MPSA special education teacher part-time. Mr. Miles will be teaching all Upper Elementary and some Lower Elementary classes.



Kevin Miles

Weather and Outdoor Lunch/Recess

Colder temperatures are here! The Virginia Department of Education requires schools to allow children to have outdoor recess and activities if the weather is not dangerously hot or cold.

- Temperatures between 15- and 30-degrees Fahrenheit result in a **shortened recess**, meaning students **should not be outside more than 15 minutes at a time**.
- Temperatures below 15 degrees Fahrenheit mean that it's **dangerously cold** and children **should not go outside at all**.

**This also includes wind chill temperature*

We understand that some families may be fine with their children going outside for longer lengths of time than listed, however, we are required to follow policy.

Please remember to send your child to school with appropriate clothing for the weather. Hats, coats and gloves or mittens, please, and we are suggesting your child dress in layers so they can remove or add clothing if they get warm or cold while indoors.

If providing these items is a hardship for your family, please do not hesitate to reach out to our school social worker, [Kristin Decker](#). She will help secure winter clothing for your child. She will be discreet.

SEL Update

Each month at MPSA we focus on **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)** in a variety of ways. One way we support student to student and teacher to student relationships each day is through the morning or afternoon meeting. Meetings are based on Montessori methods and Responsive Classroom methods. Our counseling team also introduces lessons for teachers to use each month based on both the Second Step curriculum and the Playbook lessons found in Panaroma Education to support classroom SEL. The counseling lesson to be presented to staff in late November is called the Resilience Tree.

Staff also share SEL practices they are using in their classrooms at monthly staff meetings. This past month Ms. Ross shared an Actor's Toolbox's technique. She and her class modified this technique which she uses to support student concentration and focus. Ms. Shaw our ITC presented a Sound Bath to the staff to support stress reduction, emotional-regulation, and self-awareness. This encompassed her playing an octave of crystal sound bowls which produce vibrations believed to synchronize brainwaves, promoting a sense of calmness, and reducing anxiety or tension. Additionally, Ms. Shaw presented a new Nearpod app to staff to support both staff and students in taking care of their emotional health.

Along with these SEL practices and professional development opportunities is another school wide initiative using an App called Flocabulary that supports children in different aspects of their social emotional development using rap songs. Each month there is a school wide SEL theme supported by a Flocabulary song. For November and December, the themes are Managing Worry and Stress and Conflict Resolution. The November and December school-wide Flocabulary songs will begin with: Managing Worry K-3, Managing Frustration K-1, and Managing Stress 6-12 (for upper EL).

Music Notes

Wakefield Choral Pyramid Concert

On Thursday, November 30, seventeen MPSA 5th graders performed in Wakefield High School's Choral Pyramid Concert. Congratulations to these students for proudly representing our school and for performing enthusiastically and masterfully. Thank you to the parents who donated pre-concert snacks and water; and a special thank you to Haely Shrock who chaperoned and helped keep our kids safe and happy before and throughout the concert.

The Arlington Public Schools South Pyramid Concert is an annual event in which 5th grade chorus students from several south Arlington elementary schools are invited to perform with Gunston, Thomas Jefferson, HB Woodlawn and Wakefield High School choristers. Singers perform a concert for each other and their parents. For many elementary school students, it is their first experience playing in a large orchestra on stage.



Honors Music – Band, Chorus, Orchestra

Honors music programs give elementary and middle school students the opportunity to grow and challenge themselves musically. These are auditioned groups; auditions are held in the fall of each school year, with rehearsals and performances beginning in January.

MPSA is pleased to announce the following students who have been chosen to participate in the honors music program.

- **Casper Anderson** (violin) and **Avi Freestone** (cello) were chosen for **Junior Honors Orchestra**.
- **Saidarshan Nevethan** and **Kira Parasram-Magro** were chosen for **Elementary Honors Chorus**.

This year's Junior Honors Music Concert will be **Tuesday, March 12, 2024**, 7:00 PM at Kenmore Middle School.

Annual Library Book Gift Wrap – Volunteers Needed

We're continuing the tradition of wrapping library books for students to check out as a surprise before the Winter break. They are not books to keep, but by not being able to see the book they choose since they are wrapped, they are getting the gift of trying new books! These wrapped books get checked out in flash so we will need to have many available, which means we will need volunteers! If you are willing to help wrap books, our librarian, Ms. Miller, has sent out a [sign up on ParentSquare](#).

You will need to be cleared as an APS volunteer to help. If you have not already applied to be a volunteer, [you may do so here](#). All clearances are good for 3 years and give you the opportunity to volunteer for many of our activities, so it's better to have it than to not.

Can't volunteer but still would like to help? The library is taking donations of gift wrap! You can send the wrapping paper to school with your child or drop off at the main office. Thank you in advance!

Middle School Reminders for 5th Grade Families

The Home Address Confirmation Process (HACP) began this week on November 27th. ALL 5th grade families are required to provide the school with a copy of your deed/lease and two current proofs of address to confirm your residency here in Arlington. Families who recently submitted renewed leases or updated A/B Forms in September/October are still required to send in the supporting documentation. Families who do not submit their documents by the deadline of **January 26th** will have their students and their siblings (regardless of which school they are attending) **withdrawn** from APS at the end of the year. All documents received will be researched and verified for validity.

[Read more about HACP here](#), plus learn how you can submit your documents online. You can also bring your documents to school or e-mail them to our registrar, Kia Haynes by clicking [here](#).

Homeowners: Arlington County will provide you with a free copy of your deed. E-mail **Arlington County Land Records** at landrec@arlingtonva.us making the request, being sure to include your child's school and school ID# in the request for enrollment confirmation.

Middle school information sessions have been scheduled. Each middle school offers an in-person information session between December and January. Families are encouraged to attend to learn about their assigned neighborhood school or option school of interest, meet school staff, and ask questions.

Middle School Family Information Sessions:

December

- Swanson Middle School – Thu, Dec. 7, 6:30 p.m.
- H-B Woodlawn – Tue, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
- Dorothy Hamm Middle School – Wed, Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m.

January

- Kenmore Middle School – Thu, Jan 4, 6:30 p.m.
- Williamsburg Middle School – Tue, Jan. 9, 6:30 p.m.

- Jefferson Middle School – Wed, Jan. 10, 6:30 p.m.
- Gunston Middle School – Thu, Jan. 11, 6:30 p.m.
 - *Gunston Middle School teachers are hosting a presentation for parents who are interesting in learning more about the Middle Years Montessori program and would like an opportunity to ask questions live. Monday, December 11th at 8PM on Zoom. <https://tinyurl.com/5hemnejk> to join*

Application information for Middle School Option programs: Opens **Nov. 6, 2023**, and closes **Jan. 14, 2024**. [Applications submitted here.](#)

Neighborhood transfer requests for Middle Schools: The decision to accept requests for neighborhood transfers has not been made yet. Keep your eye on the Middle School Options page on the APS website for more information.

We Could Still Use Some Grocery Gift Cards and Clothing Items

Winter break is a fun time for most of us, but for some of our families, it's a time of stress because access to two hot meals a day will be missing for 10 days. It is for this reason that we are continuing our annual tradition of collecting **grocery store gift cards** to help keep our food-insecure families stocked up for the additional burden of having to provide 20 more meals per child during the break. At this time, we have identified 13 families who will need help this season. We anticipate more reaching out for help as the break gets closer. Our goal is to collect enough gift cards to supply each family with at least \$100 to supplement their food budget.

With that said, if you are willing to **donate a grocery store gift card** (or gift card to a store that has a grocery section, like Target or Walmart) please drop off to **Kia Haynes** in the main office. Please keep the denominations for each gift card small (\$25 or less) so we can more evenly divvy up the cards amongst our families. **A tip to get more bang for your donated buck:** Purchase gift cards from **Aldi's**, where the food quality is still great but for much less than a typical chain store.

We will also take cash donations. Those will go directly to our social worker, Kristin Decker, who will purchase the gift cards and provide receipts of purchase if you would like. We will not be issuing cash to any families. **We need all gift cards in hand by December 11th**. We humbly thank you in advance.

Clothes: We could use boys/girls pants - sizes small and medium (5T to 8-10), and new, unused underwear of all sizes.

Upcoming Dates

- Wednesday, December 6: **EARLY RELEASE, dismissal is at 1:30PM**
- Friday, December 8: **All LEM and UEM to D.A.R. Constitution Hall**
- Thursday, December 21 through January 1: **Winter Break**

Keep in Touch

- MPSA on APS: <https://montessori.apsva.us/>
- MPSA on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MPSArlington>
- MPSA Library on Twitter: https://twitter.com/MPSA_Library
- MPSA Science on Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/MPSA_Science ***NEW!***
- Principal Genove on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CSGenove>
- Arlington Montessori PTA: <http://acmpta.com/>
- Arlington Montessori Action Committee (AMAC): <http://www.arlingtonmontessori.org/>

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ACMPTA WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



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[MPSA Holiday Party by Hope Multiplied \(Remaining Spaces Limited\)](#)

Jingle & Mingle

HOSTED BY
HOPE
MULTIPLIED

**JOIN US FOR A
MPSA HOLIDAY PARTY**
SAT, DEC 16 2023
11AM - 2PM

St. Timothy and St. Athanasius Coptic Orthodox Church
2640 Shirlington Rd, Arlington, VA 22206

ACTIVITIES include: GAMES, FACE PAINTING, SANTA PHOTOS,
and HOLIDAY MEAL

ALL MPSA STAFF & FAMILIES ARE INVITED
Free event

RSVP REQUIRED BY DEC 9
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/3CSRVC3](https://tinyurl.com/3CSRVC3)

CONTACT
VPPROGRAMS@ACMPTA.COM

ALL MPSA students and their families are invited to attend a holiday party on **Saturday, December 16, 2023**, from **11AM to 2PM**. This party is **FREE** of charge. Activities include games, face painting, the option to have a photo with Santa and a holiday meal.

SPACE IS LIMITED AND GOING FAST!

The party will be held at **St. Timothy & St. Athanasius Coptic Orthodox Church** located at 2640 Shirlington Rd, Arlington, VA 22206. [To register to attend, click here.](#) ***An accurate headcount is**

important, so please register!* This party is **non-denominational** so everyone should feel comfortable attending, regardless of religion/beliefs.

Any questions about the party, please e-mail Sonali at vpprograms@acmpta.com.

*This is not a PTA or MPSA sponsored event, however, it is being held with their support and APS approval. This party is sponsored by **HOPE Multiplied**, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to building up communities. They have partnered with several APS schools. Read more about them [here](#).*

AMAC Needs the Community's Help!

The **Arlington Montessori Action Committee (AMAC)** is hosting a holiday open house on Wednesday December 13th from 3:30-6:30pm for our wonderful Montessori teachers. This annual event is one that is looked forward to by the staff at both public and private Montessori schools in Arlington, as it is a grand thank you given to them by the families of the Montessori community.

It cannot be done without help from you! AMAC is looking for volunteers and donations to make this day a success. Look at the sign up genius link to see how you can help out.

Thank you! <https://m.signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/904094EAEA72AA0FE3-46296085-amac>

REMINDER: MPSA Girls Scout Troop Forming!

Girl Scouts create the world they want to live in and strive to make it better every single day. They explore their strengths, take on new challenges, and can always be themselves, regardless of background or ability. Supported by adult volunteers and mentors right here in our community, as well as millions of alums around the globe, Girl Scouts lead the way as they discover who they are and how they can make the future a brighter place. Is your family interested in joining a troop? Join us on December 5 at the Columbia Pike Library to learn more.

- Girl Scout Informational Meeting for MPSA Families: **Tuesday, December 5** at 6pm. Drew Room - Columbia Pike Library.
- Contact: Isatou Manneh (Membership Specialist for Girl Scouts of Nation's Capital Council) Imanneh@gscnc.org; or Christina Malin (MPSA parent) christinammalin@gmail.com

Purchase MPSA Themed Swag

You can still order through the PTA's On-Demand sale! Prices are slightly higher and you will have to ship to your house, so consider consolidating your purchase with another family to save on shipping costs! Already bought swag? Keep an eye on the site as more designs coming soon!

https://spirithero.com/collections/montessori-1?fbclid=IwAR2kKdhpfSjgMRbsUsNhWR8IKbPrs4b3B9yZEq1nPjLn5pmMiHMj-c7dG_c

Teacher Wish Lists – Check Them Out

The generosity of families who shopped our MPSA teachers' wish lists have helped teachers get the supplies they desired to help give your child a full, educational experience. If you are so inclined to give, please look at our Wish List page for teachers [here](#). Your child's teacher may be listed!

Join the PTA or Sponsor a Staff Member

Membership is **\$12** per person, or **\$20** for 2 people. Cash and check will be accepted or sign up through our [online portal on Membership Hub](#). Signing up to be a member is also the easiest fundraising effort you could make as a portion of the dues goes into our general fund. Already have a membership? Consider sponsoring a staff member. We require staff to be a paid PTA member in order to receive a PTA grant. Help them out by purchasing them a membership!

Stay in Touch With the ACMPTA

- Our Website: <https://www.acmpta.com/>
- Our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ACMPTA/>
- Our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MPSAFamilies/>
- Our Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ArCoMontessori>
- Sign up for our Chat listserv: <https://groups.io/g/ACMPTA>