

**Gunpowder
Elementary**



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www.gunpowderpta.org

August 30, 2010

Dear Gunpowder Elementary School Families,

Welcome to all of you who are new to our school and to the rest of you who are returning. Gunpowder PTA is excited to begin a new school year. Our Board has been busy this summer establishing our calendar, creating our budget, deciding on our fundraisers, and getting things ready for what promises to be an exciting new school year.

I will be addressing you all soon enough at **Back to School Night on September 7**. There I will have an opportunity to introduce myself, my fellow officers, and give you a brief overview of precisely what we have planned this year. But, as anyone who is returning to Gunpowder Elementary knows, my brief speech is not the highlight of the evening, nor is our first General PTA Meeting of the year. For that reason I plan to keep it brief. I will cover what is required by our bylaws, quickly mention a few timely PTA items, and make sure you know how to reach me if you have questions after the meeting, or at any other time during the school year. It is because my intention is to be brief, that I thought I would take a moment to write you now. There are a few things I need you to know.

Membership

The PTA membership drive will once again start in earnest. The theme for this year's membership is "Join Our School." The cost is the same as it was last year. We will be charging \$8 for the first adult member and \$7 for each additional adult member. A little less than \$4 of each membership helps support the National, Maryland and Baltimore County chapters of the PTA, with the remainder helping to pay for PTA mandates upon our local chapter. All members will receive a card that we will send home with their child. This card is your proof of membership, and your ticket for free admission to all PTA family activities held by Gunpowder PTA throughout the school year. It also gives you a vote at our PTA General Membership Meetings, and a voice in the decision making process. Membership materials will be sent home soon. **If you have questions, please contact PTA Membership Chair, Erin Kahl, at membership@gunpowderpta.org.**

PTA Website

If you like to know what is going on, there is an easy way to find out and to stay in touch. We encourage you to visit the PTA website frequently, and to create an account if you do not already have one. We need you to have one in order to send you e-mail announcements. **If you created one last year, please take a moment to update your information, specifically your child's grade level and teacher assignment.** Our website—www.gunpowderpta.org—is the repository for everything related to the PTA. There you will find a calendar of events, a list of officers, PTA committee descriptions and contact information for their chairmen, copies of all flyers sent home by the PTA, back issues of the PTA newsletter, Box Tops 4 Education collection forms, minutes from our monthly PTA Board meetings, and more. There is also a PDF directory accessible to members. It gives the names and contact information, including student grade and teacher assignments, for all those who opt to share it. Finally, the website is a fundraising tool for our school with links to a variety of retailers who give us a commission on sales that originate from it. Please take a moment to check it out. **For more information, please contact the PTA Webmaster, Chris Hagan, at webmaster@gunpowderpta.org.**

ATTENTION: This organization and its materials are not affiliated with, sponsored by, or endorsed by Baltimore County Public Schools, the Superintendent, or this Baltimore County school or office.

Volunteer Opportunities

There is always a need for volunteers, both on PTA committees and in the classroom, but before you can help out you need to spend about 15 minutes watching Baltimore County Public School's Volunteer Training film and fill out or update an application. The video is usually shown prior to our monthly PTA Board meetings at 6 p.m. Our meetings follow at 6:30 p.m. **Our PTA Volunteer Hours Chair, Kathryn Snyder, has put together a letter that explains the volunteer process in detail. It is attached. I encourage you to read it, and contact Kathryn at volunteers@gunpowderpta.org if you have questions.**

Fundraising Plans

Gunpowder PTA is a nonprofit organization existing to enhance the educational experience of Gunpowder students. PTA funds pay for things such as supplies for the students and teachers, assemblies, field trips for students with financial need, student awards, and a variety of social and educational programs for our students and their families. All of our money comes from a combination of corporate donations and our fundraising efforts. This year, the PTA has decided to go with three primary fundraisers, all scheduled to take place this fall. Our choices for this year are similar to last year. For a second year, Gunpowder will hold a fundraiser that is unique to our school. We will be having a "Book Boogie," a sponsorship fundraiser that combines the best elements of a read-a-thon and a pledge drive. This fundraiser will begin on September 1 and last a month. Approximately 80 percent of all dollars raised through our Book Boogie will go to the PTA and help support items in our budget.

Our second and third fundraisers of the year continue to follow last year's fundraising philosophy of saving you time or money. In October, we will introduce a new fundraiser, the sale of Entertainment Discount Cards. These cards are pocket size, feature 32 offers from a combination of local and national businesses, as well as many repeat offers. Purchasers also will have access to a variety of online coupons. The cards will sell for \$20 each with the PTA earning half of that. Offers are good from October until June 30, 2011.

Finally, as requested by Gunpowder parents, we will again be selling Kids Stuff Coupon Books. This sale will begin in November and conclude before the Thanksgiving holiday. The books will sell for \$25 each with the PTA earning 50 percent of the proceeds. Coupons in the book will expire December 31, 2011.

We realize that with the economy the way it is, there is a great deal of concern about spending money, and that it may be unreasonable to expect you to support all three of these fundraisers, as well as some of the smaller ones that may appear from time to time throughout the school year, such as our Restaurant Nights and Great Clips fundraiser. We don't expect you to.

Our goal is to give you choices so that you can pick one or more fundraisers that fit your needs and your budget, and that offer you value in return. Our budget this year is smaller than the two previous years. **If we reach our fundraising goal this fall, we promise, there will be no additional fundraisers after these three. If you have questions about the PTA's fundraising plans, please contact PTA Fundraiser Chair, Chris Hagan, at fundraiser@gunpowderpta.org.**

Thank you all again for your interest and support of Gunpowder Elementary PTA. I know this year will be a good one. **I urge you to become involved in our organization and to join a committee, and/or attend one of our monthly PTA Board meetings. They occur, with rare exception, on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the school library.** A schedule of upcoming meetings can be found on the PTA website. **If you have questions that I can answer for you, or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at president@gunpowderpta.org.** Best wishes to you and your family as we begin a new school year.

Sincerely,

Melissa Strohman

Melissa Strohman
PTA President