



August 2015

Dear Stoddert Families:

Hello from your Stoddert Parent Teacher Organization! We hope that you are having a wonderful summer. Like you, we are excited for the upcoming school year and are thrilled to have you and your children be a part of the Stoddert community. We've quite a bit of important information to share with you, so please read this letter through to the end.

WHO IS THE STODDERT PTO?

The Stoddert PTO is an organization of parent and teacher volunteers committed to supporting the school and enhancing each and every child's education in and out of the classroom. Part of what makes Stoddert a great place to learn is the widespread support and engagement from our very active parent community.

WHAT DOES THE PTO DO?

Throughout the year, the PTO supports school initiatives or activities, hosts events and works with DC government agencies to a) foster a strong school community; b) provide opportunities that reaches every student and; c) improve Stoddert with each year.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT THE STODDERT PTO?

The PTO supports initiatives, activities and events that reach *every* Stoddert student and parent. Stoddert PTO volunteers maintain our school website, write and distribute an electronic newsletter, the *Chalkboard*, and chair annual events such as Potluck & Pizza, the Book Fair, Family Fun Night and International Night. Our PTO is involved at the policy level as well working with the school administration during budget discussions and with other area schools on larger policy issues such as the recent boundary changes or the Wilson High School budget cuts. This year Stoddert is the only school in the city with two parent representatives on Chancellor Henderson's Parent Cabinet.

The PTO requests support from every family because every family benefits from the PTO's activities and events. The suggested amount is \$400 per family. We understand that not every family will give at this level but encourage you to give what is financially comfortable for you. Please see the enclosed "Count Me In" flier for more information on how to donate and what dues support.

Just as important, the PTO and the school needs and welcomes your volunteer spirit! Please attend PTO meetings (more information below), consider volunteering at an event or get involved in your own way - there are many jobs to fill and we need your help!

A few other ways to support Stoddert is by attendance at our annual gala, Fall Festival and regular Restaurant Nights. NEW this year is Stoddert's partnership with Amazon Smile which gives a portion back to the PTO every time you purchase an item. When you shop on Amazon.com using Stoddert's Amazon Smile [link](#) they will donate a portion of your purchases to the school. It's an easy way for you to support Stoddert and our PTO. Start shopping today at smile.amazon.com.

HELLO NEW & RETURNING FAMILIES!

The PTO's **Welcome Committee** helps new families with information and to ease the start of school transition for all students. We wanted to highlight a few upcoming events:

Sneak Peek. All families are invited to attend the inaugural Sneak Peek event on Friday, August 21, 2015 from 2:30 - 3:30 pm at Stoddert. The Sneak Peek is an opportunity for you, and your child, to visit classrooms and ask questions about the basics, hopefully contributing to a smooth first day of school. Please know that the faculty is taking time out of their busy prep week to open classrooms, so their availability is extremely limited. Accordingly, we strongly encourage all families to be at the school at 2:30 pm sharp, because the classrooms will be promptly closing at 3:00 pm.

AGENDA:

2:30 - 3:00 pm - Meet your teacher, see your classroom and drop off supplies.

3:00 - 3:30 pm - Join Principal Bryant and the PTO in the gym for an information session.

Playdates for New Families. Bring your children and your questions to one or more of the welcome committee's playdates at Guy Mason park (corner of Wisconsin and Calvert). This is an opportunity for new children to get to know one another and for parents to connect and have questions answered in an informal setting. While we've grouped families by age, please feel free to come to any or all of the times that work with your schedule:

New Pre-K and K families – Saturday, August 22, 2015, 2 – 4 pm

New 1st through 5th families – Sunday, August 23, 2015, 10 am – 12 pm

All new families – Saturday, August 29, 2015, 10 am – 12 pm

Questions? Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Stoddert PTO's Welcome Committee co-chair, Elizabeth Peyster, at epeyster@gmail.com.

PTO COMMUNICATION

The Stoddert PTO strives to inform parents about all that is happening at Stoddert. Our website and electronic newsletter are the main forms of communicating. Please notify the front office if you do not have a phone or computer with which to check either of these options.

Website. We invite you to explore the redesigned Stoddert website at www.stoddert.org. The new site, which is maintained by PTO volunteers, is now mobile friendly and contains the most current information about the school and daily life at Stoddert.

E-mail Newsletter. The *Chalkboard* is the PTO's regular e-mail newsletter and is produced by PTO volunteers. It is a main source of information for much of what is happening at Stoddert. For all parents, new and returning, please ensure that you sign up at www.stoddert.org to receive the *Chalkboard* and read it to stay informed.

Contact. On the website you'll find a complete list of the PTO executive board and committee members. Should you wish to contact the PTO directly, you may reach the co-presidents, Maria O'Donnell and Nitchet Quarles, at president@stoddert.org. The PTO welcomes your feedback and questions.

PTO MEETINGS

One of the best ways to stay informed about your child's school is to attend PTO meetings that cover upcoming events, various issues and current "hot topics." We encourage all parents to attend as your ideas, enthusiasm and creativity are a critical part of making Stoddert a great place for our children. In addition to the PTO executive board members, school administration and teacher representatives are present to contribute to the discussion, answer questions and receive feedback.

PTO meetings are held every month from 6:30 - 8:00 pm in the school's library alternating every other month between General and Executive Board meetings with all meetings open to the Stoddert community. If you wish to raise a specific issue for discussion at an Executive or General Board meeting please send your concern to the attention of the PTO at president@stoddert.org at least 3 days prior to the scheduled meeting so that it may be included on the agenda.

General Meetings: Tuesday, September 8, 2015 and then the following Thursdays: November 5, 2015 and January 14, March 3, and May 5, 2016

Executive Board Meetings: Thursday, August 27, 2015 and then the following Thursdays: October 1 and December 3, 2015 and February 4, April 7, and June 2, 2016

SAVE THE DATE!

A vibrant and active community is part of what makes Stoddert an amazing place for our children. From potlucks to policy decisions, there are many ways to get involved and take an active role in your child's Stoddert experience. Please find Stoddert's full calendar and more information about each event at www.stoddert.org. Below are September highlights:

- Sneak Peek - 2:30-3:30 pm, Friday, August 21, 2015 (See above)
- Pizza & Potluck Night - 6:00 – 8:00pm, Friday, August 28, 2015 (See enclosed flyer)
- Coffee w/Principal Bryant - 8:30am, Thursday, September 3, 2015
- Back to School Night - 6:30pm, Tuesday, September 8, 2015

FAMILY DIRECTORY

We encourage all families to sign up for the Stoddert Family Directory. It is useful for arranging play dates, planning birthday parties, and more. NEW this year will be the opportunity to list your business along with a short description and contact information. This is a wonderful way to support our community and have access to all the resources our community of parents has to offer. The family and business listing will be encompassed in one directory and are password encrypted so that only current families of Stoddert may list in them and access them. The password is found at the bottom of each *Chalkboard* newsletter. Sign up at www.stoddert.org.

STODDERT EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

Stoddert's Extended Day Programs (EDP) offers before and after school childcare throughout the

school year to Stoddert students in grades pre-K through 5. The before care program operates from 7:30 – 8:45 am; the after care program operates from 3:15 – 6:00 pm. After care is also provided from 12:15 – 6:00 pm on District of Columbia School (DCPS) half days (with the exception of the last day of school when there is no after care).

This year the EDP experienced an unprecedented demand for its services this year. Expansion of the program has been discussed at length, but unfortunately expansion is not a realistic possibility for SY15-16. We would like to encourage all families to consider two other options available, even if you have a spot in EDP, as there may be a more convenient solution for your family.

DC DPR Programs. The DC Department of Parks and Recreation (DC DPR) offers a free aftercare program at Stoddert. The program is separate from EDP and several Stoddert families have utilized this option in the past. This program is most appropriate for students in the 3-5th grades. Please visit Ricky Davenport at the DC DPR onsite office, or call (202) 299-3324, or email ricky.davenport@dc.gov. Please note that you must register in person. (For our new families, the DPR office is located in the main lobby of Stoddert to the right of the security guards' front desk.)

Jelleff Boys & Girls Club. The Jelleff Boys & Girls Club offers a free after school program for students 6 and older. It is located at 3265 S Street, NW, next to the Safeway and across from Hardy Middle School, and operates from 3:00 - 8:00 pm, five days a week starting one week after the start of the school year. The program groups students by grade and provides enrichment activities including fun time, homework hour, cooking classes, art, floor hockey leagues, basketball, soccer, math competition and much more. You may enroll onsite with Patrick Leonard, Program Director, or Yolanda Gales, Membership Clerk, through walking in, calling the office at 202-462-1317, or emailing pleonard@bgcgw.org. The PTO is committed to helping parents find reliable transportation options from Stoddert to Jelleff, but parents will be responsible for any cost of arranged transportation, and will need to pick up from the program. Please contact PTO Co-Presidents, Nitchet Quarles or Maria O'Donnell at president@stoddert.org to find out the most current information about transportation options.

OTHER STODDERT SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Fillmore Arts Center

Stoddert students receive high-quality arts education every week through our long-standing partnership with Fillmore Arts Center located on the 3rd floor of Hardy Middle School. Our students are delivered there via bus once a week and participate in a half-day of arts education that includes visual arts, music, dance and theater. Visit <http://www.fillmoreartscenter.org> to learn more. Please see enclosed Count Me In flyer for more information on how to support Fillmore.

DC Department of Parks and Recreation

Stoddert ES has a unique partnership with DC DPR where we share our facilities thus making programing available onsite to the Stoddert community and the general public. Please stop by and see Ricky Davenport at the DC DPR office located in the main lobby of Stoddert.

Thank you for choosing Stoddert as your child's school. It's going to be a fantastic year and we look forward to supporting each and every child inside and outside of the classroom!

Sincerely,

Maria O'Donnell & Nitchet Quarles
Co-Presidents, Stoddert PTO