

Hello TMES PTA School Community!



While volunteering in one of my daughter's classrooms in 2017 in the Montgomery County School System, I overheard a teacher talking about buying clothes and shoes for one of her students, as he didn't have any weather-appropriate items. His family, she knew, couldn't afford these essentials. I jumped into the conversation, offering to help. Many of the staff at my daughters' school were using their own money to purchase necessities for students in their classrooms. Clearly, this model was not sustainable. Teachers cannot support the basic needs of their students. There had to be a way to scale the process and ask the larger community to get involved.

As a result, I launched the 4 SEASON GIVING TREE ([www.4seasongivingtree.org](http://www.4seasongivingtree.org)), a grass-roots effort to create the infrastructure needed to share gently used belongings with needy families in our community. School counselors refer families in need to our organization, and we then work closely with the parents of those families to understand their specific needs.

With the support of extraordinary board members and a coterie of incredible volunteers, the 4 SEASON GIVING TREE became an official 501c3 non-profit in 2021.

The program matches families offering to donate with families in need, focusing on upcycling gently used clothing and toys and supplementing with new items when necessary. For example, if a donating family has a 10-year-old boy and a 7-year-old girl, we try to match them to a family with an 8-year-old boy and a 5-year-old girl so that the giving family can donate the clothing and toys their own children have outgrown. Donations are delivered directly onto the doorstep of families in need, encouraging direct family-to-family giving and creating a stronger community bond. To date, we have helped over 200 families.

Our *Holiday Support Program* becomes active during the fall. This program offers members of the community— school communities, book clubs, Girl Scout and Cub Scout troops, condo associations, etc.—the opportunity to be matched with families in need, providing new toys, clothes, household items, etc. Donors have the option to provide tax-deductible monetary support through active fundraisers on our business page (<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100079217553386>) or fulfill the wish list that these families provide to us. For the 2021 holiday season, 76 families were supported, providing for 330 individual family members. Our goal for the 2022 holiday season is to help 100 families. As of October 19, 2022, we can support 54 families in need, over half of our goal!

We are in the process of assigning donating families to families that need help during the holidays.

Once we have established the number of people willing to help, we notify the Montgomery County Public School counselors/Pupil Personnel Workers (PPWs) of the number of families that we can support so they can refer the families that are most in need. The counselor or PPW will then contact the families most in need to inform them that they have been referred to the program and will provide their contact information to our organization so that we can get in touch with the families to inquire about their wish list of items for their children and family members. Once we get the wish lists from the families, we create sign-up genius lists and then provide this list to those who want to support a family.

The more people interested in participating, the more families we can help. We encourage you to reach out to your place of business, social groups, etc., to participate in this very meaningful program that is taking place right in your own community.

Please fill out the volunteer form listed to confirm your interest in providing holiday support: [Volunteer | 4 Season Giving Tree | Gaithersburg, MD 20878](#)

Additionally, we welcome you to join our community Facebook group, [4 Season Giving Tree: 20878 \(www.4seasongivingtree.org\) | Facebook](#), where we continuously post Montgomery County Public School Pupil Personnel Worker referral requests for gently used items for the families most in need. This is a great way to pass along your gently used belongings, directly to the families who need it.

We hope that our organization inspires others to make a difference. Our goal is to provide families that are part of this program with the essentials needed to thrive. Together, I know we are making this happen, and I invite you to participate in our efforts.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

In lifting others, we rise!

The 4 Season Giving Tree Team

Lauren Laimon

[4 Season Giving Tree](#)

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Holiday Fundraiser | <https://www.facebook.com/donate/808164293938799/>

Donate | [www.4seasongivingtree.org/donate](http://www.4seasongivingtree.org/donate)

Amazon Smile Donation Link | <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/87-1831419>