

False statements - Garden City News

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By Editorial Team | on June 15, 2023

June 16, 2023



To the Editor:

We, the Garden City Special Education Parent Teacher Association (GC SEPTA), have been made aware of accusations against us (both verbally and in writing) of an alleged misuse of funds to benefit SEPTA board member, Neha Bajaj. As fellow special needs parents, we have cheered Ms. Bajaj on in her own professional venture to author a children's book to raise autism acceptance. However, we want to correct the record and make sure the facts are clear. SEPTA has not used our funding to support her efforts in any capacity.

We are a 501(3)-c organization that receives its charter from the New York State Parent Teacher Association, and we follow the rules and guidelines of our chapter, as well as those put forth by the New York State and National Parent Teacher Association. The bylaws require maintenance of our financial records, the sharing of our finances at our public meetings, filing our taxes and presenting all forms required by the Internal Revenue Service and New York State agencies. Misuse of funds such as those falsely described against us could result in the dissolution of our chapter and the loss of everything SEPTA has worked towards. We are taking these false allegations against us very seriously as they are defamatory and harmful to both our credibility and mission.

Within these attacks against SEPTA, several other false and discriminatory statements have been made against Ms. Bajaj due to her write in candidacy in the latest Board of Education election. Again, to set the record straight, a day before the election, a few community members, knowing the quality of Ms. Bajaj's character and work ethic, decided to write in her name as a candidate. They shared this desire with a few others and word spread. Ms. Bajaj had no knowledge of her write in candidacy until late afternoon on election day when a friend texted to congratulate her on her decision to throw her hat in the ring.

To be clear, GC SEPTA fully stands behind and supports Ms. Bajaj. Her work on behalf of special needs students as a SEPTA board member as well as on behalf of the greater Garden City Community, has been invaluable. Discrimination and malicious statements about Ms. Bajaj as well as GC SEPTA will not be tolerated.

Garden City SEPTA is a group of volunteers. Moms and dads, who are committed to a mission of unity through inclusion. We promote anti-bullying and anti-exclusion policies and actions. We are a group with many different backgrounds, but we come together to help better the experiences of Garden City students and families. As an organization that works hard to promote these values, the tone and tenor of these attacks are deeply troubling. We hope that in the future, our neighbors and fellow Garden City residents will help us in calling out harmful discourse when they hear it.

We thank you for your time and attention,

The Executive Board of GC SEPTA:

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Cristina Dickey
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