



## Ms. Lydia Diamond

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Originally from Brooklyn New York, Lydia Diamond (children may call her Nana Lydia) is a hair braider, teaching artist, and community organizer based in South Burlington, Vermont. Lydia Diamond was Born and raised in Brooklyn, her mother from South Carolina and her father from Panama City, Panama. Ms. Diamond has four children and six grandchildren. She is proud to be a Black woman who shares her stories and the tradition of hair braiding with others.

Ms. Diamond has always been very involved in her local community. She was the cofounder of A.W.A.R.E (A Work Against Racism Everywhere), an organization that fought racism in the Vermont public school system. She then spent two years as the Commissioner for the Burlington School District. During her time on the school board, she fought to have racial harassment recognized as a separate form of bullying. In 2002 Ms. Diamond was honored by Mr. & Mrs. Roy V. Hill of the Vermont

Juneteenth society with a plaque for her work as a school commissioner for the Burlington school district. In the same year she received a Golden Apple award, from the Burlington School District, appreciating her for her service to the children of Burlington Vermont. Inspired by her granddaughter Brooklyn Ms. Diamond founded Brooklyn Strong, an organization that advocates and fundraises for children diagnosed with cancer. Ms. Diamond is also an educator who teaches hair braiding. Taught by her mother, Ms. Diamond has been braiding hair since she was 9 years old. As the oldest of four, she was often responsible for braiding her younger siblings' hair. From a young age she learned that braiding hair was not just about style, but also hair care and tradition. A tradition that she passed down to her children. Ms. Diamond also educates others on the history of hair braiding, specifically how Africans braided grains and seeds in their hair to survive in the New World after the Middle Passage.

Ms. Diamond is a Teaching Artist for The Clemmons Family Farm's Windows to A Multicultural World program. She will open the session for children in grades 4 – 8 and their families with storytelling about how her own family celebrated Kwanzaa when she was a girl. She will also introduce Mr. Kunama of the National Association of Black Storytellers. Her session will be livestreamed on Zoom from 5:30 – 6:30 pm on December 19.

