

Gecko Gazette

Robert E. Willis Elementary School



14705 THE MASTERS AVENUE, LAKEWOOD RANCH, FL 34202

(941) 316-8245

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

We are pleased to welcome you to the 2016/17 school year! At Willis Elementary, we are committed to providing a safe environment that ensures all children reach their full potential. We believe the meaningful involvement of families and support from the community is essential. Children learn best when the significant adults in their lives (parents, teachers, and other family and community members) work together to encourage and support them. All the experiences children have, both in and out of school, help shape their sense that someone cares about them, their feelings of self-worth and competency, their understanding of the world around them, and their beliefs about where they fit into the scheme of things. In the upcoming year we look forward to working with you to strengthen the relationships between families and the school community. In our experience, significant and meaningful home-school relationships are essential and valuable in improving student growth and performance.

As partners, we all share in the responsibility for our children's safety. As we begin the new year, please keep in mind the following safety protocols designed to ensure the safety of our students, their families, and the Willis Elementary School staff. Of great importance are the rules related to dismissal:

- 1) Please remain in your vehicle and keep in the right hand lane when you are in the drop off/



Welcome new Assistant Principal
Billie-Jo Fintel and Mr. Stenger, Principal.

pick up line. When your vehicle reaches the designated spot, a staff member will assist your child in exiting or entering the vehicle in safe manner (on the right side of your vehicle).

2) If you choose to bypass the drop off line and enter into the parking lot to drop off your child, you are required to park in a designated space and escort your child through the

crosswalk. Please be sure to use caution while walking through the parking lot. If you wish to simply drop your child off in the morning, you must do so by using the drop off line.

- 3) At dismissal time, please make certain your child's name card is hanging from your rearview mirror. In this location, staff members are able to easily identify the student to be picked up and ensure they are waiting for you at the designated area when you arrive.
- 4) Please do not use your cell phone while driving on school property. Cell phones can be a distraction while driving and the safety of the students at Willis is of the utmost importance.

Following these few procedures will help you ensure the safety of every Willis Elementary School student. We greatly appreciate your cooperation and understanding concerning our school's safety procedures. We look forward to a very successful and safe year!

Bill Stenger, Principal
Billie-Jo Fintel, Assistant Principal

PTO CORNER

Welcome back to Willis and a great big welcome to those who are new to our school! I hope you all had a great summer!

On behalf of the Willis P.T.O., I would like to say how excited we are about 2016-17 school year. At Willis we are very fortunate to have a terrific Principal, a fabulous new Assistant Principal, and an amazing faculty and staff that are 110% dedicated to educating our children.

For those unfamiliar with us, the Willis P.T.O. is a non-profit volunteer organization whose mission is to support our teachers, administrators, staff, and students by providing a top quality education to our students. We achieve this through financial support, organizing community events and enrichment activities, and much more.

As a parent/guardian of a Willis student, you are automatically a member of the Willis P.T.O., no sign up required. We have monthly general meetings and hope that you will attend. The first **P.T.O. meeting is set for Friday, Sept. 16th at 2:00 - 2:50pm** in the Cafeteria. I have found being involved in the P.T.O. keeps me connected to my child's school and has been a rewarding experience. I cannot believe it is my last year here. Time flies!

The P.T.O. works hard to make the school year both enjoyable and exciting for everyone. We will continue to host our two main fundraisers this year, **The Walk-a-thon on Nov. 4th** and the Gecko Gala in the Spring to support the needs of our school. We also plan to hold many fun activities, such as Spirit Nights, Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Mom, a Father Daughter Dance, a Mother Son Event and Field Day.

Everything we do is based on volunteers and we are always looking for those of you to help make a difference in the lives of our children. We are so grateful to all the amazing and talented

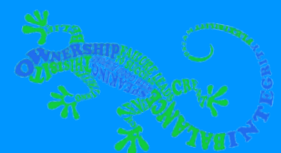
parents that contribute their time and talent in many ways, big and small. You can help in easy ways by attending events, saving Box Tops, and registering with Amazon Smile. You can help your child get pledges for the Walk-a-thon and/or participate in the Gecko Gala through on-line bidding. Most importantly you can get involved in the life of the school by volunteering. Everyone's participation makes the P.T.O. successful and results in tremendous benefits to the school.

This year we are looking for 2 volunteers to shadow the current Chairs of the **Newsletter** and **Gecko Gala** that would be willing to be Chair for the 2017-2018 school year. If you are interested and want to learn more, please email us at williselementarypto@yahoo.com.

Each year the Willis P.T.O. Board works with administration to identify areas in need of improvement throughout the school. This summer we were very busy inside and out! Inside we completed the projector retrofit project, which consisted of mounting the remaining 22 classroom projectors, as well as the installation of classroom wireless surround systems. Outside, we had fans installed to keep our students and coaches cool under our P.E. covered area.

Your involvement with the P.T.O. not only benefits our Willis family, but the greatest reward is seeing the smile on your child's face when you are involved in his or her world. Please consider attending our monthly meetings or volunteering to help with an event. Be sure to read our weekly P.T.O. Email Blast for up-to-date information and announcements, join our Facebook page, and check out the Newsletter to review all that's happened and what's coming up. Here's to a great school year!

Best wishes,
Ashley Henderson
P.T.O. President



2016 WALK-A-THON November 4, 2016

The Walk-a-thon is our largest fundraiser of the year. Willis students, teachers and staff walk to raise money for Willis. Based on the amount of money each student raises, they win prizes like "no homework", a special Walk-a-thon t-shirt, many priceless experiences, and a chance to get Mr. Stenger, the principal, to do something out of the ordinary such as spend the day on the lake or above a lake in a crane as we did last year.

More detailed information will be sent home closer to the event, along with instructions on how to donate on-line. Please rally up your relatives and good friends to help make this year the most successful yet!



Mr. Stenger "above the lake" for the 2015 Walk-A-thon. Mrs. Rahn's Class enjoying the view!

CLASS OF 2016 GIFT

A big thank you to the Willis Class of 2016, last year's 5th graders, for purchasing brand new front door mats for the school.



P.T.O. MEETING!

Our next P.T.O. Meeting is Friday, Sept. 16th from 2:00-2:50 in the Cafeteria.

PHOTOGRAPHERS NEEDED!

Like to take pictures? Have a camera? The Yearbook Committee needs you! Whether you can volunteer for an hour, a few days, once a week, please contact our chairs: Jen Bowles: jennifer.bowles@aol.com & Liz Baas: lizbass@gmail.com. Thank you!

SPIRIT NIGHTS

Our next Spirit Night is **Thursday, Sept. 22nd at Chick-Fil-A from 3:00pm - 9:00pm.** Spirit Nights are fundraisers where Willis families eat at a local restaurant on a specific night and part of the proceeds for the sales go back to Willis.

THANK YOU!


Thank you to PDQ for hosting our first Spirit Night of the 2016-2017 school year!

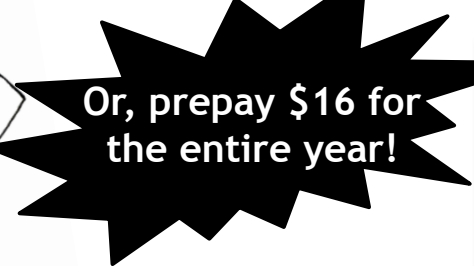


2016/17 P.T.O. BOARD MEMBERS*

Ashley Henderson - President
Courtney Darpino - Vice President
Deb Hossenlopp - Vice President
Tara Merino - Treasurer
Christa Nash - Secretary

*click on each name for email






Thank you! Your donation supports the 2016/2017 5th Grade!

DRESS DOWN DAYS
 Friday, August 19th
 Wednesday, September 7th
 Wednesday, October 5th
 Thursday, November 10th
 Wednesday, December 7th
 Friday, January 20th
 Wednesday, February 1st
 Wednesday, March 1st
 Friday, April 7th

Don't forget: Students must meet the School District of Manatee County Code of Student Conduct Dress Code Requirements.



Hello Families!

This is just a little note to let you know that our school collects Box Tops and we would absolutely LOVE it if you could collect them and send them in to your child's classroom!

You can find them on lots of packages...everything from school supplies to cereal! Each regular Box Top clipping is worth 10 cents and those can add up quickly when we all turn them in!



We will have 4 collection dates during the year. Our first one is on **September 1st** and the **top 3 collecting classes will win a popcorn party!** Don't forget to ask your friends and family to collect them as well!!

Thank you in advance for your participation!

Sincerely,

Willis Elementary PTO

First Box Top Collection:
September 1st!

FRONT OFFICE REMINDER

Please note that District policy requires that all visitors sign in at the front office using our computer system. In order to sign-in via our computer system, you must complete the registration process. This process requires you to provide a valid driver's license or state identification card to our office staff. The office staff will then register you within the system.

After you are registered in the system, you will be able to log in any time you wish to enter the school by typing your name into the computers located by the front door. Please be sure to type your name in as it appears on the form of identification previously provided. When logging in, please indicate the reason for your visit, print your name badge, and place the badge in a visible location on your shirt. Please do not enter the school through any other entrance. Upon leaving the building, you may scan your name badge to indicate you are checking out, or hand the sticker to one of the front office staff and they will complete this step for you.

CLINIC

WELCOME BACK! The clinic is up and running. However, we do find our clinic to be low on small and medium sizes of underwear. Accidents happen and so if anybody can donate some "undies", it would be greatly appreciated.

The Clinic is here to help take care of our students when they are not feeling well, get hurt or need medication here at school. We REALLY stress the importance of hand washing and keeping those germs away. Students with a temperature of 100 or more will be sent home and are NOT to return to school until they are fever free for 24 hours without any fever reducing medications. Also, if they have been running a fever or vomiting at home prior to school or the night before, it is best to keep them home to rest

so when they return to school they are at their best to learn.

Medications including those that are over the counter medications (Tylenol, cough drops, antihistamines, etc.) must have a physician's order and parent permission form completed, delivered and turned into the clinic by an adult. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to stop by the clinic or call us at **(941) 316-8245 ext. 2011**.

We are looking forward to a FANTASTIC and HEALTHY school year here at Willis Elementary!

Mary Fischer, RN
School Nurse

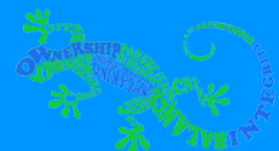
COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Welcome back! I Hope you had a relaxing summer.

*I would like to take a moment to introduce myself to our Willis students, families and friends. My name is Phyllis Morales and I am your child's school counselor here at Willis Elementary. This is my 14th year as a school counselor and I am available to help you and your child have a successful school year. I will be facilitating individual and group counseling sessions throughout the school year to promote the development of strong, positive character traits for those in need. The groups will revolve around the nine pillars found in the state statute, which are **Patriotism, Responsibility, Citizenship, Kindness,***

Respect, Honesty, Self-Control, Tolerance, and Cooperation.

In addition, I am the Test Coordinator, Intense Support Team Chairperson and part of the Best Practices for Inclusion Education (BPIE) Team. I look forward to working with a fabulous staff this year and if you have any questions, concerns, or an interest to refer your child for counseling, please don't hesitate to contact me.



Thank you,
Phyllis Morales
Certified School Counselor
Willis Elementary School
941-316.8245 at ext.2004

FOOD SERVICES

- ◆ Menus may be found at <http://manatee.nutrislice.com/>
- ◆ **Elementary Breakfast is Free** for all students! If your child is a car rider, biker or walker, please make sure he/she is in the cafeteria no later than 8:10 so they have enough time to eat breakfast.

Elementary Lunch - \$2.25 Adult Lunch - \$3.25
- ◆ Please be sure to have your child's lunch money in an envelope with his/her name on the envelope as well as the teacher's name.
- ◆ You may also pay online at www.mypaymentsplus.com. **Please contact Mr. Jeff, Cafeteria Manager, at 941-316-8245 ext. 2014** or Ms. Kari, Registrar, at 941-316-8245 ext. 2009 to get your child's ID # if you are setting up an account online.
- ◆ If you want to apply for **Free and Reduced Lunch Meals**, please go to the following website: www.manateeschoolfood.net. Click

on the Free and Reduced button and fill in the form. Please remember that you must reapply for free and reduced lunches for your child each year, even if your child was receiving free or reduced lunches last school year.

- ◆ If you would like to treat your child's class for a special occasion like a birthday or holiday, we can take the worry and work out of it for you with a **Celebration Basket!** All Celebration Baskets include a choice of a snack, choice of a sweet treat, and prizes! You can purchase the Celebration Baskets by going to the following website and setting up an account - <https://manateeschools.catertrax.com>. Once you are in the website and have your account set up, go to student catering and then select Celebration Basket. Please fill out the form and send a check or cash in on the day of the order to Mr. Jeff in the Cafeteria. Please make sure you notify your teacher to coordinate the day you wish to provide the Celebration Basket. The baskets are delivered around 1:45 p.m directly to the class. Please try to order the baskets two weeks in advance to make sure we have all items in stock.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Willis Runner's Club

Every Wednesday morning from 7:30am - 8:00am at the Willis Field.

Please bring a water bottle!

Club is free! All you have to do is show up and walk, jog, or run!

Parents can come and run as well but please no pets.

Parents. please park cars in the parking lot if you are staying.

Students must stay on the field until Runners' Club is over unless a parent/s is with them.

Coaches will walk students to school and enter by the Cafeteria if they want breakfast or they can go to their class!



THANK YOU TO OUR WILLIS BUSINESS PARTNERS!

Platinum

Arsenault Dermatology

Buffalo Wild Wings

Four Pillars

IMG

Jumpin Fun Sports

LWR Family & Cosmetic Dentistry

Primrose School at Lakewood Ranch

1bid1

Morrish Stewart Orthodontics

Zarghami Dream Home Specialists

Gold

Beyond Dancing

Brain Balance Center of Lakewood Ranch

Cooper Creek Dental

First Physicians Group

Golf Car Outlet

Hornback Chiropractic

Jess Jewelers

Kristin M. Culliton, Atchley International Realty

Kumon

Lil Divas and Dudes

Manasota Roofing

Moricz & Varone Orthodontics

MSD Engineering

PDQ

Premier Sports Campus

Reel Deal Pressure Washing

Riverchase Dermatology

Square 1 Burgers & Bar

Team Cash, Coldwell Banker

Thomas A. Bowles DDS

CALENDAR

September

5 NO SCHOOL (Holiday)

7 EARLY RELEASE (1:15pm)

Runner's Club (7:30am)

Dress Down Day (\$2)

16 P.T.O. Meeting (2:00-2:50pm)

19 SAC Meeting (6:00pm). All welcome!

22 Chik-Fil-A Spirit Night (3:00-9:00pm)

30 Fall Book Fair starts (ends Oct. 6)

October

5 EARLY RELEASE (1:15pm)

Runner's Club (7:30am)

Dress Down Day (\$2)

6 Donuts with Dad (7:30-8:30am)

13 End of 1st Quarter

14 NO SCHOOL (Record Day)

21 EARLY RELEASE (12:30pm)

24 NO SCHOOL (Inservice)

26 Fall Pictures (retakes Dec. 6)

28 EARLY RELEASE (12:30pm)

HOW TO CONTACT THE SCHOOL

Phone: (941) 316-8245

Website: [Link here!](#)

MANATEE COUNTY

Website: [Link here!](#)

2016/17 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Website: [Link here!](#)

WILLIS P.T.O.

Website: [Link here!](#)

The Gecko Gazette is a quarterly publication for the Robert E. Willis Elementary School. For any questions or comments feel free to contact Christine Shaklik at shaklik@me.com.

