

# Gecko Gazette

## Robert E. Willis Elementary School



14705 THE MASTERS AVENUE, LAKEWOOD RANCH, FL 34202

(941) 316-8245

### ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

It is hard to believe that we are getting ready to say good-bye to the 2016-2017 school year. These past ten months have passed too quickly.

As the end of the year draws near please keep in mind that students must be in their classrooms ready to learn at 8:30 a.m. During morning drop off, please be sure to remember our drop off procedures. We appreciate you looking out for all of our students' safety while arriving at school.

The school year's end always brings with it a tremendous sense of accomplishment. So many things have been accomplished this year! From kindergartener's first day of school to the fifth grade celebration - our students have been involved in an extraordinary number of activities. Of course, we should not forget the tremendous amount of learning, which has taken place during the year. Our students and staff worked extremely hard to embrace the Florida Standards. Throughout all of these activities and learning our students have demonstrated great character!

Although summer is time away from school, it is important to continue to support your child so they maintain the gains made throughout the school year. This year we will be sending home summer packets for all of our students in kindergarten through fourth grade. Please

encourage your child to work on the packet throughout the summer. Our goal is to make learning throughout the summer fun, while keeping skills sharp.

To our fifth graders - congratulations on your achievement! The Willis staff wishes you all the best as you move on to middle school. We know that each of them has gained a firm foundation for their educational life while at Willis. We hope that our students have embraced the Eight Keys of Excellence and will carry those values forward in their lives.

Parents, the staff would like to thank you for your support and for the guidance that you have provided for your child all year. Please take a moment this summer to celebrate your child's academic achievements.

We wish everyone a safe summer break! Most importantly, relax and enjoy your family and friends this summer. We look forward to seeing our returning Geckos on the first day of school, August 10, 2017.

**Bill Stenger, Principal**

**Billie-Jo Fintel, Assistant Principal**



## P.T.O. PRESIDENT

Dear Willis Families!

The end of the school year is upon us, and in just a few days it will be summer vacation! It feels like yesterday that we began this 2016-2017 school year together. It has been so fun, busy and amazingly successful thanks to our volunteers, parents, staff and sponsors. We can't thank you enough for all of your support, time, partnership and leadership.

I hope that you have been able to enjoy some of our great events we held this year, such as the Walk-A-Thon, Holiday Shop, Muffins with Mom, Donuts with Dad, various Spirit Nights, the Gecko Gala, On the Roof, Father/Daughter Dance, Mother/Son Baseball Game, Popcorn Wednesdays, Book Fairs, Staff Appreciation Week and the best day of the year - Field Day! Also, our yearbooks are finally here! The P.T.O. Board would especially like to thank all of our Committee Chairs who volunteered so much of their

time, energy and talents to our children and school. These events, activities and fundraisers would not be possible without these amazing volunteers!

This is also my last year at Willis. You have become my family and I am sad to leave. I have really enjoyed serving on the P.T.O. for the last three years, getting to know families, staff and administration. I will miss you all!

Though I am leaving Willis, I will always be a supporter of this P.T.O. I encourage others who haven't volunteered for this great organization to do so. I feel very lucky to have been part of such a great organization.

Have a wonderful summer!

Best Wishes to you all,  
Ashley Henderson, P.T.O. President



### THANK YOU TO OUR SPIRIT NIGHT SPONSORS!



A big thank you to:

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

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

\*click on each name for email



## P.T.O. TREASURER REPORT

While everyone has been enjoying the amazing events held throughout the year, the P.T.O. has been working hard behind the scenes putting our fundraising dollars to good use by making several large scale financial investments at Willis. Thanks to your generous Walk-A-Thon and Gala donations, we have been able to make some really cool things happen!

### WALK-A-THON DONATIONS:

- ★ purchased new furniture to create an Early Reader section in the Media Center. This area will include a wonderful reading nook. This was a \$10,000 investment and will be set up over the summer.
- ★ purchased 25 new laptops for the students. This was an \$11,000 investment.
- ★ purchased items for a new Makerspace in the Media Center. This includes Cublets to build robots, Snap Circuits, Legos, and littleBits STEAM kit. We also purchased a the very popular Hooki stools for this space. This was a \$3,000 investment.
- ★ purchased Leveled Classroom Libraries for all classrooms for the start of next year. This was a \$30,000 investment.
- ★ will purchase an additional \$10,000 in items for the Media Center by the end of June.

### OTHER FUNDRAISING EFFORTS:

- ★ purchased additional STEM books, "Who Is," "I Survived," and "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" books. This was a \$1,000 investment.
- ★ completed the new Volunteer Area for all of our amazing volunteers to use. This was just under a \$1,000 investment.
- ★ will purchase an ELA program designed to deepen teacher understanding of effective instruction and illuminate student thinking about literature, supporting the development of critical thinking and lifelong love of reading. This will be a \$20,000 investment.
- ★ will begin to build our Math program and provide additional teaching strategy tools. This will be around a \$10,000 investment.

We hope that all the students enjoy these new resources! In total, we anticipate a total investment of over **\$85,000**. We greatly appreciate all of your support and thank everyone who has been involved in these projects.

**Sincerely,**

**Tara Bergstrom-Merino, P.T.O. Treasurer**



### BOX TOP WINNERS!



#### 3rd Quarter

Mrs. Scherpf

Mrs. Turner

Mrs. McLaurin

#### 4th Quarter

Mrs. Podolan

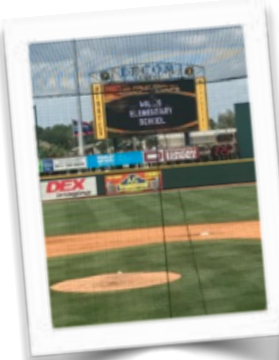
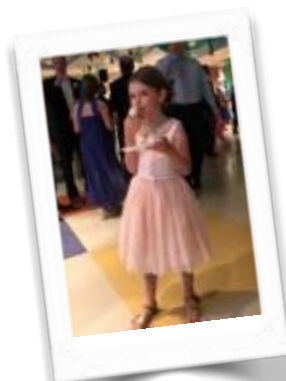
Mrs. Santello

Mrs. Scherpf

Thank you to our amazing volunteer, Natalia Escamilla who has counted each and every Box Top for the past three years. We will miss you and can't thank you enough for your time and energy!

Please do not forget to keep collecting your Box Tops this summer!

## Under the Sea Father Daughter Dance 2017





# Field Day Fun!



## MUSIC

As we are winding up the year I want to thank all of the students, staff, and parents for your support for the arts here at Willis. We have had a fantastic year in the music room. In October, the fourth and fifth grade students attended the Young Person's Concert at the Van Wezel. In December, the third grade students performed in the holiday musical "Christmas on Candy Cane Lane." In November, the Didgeridoo Down Under Australian group came to perform for the entire school. In March, five Willis fifth graders were chosen to perform in the Manatee County Elementary All County Music Festival. Their performance was fantastic and will be remembered for years to come. Congratulations! Thanks to access to grant funds, we were able to continue our music glow-in-the-dark party for all students this month. Lastly, the Under the Sea Talent Show was a huge success once again. There is a link on Youtube if you would like to watch the dress performance. Please click on the [link](#) to access the site:



Have a wonderful summer. We look forward to the 2017-2018 school year!

Mrs. Christy Isaacs, Music Teacher x2079

## CLINIC

The summertime fun is about to begin and with that I'd like to put out a few friendly reminders.

- ★ Never swim alone.
- ★ Apply your sunscreen before you go out into the sun and reapply if you will be out all day to help prevent sunburn.
- ★ Shuffle your feet (stingray shuffle) when going into the water to scatter off any rays in the water to avoid getting stung.
- ★ Remember to wear those helmets while biking, skateboarding or on your scooter. Protect that brain and all the knowledge that is in it!
- ★ Wear bright color clothing when outside, especially at night so you can be easily seen by cars.
- ★ Also, please make sure your children know their address and parents name and phone number.

We want you to stay safe all year long! Have a great summer and see you in August!



**Mary Fischer, RN, School Nurse**  
**Kris Miller x2010/x2011**

REMINDER: Any medication that is in the clinic, must be picked up no later than the last day of school or it will be destroyed. Thank you!

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Congratulations to our **Robert E. Willis Elementary Track Team** that competed in the Manatee County Elementary School Track Championships held at Bayshore High School on April 22, 2017. The Willis Team participated in the 400 meter run - only three boys and girls from third, fourth, and fifth grades were permitted to compete from each school.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Girls

- 1- Morgan Cunningham – DNF
- 2- Lilly Robertson – 1:30.81 (20<sup>th</sup>)
- 3- Boston Robertson – 1:25.40 ( 9<sup>th</sup>)

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Boys

- 1- Jaxon Lemus – 1:27.28 (26<sup>th</sup>)
- 2- Dylan Walker – 1:22.75 (11<sup>th</sup>)
- 3- Wyatt Hossenlopp – 1:19.28 (6<sup>th</sup>)

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls

- 1- Laney Curtis – 1:25.78 (17<sup>th</sup>)
- 2- Savannah Adams – 1:21.66 (8<sup>th</sup>)
- 3- Kai Tsakiris – 1:22.44 (10<sup>th</sup>)

### 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Boys

- 1- Jake Morales – 1:16.18 (12<sup>th</sup>)
- 2- Michael Wagner – 1:14.38 (6<sup>th</sup>)
- 3- Zaid Ibsais – 1:17.87 (16<sup>th</sup>)

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Girls

- 1- Emily Conelias – 1:19.69 (21<sup>st</sup>)
- 2- Sophie Lemus – 1:18.44 (18<sup>th</sup>)
- 3- Brandi Maslar – 1:15.87 (13<sup>th</sup>)

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Boys

- 1- Nico Tsakiris – 1:09.88 (7<sup>th</sup>)
- 2- Keagan Duquette – 1:15.33 (18<sup>th</sup>)
- 3- Tim Kovacs – 1:22.69 (39<sup>th</sup>)

Thank you to all the students who participated in **Runner's Club**. In total, 425 students ran **52,355 laps (10,471 miles)**! Top Runners are listed below.

Grade	Names	Laps	Laps/Grade
K Girls	Quinn Hossenlopp	161	
	Erin Delong	109	
	Myla Bryan	65	
K Boys	Mason Hunn	319	<b>2,613 Laps 523 Miles</b>
	Aidan Butler	314	
	Sebastian Galliano	262	
1st Grade Girls	Alexia Brielman	556	
	Hayden Bowles	556	
	Abby Messner	364	
	Kara Gaines	299	
1st Grade Boys	Parker Bowles	489	<b>8,003 Laps 1,600 Miles</b>
	Max Morales	460	
	Luca Schlosberg	312	
2nd Grade Girls	Averie Gaines	392	
	Gianna Demino	306	
	Adriana Galiano	278	
2nd Grade Boys	Jacob Lies Cruz	580	<b>5,368 Laps 1,074 Miles</b>
	Davis Hunn	435	
	Christen Miceli	172	
3rd Grade Girls	Morgan Cunningham	574	
	Veria Sergenu	369	
	Isabella Monsalve	291	
3rd Grade Boys	Jaxon Lemus	780	<b>10,738 Laps 2,148 Miles</b>
	Ryan Catlett	740	
	Carter Okuhara	374	
4th Grade Girls	Savannah Adams	925	
	Sofia Cruz	653	
	Ellie Hierholzer	635	
4th Grade Boys	Jake Morales	832	<b>11,624 Laps 2,325 Miles</b>
	Michael Wagner	754	
	Cody Crawford	713	
5th Grade Girls	Madison Adams	936	
	Brandi Maslar	624	
	Ava Antritt	600	
	Kendall Crowell	506	
5th Grade Boys	Logan Catlett	732	<b>13,969 Laps 2,794 Miles</b>
	Kyle Vaughn	651	
	Evan Okuhara	549	



Miles of Smiles,  
Coach Morales & Coach Quinn



## Kindergarten

It is hard to believe another wonderful year has gone by. The kindergarten students have blossomed and now are ready to move on. We are so proud of their accomplishments. In Language Arts this quarter, students applied and extended reading and writing strategies with both fiction and informational text that included shared reading, close reading/read aloud, group discussions, independent reading practice, and written responses to reading through drawing, dictating, and writing.

During fourth quarter Math, students described measurable attributes of objects, compared objects and expressed length of an object as a whole number of length units. Students continued to use basic shapes and spatial reasoning to model objects in their environment and constructed complex shapes.

In Science, students explored how the daytime and nighttime sky look different and learned when the Sun and moon can be observed in the sky. Students also recognized that some objects are far away and some are near and that this can change how they appear when you observe them.

In Social Studies the students examined the difference between a need and a want and recognized that people work to earn money.

This quarter the students were able to experience the "Under Six" performance at Florida Studios. Don't be surprised if your child wants to write stories and have the stories submitted for next year's plays. It was so rewarding to hear the students' laughter during the play. Embracing Our Differences presentation was incredible. We viewed most of the displays and discussed the meaning behind the artwork. The students did an outstanding job in our End of Year Kindergarten Performance.

(cont. above)

The kindergarten team would like to thank the parents for the wonderful teacher appreciation gifts and all your support this school year. We are lucky to have such wonderful parents.

Kindergarten performance!



## First Grade

Boy, time sure does fly when you're having fun! We can't believe it's already time for summer break! During the past few months, first graders have had a lot of fun learning about space and Earth's land and water. In math, we focused on geometry, data, measurement, and just completed our final Math i-Ready Diagnostic. We also just finished our final i-Ready Reading Diagnostic and the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment.

We hope each and every child will complete the summer packets we are providing each student, and continue reading at least 20 minutes daily. Everyone worked so hard this year and made excellent gains; however, as you know, students will regress over the summer if they stop reading and writing.

All of the first grade teachers would like to thank you for the support you gave us this year. We have enjoyed teaching your children, and wish all of you a safe and happy summer!



## 2nd Grade

Second grade has had a wonderful year. Our students have grown by leaps and bounds and are ready to show off all of their learning to their third grade teachers!

It would be beneficial for all students to review their math facts and continue reading at their independent level throughout the summer. The Summer Packet is a great way to do a little bit of practice each day!

Thank you for all of your support throughout the school year and all of your extra love during Teacher Appreciation Week. We wish all families a fun and safe summer vacation. See you in August!



Mrs. Nadeau's Class



Mrs. Flynn's Class



Mrs. Whitenight's Class



Mrs. French's Class



## 3rd Grade

We cannot believe the end of the year is already here! It has been a fantastic pleasure to teach your children this year, and we have really enjoyed watching them learn and grow. We wish everyone a safe and happy summer!

We encourage you to work on the summer packet that was sent home with your child. This will help keep their skills fresh and avoid the "summer slide." Multiplication and division fact practice is also recommended.

We were thrilled to receive the preliminary Third Grade FSA ELA scores. We are so proud of our students and their hard work. Good luck in 4<sup>th</sup> grade!

## 4th Grade

What a great year we have had in fourth grade! The students have learned many new skills and strategies in all of their subjects and participated in many fun and exciting projects such as the Tropicana Speech Contest and the Science Fair. We have also been on field trips to the Symphony and Florida Studio Theater to enrich our learning.

As your child moves on to fifth grade, there are some things that you can do to help them succeed. Have your child read every day, either on their own or with you. Remind them to ask and answer questions with text evidence, make predictions, and visualize as they read. Continue to practice all of their basic facts as a way to be ready for fifth grade math. Give your child the opportunity to develop skills working with appropriate strategies and solving problems independently. Have a discussion with your child about ways to stay organized. Then start practicing over the summer. Encourage your child to write often! Writing stories, letters, and journal entries are wonderful ways to get thoughts organized and put onto paper. Finally, let your child play outdoors. There are always so many new things to discover.

The fourth grade team would like to say thank you for a wonderful year. Have a terrific summer!



## 5th Grade

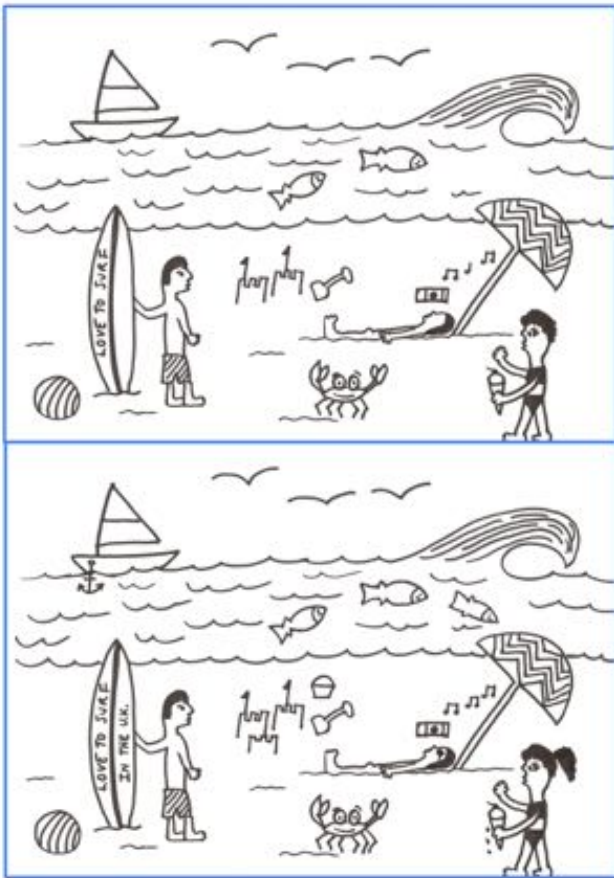
It is hard to believe that this school year is coming to an end. It seems like it has sped by. We have been very busy finishing testing, practicing for the recognition program and making presentations. The fifth grade has a very busy end of the year and enjoyed their end of year field trips and recognition ceremony.

The fifth grade team would like to wish everyone a safe and happy summer! Congratulations to our 5th grade students - we will miss you!

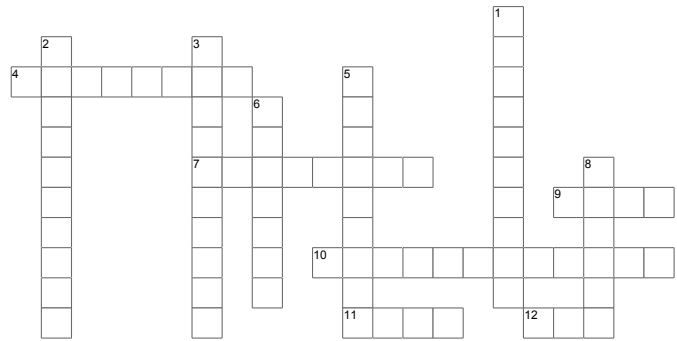


### Spot The Differences

There are 10 differences between these two beaches. Can you find them?



### Summer Fun!



**ACROSS**

- 4. To cook outdoors on a grill
- 7. Beverage made of lemon
- 9. The month at the beginning of summer
- 10. Independence Day
- 11. What you can do at the beach?
- 12. Opposite of cold

**DOWN**

- 1. A big fruit you can eat in summer
- 2. What you can make at the beach with sand?
- 3. Protective eyewear
- 5. Time off from school
- 6. Sleeping in a tent
- 8. The month at the end of summer

AUGUST	FOURTH OF JULY	SWIM	BARBECUE
SAND CASTLE	HOT	VACATIONS	SUNGLASSES
LEMONADE	JUNE	CAMPING	WATERMELON

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Puzzle by Julie K. Cohen



# BEACH WORD SEARCH

DRNEAMESMLSBTBE  
 RRTAHBAELSUUIUN  
 SSACCIUERERERKUEE  
 NEXULIHCLZFI SBG  
 LBSBGSLSSTSSBN GSH  
 BAOSAESEAI OINCI  
 MACEAAFNPJAZIKY  
 TJSICLDIWGRCHLG  
 LNWD PAGV LQDZTAV  
 XLNTLOWNPVPRAWN  
 GAUSXIRWUHVXBDT  
 SKLGFMLTXSHEVRM  
 NOITACAVAVESAN  
 PCDNSEBTPYXWSOJ  
 QBD CGRSZWLBD RBL

Bathing Suit  
Bikini  
Boardwalk  
Lifeguard

Pelican  
Sailboat  
Sandals  
Sand Castle

Scuba  
Seagull  
Seashell  
Sunglasses

Surfboard  
Tropical  
Vacation  
Waves

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**Thomas A. Bowles DDS**

**CALENDAR**

**May**

- 29 NO SCHOOL (Holiday)
- 30 EARLY RELEASE (1:15pm)
- 31 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!  
EARLY RELEASE (1:15pm)

**August**

- 8 Open House (Classroom Assignments)
- 10 FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL (2017-2018)



**THE GECKO GAZETTE**

The Gecko Gazette has been a quarterly publication for the Robert E. Willis Elementary School for the past four years. This will be my last edition!

Anyone interested in taking over, please contact the Assistant Principal, Ms. Billie Jo Fintel or the P.T.O. President.

Thank you for your support!  
Christine Shaklik at [shaklik@me.com](mailto:shaklik@me.com).