

The Gecko Gazette

Robert E. Willis Elementary School

14705 The Masters Avenue, Lakewood Ranch, Florida 34202 (941) 316-8245



August 2013-14
Issue #1

PRINCIPAL

WELCOME BACK! It's been a long, hot summer, but we are ready to jump into school feet first! Because safety is of utmost importance to all of us at Willis, I want to take the time to highlight the rules concerning carpool and drop off to ensure a smooth start to the year.

The carpool and drop off appear complicated, but a few key rules make the process quite simple. First, if you are in the carpool line, please stay in your car in the right hand lane and do not exit your car at any time. When you reach the designated spot, a school staff member will assist your child in exiting the vehicle in a safe manner.

Second, PLEASE, no cell phone use while driving on school grounds. Third, upon pick up, ensure you have your name placard in a visible location so staff may quickly identify and call your children.

If you choose to drop off your child by parking in the parking lot, please park; you MUST escort your child through the crosswalk, and please use caution while walking through the parking lot. Please DO NOT stop in the stream of traffic to drop off your child and have them walk unattended through the crosswalk. This is very dangerous for students and causes unnecessary back-up of traffic. Upon pick up, please wait in the designated places for your child to exit the school. If

your child has already been seated, provide a staff member your child's name and grade to have the child brought to you.

Following these simple rules will help all of us ensure a smart and safe return. We appreciate your cooperation.

As always, if you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask!

Mr. Bill Stenger



Mrs. Connie Dixon, Asst. Principal and Mr. Bill Stenger, Principal head up a new school year!

P.T.O.

I would personally like to welcome both returning and new Willis Families. The P.T.O. has been working very hard to make this school year an amazing one, filled with both familiar events in addition to some exciting new ones.

Our first P.T.O. meeting is Friday, August 30th at 2pm in the Cafetorium. This is a perfect opportunity to find out what is planned and what volunteer opportunities are available for the school year.

The P.T.O. is planning three big events in addition to other fun filled

ones throughout the year. Our biggest fundraiser, the Walk-a-thon, will take place in October. We are adding a Holiday Bazaar in December and our third will be our Gecko Gala in the spring.

We have a new, enthusiastic P.T.O., that is excited about making this school year the best ever.

We look forward to

your participation and partnership with our awesome school.

Here's to a great year at a great school!

Jillanne Conelias
P.T.O. President

www.williselementarypto.com

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Welcome back Willis students. Hope everyone had a great summer. Just like the students, we as educators have opportunities to grow, and it is with great pleasure that I announce that I will be stepping out of the role of Guidance Counselor at Willis and moving into the math lab as a special area teacher. I have a love of math and am very excited

about my new role.

Change is always a good thing, so never be afraid of doing something different. I look forward to serving the students in this new way and to a wonderful new year.

I will continue serving in the Guidance Counselor role until a new counselor is appointed.

Mr. Green x 2004

FOOD SERVICE

Welcome Back! The food service team is excited to see the students return and provide healthy food choices during the school day.

For general information, including menus, please visit www.manateeschoolfood.net, where you can also register for MyPayments Plus or go to www.mypaymentsplus.com to electronically manage your food service account. You may also send in cash or check with your child (properly marked as lunch money), or visit the cafeteria to deposit money onto your child's account.

Questions? We are at x2014

HEALTH CLINIC

WELCOME BACK!

We would like to remind everyone that all students requiring medications during the school day MUST have a [Medication Authorization form](#) completed before any medication can be given at school. This includes over the counter medications such as Benadryl, cough drops, Tylenol, etc. These forms are available in the clinic or online at the Manatee County schools website.

Please note that students sent home with fevers over 100 should not return to school until they are fever free for 24 hours without medication. If there are any questions regarding the health of your student, please contact the clinic.

Mary Fischer, RN,
School Nurse and
Kris Miller, LPN,
Clinic Nurse
x2010 or x2011

FRONT OFFICE

Visitors

All visitors must check in by using the front office computer system. In order to be entered into the log-in system, you are required to produce photographic identification. Once your information is entered into the system, you will then be able to check yourself in as a Visitor by entering your name and printing off a name badge. Please do not forget to check yourself out upon leaving by scanning your name badge or leaving it for the front office staff to scan.

P.T.O. PAGE

WALK-A-THON

On Friday, October 17, 2013, we will have the Willis Walk-A-Thon, one of our major fundraisers for the school year. Our students enjoy a fun filled event while raising money for their school. Depending on the amount raised and the number of laps walked by the students, prizes are awarded to students and classes. In addition, if the school reaches it's goal, the students get to enjoy seeing their principal do something "unusual." Stay tuned for more details!

If you have any questions or are interested in helping out with the Walk-A-Thon, please contact Elizabeth Pearce (Walk-A-Thon Chair) at ecpearce@yahoo.com.

STUDENT DIRECTORY

Do you own a local business that would like to place an ad in the Willis Student Directory? We distribute over 700 copies! For more details, please visit <http://www.williselementarypto.com/Student-Directory-Advertising.html>. If interested or have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Pearce at williselementarypto@yahoo.com.

DEADLINE: SEPT. 12, 2013

BRICKS FOR SALE!

You can recognize your child's enrollment at Willis by purchasing a 4" x 8" engraved brick for \$50 that will be laid in the school courtyard. Please fill out this [form](#) or purchase directly from the [Gecko Store](#).

P.T.O. Board 2013-14

Jillanne Conelias - President
jillanne67@verizon.net

Liz Combe - Vice President
liz.combe@hotmail.com

Kara Leckie - Treasurer
usaleckies@gmail.com

Shelly Steiner - Secretary
shellyrsteiner@yahoo.com

THANK YOU !

A big thank you to some of our local business sponsors who provided meals to the teachers during their first week back to school:

- ★ DUNKIN' DONUTS (SR 70/Lorraine)
- ★ JIMMY JOHNS (University)

Also, thank you to our business sponsor for the Parent Back to School Coffee:

- ★ FIRST WATCH (Lakewood Ranch)

WELCOME OFFICER

If you are new to Willis Elementary and have questions about the school, the community or just need some general guidance, please contact the P.T.O. Welcome Officer, Liz Combe at liz.combe@hotmail.com.

SPECIALS



Physical Education with Coach Morales!

P.E. Attire

- ★ Willis School Uniform
- ★ Sneakers with Socks
- ★ No Open Toed Shoes/Sandals/Crocs (will not be able to participate)
- ★ Optional: Hat, Sunglasses, Sun block, Water Bottle

Character Qualities through P.E. to promote:

- ★ Respect
- ★ Teamwork
- ★ Trust
- ★ Cooperation
- ★ Sportsmanship
- ★ Self-Control
- ★ Following Directions

Non-Participation Excuses

Needs parent, doctor, teacher or clinic note.

Runners' Club

Let's promote active and healthy lifestyles while having fun ... every Wednesday at 7:30am at Willis Field starting 8/28/13.

Yearly Events

- ★ The President's Challenge
- ★ Speed Stacking
- ★ Elementary Track Competition
- ★ P.E. Central Challenges



Coach Morales
941-316-8245 x 2080
moralesj@manateeschools.net

Music

My name is Christy Isaacs and I am the new music teacher at Willis Elementary. I have been working in Manatee County for 14 years as an elementary music teacher and I'm very excited about joining the Willis team! My philosophy of teaching music is, first and foremost, to present a well rounded education to each and every student in new and exciting ways. In every music class your child will sing, play instruments, move, improvise and read/notate music. I invite you to come to any one of your child's music classes to experience all music education has to offer. However, don't be surprised if you have a blast and want to come back. Hope to see you soon!

Ms. Isaacs x2079

Media Center

Greetings from the Willis Media Center! My name is Stephen Sajewski and I will be the Media Specialist at Willis for the 2013-2014 school year. I am truly excited about the possibilities with this position. As the Media Specialist, I will not only be able to play a supportive role to the instruction that is delivered by our great educators, but I will also be given the opportunity to develop a life long love of reading and learning within each of our students. In the near future, I will be seeking volunteers and look forward to meeting many of you.

Mark Your Calendars: Scholastic's Reading Oasis Book Fair will be appearing at Willis starting September 23rd (finalized schedule is forthcoming).

Mr. Sajewski x 2029



SPECIALS (cont.)

The Science Fair is Coming! The Science Fair is Coming!

Mrs. Bradl will be meeting with fourth and fifth grade parents on Thursday, Sept. 5th from 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. in the cafeteria to review the handouts and explain the expectations for this year's Science Fair projects. She is looking forward to relieving some of the stress that families feel when helping their fourth and fifth graders complete the different

components of this important project. Mrs. Bradl will be working with the parents through the scientific method, how do choose a topic, and what the final science board should look like.

We hope to see you there!

Mrs. Bradl Ext. 2021



More to follow in our next Gecko Gazette from Mr. Green, our new Math Lab instructor!

Art with Mr. London

I'm pleased to have an opportunity to teach Art this year at Willis.

Prior to teaching math lab last year, I taught art for over 12 years. My background is in commercial photography and publishing. I have New York and Florida state certifications in fine arts. My BFA degree is from the School of Visual Arts in New York, and I still operate a small portrait studio.

My approach to teaching art, while still aligned with the Florida Sunshine State Standards, is based on commercial art and how people use art to earn a living. I find that teaching fine art with commercial art blends nicely together in the classroom.

In a commercial art based program the students learn

that art is more than just drawing. An emphasis is placed upon the people who make their living in art in many ways other than by just creating art. In addition to teaching the practical technical skills in art, an equally important component in art education is "the artists" (both past and present).

One of my goals in Art class this year is that each student will be able to name one or more artists, perhaps chose a favorite artist and be able to explain what contributions they have made.

Mr. London x2053



What you will find "in school" ...

F	A	F	S	T		
□	□	□	○	□		
C	E	K	L	O	R	S
□	○	□	□	○	□	□
A	C	E	L	S	S	S
○	□	□	□	□	□	□
S	K	I	D			
□	○	□	□			

Answer:

□ □ □ □ □ □ □

www.PrintActivities.com

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES CAN BE FOUND ON THE PTO WEBSITE [HERE](#).

What we will learn this year ...

Kindergarten

Students will:

- ★ learn to decode words and make meaning from reading.
- ★ learn how to solve multi-stepped math problems.
- ★ explore and learn more about the world around them.
- ★ learn how to write to compose an opinion, informational, narrative, explanatory, and persuasive text.

1st Grade

Students will:

- ★ determine the importance and main idea in a story.
- ★ not only write personal narratives, but they will also learn to write to inform others about a topic or cause.
- ★ learn multiple addition and subtraction strategies to help them solve addition and subtraction problems.

2nd Grade

Students will:

- ★ develop and publish narratives, informational/explanatory texts, and opinion pieces.
- ★ read, analyze, and comprehend complex literature and informational text.
- ★ integrate the use of math practices to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of various math concepts.

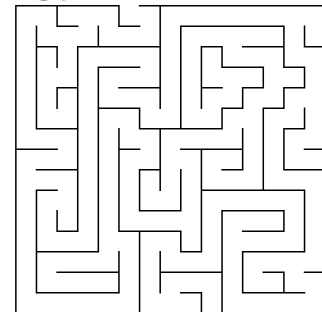


Rising K students Wyatt Hossenlopp, Dylan Walker, and Jaxon Lemus having fun at the Kindergarten Playdate (Aug. 13, 2013).



Back to School Maze

Help the boy find his way through the maze to the school bus.



Copyright © www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy



Karen Jordan with her daughters - Emma (1st) and Mia (K) at the Kindergarten Playdate (Aug. 13, 2013).

What we will learn this year ...

SCHOOL SCRAMBLE!

1. OHSLCO _____
2. NPLICSE _____
3. SERARE _____
4. SYTRHIO _____
5. IAEDNGR _____
6. TECHRAE _____
7. LCUHN _____
8. RCKLOE _____
9. RREUL _____
10. EDSINRF _____

www.TheTeachersCorner.net

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES CAN BE FOUND ON THE PTO WEBSITE [HERE](#).



Charlie Curry (5th) assists with the Uniform Fair (Aug. 3, 2013).

3rd Grade

Students will:

- ★ make meaning of complete texts across multiple genres.
- ★ build independent reading stamina.
- ★ understand multiplication & division and problem solving strategies for both.
- ★ develop an understanding of unit fractions and two-dimensional geometry.

4th Grade

Students will:

- ★ learn to write expository and narrative essays using precise language that focuses, clarifies, and expands ideas.
- ★ learn about Florida history through historical fiction and electronic media.
- ★ learn to compare and order decimals, and estimate fraction and decimal amounts in real-world problems.

5th Grade

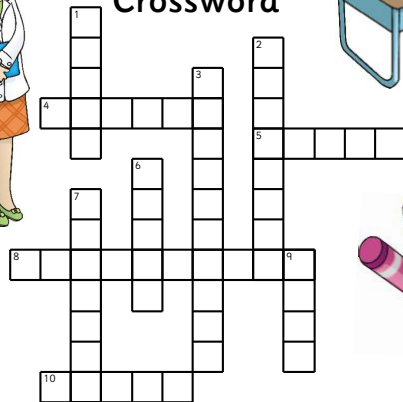
Students will:

- ★ prepare for the departmentalization of the middle school model.
- ★ explore multi-step math at a high level of complexity.
- ★ enjoy multiple novels while growing and applying deeper literary analysis.
- ★ participate in hands-on science experiments through the science process.

FUN & GAMES!



Back to School Crossword



Across

4. Do you need to sharpen yours?
5. Write or draw on this.
8. You write on this with chalk.
10. Please _____ your name on your work.

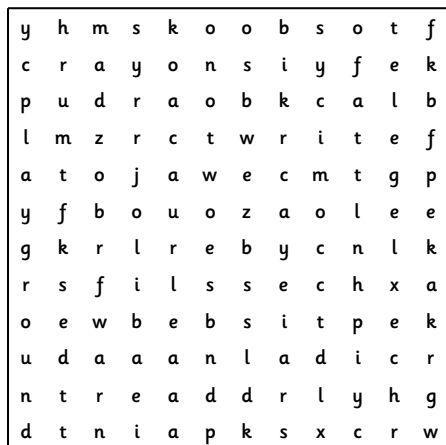
Down

1. Draw straight lines with this.
2. It has a keyboard and a screen.
3. Where you go to play at break (recess)
6. Read these at home or school.
7. They help you learn new things.
9. The teacher sits here.

Copyright © www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy



Back to School Word Search



- | | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|---------|
| blackboard | books | classroom | crayons |
| desk | friends | paint | pencil |
| playground | read | table | teacher |
| tous | whiteboard | write | |

Copyright © www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES CAN BE FOUND ON THE PTO WEBSITE [HERE](#).

Calendar of Events

August

- 26 Chick-Fil-A Spirit Night
School Advisory Council (SAC) (6:00pm)
- 28 Runners' Club (7:30am/Willis Back Field)
Walk-A-Thon Brainstorm Meeting
(1:30-2:50pm/Media Center)
- 30 P.T.O. Meeting (2:00pm/Willis Cafeterium)

September

- 2 **NO SCHOOL**
- 4 Runner's Club (7:30am/Willis Back Field)
EARLY RELEASE (1:15pm)
Dress Down Day (\$2)
You Say When Yogurt Spirit Night
- 5 5th Grade Recognition Committee
Brainstorming Meeting (2:00-2:50pm/Media
Production Room)
Science Fair Meeting (6:30-7:30pm/Cafeteria)
- 11 Runners' Club (7:30am/Willis Back Field)
- 12 Box Tops/Campbell's Soup Labels, Prang and
Coke Tops Collection
Jumpin Fun Sports Spirit Night
- 18 Runners' Club (7:30am/Willis Back Field)
- 19 Progress Reports
- 23 - Oct. 1: Book Fair
- 23 SAC (6:00pm)
- 24 Chili's Spirit Night
- 25 Runners' Club (7:30am/Willis Back Field)
- 26 Donuts for Dads (7:30-8:30am)
- 30 Fall Pictures - Uniform Required

October

- 2 Runners' Club (7:30am/Willis Back Field)
EARLY RELEASE (1:15pm)
Dress Down Day (\$2)
- 4 P.T.O. Meeting (2:00-2:50pm)
Crispers Spirit Night
- 11 **NO SCHOOL (Inservice)**
- 17 **WALK-A-THON**
- 18 End of 1st Quarter
- 21 **NO SCHOOL (Record Day)**
.... [more dates can be found here!](#)

GECKO GAZETTE

The Gecko Gazette will be published in Oct., Dec., Feb., April & June. For questions concerning the publication, please contact P.T.O. Newsletter Editor Christine Shaklik at shaklik@me.com.