

The Gecko Gazette

Robert E. Willis Elementary School

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



ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

WELCOME BACK! We are happy to welcome you to the 2014-2015 school year. We are looking forward to a productive partnership with you to ensure our children can achieve their highest potential in a safe environment. We recognize that in order to be successful in school, our children need support from both parents and the school community. We recognize that a strong partnership with you will make a great difference in your child's education. As partners, we share the responsibility for our children's safety, particularly during school drop off and pick up.

There are a few key procedures that can make the car drop off and pick up process run more smoothly. First, if you are in the drop off or pick up line, please remain in your vehicle and keep in the right hand lane. Please do not exit your vehicle at any point while in the line. When your vehicle reaches the designated spot, a staff member will assist your child in exiting or entering the vehicle in a safe manner (on the *right* side of

your vehicle). Second, at pick up time be sure to have your lime green name card in a visible location so staff may quickly identify and call your children. Third, PLEASE, do not use your cell phone while driving on school grounds as cell phones can be a distraction while driving. Lastly, in the morning if you wish to drop off your child by parking in the parking lot, please park in a designated space and remember you must escort your child across the crosswalk. Please be sure to use caution while walking through the parking lot.

Another important aspect of safety relates to entering the school building. District policy requires all visitors to sign in at the front office using our computer system. You must first register into the system by providing your drivers license or other photo identification to one of our front office staff. After your name has been entered, you will be able to log on any time you wish to enter the school by typing in your name as it appears on your identification previously provided. After logging in, please notate the reason for your visit and place your name

badge in a visible location on your shirt. Please do not enter the school through any other entrance. Upon leaving the building, please either scan your name badge to indicate that you are checking out, or hand the sticker to one of our front office staff to do so for you.

Following these few procedures will help to ensure the safety of every Willis Elementary student. We greatly appreciate your cooperation and understanding concerning car drop off/pick-up and school sign-in procedures.

Again, we look forward to a very successful and safe year!

Bill Stenger
Principal and
Michele Danowski
Assistant Principal



"Welcome to Willis!" Mrs. Danowski joins our administrative team.

P.T.O. Prez

On behalf of the P.T.O. I would like to say how excited we are about the 2014-15 school year. We have had such an amazing first week of school which was made possible by the entire Willis team. Prior to school starting the P.T.O. board got to enjoy a behind the scenes look of all the hard work and relentless efforts of each teacher, staff, and administrator required to get the school up and running for a new school year. We have also greatly enjoyed getting to meet new teachers, see old friends, and make new ones.

The P.T.O. plans to carry on many of Willis' traditions. We will continue to host our two main fundraisers, the Walk-a-Thon and the Gecko Gala, to help support the needs of our school. We are also planning many fun activities like play dates for each grade, the Holiday Fair, Muffins for Moms, Donuts for Dads, and Field Day to name a few. Most of all, we are super excited about a few new groups being started like the Giving Geckos, a resource to help students, families, and teachers at Willis and our community at large, and the Geckorators, a group that will meet up periodically to help teachers decorate classrooms and hallways.

The P.T.O. would like to thank every parent that has stepped up to take on a more active role in the school by taking on a chair event position. A special thank you to:

★ Elizabeth Pearce/Communication Chair and for the many many things she does every day!

- ★ Laura Crawford/Room Parent Chair
- ★ Kristin Culliton/Volunteer Chair
- ★ Rachel Kresten/Student Directory Chair
- ★ Christine Shaklik/Newsletter Chair
- ★ Jillanne Conelias/Welcoming Committee, Uniform Chair & Yearbook Chair
- ★ Lisa Hodo and Lupe Garcia/Walk-a-Thon Co-Chairs
- ★ Lauren Kruszewski/Gecko Gala Chair
- ★ Bernice Cappelletti/Holiday Fair Chair
- ★ Amber Monsereez/Staff Appreciation Chair
- ★ Mira Milburn/Secret Santa Chair
- ★ Mark and Elyse Gorden/Spirit Night Co-Chairs
- ★ Deborah Hossenlopp/Muffins for Mom, Donuts for Dad, and Donation Request Chair
- ★ Shannon McCoy/Bricks Chair
- ★ Tara Merino/Field Day Chair
- ★ Hope Owens/Grant Writer Chair
- ★ Shelly Steiner/Partners In Education Chair
- ★ Jay and Jen Frisbie/Giving Gecko Co-Chair
- ★ Stephanie Hefner/Popcorn Chair
- ★ Christina Reed/Geckorator Chair
- ★ Cathy Dobson/Box Tops Chair

And we cannot forget the many, many parents that have signed up to volunteer for all of these events. Each and every one of you helps make Willis Elementary a better place for our students and Staff. Thank you!

[Yazzie Bruss](#)

P.T.O. President

FIRST P.T.O. MEETING

Please join us for the first P.T.O. meeting of the 2014/15 school year. The meeting will be held on:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2014

at 1:30pm in the Cafeteria.

We look forward to seeing you there! Please contact [Ashley Henderson](#) for more information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We are looking for an amazing parent that would like to be work on the PTO Information Book. If you are interested or would like more information on this exciting opportunity to work with the PTO and the school please email [Kristin Culliton](#).

More from the P.T.O.!

Kindergarten Playdate

On Friday, August 15th, the entire Kindergarten was invited to the school to meet their new classmates. Unfortunately, the weather did NOT exactly cooperate, so we scrambled to the gym and played games like Simon Says and Duck-Duck-Goose. This fun event helps take a little stress out of the first day of school for our littlest students ... and their parents!



London Chura-Schiffer (K), Mrs. Grigsby's class, brought her adorable fluffy friend "Snowflake" and met Nora Supernaw (K), Mrs. Pannell-Miller.

CALLING ALL DADS!!!

It is time for Donuts for Dads this year and we can't wait to see you. Please come to enjoy a special morning designed to honor our Willis Fathers. Mark your calendar, bring your kids to school, enjoy a donut, juice and coffee, and walk your kids to class. The event will be on Thursday, September 25th from 7:30 - 8:30am in the Cafeteria. Click here to [RSVP for this event](#).

We will also be in need of volunteers for this event. More information will be posted at a later date.

[Deb Hossenlopp](#)
Donuts for Dads Chair

BOX TOPS

Willis collects Box Tops for Education throughout the year to raise funds for our school. Cut and save those labels to send in to your classroom by:

SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2014

Thank you for your support!

[Cathy Dobson](#)/Box Tops Chair

Congrats to Cathy, and her family, on her new baby girl, Helena born on 8/23. Get some rest!!!

P.T.O. BOARD MEMBERS 2014-2015

Yazzie Bruss - President
yazziebruss@gmail.com

Shannon McCoy - Vice President
smccoy@att.net

Bianca Lawrence - Vice President
ablaw@netzero.net

Tara Merino - Treasurer
tarabergstrom@yahoo.com

Ashley Henderson - Secretary
ashenderson321@yahoo.com

[P.T.O. WEBSITE](#)

Mom's Night Out!!!

Let's get ready for some fun ladies! Your P.T.O. Board has planned a "Mom's Night Out" at Let's Create Art on:

SEPTEMBER 13th
7:00-10:00pm

For \$45 you will receive art materials, a glass of wine, and sushi appetizers. Preregistration is required. [Link here!](#)

HEALTH CLINIC

Health Clinic Notes

WE'RE STARTING A HEALTHY NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

The clinic is up and running! We are 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. Hand sanitizer is a good alternative, but good old soap and water and drying with a paper towel is best.

If your child has a temperature of 100 or above they will be sent home from school and are not to return until they are 24 hours fever free, without the use of a fever reducing medicine. We use clinic passes that the teacher sends down with the student listing their complaint. Any treatment provided is notated on the pass. These notes are sent home as a means of communicating with parents. If the complaint is

a major issue, please know that we will call you. With this said, please make sure we have a correct and current phone number on file at the school.

PLEASE REMEMBER that any medication, even medication that does not require a prescription, MUST have a medication authorization form filled out by a physician and a parent. The parent must then bring the medication AND completed form in to the school clinic to be signed in. These forms are available in the clinic for you to take to your physician should you need them.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please call or stop by the clinic. Here is to a great 2014/2015 Healthy New School Year!

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

FOOD SERVICE

The entire cafeteria staff welcomes back all our students, providing even healthier food choices this school year. Here are some important tips regarding student meals.

★ Menu can be found at <http://manatee.nutrislice.com/>

★ Prices are as follows:

Elementary Breakfast - \$1.10

Elementary Lunch - \$2.05

Adult Lunch - \$3.00

★ Please be sure to place your child's lunch money in an envelope with his/her name on the envelope as well as the teacher's name.

★ You can also pay online at www.mypaymentsplus.com. You can contact Jeff at 941-316-8245 ext. 5 to get your child's ID # if you are setting up an account online.

If you would like to provide your child's class a treat for a special occasion, like a birthday or holiday, we can take the worry and work out of it for you! You can order a Celebration Basket, which includes a choice of a snack, choice of a sweet treat, and prizes. All baskets are Smart Snack Approved! The [Celebration Basket form](#) is available on the P.T.O. website under School Info/Cafeteria News.

If you would like to treat your child's class to a pizza party, we can take the worry and work out of it for you! All Pizza Party Baskets include a slice of pizza, Rice Krispie treat, prizes, and are Smart Snack Approved! [The Pizza Party form](#) is available on the P.T.O. website under School Info/Cafeteria News.

Jeff Cardarelle-Hermans
x2014



From Specials ...



Music

I want to welcome everyone back to school for the 2014-2015 school year. I'm very excited to be back at Willis Elementary.

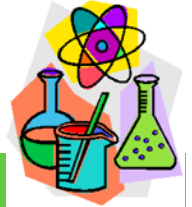
We are beginning this year with a lot of new instruments and equipment. As you may know, the music room was awarded nearly \$9,000 in grants and P.T.O. funds last year. Some items have already been utilized, however, you may notice some new additions that were not seen last year, so make sure to stop by the music room to see them.

My plan for this year is to continue to help your child develop an enthusiasm for music by singing, moving, reading and notating music, and improvising during music class. I hope to have another grade level performance for the Winter Concert and another Talent Show this year. If you are able to help with simple costumes and set design please email or call me!

Something that will be new to Manatee County this year is End of Course Assessments (EOC's) for every student who is in a highly enrolled course. This includes hard-to-measure classes such as Art, P.E. and Music. As this is a huge change for both teachers and parents, we are already teaching the standards that will be assessed, and this year the test will be all Multiple Choice. More information will come at a later date, hopefully, from the County Office.

I'm really looking forward to another fun year in music with all of you!

Christy Isaacs,
Music Teacher
x2079



Science

Welcome Back Scientists!

Mrs. Bradl has some terrific science activities and experiments planned for the new school year. We are starting out with a review of expectations and procedures and then will discuss and explore reasons why hand washing is such an important skill.

As you navigate the Willis Elementary homepage, we hope that you will take a look at the new Science Lab page by clicking on Mrs. Bradl's name. You'll find Mrs. Bradl's contact information as well as pictures and comments on weekly lessons. This will be an invaluable source of information as we work through the Science Fair process this year.

Mrs. Bradl, Science Teacher
x2021

**2014/15
SCHOOL
CALENDAR!**

[Link here!](#)



More from Specials!

Physical Education

Welcome back students, staff, parents and friends. I would like to take a moment to introduce myself to those who do not know me. My name is Jason Morales, also known as "Coach," and I am one of the physical education (P.E.) teachers here at Willis Elementary. This is my 10th year at this amazing school and I have the privilege of having a co-coach this year ... Coach Quinn.

I will be keeping you up to date through our newsletter on many ways to make physical activity a regular part of the day. Being physically active is a key component in living a happier, healthier and longer life. Not only does it improve ones' self-esteem, but it also helps build and maintain bones, muscles, and joints and lowers the risk of heart disease.

So why not get the whole family involved! Here are just a few suggested activities you can incorporate into your daily lives with your child:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Bike Ride | 6. Jogging |
| 2. Yoga | 7. Swimming |
| 3. Nature Walks | 8. Aerobics |
| 4. Martial Arts | 9. Dancing |
| 5. Sports | 10. Rollerblading |

Runners Club will begin Wednesday, September 3rd here at Willis Elementary. We meet on the baseball field and start at 7:30 a.m. Please make sure you park in the main parking lot if you plan on staying, or you may drop your child off at the field where they will be escorted into school following Runners Club.

I look forward to another successful school year and always remember ... have fun while being ACTIVE!

Coach Morales

941-316-8245 ext. 2080

moralesj@manateeschools.net

Coach Quinn

941-316-8245 ext. 2068

quinnm@manateeschools.net

Media Center

Greetings from the Willis Media Center. This will be an exciting year ... be on the lookout for these new happenings:

- ★ The Gecko Book Store
- ★ Storia School Edition
- ★ Accelerated Reader, and
- ★ Independent Media Blocks for the students.

Also, the "Sir Readalot's Castle Book Fair" is right around the corner! Mark your calendars for September 22 - 30. Let the fun begin!

Mr. Sajewski
Ext. 2029



Runners Club - a very popular activity here at Willis.

Kindergarten

The kindergarten teachers would like to welcome all the kindergarten students and parents to Willis Elementary. We are so excited about this upcoming school year and would like to take this opportunity to give you a glance of what the kindergarten students will be learning.

- ★ In Math, we will start off the school year with counting and cardinality of numbers, followed by adding and subtraction, understanding numbers, geometry, and end the year with measurement and data.
- ★ In Language Arts, we will begin the year with "Building Habits for a Literate Life," and then continue with growing ideas for stories, informational text, details that make topics interesting, how storytellers use details to bring stories to life, how readers and writers take journeys with characters, digging deeper into a topic, and finally immersing ourselves in research to teach others.
- ★ In Science, we will begin the year with thinking like a scientist, followed by objects and materials physical properties, earth and space, energy and motion, sound, and end the year with the study of living things.
- ★ In Social Studies, we will start off the year with "how to be a good citizen," followed with the study of a community, tools of a historian, history (Historical knowledge), and finish the year with geography all around us.

1st Grade

Our first week of school went smoothly and the students are eager to be back. Please remember that establishing routines are as important at school as they are at home. So, please continue to make sure your child is getting to bed early and has a healthy breakfast.

Over the next couple of weeks, the students will be reading both fiction and non-fiction text. They will use the strategy of visualizing to develop comprehension and the skill of finding key details. By digging deeper into the stories, the students will have a better understanding of the central message.

In Math, the students will represent real world situations with objects, mental images and drawings to identify situations involving putting together (adding) or taking apart (subtraction). We will solve addition and subtraction problems for the unknown number in all positions.



Mrs. Turner's Samantha Cunningham (top) and Bailey Smith (bottom) on the first day of Kindergarten!



New first graders in Mr. Violette's class. From left: Carter Okuhara, Claudia Rodriguez, Madison Johnson, Jordan Froug. Welcome!

2nd Grade

We are so excited to welcome the new second graders and are looking forward to a fantastic year! We would like to give parents a brief overview of the first units of study.

Our first unit in Language Arts is "Friends and Families." We will focus on key details and students will be asked to explain how these key details help us understand the characters. They will also be asked to use text features to better understand nonfiction text. Please read with your child at home, and as you are reading stop and ask questions to help deepen their understanding of the story.

Our first unit in Math focuses on operations and algebraic thinking. Students will be asked to identify groups of numbers as even or odd. They will also fluently add and subtract within 20 using mental strategies. There are lots of games that you can play at home to help your child add and subtract more fluently. You can use dice and ask them to either add or subtract numbers or use playing cards and play "Make a Ten, Go Fish". Please ask your teacher for directions or other suggestions on how to review basic facts.

In addition to Language Arts and Math, we have great units planned for Science and Social Studies. In Science we will be discussing the practice of science and how to think like a scientist. We will also review the scientific method. In Social Studies, we will be discussing citizenship and the ways that we can be good citizens. This unit aligns perfectly with the beginning of the school year.

We are looking forward to another great year. Please contact your child's teacher if you have any questions about how to better help your child at home.



Mrs. Flynn's second graders, Emma Hubley & Charley Hunn getting a great start to the year!



Mrs. Lambertson's second graders, Ryan Shaklik and Jake Morales enjoying their new classroom.

3rd Grade

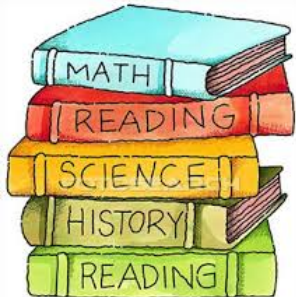
Welcome to third grade! We are excited to welcome Mrs. Dienna, Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Tully & Mrs. Lawrence to the team this year! We are all very enthusiastic for a great school year!

This year is full of curricular changes for third grade. We have new Florida Standards for English/Language Arts & Math. We are confident that our children will meet these standards with your support! Our third graders will also be taking the Florida Standards Assessments for the first time. These assessments focus will on ELA and Math.

The pacing and expectations for third grade are quite a change from second grade. Third graders are expected to begin building more independent work habits and personal responsibility. You can

support your child at home by helping them develop a routine for homework and study habits. Encourage your child to do their homework independently offering support only when they struggle to the point of frustration. We cannot stress enough the importance of daily reading tasks! Listen to your child read and continue to model good reading habits. Mental math skills, problem-solving skills, and perseverance will be paramount to tackling the Florida Math Standards. Exposing your child to real-world application of math skills is a great way to support them in mathematics.

The third grade team is looking forward to another successful year! Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.



4th Grade

The 4th Grade Team is excited to welcome you and your fourth grader to Willis Elementary School as we begin our 2014-2015 school year! We are thrilled to share with you our new scheduling approach to your child's school day. This year is the beginning of our Core Curriculum and an ideal time to departmentalize our grade level to better meet our student's needs.

Each fourth grader will begin their day with their homeroom teacher for math, science, or social studies. After that class they will rotate through the other classrooms to cover all of those three subject areas. In the afternoon, each student will return to their homeroom teacher for language arts and dismissal.

We are looking forward to an excellent year!

Keli Georgas, Terri Holbrook, Emily Ross & Lisa Scherpf



5th Grade

Welcome to the 2014/15 school year! Both of the fifth grade teams (blue team and green team) are happy to have the students back in school.

The students have quickly adapted to having three teachers each day. Our day moves quickly and we are working on organization to be sure we are prepared for each class. Thank you to all who came out to open house or stopped by the first week to meet us. We look forward to working together with you to help your child have a successful and enjoyable fifth grade year.

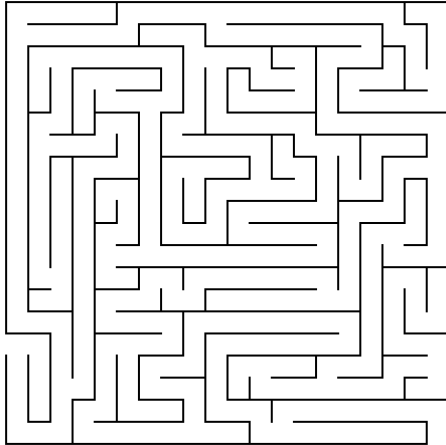
The Fifth Grade Team

FUN & GAMES!

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

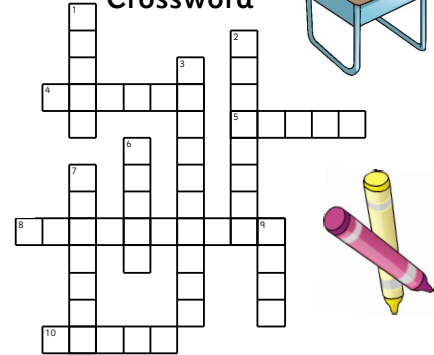
Back to School Maze

Help the teacher find her way through the maze to the desk.



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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.

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Back to School Word Search



y	h	m	s	k	o	o	b	s	o	t	f
c	r	a	y	o	n	s	i	y	f	e	k
p	u	d	r	a	o	b	k	c	a	l	b
l	m	z	r	c	t	w	r	i	t	e	f
a	t	o	j	a	w	e	c	m	t	g	p
y	f	b	o	u	o	z	a	o	l	e	e
g	k	r	l	r	e	b	y	c	n	l	k
r	s	f	i	l	s	s	e	c	h	x	a
o	e	w	b	e	b	s	i	t	p	e	k
u	d	a	a	a	n	l	a	d	i	c	r
n	t	r	e	a	d	d	r	l	y	h	g
d	t	n	i	a	p	k	s	x	c	r	w

blackboard books classroom crayons

desk friends paint pencil

playground read table teacher

tous whiteboard write

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	2	4	
1			3
4			2
	1	3	

Sudulko Puzzle by Puzzle Choice

THANK YOU TO
Chili's

for donating food for teachers during
training their first week of school.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS IN EDUCATION!

Platinum (\$1000+)

Burnett's Wholesale Nursery, Inc.
Green Group
Maslar Renovation and Design
Moricz & Varone Orthodontics
Kumon
Ian Cutmore, Keller Williams Realty Lakewood Ranch
Eagle Home Mortgage

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Jumpin Fun Sports
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LWR Main Street
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The Reading Station
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Monsters Lacrosse Academy
PostNet
TFN Financial Consulting Network, Mike Traver, CFP,
Keller Williams Realty, Holly Pascarella
SmileWorks Kids Denistry
The Goddard School
Rodan & Fields Dermatologist, Julie Berry
First Physicians Group, Dr. Nicholas Sutera, MD.
Coldwell Banker, Tami Cashi & Lori Cashi-Haught
APC Pedicatrics
Geckos
Let's Create Art

FOR MORE INFO ON BECOMING
A BUSINESS PARTNER, LINK [HERE](#)

Calendar of Events

September

3 Runners Club (7:30-8:00am)
5 P.T.O. Meeting 1:30pm (Cafeteria)
10 Runners Club (7:30-8:00am)
Dress Down Day (\$2)
Early Release (1:15pm)
11 Box Tops Due
13 Mom's Night Out (7:00-10:00pm)
17 Runners Club (7:30-8:00am)
22 - 30 Book Fair
24 Runners Club (7:30-8:00am)
25 Donuts with Dads (7:30-8:30am)
29 Spirit Night: Freddy's
(5:00-9:00pm)

October

1 Runners Club (7:30-8:00am)
8 Runners Club (7:30-8:00am)
Early Release (1:15pm)
9 Jumpin Fun for 2nd/3rd Grade
(3:30-4:30pm)
10 NO SCHOOL
15 Runners Club (7:30-8:00am)
17 END OF 1ST QUARTER
20 NO SCHOOL (Record Day)
22 Runners Club (7:30-8:00am)
Individual Picture Day (Uniform
Required)
23 Class Picture Day (Uniform Required)
22 Runners Club (7:30-8:00am)
31 Early Release (12:30pm)

GECKO GAZETTE

For questions concerning The Gecko Gazette, please
contact P.T.O. Newsletter Editor Christine Shaklik
at shaklik@me.com.