

The Gecko Gazette

Robert E. Willis Elementary School

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



June 2013-14
Issue #6

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Dear Parents,

It is hard to imagine that in just a few days we will have completed the 2013-2014 school year. What a year it has been! We continue to see the dedication and perseverance of our students in their academics, which have resulted in many new and fulfilling achievements. We have seen our students grow, make gains, and enjoy the many activities Willis has to offer throughout the year.

All of our students' achievements could not be possible without the support they received from all members of our school community. Thank you to the teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff, who have worked tirelessly to make learning at our school

possible. Thank you also to all our families who support our students in so many ways. Signing planners, checking over homework, and reading with their student... are just a few of the ways we recognize the support you provide at home, which in turn helps to foster and encourage achievement at school.

Although summer is a time away from school, it is important to continue to support your child to maintain the gains made throughout the school year. Please be sure your child is reading daily and sharing, whether orally or by summarizing and writing their thoughts in a journal. Math practice is just as important. Practicing grade level appropriate math facts and again, being able to explain the answer, either through writing or orally,

provides great practice and helps to keep those skills sharp. For additional ideas on how to support your child over the summer please be sure to look for information coming home from your child's teacher.

We wish you all a very happy and safe summer holiday. We also wish for you and your children time together to be creative and have fun. Most importantly, we hope that everyone can take some time this summer to relax and enjoy one another. August will be here soon enough... and we can't wait!

Happy Summer,

Bill Stenger and Connie Dixon



Class of 2014

Congratulations to the Class of 2014!

We wish you much success and happiness as you move on to middle school. You have worked hard and should be proud of reaching this important milestone. We will miss you but know you have many more wonderful experiences ahead of you. Most of all - enjoy your summer!

P.T.O. PAGE

P.T.O.

As we come to a close on another year at Willis Elementary, I am reminded of all the wonderful memories our children have had throughout the year. Walk-a-thon, Holiday Fair, Muffins for Mom, Donuts for Dad, Book and Science Fairs, Movie Nights, Talent Show, Spirit Nights, Field Day, and many more fun-filled events were enjoyed by all thanks to all the amazing volunteers we have at Willis. It has truly been my pleasure to serve as your P.T.O. President this year. I had the privilege of working with some incredible people that made my job much easier. I want to especially thank the P.T.O. Executive Board, the Operating Committee, and the committee Chairs that worked tirelessly on all the special events we were able to enjoy. Without their help, these events are not possible.

Through the generosity of Willis families, the P.T.O. has been able to provide some wonderful items for our teachers and students. As a continuation of an ongoing project, the upstairs classroom and media center projectors will be ceiling mounted with a wireless sound system this June. These projectors are used daily for classroom instruction and are now used in conjunction with the interactive white boards. By mounting them in the ceiling, they will be less obtrusive in the classroom. In addition, interactive white boards will be provided and utilized in many of the classrooms next year. We were also able to provide some greatly needed pencil sharpeners in the classrooms in addition to financial tokens to be used for additional classroom supplies for each teacher. We were able to replace our broken field trip coolers with some brand new ones and purchased a portable wireless sound system that we christened at Field Day and will continue to be used for Willis events.

So with that, I say, "Thank You" to all the Willis families that made this possible. I want to wish you all a wonderful fun-filled relaxing summer, and we will see you back at Willis in August!

Jillanne Conelias
P.T.O. President

BOX TOPS

A big congratulations goes out to the winning classrooms for the May Box Top collection! The following winning classrooms will enjoy a sno-cone party to celebrate:

Mrs. Harvey (2)
Mrs. French (2)
Mrs. Piper (3)

I would like to extend a big thank you to all for such wonderful support of the Box Tops program throughout this school year! Those little tops make a big impact, allowing us to raise over \$3000 for our Geckos. Please remember to keep clipping and collecting those Box Tops throughout the summer!

Cathy Dobson
BoxTop Coordinator
cathy.m.dobson@gmail.com

STAFF APPRECIATION WEEK

I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped out during this fun-filled week for our teachers and staff and those parents who made items for our sweet treat day and breakfast. This special week would not have run as smoothly as it did without your help.

Also a big thanks to the restaurants who donated food: Chili's, Crispers and the P.T.O. provided lunch for the teachers, while Dunkin Donuts supplied coffee and donuts to the staff for breakfast.

Deborah Hossenlopp, Chair
Staff Appreciation Week

P.T.O. PAGE ... continued!

Field Day 2014

On Friday, June 23rd, Willis students participated in the highly anticipated annual Field Day. As music filled the air, Willis students enjoyed over 10 events, including Tug-of-War, 3-legged Race, and, of course, several water events which provided them the opportunity to cool off. Coach Morales also set up a water misting ring to give the students an additional opportunity to cool down in the hot sun while enjoying an ice pop. It was an exciting day with the score being neck and neck throughout and the winner coming down to the final event!

The highlights of the day were the three class specific events. Kindergarten and 1st grade continued with their fun-filled Obstacle Course, jumping through hoops and over hurdles. The 2nd and 3rd grades enjoyed Fast Pitch where a radar measured the speed of their Baseball pitch or Lacrosse throw. The 4th and 5th grades enjoyed having to strategize their approach to win their Plank Walk event where students stood on top of 2 boards/planks and had to find a way to walk together.

At the end of the day, the Blue team came out victorious with the Green and Yellow teams falling close behind. The Orange team fell behind early in the day, but worked hard in the second half of the day to drastically close the gap. All the students did a great job, and most importantly had a ton of fun!

A big thank you to our over 70 volunteers and our vendor partners, Primrose School, Home Depot, 19 Sports, IMG Academy and Wal-Mart.



"On the Lake" Becomes a Reality

On Friday, May 16, Principal Stenger finally went "on the lake" to fulfill his pledge for reaching our fundraising goal for the fall Walk-A-Thon. Not only did our courageous leader spend the day in the gator (singular)-infested pond behind the school, but he was then subjected to each and every child and staff member at the school lobbing tennis balls via two potato launchers from the shore! Numerous news stations also visited to capture the fun and highlight our achievement. A great time was had by all!



Mr. Stenger on the raft that he built!



Coach "Gator" Morales giving launch instructions!



Congratulations to the Blue Team!

VOLUNTEER BREAKFAST

All volunteers are invited to an "Appreciation Breakfast" on Friday, June 6, 2014 from 8:30am to 9:30am in the school cafeteria. Please RVSP to Jillanne Conelias at Jillanne67@verizon.net.

HEALTH CLINIC

Clinic Notes for June

Well, another year is ending and it has been a pleasure to have been able to provide nursing services to the students, staff, and visitors here at Willis.

Please remember that if your student has medications in the clinic, they need to be picked up by dismissal on the last day of school or the medication will be destroyed. A new medication form and medication supply will need to

be brought in at the beginning of the new school year in August. Medication authorization forms may be found on Manatee County Schools website and we have them here in the clinic for you also.

And of course, as summer is here we all tend to look for the water for fun, sun, and cooling off. Remember water safety ... drowning in Florida is at an all-time high, which is very sad. Please be extra vigilant about

safety around any pool or body of water.

Have a Great Summer and we will see you in August!

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

2014-2015 Suggested Grade Level School Supply List

Will soon be posted on the [Willis PTO Website](#). Keep an eye out for it!



**SUMMER
BREAK SPOT**
FRIENDS FOOD FREE ALL SUMMER LONG

Free Meals For Kids

Free Breakfast and Lunch For Kids 18 years or Younger

Starts June 11th

For Site Information:
Dial 2-1-1 or Call 941-751-6550
www.summerfoodflorida.org



2014/15 SCHOOL CALENDAR!

The county has
published the
calendar for the
next school year.
[Link here!](#)



SPECIALS

Music

I wanted to thank all the parents, teachers, staff and administrators for a fantastic year!

You've made my transition here an amazing experience. As many of you know, the music room did not start off with an ideal inventory this year. We had mostly old or borrowed instruments. Thanks to Mr. Stenger, Mrs. Dixon, and the P.T.O., the music room was given \$5,000 to purchase all new classroom instruments and a World Drumming Kit (over 25 drums). I am also pleased to announce that I wrote and received a grant to further expand the music room inventory. Because of the generous donation of The Eugene F. and Elizabeth Hull Fund of the Manatee Community Foundation, we received another \$3,300 for the music room! I wrote this grant to implement music centers. What did we get, you ask? We purchased five electric drums with 8 pads and foot pedals, two Karaoke machines, Karaoke music, a 10x15 music rug to play Staff Twister, seven music board games, \$300 in iTunes gift cards for our classroom iPods, and, next year I will utilize the remaining monies by purchasing music software for our classroom computers. All these items will be implemented at the beginning of next year.

I strongly feel that Willis Elementary is now on par with the rest of Manatee County's music classrooms and we can move forward and provide your child with a complete music education. I hope all of you have a fun and safe summer and I can't wait for next year!

Christy Isaacs, Music Teacher
Ext. 2079



Math Lab & Community Service Projects

Well the year is coming to a close in the Math Lab. It has been an awesome year and we have covered a lot of information. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students have been exploring careers, salaries, expenses and budgets. It has been very exciting to see the student's go grocery shopping online with a set budget and have to feed themselves for a week without overspending. They also created a monthly budget and had to make tough decisions to live within their means. There are many math lessons in our daily and monthly expenses that we can expose our kids to in order to enlighten them about the daily struggles of adulthood.

The Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd graders have been continuing to work on foundation skills. A strong foundation will make it easier in the years to come to keep up with the rigors of the changing math curriculum.

Finally, we don't just do math in the lab. We have recycled over 2000 pounds of paper, 18 large garbage cans of plastic, glass and aluminum products. We have also filled two, 55 gallon barrels of canned and dry food items for the Manatee County Food Bank. We also continue to collect Kellogg's reward boxes to help with tree replenishment all around the world. To date we have had 24 trees planted just by collecting the Kellogg's reward boxes.

The future is bright, work hard, stay vigilant and don't let anyone tell you something can't be done.

Your Math Lab Teacher
Jon H. Green, Ext. 2076

SPECIALS (cont.)

Willis Girls and Boys Track Team!

Congratulations to the 2014 Willis Girls and Boys Track Team for competing in the elementary school track championship at Bayshore High School on May 17th.

There were more than 28 elementary schools participating in the event and more than 800 student athletes running. They competed against the fastest runners in Manatee County and should be very proud of how they finished. Each group competed against about 60 runners. The results below were for the 400 meter run.

3rd Grade

Girls

Kaitlyn Duquette - 1st place overall

Rose Mondragaon - 18th place

Gabriela Traver - 19th place

Boys

Caden Minniti - 1st place overall & New Track Record

Cooper Ross - 19th place

Hunter Wineka - 20th place

4th Grade

Girls

Jayla Daoust - 2nd place

Hallie Monserez - 4th place

Julia Felice - 22nd place

Boys

Garrett Benson - 10th place

Suvan Sethi - 42nd place

5th Grade

Girls

Emma DeCastro - 5th place

Emma Tullio - 13th place

Mackenzie Hopkins - 20th place

Boys

Owen Catlett - 10th place

Camden Martin - 25th place

Media Center

In the Media Center, we have begun our end of the year inventory. Students need to return their books as soon as possible to avoid a fine being assessed.

As always, if you have a question or concern, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Sajewski. Thank you for making it a successful year in our Media Center!

Mr. Sajewski, Media Center
Ext. 2029



Runner's Club Results 2013-14

Grade	# of Runners	Total Laps	Total Miles
KG	55	8,158	1,632
1st	52	8,181	1,636
2nd	86	17,504	3,500
3rd	48	11,085	2,217
4th	60	9,273	1,855
5th	65	15,129	3,026
TOTAL	366	69.33	13,866

Kindergarten

Wow! The end is almost here. We have had a wonderful time winding down the school year. Water Day and Field were highlights. Practicing and performing our kindergarten program were exciting and rewarding.

This final quarter the students learned all about Data collecting and measurement in Math, Wants and Needs were the focus for Social Studies, a review of the five senses along with plants and animals were the focus in Science. In Reading and Writing, the focus was on reviewing characters, setting, and Immersing Ourselves in Research to Teach Others.

Please have your child practice their reading and math over the summer. Thank you to all our parents for their support this year!

1st Grade

First grade really enjoyed the field trip to the Van Wezel Center to see Junie B. Jones! The show was very cute and entertaining. We also explored the art exhibit "Embracing Differences" nearby at Island Park in Sarasota.

Even though we're close to the end of first grade, we're still working hard to improve our reading and writing skills in class, and by reading at home each night. In math, we're learning about 2-dimensional shapes and how they are alike and different. In science, we are learning a lot about plants and animals, and how we are dependent on them for many things. It has been a wonderful year in first grade!

Best wishes for a wonderful summer break, and don't forget to read!

2nd Grade

Our second graders are finishing up the school year by continuing their hard work from all year. We are reading and studying science texts, focusing on Weather, and also touching into Geometry to give us a foundation for fractions in third grade. If you notice your child's arguments have been more convincing lately, it is because we are working on persuasive writing. The children are considering their opinions on various foods, places, likes and dislikes, and then writing to persuade others to agree with them. It is definitely a fun unit to bring our school year to an end.

Second Grade has had a fabulous year thanks to our wonderful families. We are sad to say goodbye, but know our students are ready to show off everything they have learned to their third grade teacher. We hope everyone has a safe, relaxing, and enjoyable summer. Don't forget to make some time every day for reading and a review of math facts!



Mrs. Turner's Kindergarteners having fun at Field day!



Kindergarten students, Hayden H. and Caroline F. enjoying Water Day!



First graders visited "Embracing our Differences"



Mr. Violette's Class stops for lunch at Island Park, Sarasota.



Mrs. McLaurin's students enjoy Junie B. Jones at the Van Wezel.



Mrs. Flynn's 2nd grade class after a fun Field Day!





Fourth Grade Silly String fun!



Tropicana Speech Winners!



Mrs. Richard's Class enjoying the 5th grade party May 28th at Potter Park YMCA.



Fun in the sun at the 5th grade party!



3rd Grade

Thank you students and parents for such a wonderful year! We are so proud of our third graders for improving their overall reading and math FCAT scores from last year! Keep up the hard work over the summer. Students will need to have their multiplication facts memorized in fourth grade. Flash cards are a great way to practice facts, especially on car trips! Reading stamina fades quickly so make sure you keep reading over the summer. Chapter books are great, but so are magazines! Family book clubs are also a great way to keep reading over the summer.

Have a safe and wonderful summer. We look forward to seeing everyone at Open House next fall!

4th Grade

Fourth grade celebrated the end of FCAT testing in "silly style". Each class had a student representative to silly string their teacher using two cans of silly string, but little did they know that a third can was in reserve to get those silly stringers back and their little friends, too. What a great time for all!

We are proud of our Tropicana Speech classroom winners in presenting their speeches for the Willis competition on stage in front of all fourth and fifth grade students, teachers, and parents. They all deserve a medal of valor! Our class winners were Mia C., Casey L., Kaitlyn S., Dillon R., Hallie M., Connor S., Kim B., Alyssa R., Jenny C., Cami S., Jayla D., and Baron G. Top honors went to Mia and Dillon in receiving 2nd and 3rd place medals respectively.

5th Grade

It's so hard to believe the 2013/14 school year is OVER! We have really enjoyed working with the 5th graders this year, and feel confident that they are ready for their big move to middle school. We hope that the summer brings lots of great times and family memories.

Please try to keep your child's brain active by reading daily, and doing some sort of math activities. This link will take you to the new 2014 Florida Standards <http://www.fldoe.org/bii/curriculum/sss/>. FCAT Explorer will remain available (same user name and password that they used throughout the school year.) <http://www.fcateexplorer.org>. Also, please follow this link to a suggested 6th reading list - http://www.lisle202.org/pages/uploaded_files/6th%20Booklist.pdf.

We hope you have a great summer!
The 5th Grade Team

FUN & GAMES!

Summer Sudoku

Every row, column and mini-grid must contain the letters B U C K E T.
Don't guess - use logic



Water Sports Word Search



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

diving	fishing	kayaking	rafting
rowing	sailing	snorkeling	surfing
swimming	waterpolo	waterskiing	windsurfing

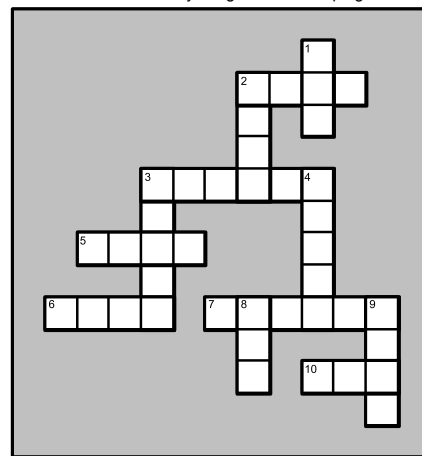
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ANSWERS TO PUZZLES CAN BE
FOUND ON THE PTO WEBSITE
[HERE](#).

	T			K	
	U	K	B	C	
T					U
K					C
	B	E	C	T	
	K			U	

Seaside Crossword

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Across

- It may have a sail or oars
- Perhaps you could collect water in this?
- Watch him scurry down his hole
- They swim in the sea and have scales and fins
- She sells sea _____ on the sea-shore
- I hope this is out for your holiday

Down

- Carry your beach things in this
- A good read!
- The strip of sand along the sea shore
- Dry yourself with this
- Wear one of these to keep the sun off your head!
- It feels funny under your toes

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

Calendar of Events

June

4 5th Grade Recognition Ceremony
9 LAST DAY OF SCHOOL
Early Release (1:15pm)
You Say When Yogurt Spirit Night

August

14 Back to School Open House
(3:30 - 5:30)
18 First Day of School 2014/15

THANK YOU TO OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS WHO SPONSORED SPIRIT NIGHTS:

**Tijuana Flats
Crispers
Chick-Fil-A
Chili's**

VACANCY'S REMAIN ON 2014/2015 PTO BOARD

We have 5 days of school left and are still in need of a PTO President, Vice President, and Treasurer, as well as committee chairs for most of our major school events. Without this leadership, we will be unable to provide the wonderful events we typically have at Willis. It is these events that not only establish school spirit, but raises the money that fund projects like school technology. Please consider one of these much needed roles and supporting Willis Elementary. Please feel free to contact any of the current board members with any questions you may have.

Jillanne Conelias, P.T.O. President
Jillanne67@verizon.net.

GECKO GAZETTE

For 2013/14, The Gecko Gazette will be published in Aug., Oct., Dec., Feb., April & June. For questions concerning the publication, please contact P.T.O. Newsletter Editor Christine Shaklik at shaklik@me.com.