

From the Principal...

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

The month of December brings with it a sense of celebration. Here at Willow Dale, we make it our goal to celebrate all of our children and their learning each and every day. I encourage you to take some time out of the busy schedules that can consume us all to make sure we are focusing on our youngest of minds. Encouragement at home and at school will only improve learning and focus and will help our students gain a positive sense of self. At school, we strive to build up our students so they feel empowered to do all that they can and be all that they dream.

Our boys and girls remain focused in their school work and continue to practice their good character, everywhere, all the time. We have successfully implemented three positive rewards programs to encourage making good choices and for following expectations. For good character in the cafeteria, we award one homeroom with the *Silver Spoon Award*. The winning homeroom sits at a decorated table (in blue and yellow, of course) and is served lunch by Mr. Donnelly and Mr. Drago! Our playground is a fun place, and it is important we teach our boys and girls to respect each other and to play nicely. The grade level demonstrating the best choices for the month will earn an additional thirty minute recess, monitored by Mr. Donnelly and Mr. Drago. The grade level earns the *Playground Pride Award*.

Additionally, to encourage safe, appropriate behavior, we will continue with the *Puma Passenger Award*, which will showcase the entire bus for making appropriate and safe choices as good passengers. The school bus is "school on wheels". The students will receive a certificate to purchase a prize from a special selection in the school store, and the driver will be honored with a special prize, too! We maintain that the boys and girls at Willow Dale demonstrate great character and we want to encourage this in all facets of school life.

In closing, as the daylight becomes less and the temperatures grow colder, it is the smile on our children's faces and the warmth of love and caring that will brighten everyone's day.

Wishing you and yours the happiest of holiday seasons,

Michael W. Donnelly

Mr. Michael W. Donnelly
Principal

Wellness Committee

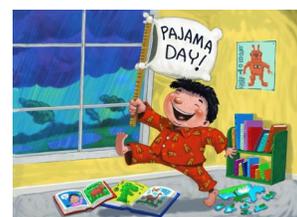
Thanks to everyone who came out and supported the third annual Puma 5K/Family Fun Run. It was a wonderful day to show support for wellness! We're already in the beginning stages of planning for the Fourth Annual to take place in the Fall of 2016!



Pajama Day

On Wednesday, December 23rd, we will be participating in our annual Pajama Day and Holiday sing-along. Students and staff are invited to wear their favorite pajamas to school. We will conclude our day with a holiday sing-along in the gym. We do ask,

however, that students wear sneakers or other appropriate footwear to school before changing into slippers. Thanks for your support. If you have any questions, feel free to contact your child's teacher. ■



Outstanding Cafeteria Balance

The Food Service Department has a procedure that states that students owing more than an established obligation (\$6.00) be provided with Cheerios and milk and charged \$1.00 until the account has been paid. Please note this limit and understand that the cafeteria staff will enforce this procedure. We request that you provide payments in a timely

manner. Please contact the cafeteria Manager, Mrs. Magiera, if you have any questions concerning this procedure.

If you are eligible, free or reduced price lunches are available by filing an application through the Business Office of the Centennial School District. You can also pre-pay for lunch through the "E

-Fund" system and credit can be immediately applied to the account. If you need assistance with placing money on your child's account or applying for free/reduced lunch programs, please contact the Business Office at 215-441-6000 ext. 11013. Thank you for your cooperation. ■

Winter Concert

It is time to "Save the Date" for our Winter Concert! This year's choral event is slated for **Thursday, December 17th**, at **7:00 PM** in the Willow Dale Elementary Alta S. Leary All-Purpose Room. The concert will feature our 5th Grade Handbell Choir and our 4th and 5th Grade Choruses. It is certain to be a wonderful evening; one that should not be missed.

We hope to see you there! ■



Kindergarten—Adjusted Schedule

We will have one half-day schedule in November. On **December 9**, there will be no AM Kindergarten. Our friends in **PM** kindergarten will attend school from 8:45 – 11:45. Specific information regarding bus schedules will be sent home. ■

PSSA - Mark your Calendar

PSSA Testing WINDOW*

*specific dates will be communicated in early 2016

**April 11 - 15: English/Language Arts
(Grades 3, 4, 5)**

April 18 - 22: Mathematics (Grade 3, 4, 5)

April 25 - 29: Science (Grade 4)

The PSSA is a state-mandated test, which means all students must take the test. Please do not schedule vacations or appointments during these testing days. Thank you!

Counselors' Corner



ROUTES TO SUCCESS

As parents, we understand the idea that children benefit from structure. Using daily routines can help your child be more ready to learn and ultimately, be more likely to succeed. Thanks to [Resources for Educators](#), we can learn some helpful tips to maintain enjoyable routines with our children.

Relaxation

Certain parts of the day can be stressful for kids. Start the day off right by avoiding the morning rush out the door. Play some soothing music as your child gets ready in the morning.

Tip: Have your child hang up their outfits for the whole week Sunday night so they'll be ready to go for the week.

Energized

Be sure your child has enough energy to get them through the day. Start with a healthy breakfast and continue with healthy eating throughout the day with lunch and a snack.

Tip: Pack lunch the night before and have everything you need to make breakfast for the next morning out the night prior.

Connect

Talking about the school day lets your child know you care and also allows them to discuss any worries or concerns they may have about their day.

Tip: Have your child say the worst part of their day and the best part of their day during dinner. Grown-ups at the table can also share.

Prepare

Choose a specific time to have your child do homework and then once homework is done, have him pack up his backpack and get ready for the next day.

Tip: Pick a time for homework when your child is most alert and the learned material is fresh in his mind, such as when they get home from school and have had a snack.

Rest

Adequate rest is essential for your child's development. Having a set bedtime allows your child to fall asleep faster and rest better.

Tips: Decide upon a bedtime then have your child start getting ready for bed 15 minutes early so you can read stories before bed.



Willow Dale Home & School News

December 2015



As we celebrate the end of 2015, we want to thank you for the support you give to Home and School throughout the year. May you and your family have a wonderful holiday season.

Our next H&S meeting will be Monday, December 7th at 6:15 PM in the library.

Light refreshments will be served.



Help provide some holiday wishes to families in need. Giving Tree donations (gift cards and monetary donations), along with hat and glove donations are due 12/11. Just send in with your child.



Looking for the easiest way to shop or a last-minute gift idea?

There are lots of gift cards available through our SCRIP program.

Visit our website at www.wdscrip.com.

Now is the time to order!

For questions, please contact kirkkwilliams@hotmail.com



REMINDERS



KIDS NIGHT OUT-12/4
6:30-8:30pm

Be sure to RSVP to attend!

For more information
contact Nicole McPhillips:
nmcphillips@comcast.net
or Linda Chun:
lindachun@msn.com

HOLIDAY SHOP

11/30-12/4

Special evening shopping
12/2

Students will have a chance
to shop for the holidays!

Check the website for
shopping days and times.



**Service Project Opportunity,
in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
for all Willow Dale students & families**

Between now and **January 18, 2016**, our school will be holding our annual used children's clothing and equipment drive for

Cradles to Crayons

Cradles to Crayons is a local organization that provides, free of charge, the basic essentials that low-income and homeless children need to be safe, warm, valued, and ready to learn.

Here's how you and your whole family can help:

- *Bring in gently used or new items (see list);*
- *Come to WDES on Monday, 1/18/16, 9 – 12 noon, to sort and bag all the donations; and/or*
- *Volunteer to drive to the C2C warehouse to drop off our school's donations that same day.*

We need to know **who** can help on **MLK Day**, (all children must be accompanied by an adult), **and who** is willing to drive to the warehouse. If you would like to volunteer for either or both, *please let Mrs. Kerber know at: kerbha@centennialisd.org.*

Sponsored by Willow Dale's CATS Committee.

Donations may be dropped off in the front lobby of Willow Dale School, and placed in the specially marked containers.

Cradles to Crayons

Cradles to Crayons can only accept quality items—goods that "our" children will be proud to own, and which will help make them feel valued.

Help us by donating only clothes that are in good condition, baby equipment that is safe and sound, school supplies that are unopened, and so on.

New items are also gladly accepted!

C2C children need: *Clothing* (kids' sizes newborn–14/16 and adult size small); *Shoes, boots, sneakers, and sandals* (all sizes); *Winter and rain jackets; NEW socks and underwear; Books* (especially baby board books); *NEW arts and crafts/school supplies; Baby supplies* (especially crib & bassinette bedding); *Baby safety equipment* (especially strollers, pack-n-plays and car seats less than 6 years old); *NEW baby hygiene supplies; Toys* (for children ages 0 – 2); *Puzzles and games* (for children ages 0 – 12); *NEW toys*; and, *Batteries.*

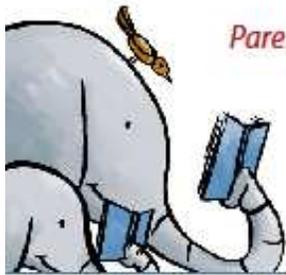
Immediate Needs: as of 11/10/2015

- New and gently used winter clothing, sizes newborn-14/16; specifically, boys/girls tops and bottoms, size 24 months
- New and gently used winter coats, sizes 0-14/16
- New socks, sizes 12-24 months
- New and gently used baby bibs
- New and gently used board games and puzzles, ages 7-12
- Baby board books, ages 0-2
- New and gently used baby carriers and diaper bags
- New and gently used crib and bassinet sheets
- New AA Batteries

C2C Can't Accept:

- We are no longer accepting cribs of any kind
- Stuffed animals
- Car seats over six years old
- DVDs/CDs/VHS tapes/computer games
- Religious books/toys, including Christmas/Easter/Hanukah/Kwanzaa related items
- Books about families ("I Love Mommy," "Daddy and I")
- Underwear or socks out of its package
- Military related or violent toys/games
- Oversized plastic play structures and slides
- Large backyard toys, baby pools, and structures
- Used hygiene products/baby food/breast feeding supplies
- Used arts and crafts/coloring supplies

From the Reading Specialists



Parent tips for raising strong readers and writers

Growing readers!

Brought to you by Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado and LD OnLine

Finding the Right Book for Your Child

Finding the right book for your child means finding something your child wants to read AND making sure it's at the right level for your child. Advice for both is below:

"I can't find anything to read!"

Libraries and bookstores are full of good books, yet sometimes it's hard for a child to find something to read. Genre and authors can help.

Genre: Think of genre as categories or types of books. Identifying what type, or genre, of book your reader enjoys can lead to you certain shelves or areas. For example, does your reader like action and adventure? Fantasy? Graphic novels? Mystery? Start your book searches by looking for new books within a favorite genre.

Author: Stumbling on a new author can be a treasure trove of new titles! Find a book your child particularly enjoys and see if that author has written other books. It's also fun to search online to see if that author has a website. Many authors do, and some include games, facts, and other interesting information to keep a reader engaged.

"This book is too hard! This book is too easy!"

Making sure a book is at the right reading level for your child can be a challenge. Parents often seek a "just right" book: not too hard, but not too easy. When looking for books for your child to read on his own, try the 5-finger test:

- Open the book to the middle. Choose a full page of words. Read the page out loud, and hold up a finger each time you come to a word you don't know.
- One finger (thumb): Thumbs up! Great book choice, this will be easy reading for you.
- Two fingers (thumb and index finger): Makes an L, still Looking good! Enjoy.
- Three fingers (makes a W): Warning! This book may be best when read with someone.
- Four or more fingers (whole hand): Stop! This book may be too tough to enjoy alone. Ask an adult or older sibling to read this book to you.

Finding the right book may involve a little bit of extra work, but it's worth it in the end.

Reading Rockets, Colorín Colorado, and LD OnLine are national education services of WETA, the flagship public broadcasting station in Washington, D.C.





Centennial School District

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Mr. Michael W. Donnelly
Principal

Mr. Andrew Drago
Assistant Principal

Inclement Weather



December is upon us, which means winter weather is right around the corner. Please be sure to have a family plan in place for early dismissals or cancellations of school. Announcements of school closings will be made on KYW (1060 AM). The radio stations identify school districts by name and/or by specific numbers. Centennial's school closing number is **753**. When schools open late, **753** will be announced, along with details of the delayed opening. Additional channels (3, 6, and 10), as well as the local Comcast cable channel, 28, and Verizon cable channel, 36, will post information. As always, the district website, www.centennialsd.org, will be updated with up-to-the-minute information. Don't forget that this information will be provided to you via a phone call, making use of our new *School Messenger* system. When possible, we will also update our Twitter account. Don't forget to follow us, @Willow_Dale_ES! Visit the district website for further information. ■

A Heartfelt Thank You



A heartfelt Thank You

On behalf of the entire faculty and staff of Willow Dale Elementary School, a heartfelt *Thank You* goes out to the families of the Home and School Association and, in particular, to those parents of the Hospitality Committee. A delectable spread of culinary excellence was provided for an enjoyable mid-conference dinner on November 24th. Thank you! ■

From the Nurse

Our school nurse, Mrs. White, is always available to discuss any questions you may have regarding our students' health and wellness. If your child is in need of medicine, over-the-counter or prescribed, it can only be given to the student by the school nurse. The medicine must be in its original packaging and should be delivered to the health suite at the beginning of the school day. ■



Attendance



While coming to school each and every day is important, it is equally as important to monitor our children's health. If a child is sick, please keep him/her home. Our teachers will work with students who have fallen ill to make sure they do not fall behind in the classroom. When a child is absent, you must send in a written excuse note. This note must be given to the homeroom teacher within three days of return from the absence. Students who do not turn in notes within this period of time, per policy, will receive an unexcused absence on his/her record. Let's work together to ensure our students are healthy and safe, and accountable. ■

Family Vacations

As per District policy, requests for family trips/vacations are due to the Principal's office *at least two weeks prior to the date* of the absence for the trip. Vacation forms can be picked up in the main office or printed from the Willow Dale website. Please refer to the PSSA testing dates, located within this newsletter. Also, don't forget that the District will be on Spring Break from **March 24 – 28, 2016!** ■

Visitors



In order to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff, all visitors to Willow Dale must report to the main office, entering through the front doors of the school. There, our visitors sign in and retrieve a Willow Dale sticker, which is used to identify the grown-up as someone that has, in fact, been to the office. Please remember to have a photo ID on your person. This is required for identification purposes. Albeit a seemingly small inconvenience, we do all that we can to ensure the safety of all of our boys and girls and our faculty/staff. Mrs. Gedraitis or Mrs. Paris, our Office Monitors, will greet you and assist you with whatever you need. Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation. ■