



Paw Prints

The Monthly PTSA Newsletter of Washington Middle School

<http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/washingtonms>

SEPTEMBER 2007

The WMS PTSA Welcomes You!

Greetings new and returning parents, students and staff! The Washington Middle School PTSA welcomes you to another frenzied year in middle school. The new among us, parents, students and staff alike, are bound to be overwhelmed by the whirlwind of new circumstances, expectations and conditions while the seasoned are bracing for the battery of challenging courses and the extracurricular opportunities to come this year. Your PTSA is here to help.

Right out of the box, we are working to make the start of the year go smoothly with a 'day-one' coffee hour on the first day of school and a student packet that will include refined forms for PTSA volunteer information and the student directory. A PTSA Co-treasurer has already attended a staff meeting to let the great teachers and staff that make this school so terrific, how best to work with the PTSA. And, just around the corner, on **Thursday, September 20th** we'll host the *Bite of Washington*, with great food, information and the always exciting *Class Olympics*.

To do these terrific things and all the others we have in store this year, including: nine issues of this newsletter, Family Directories, Emergency Preparedness, Jr. Husky Happenings, 8th Grade Promotion, Peer Mediation, Student Planners, 6th Grade Ice Cream Social, Star Recognition Awards and field trips, we need you. We need you to join the PTSA, which as easy as writing a very small check and filling out the membership envelope that comes with your student packet (also available in the office and at any PTSA event). The nominal PTSA membership fees fund the statewide effort to have healthy PTSA's, including the leadership materials we use to run a non-profit organization with mostly new volunteers each year,

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WMS PTSA—Join us!

When you join WMS PTSA, you also become a member of the Seattle Council of PTSA's, the Washington State PTA (www.wastatepta.org) and the National PTA (www.pta.org). So, by joining, you are taking a stand for all children in this city, state, and country. To join the PTSA, send a check for \$10 per member, payable to WMS PTSA Membership, along with the form from the First-Week Packet. Or, mail the check to WMS at 2101 S. Jackson St., Seattle, WA 98144. Donations are tax-deductible.

Getting Ready

Summer is officially winding down. The cool breezes of twilight, the creeping darkness of dawn, and the slight chill in the lake all signaling the change we knew was on its way. The halls of Washington Middle School have been buzzing with activity the past two months. Our fantastic custodial crew (**Theresa, Viet, Chris, and Tony**) is finishing their final punch-list of items that need to be cleaned, fixed, shuttled to the dumpster, or moved to the storage rooms before the staff and students return. In the main office, **Brenda** (filling in for **Ms. Maldonado**) and **Katrina** (our new registrar) have been busily updating records, prepping the staff handbooks with the latest updates, and fielding a growing number of calls from anxious 6th graders, or more often, their parents. Getting ready for school, and for the students that bring our school alive, is the primary focus of all our energy during the summer months. **Ms. Guenther, Mr. Powell, Mrs. Jones**, and I have spent countless hours working on the master schedule, tweaking the safety plans, getting the student handbook/planner ready, and pouring over a growing stack of resumes and applications as we search for the perfect matches to fill the vacant positions in our WMS teaching ranks. For a brief moment in the middle of July, the schedule was set and the staff was complete, but only for a brief moment. As I write this letter, we still have one last position to fill, but such is the nature of school in the fading weeks of summer.

While getting the building ready for school and students, we've also been getting ourselves ready for the year to come. The new Superintendent of Seattle Schools, **Dr. Goodloe-Johnson**, set the tone for the start of a fantastic year as she greeted the principals and administrators of Seattle Schools with the kickoff to our annual summer leadership institute. Breaking from past practice, she and **Dr. Santorno**, the Chief Academic Officer, joined us or lead us in the professional development that was presented. By the end of our two weeks together, all of us collectively could see that Seattle Schools is under new leadership, a leadership grounded in education, high expectations, accountability, and sustained improvement. As we finished last Friday, it was clear that the "flywheel" was starting to turn, that momentum was beginning to build, and that all of us felt a new and positive energy towards getting ready—ready for school.

The teachers of WMS have also been getting ready. Many of them departed that last Friday in June, only to return the

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PTSA Welcomes You, *continued from page 1*

high quality low cost insurance for our events, and training for our officers.

We also need your financial support to keep our commitment to adding opportunity to every classroom at Washington. Your PTSA provides teacher grants to each teacher and department grants to each department, putting your contributions directly to work in every classroom every day. We'll ask you to please participate in the annual fund and the spring auction so that our tradition of excellence can continue this year.

Lastly, and by far most importantly, we need your time. There are some key positions still vacant that desperately need your talent, including:

- **Auction Procurement Chair** [leads the effort to procure items to be auctioned this spring, Auction Co-chairs are already working on the event and many folks are ready to provide the items they donated last year.]
- **Co-President** [Two year commitment, but includes coaching by current co-prez in his fourth year of PTSA exec work]
- **Picture Day Coordinator** [organizes a few parents to assist the photographer on picture day and make-up day later this month.]
- **Building Leadership Team Members** [Attend meetings with staff and principal representing the PTSA on the team that coordinates and improves operations and facilities at WMS]
- **Grounds Beautification Chair** [Organizes work parties to keep our school campus looking swell]
- **Reflections Chair** [organizes the Reflections art and creative writing submittals for annual national competition.]

There are also endless opportunities to help on any of these teams and other teams as well as with tutoring and assisting teachers. Please contact our volunteer coordinator, **Lisa Coughlin** (Lisac@cycla.com), mother of 7th grade **Jamie**, today to get started on your 07-08 PTSA adventure. Your time is what really makes it happen for our students and their teachers. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, ideas, concerns, etc. I wish you all a terrific year at Washington!

*John Eickelberg, PTSA Co-President
eibhllis@msn.com (father of 7th grade Brendan)*

All the News That Fits We Print

Paw Prints offers a great opportunity to get information out to the entire WMS community—parents and caretakers as well as students—and we are looking for articles and ideas from the entire school. Submissions can be emailed to elizsanders@yahoo.com. Deadline is the 15th of each month. Feel free to call me at 324-0222 with questions and/or ideas.

Elizabeth Sanders, Editor

Get in the Loop

2007 WMS Student Directory

This directory is a great resource to help students stay in touch with each other. The permission form is included in your *First Day Packet*. Additional forms may be picked up in the office. The deadline is Friday, September 28.

WMS e-News

Sign up on-line for the WMS e-News at www.seattleschools.org/schools/washingtonms to receive information and reminders about school events, news, and volunteer needs.

APP Advisory Committee

The *APP Advisory Committee* is an official group of APP parents and teachers that are appointed by the Superintendent to advise and inform the school district on issues regarding the Accelerated Progress Program. Part of our charge is to communicate with the APP community, and the primary way we do this is to send out regular emails with information that is important to APP families, students, and teachers. We encourage you to sign up to receive these emails. They are the only way middle and high school families will get current information on APP specific issues and changes. The Committee meets once per month. All are welcome to attend.

To sign up for the APP Advisory Committee email list, contact the Communications Representative, **Karen Jensen** (urbankaren@aol.com). Please include your first and last name, your student(s) first and last names, and their HS graduation year. If you currently receive emails from "UrbanKaren" there is no need to sign up again.

Light up a Young Mind



"Could we read one more chapter?" Those are sweet words to hear—especially when you're hearing them from somebody who "hates to read." The satisfaction of bringing kids and books together, or of seeing that "I get it!" expression while going over a math assignment, can be yours—if you sign up today to be a volunteer tutor at WMS.

This year our in-school tutoring program is starting in September, allowing adults and students more time to develop a bond that promotes trust, confidence and greater academic success. If you can keep a commitment to meet once or twice a week, for the school year, it will have a positive impact on a student's learning while keeping you connected in a meaningful way with the school. (Your own middle schoolers will not only tolerate your presence; they will probably be quite pleased to have you here.)

Like working one-on-one with students? Want to be a classroom assistant? To learn more about these opportunities, call **Susan Huntley**, Tutor Coordinator (252-2644, sjhuntley@seattleschools.org).



WMS Music News



Washington Middle School is proud to have an outstanding music program that has received both local and national recognition as well as numerous awards. All WMS students are invited to be a part of the WMS tradition of music—*previous music experience is not required!!* Three of our music classes are specifically designed for the beginning musician: *Beginning Strings*, *Beginning Instruments* and *Choir*. We have instruments to loan to students and can provide scholarships for performance uniforms and music books. Please consider joining—it is not too late to sign up for one of these classes!!!!

First-Day Music Packets

Be on the lookout for an envelope of music information to come home with your music student on the first day of school. The packet will contain information about the music classes, including: supplies needed, grading rubric, practice guidelines, uniform order form, as well as a performance calendar and expectations for performance attendance. It will also include information about *Friends of Washington Music (FOWM)* and its mission to support the music program through fundraising, communication and volunteerism. **PLEASE** fill out and return the *FOWM* contact information sheet. In addition to *Paw Prints* articles, we rely heavily on email communication for our music event notices and travel information. Your contact information is vital to help the year run smoothly.

Music Open House

Please join us on **Thursday, September 13 at 7pm** in the WMS Gym for an evening of information about the music program at WMS. Whether you are new to the program, a returning veteran, or just considering a music course this year, we encourage all to attend. It is never too late to learn to play an instrument or take up group singing! The evening will include information about music classes, music performances, uniforms, travel trips, private lessons, borrowing instruments, scholarship availability, and more. We'll even have a uniform exchange table where you can bring in your outgrown tuxedo shirts, black slacks, skirts and shoes and try others on for size. Our outstanding music directors: **Mr. Robert E. Knatt** (Band) and **Ms. Elizabeth Fortune Gobo** (Orchestra/Choir) will be on hand to answer your questions.



Friends Of Washington Music Meeting

All parents are welcome to come to our September *FOWM* board meeting on **Thursday, September 6 at 7pm** in the Band Room (Rm 8). These monthly meetings include discussions about upcoming music activities and performances, fundraising activities, elementary outreach efforts, trip planning and much more.

After-School Music Program

Washington Middle School offers several after-school music classes that will start up in early October. After school activities are coordinated by the *After School Activity Program (ASAP)* and occur several days a week from 2:30–4:15pm. Be watching for the *ASAP* flyer coming home this fall for more information.

WMS PTSA Auction

FOWM receives a generous portion of the Auction proceeds, so we have some special obligations to help the Auction be a great success. We organize the student musicians who provide entertainment and serve the meal. In addition, we provide donated items for both the silent and live auctions, as well as provide 10 table captains. We also organize the *Bouquet-A-Month*, *Dessert-A-Month*, *CD-A-Month* and *FOWM Wine Cellar*, created with wine donated by *FOWM* members. If there is any item you could donate or any job you'd like to do to help make the Auction the same huge success it was last year, the sooner we get the donations and volunteers in place, the smoother everything goes at auction time. We would be truly grateful for all early offers of items and help. For information contact Auction Co-chairs **Elizabeth Lowry** (725-0288, elizabethlowry@comcast.net) or **Su Chase** (722-1103, billnsu@w-link.net).



Getting Ready, *continued from page 1*

following Monday to start summer coursework on Readers and Writers Workshop, CMPII, and many of the FOSS science kits. A few of us attended the kickoff for our new partnership with Microsoft, which in addition to materials and resources will also bring a half-time math coach to work with and support our math teachers. Others who were not part of the math, reading, and writing trainings, sought out workshops in music, art, Shakespeare, world language, and Critical Friends Groups. And a few brave souls even ventured off to other middle schools, bringing their skills and expertise to the various summer school programs that Seattle has to offer. Yes, teachers do have the summer months off, but the reality is that much of their summer is time spent in getting ready—ready for school.

Summer has nearly run its course. I hope that all of you found time to read and relax, to recharge your batteries, and of course to catch a bit of that wonderful summer sun. The building will come alive on September 5th, as the halls and classrooms fill with nearly 1,100 students and another 80 adults. And as the building comes alive, know that we have been getting ready—ready for school, and ready for you. Welcome back!

Jon Halfaker
Principal

Legislative Report

Washington State PTA Simple Majority Campaign—Yes on EHJR 4204

For 20 years, the Washington State PTA has been working for a change in Washington State's school levy system. Levies generally account for about ¼ of a school district's operating budget. The current system disadvantages schools, students and educators by requiring a 60% "supermajority" in order to pass a school levy. In 2006, out of 225 levy elections all but one received a *majority* vote. However, 32 of those levies still failed because they did not receive 60% of the vote. Levy failures result in deep budget cuts, teacher layoffs and other disruptions to vital education programs. EHJR 4204 will amend the State Constitution to the school levy election system to require a "simple majority," or 50% +1, to win passage of school levies. The Legislature has passed EHJR 4204 by a supermajority. It is up to the people to vote approval of the measure statewide. All we need to do it is a **simple majority**.

WSPTA and WMS PTSA are excited to work for passage of EHJR 4204 but we can't do it alone. We need **your help** and **your votes** in November if Washington State Schools are going to win. Together we can seize this historic opportunity to make a positive change for our schools, teachers and students.

Our PTSA has endorsed **EHJR 4204, the Simple Majority Campaign**. You can personally endorse and donate to the campaign at www.simplybetterschools.org.

In addition, you will have the opportunity to join other WMS PTSA parents for phonebanking to get this important Constitutional amendment passed. A date and time for the phonebank will be announced. Stayed tuned for details!

School Board Elections

By the time you receive this edition of *Paw Prints*, candidates for the four School Director positions will be determined. Unlike the primary election, in which you get to vote for candidates only within your School Director District, all four positions will run city-wide in November's General election.

WSPTA Legislative Assembly

The State PTA will hold its annual Legislative Assembly to determine its legislative priorities on October 5–6 in Sea Tac. The issues to be discussed can be found here: <http://wastatepta.org/leg/PROPOSEDPRIORITYISSUESFINAL.pdf>.

Please let me know which issues are most important to you so that I can best represent the WMS PTSA at the Assembly.

*Janis Traven, WMS Legislative Chair
285-7375, janistraven@comcast.net*

**VOTE YES
on
EHJR 4204
Simple Majority
for Schools**

WMS Auction 2008 Date is set for Saturday, March 15

Have you ever wanted to learn to cook from *Rover's* "Chef in the Hat" **Thierry Rautureau** and *St. Clouds'* chef **John Platt**? Would you like to influence young person by donating a few hours of your time just talking about your work? How about hosting a dinner party in your home? Or asking a friend to donate the weekend use of his or her cabin in the Cascades?

These are just a few ways you can help raise money for Washington Middle School. Each year, the WMS Auction raises money to help teachers pay for classroom supplies and help fund the *Saturday School* where students can get extra help with their homework. Auction proceeds enable the PTSA to give grants to departments such as music, art, science and reading.

The auction will take place **Saturday, March 15, 2008**, and the PTSA and *Friends of Washington Music (FOWM)* are gathering fabulous items for the auction and planning a wonderful evening of music and a gourmet dinner prepared by Thierry and John.

We hope to raise more than \$75,000 this year, and we need your help procuring items, organizing and helping with aspects of auction such as the live auction, silent auction, set up, decorations and working the day of the event.

A form asking for your help will be included in the packet your WMS student will bring home the first week of school. One side includes information about volunteering and areas of expertise; the other side includes information about donating to the auction. Please fill out this form and return it to the school. Whether you donate time, money or items, we need you!

To find out how you can help, contact auction co-chairs **Su Chase** (722-1103) or **Elizabeth Lowry** (725-0288) at WMSauction2008@hotmail.com.



Girls' Soccer

Girls' soccer turn-outs are scheduled for Monday 9/10, Tuesday 9/11 and Thursday 9/13 from 2:30–4:30. Anyone interested in participating in the WMS soccer program must have the school district athletic paperwork (including a current physical) completed and turned in to the athletic director before turning out.



The varsity team is extremely competitive. Girls interested in playing on the varsity team need to participate in the first week of turn-outs. Varsity and JV practice 2–3 days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday) with games on Saturday.

For more information, contact **Coach Miller** (ammiller1@seattleschools.org).

Come to the *Bite of Washington*— B.O.W.-WOW!

Our Annual School-Year Kickoff!
Thursday, September 20, 2007
5:30–8:00pm
at Washington Middle School



The *Bite of Washington* is everyone's favorite kickoff event of the school year. Meet WMS staff, mingle with families from your child's grade and classes. Get a feel for how much fun WMS can be while you browse information tables on after-school clubs and classes, *Saturday School*, WMS Teen Health Center, community resources, *PTSA Reflections*, WMS Music programs, and much, much more. Discover ways you can make a difference and how the PTSA can help. Join us for dinner, too! Enjoy a selection of delicious items provided by local merchants, including local favorite, Jones BBQ. The *Bite* is not a fundraiser, but to help cover costs, bite items will be priced between \$1 and \$4. Dinner scrip will be sold at the event—come early for best selection... there's no telling how long the BBQ will last this year!

At 7pm, make your way to the Gym for the WMS *Class Olympics*. Loosely based on the periods of the school day, this school-spirit event features a team of students representing each grade level and competing in a series of zany challenges. The winning team is awarded the *Bite of Washington* trophy for the year!

Volunteers Needed for *Bite of Washington*

We need parent and student volunteers on September 21 in the afternoon, starting at 3pm, and during the event. Light work. Great people. Please contact **Sue Dietrich** (860-2181 suedietrich@comcast.net) or **Liz Eickelberg** (329-1267 eibhlis@msn.com) to join us!

WMS Students: Get In On the *Class Olympics*!

Sign up to represent your class in the *Class Olympics* during *Bite of Washington* (Thursday, September 20: the *Bite* starts at 5:30pm, *Olympics* at 7). Teams representing the 6th, 7th and 8th grades will be assembled right after school starts. You'll face challenges like solving silly math problems to open lockers, costume relay races, ludicrous "college bowl" questions, and zany physical challenges. Look for the sign-up form after school starts. And make sure you turn out for your class, even if you're not on the team! Everyone participates in the last challenge: a "cheer" contest with the loudest class earning extra points for their team! **Go Junior Huskies!**

WMS PTSA Annual Fund

Welcome to Washington Middle School! You are a critical part of our diverse community of dedicated families and staff and *we need your help!*

The WMS *Annual Fund* provides funding to the school's teachers and programs, above the minimal amount provided by the Seattle School District. The PTSA organizes this fund drive because the school district does not give the school nearly enough to meet its students' needs.

Consider:

- The district gives WMS's Science Department only \$400 per year for supplies, less than 40 cents per student. Minimal lab supplies cost at east seven times that amount.
- Our Music Department gets a very small sum for all supplies. Sheet music alone costs over \$4,000 a year.
- The Social Studies Department must share a total budget of \$400 per year.
- The Technology Department also has just \$400 per year, not enough to provide any specialized software for student learning.

Why do we have an Annual Fund?

We don't ask our students to participate in fund raising: no car washes, gift wrap, holiday, or pizza sales. Instead, as our children focus on learning, the adult WMS community joins together to raise money to support them.

How are the Funds Spent?

Typically, the teachers use these funds for supplies, special programs, field trips, or equipment. Each department and teacher receives money to supplement their department's budget. There is a simple application process that the teachers use to request additional funds. A group of interested PTSA parents decides which requests to fund.

What is this Year's Goal?

In 2007–08 the PTSA *Annual Fund* goal is \$80,000—and to inspire every family in the school to give.

How can YOU Help?

Make a donation to the WMS *Annual Fund*, as much as you feel you can. No amount is too small (or too big!). Help us reach our goal of 100% participation by *ALL* of the school's families. We accept checks, credit cards, stock donations and *PayPal*. Ask your employer for matching funds.

We will also ask your friends and family to make a donation on behalf of your student.

For more information email meg.watson@comcast.net.

Thanks for your support!

Kathy Feldman, Audrey Sheffield and Meg Watson
Annual Fund Committee Chairs



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Washington Middle School PTSA

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Next Pawprints Deadline
OCTOBER 15TH, 2007

When you Shop at Amazon.com, 4-8% of Your Eligible Purchases Can Go Directly to Our PTSA

Please visit www.seattleschools.org/schools/washingtonms and click on the Amazon button. When you get to Amazon, save to your favorites list as "AMAZON WMS." Always shop via your WMS link or by going through the WMS web site and WMS will receive the benefit.

Be sure to tell your family members and friends anywhere in the world that they can support your school just by using the above link to access the Amazon.com site. How easy is that??

AND DID YOU KNOW? WMS receives \$15 for every cell phone with service contract purchased through AMAZON WMS. So think of AMAZON WMS for all your shopping needs, and be sure to tell your friends and relatives to do the same. Every purchase helps!



September Calendar

- Sept 5 First Day of School
- Sept 12 PTSA Board Meeting, 7pm
- Sept 13 Friends of Wash. Music (FOWM) Board Mtg, 7pm
- Sept 10, 11 & 13 Girls' Soccer Tryouts, 2:30pm
- Sept 13 FOWM Open House, 7pm
- Sept 20 Bite of Washington MS, 5:30pm
- Sept 24 Picture Day
- Sept 26 Early Release, 12:15pm