

September 2008

Washington Middle School PTSA Newsletter

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The WMS PTSA Welcomes You!

Greetings to all new and returning families, students and staff! September came fast and furious (at least “furious” describes my children at 6:30 a.m. on the 3rd...) but no fear—the PTSA is already in high gear. Many thanks to Liz Eickelberg and the great band of volunteers that helped assemble the 1,100 first week packets. You should receive this packet on Friday of the first week via your child (be sure to ask your child for it!). This packet is full of information and forms to return from the District, school, and PTSA.

As you look ahead to the new school year, please plan to attend Washington Middle School events and get to know or become reacquainted with our families and staff. Start now by writing down these events on your calendar:

- **Bite of Washington (B.O.W.)—September 18, 5:30–8:00 p.m.** This is a fun community event and a great way to meet people. There will be a variety of

affordable dinner options followed by the annual *off-the-wall* class Olympics.

- **Friends of Washington Music Open House—September 25.** Hear about the fabulous music program at WMS.
- **Curriculum Night—October 2.** An event for families to meet their child’s teacher and hear about their Fall classes. You will follow an abbreviated version of your child’s schedule and hear a brief description of the class curriculum. An excellent time to hear from the teacher’s what their expectations are of your child and how you can stay connected.
- **Parent Conferences—TBD (sorry you can’t write this in yet but stay tuned...).** Here is your chance to sit down with your child’s teachers for a brief discussion. It is an important opportunity to have a face-to-face chat with teachers and check in on your child’s progress. It typically happens over two, 2-hour time periods—one in the afternoon, and the other in the early evening.

Continued on Page 2



"Welcome Back Washington!"



Yes, it’s finally here. September, with its shorter days and cooler evenings, has finally worked its way to the top of my calendar. While some of us would truly love to see summer go on for a few more weeks, I, for one, am extremely happy to see August on its way out, and September nosing around the corner. As always, September signals for me the return of the lifeblood of all of Seattle Schools, but especially Washington Middle School: the students and staff. The building’s halls and classrooms pulse with new energy as our students surge through the doors on the opening day. Staff members, rested from a well earned break (which is often as busy with workshops and trainings as the regular school year), are excited to reconnect with each other and with their students, and to get the learning in the classroom underway.

This year, September is especially exciting, as our staff and students are returning to a newly renovated WMS. In mid-August, the crews that have been busily turning WMS into a gutted shell for much of the summer made one final push to complete the last of the tile-locker-ceiling-window project. While a few items on the “punch-list” may still remain, I am pleased to say that the building is ready to receive both the students and the staff back to Washington. The floors are bright, the purple lockers shine down every hall, and the ceilings have been completely retiled. The windows, if not now, will very soon have the first new window treatments in nearly 30 years. No, it’s not a brand new school a la Garfield, but for a summer project, I know it will make a difference in the students’ and staff’s pride in the school.

Continued on Page 2

Continued from page 1... **The WMS PTSA Welcomes You!**

■ **School Dinner and Auction—March 14.** This is an important fundraiser for the PTSA and a fun evening with WMS families and supporters.

■ **PTSA General Meetings—October 22, January 21, and May 27.** All our general meetings start at 7:00 p.m. in the school cafeteria. Typically, these meetings start with a brief agenda on PTSA business and are followed by presentations from outside groups which are relevant to families of middle school students such as teen health or internet safety. The PTSA and school function best when they have involvement from their communities. Please ensure that the PTSA stays on track by attending these meetings and offering your input.

■ **WMS Board Meetings—2nd Wednesday of the month at WMS.** Please feel free to attend our board meetings and hear what the PTSA is working on. This is a great way to get your feet wet and find opportunities to help.

Throughout the year, the PTSA will be reaching out to our families. Please look for how you can help as needs

arise. To stay in touch with us, please sign up to be added to our e-mail distribution list. This is the quickest and most efficient way for us to communicate with you. Lisa Coughlin kindly and efficiently handles this for the PTSA (lisac@cycla.com). At the beginning of every month, this PTSA newsletter, *Paw Prints*, will be sent to you. It is our monthly opportunity to reach the entire community so please take a moment to read it. Finally, the school website (<http://65.110.89.109/index.asp>) is also an excellent way to stay informed. For those who do not like using e-mail, do not hesitate to send us a written message via the school office or call.

Again, welcome!

Harriet Bakken, WMS PTSA Co-President,
hbakken@att.net , 206.323.6046

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montlaketurner@comcast.net, 206.323.2858

Continued from page 1... **“Welcome Back Washington!”**

Besides the above improvements and renovations, a number of additional projects have been going on in the background this summer. New copiers have arrived, replacing the prior copiers that were beginning to spend more time down than up, especially when we most needed them. The lower track and basketball court has finally been painted with classroom numbers and other markers to assist our Safety Team during drills where we evacuate the entire building. The mural on the drive in front of the school was updated over the summer, thanks to City Year and Upward Bound volunteers. And finally, SDOT has done some work on the crosswalk on Jackson Street.

Beyond the noise, dust, and mess of a renovation, we've also been working very hard to get ready for all of our returning and new students. As mentioned above, much of the faculty has spent some part of their summer in trainings focused on math, science, writing, and reading. In addition, the number of staff beginning work on National Board Certification for the coming year is approaching double digits. Finally, the administrative team has just come off a week of trainings designed to get all of us energized and focused on the learning that must take place in all of our classrooms.

To our new families, I offer a sincere “Welcome!” to Washington. It is my belief, as I enter my 15th year with Seattle Schools, that you have made a wonderful decision in sending your student to Washington. This is a school where high expectations, challenging curriculum, and committed faculty are provided to every student. It is also a school full of dedicated adults who love to work with middle school students and who are here to support them and you in as many ways as possible. If you have questions, if you have concerns, if you just want to talk to someone about this “middle school student who took over my elementary student’s body,” please call and connect with us.

To our returning families, welcome back! The school has never looked better. As you begin your second or third (or more) year at WMS, please continue to stay involved and connected with your students and their learning. As with our new students, please let us know of any problems or concerns you have, especially during the opening weeks of school.

Yes, a week or two more of summer would be great, but honestly, it really is wonderful to see all of our students, teachers, and families returning to Washington. Welcome back!

Jon Halfaker, Principal



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, to supplement the inadequate 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 least seven times that amount.
- Our Music department gets just \$400 for all supplies. Sheet music alone costs over \$4,000 a year.
- The Social Studies department shares 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 fundraising such as 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 2008-09, the PTSA Annual Fund goal is \$80,000, and we hope 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.

For more information e-mail us at:

Meg.Watson@comcast.net

Thanks for your support!

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



2008-2009 Student Directory

Be a part of this year's Student Directory! It is a great resource to help students stay in touch with each other.

A permission form must be completed and submitted. The permission form is included in your First Week Packet, additional forms can be picked up in the office, or just send me an e-mail to request a form—make sure to write 'WMS Student Directory' in the subject line. **Please print clearly!** Turn in the completed forms right away; the deadline is Friday, September 26th 2008.

Leveck Mas, Student Director
(Leveckemas@hotmail.com)



Paw Prints—Your Information Connection



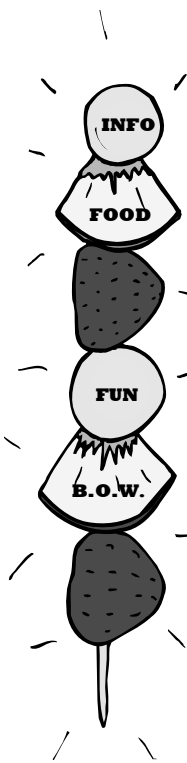
Paw Prints is not only a communication tool for the PTSA and WMS staff, it can be your connection to the community. Your ideas, feedback, and school news articles are welcome. If you have any questions about submissions, please do not hesitate to contact me (Catherine Wickham) either via e-mail or phone (206.526.1106). I look forward to working with everyone in the WMS community!



Deadline for articles is the **15th of each month**. Send your submissions via e-mail to:



clwickham@comcast.net



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

Our Annual School-Year Kickoff!

Thursday, September 18, 2008

5:30–8:00 p.m. at Washington Middle School

The *Bite of Washington* is everyone's favorite kickoff event of the school year. Beginning at 5:30, meet WMS staff and 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, WMS Music programs, and much, much more. Discover ways you can make a difference and how the PTSA can help.

Join us for some scrumptious food, too! We will have a selection of delicious items provided by local merchants. The Bite is not a fundraiser, but to help cover costs, bite items will be priced between \$1 and \$5. Dinner scrip will be sold at the event—come early for the best selection... there's no telling how long the food will last this year!

At 7:00, everyone will make their way to the Gym for the WMS Class Olympics. This school spirit event features a team of students representing each grade level that will compete in a series of zany challenges. Sign up to be on your grade's team! The winning team is awarded the Bite of Washington trophy for the year!



Mark Your Calendars!

Saturday, March 14, 2009 is the WMS Annual Spring Auction/Dinner.

Please plan to attend this event that will be fantastically fun and memorable! This important evening raises over 1/2 of the needed funds for our PTSA's annual budget.

How You Can Help?

We are currently looking for committee members, as well as other volunteers for the event. If you have participated in the past or are interested in participating in the planning of this fun event for the first time, please contact us by using the e-mail address below. We are new to WMS and would deeply appreciate your assistance. There are many ways to help, including:

- Donating or obtaining auction items
- Chairing or being part of a committee
- Volunteering your assistance for the day of the event

Please contact us using the following e-mail address: wmsauction2009@yahoo.com. Look for more information to be sent home soon!

Linda Kim and Molly Ray Callaghan, 2009 Auction Chairpersons

WMS Community—Please Support Your PTSA

Join for only \$10 per person (payable to WMS PTSA). This money is used by the State PTSA and Seattle Council PTSA to provide the organizational materials that we use to run programs for students and the training that your PTSA leaders need to do their jobs well. Every student will be bringing home an information packet the first week of school—it will include an envelope for membership. Please return your membership remittance with the rest of your forms to keep your PTSA strong and healthy. Thank you for your ongoing support! **John Eickelberg, VP at Large**



WMS Music News

Washington Middle School (WMS) 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 e-mail 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 25 at 7:00 p.m. 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 Mrs. Kelly Barr Clingan (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 Monday, September 8 at 7:00 p.m. in the Band Room (Room 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

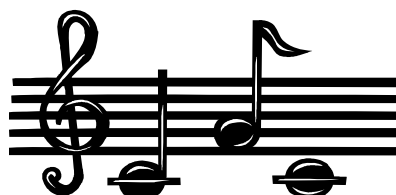
Washington Middle School offers after-school music classes that will start up in late September or early October. After-school activities are coordinated by the After School Activity Program (ASAP) and occur 2 to 3 days a week from 2:30–4:15 p.m. A late bus will be available. Watch for the flier coming home this fall for more information.

WMS PTSA AUCTION

FOWM receives a generous portion of the auction proceeds, so we have a special obligation to help the auction be a great success. We organize the student musicians who provide entertainment at the auction 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 CD-A-Month, Bouquet-A-Month, Dessert-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, please let us know. The sooner we get the donations and volunteers in place, the smoother everything goes at auction time. We would be very, very grateful for all early offers of items and help.

For more information, contact:

FOWM Co-Chairs Laurie de Koch or Leslie Ashbaugh at wms.music@gmail.org.





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Washington Middle School PTSA

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Next Paw Prints Deadline
September 15, 2008

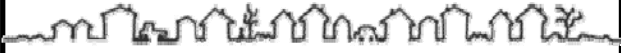
Volunteers Needed—Bite of Washington

We are very much in need of parent and student volunteers on September 18 in the afternoon, starting at 3:00 p.m., and throughout the evening. Light work. Great people.

To join the team effort needed to pull this event off, please contact:

Paula Wieber, 760.1931, home@dbrlaw.com;
 Mary Irwin, memirwin@aol.com; or
 Edna Bravo-Sawyer, 235.9082,
ESawyer@starbucks.com.

September Calendar



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| Sept 3 | First Day of School |
| Sept 10 | PTSA Board Meeting,
7:00 p.m. |
| Sept 15 | Paw Prints
Article Deadline |
| Sept 18 | Bite of Washington,
5:30–8:00 p.m. |
| Sept 24 | 2-hour early release |
| Sept 25 | FOWM Open House.,
7:00 p.m. |
| Sept 25 | Picture Day |
| Oct 2 | Curriculum Night |