



Paw Prints

The Monthly PTSA Newsletter of Washington Middle School

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

OCTOBER 2007

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The WMS PTSA Needs You

The frenzy of first weeks has calmed and each of us has a child, or two, who has taken on their middle school regimen with pride, vigor, and maybe just a little grumbling. But they're all headed for a terrific year of education and enrichment at Washington Middle School. Congratulations on rounding their minds up from summertime adventures and getting them off to school every day for nearly a month!...and it is already October, Volunteer Month in 152 nations around the world. Not really, but what a swell idea. Volunteering is the foundation, mortar and capstone of the PTSA. Nothing ever happens without the will and actions of committed folks and the good things that your PTSA does can only occur when folks like yourself agree to volunteer. One of the reasons I find most compelling for my own volunteer efforts and recruitment of my friends, colleagues, and fellow parents like you is the long term dream that I think can be real.

When our children, especially middle school students, who are deciding more and more things for themselves, see and participate in volunteer activities, it plants more seeds of community in their hearts and minds. They are recipients of services and things from the PTSA almost every school day (planners, art supplies, special class materials), so they know the outcome. When they see us volunteering when we could have leisure time, just to get that outcome for them and their classmates, they know it matters to us and they are proud of us and even themselves, for being with us. Eventually our kids end up getting the lasting impression that when you grow up, making all these good things happen as a volunteer is just another one of the things you do. In fact, they might decide it is one of their measures of success. It's a magnificent vision, the long term effects of all our students being better volunteers automatically than we are with great self-discipline today.

So please, I encourage you to choose PTSA activities that you like to do. Then, you'll enjoy sticking with them and your student(s) will get to know what it's all about. One opportunity that your PTSA needs help with right away is **Grounds and Beautification** Chairperson and committee members to revive

our commitment to make our campus more inviting and pleasant to work and play in.

Many thanks for your participation and hard work. Also, please remember to attend the first **WMS PTSA General Meeting on Tuesday, October 23, 6:30pm followed by a Group Health Forum on Youth at 7pm.** We'll be voting, and you can't vote if you don't join. Moreover, you can't complain if you don't vote. So please join today!

Feel free to contact me (eibhllis@msn.com) or Co-President **Jackie Smalley**, mother of Tristan, 6th grade (jbsmalley@mac.com), with any questions, ideas, concerns, etc. To volunteer, please contact our volunteer coordinator, **Lisa Coughlin**, mother of 7th grade Jamie (lisac@cycla.com).

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

Spinning the Wheel

They're back! Just over two weeks ago a slow trickle of students began streaming towards the doors of Washington Middle School. Within moments it had changed to a steady stream and eventually a river of students with the sounds of laughter, greetings, and reconnection filling the halls. Eyes, some blinking open in disbelief that summer was finally over, others blinking in sudden recognition that school really does start this early, darted from face to face, door to door, looking for a sign, any sign, that they were where they were supposed to be. In a mere matter of 30 minutes, the building changed, from its sleepy summer state to one full of energy, movement, and that "buzz" that tells you good things are about to happen.

The start of the 2007-2008 school year has gone very well. Day One began with the return of 700 7th and 8th grade students and a welcoming of just over 300 6th grade students. In the days since, more students and families have become part of the WMS community. Parents who joined their students for the first day of school were treated by the PTSA to coffee and connections in the library. By the end of the first day, the 6th grade orientation was complete, every student had his or her own planner for the year, and, yes, even the buses were in the right order for dismissal.

Since September 5th, the momentum built on the first day has continued to grow. Three climate assemblies went off without a hitch, with the basic school expectations and even a fashion show helping students understand the common expectations that all of us at WMS will be using. *Friends of Washington Music* held a successful open house, highlighted by
(continued on page 3)

All the News That Fits We Print

Paw Prints is always 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

Legislative Assembly, October 5-6 in Sea Tac

The annual PTA Legislative Assembly will discuss, debate and rank the following issues:

http://wastatepta.org/leg/survey07_legislative_revision_final.pdf

I have been asked to lead the information session, caucus and debate concerning Support for Highly Capable Programs.

School Board Forums

School Board Directors are up for election in Districts 1, 2, 3, and 6, and will be voted on citywide. Absentee ballots should be arriving on October 15th; Election Day is November 6th. Please be sure to vote!

A great way to engage the candidates is by attending a forum. Two are coming up soon:

Tuesday, October 9 in the multipurpose room at the Garfield Community Center, with Phyllis Fletcher, KUOW education reporter, moderating. The tentative schedule includes a meet and greet starting at 6:30pm, the forum from 7–8:30, and social time for informal conversations from 8:30–9.

Thursday, October 11, Stanford Center, 6pm.

Also on the November Ballot: Ballot Measures Regarding Education

Our PTSA has endorsed **Constitutional amendment 4204: Simple Majority for School Levies**. Watch the campaign’s video on YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qz5Ksgr_rL4

VOTE YES
on
EHJR 4204
Simple Majority
for Schools

We should commit to getting this measure passed by voting, tell our friends and neighbors to vote for the **Constitutional Amendment 4204: Simple Majority for School Levies**, and give an hour of our time to the campaign. Seattle phone banks for the measure will run from October 16–November 6. We’ll email a request for volunteers, or contact the campaign directly at Simple Majority for Our Local Schools (448-3403, info@simplemajority.org).

There are two other Constitutional amendments that will be on the November ballot that may directly or indirectly impact education. They are:

HJR 4215, which would allow the State Investment Board to invest funds for higher education in stocks and bonds (this is intended to provide a higher yield; the State Investment Board has an admirable rating and track record)

ESSJR 8206, which mandates a 1% “rainy day” fund be taken off the top of state revenues. The only way those funds can be spent is for an emergency with a 60% vote of the Legislature. Consider whether there’s enough funding for education now, and just imagine how you’ll feel when the rainy day fund hits a billion dollars, and the Legislature can’t spend it for its paramount duty of education.

We will do our friends, families and the schools a favor if we educate everyone we know on these ballot measures. I’m happy to discuss any of these matters with you— just call or email me!

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



Sister School Visitors from Jiamusi, Peoples Republic of China

Washington has had a sister school relationship with #1 Middle School in Jiamusi, PRC for seven years. During much of that time we have exchanged visits. Groups from WMS have gone to China, the last time in 2004. Jiamusi’s last visit here was in 2003. Until recently we have hosted teachers who taught Mandarin here. Several students have gone on to study Mandarin in China.

A small group (7 in all) will be visiting us from Jiamusi sometime between October and December, depending on visas. They look forward to having home stays with WMS families during the 3–4 days they will be in Seattle. I hope some families will have time to help with hosting them on tours to Microsoft, Boeing, and around the city. Anyone is welcome to contribute to goodie bags of Seattle and Washington items, all small and easily carried for the rest of their travels in America. Anyone who wants to share ideas to make their visit meaningful is welcome to participate.

If you would like to be part of this special event by helping with planning, providing a home stay, hosting them as they visit the region, or in any other way please contact **Marcy Shadow**, teacher (mhshadow@seattleschools.org).

Keep your teen safe

Community Health Forum

FREE to everyone.

Seating is limited. Reservations are recommended.

Call the Group Health Resource Line at 206-326-2800 or e-mail resource.l@ghc.org.

Sponsored by Group Health Cooperative Downtown/Capitol Hill Medical Center Council

PANEL OF EXPERTS:

- JEFF LINDENBAUM, MD, Group Health Cooperative. Board-certified in pediatrics and adolescent medicine. Medical Director, Group Health’s Adolescent Center and school-based clinics
- KATHIE WURZBACHER, MED, LMHC, Group Health Cooperative. Licensed mental health counselor and Director, Adolescent Center and school-based clinics

Learn how to work with your teen on:

- Drugs—how to know if your child is doing drugs or if they are in danger of doing them
- Gangs—understanding them and why kids join
- Homework-related stress and pressure
- Transitions—to middle school, to high school, and even to college

FREE REFRESHMENTS

Tues., Oct. 23 | Washington Middle School, Lunch Room
7–9 p.m. | 2101 South Jackson Street, Seattle

Community Partners:

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

Bringing Washington Middle School to life is no easy task. While our staff has done a fantastic job in getting the building ready, preparing the classrooms, and laying out the curriculum, we couldn't have done it all without the assistance provided by our PTSA volunteers. PTSA crews helped build and distribute the Start of School packets that all of our students took home during the first week, turned out in huge numbers to assist with first day schedules and orientation, and held a welcoming event in the LRC attended by 50 or more of our new WMS family members. PTSA members have also helped feed the staff in the days before school began, spread bark in the flower beds, move tables and desks in the final few hours before school began, and offered to assist in the classrooms and hallways as school got underway.

Jon Halfaker, Principal

I would like to thank several people who have helped in the process of updating the WMS earthquake supplies. We have more to do but since students are back will have to schedule that later this month. Outstanding helpers for Earthquake Kits for Classrooms were Shelly Cohen, her son Eli, and Karen Neyman. The storage shed inventory has been started by Ed Lowe. *Thanks!*

Barbara Hopp, RN, School Nurse



WMS Music News



Upcoming Events

October 3 (Wednesday) All parents are welcome to attend the *Friends of Washington Music* board meeting at 7pm in the band room (rm 8). Your participation can help make this a great year!

November 3 (Saturday) 9am–12pm Eckstein Symposium Junior and Senior Orchestra will perform at the Eckstein Middle School Orchestra Festival. Please have your student there by 8:30am.

December 6 (Thursday) 7pm Holiday Jazz Fundraiser (Location TBD)

Exciting Merchandise!

- Be a trendsetter with a hip purple or grey WMS Music sweatshirt. Look for an order form to come home with your music student and don't get left behind!!
- 2006–2007 WMS Music CDs to be released soon. Preorder your 2006–2007 spring concert CDs now and you'll have less holiday shopping to do later. Be on the lookout for order forms to come home with your music student.

Stay Up-to-Date on WMS Music Happenings

- Return your music family contact information form and include your email address if you have one. This is one of the best ways of getting reminders and last-minute information about events.
- Attend *Friends of Washington Music* (FOWM) meetings on the first Wednesday of each month from 7–8:30 pm in the band room (rm 8). This year's meeting dates are: Oct. 3, Nov. 7, Dec. 5, Feb. 6, March 5, April 2, May 7 and June 4.
- Check the Music Department Calendar of Events on the WMS Web site.

2007–2008 Entertainment Books Now On Sale

The 2007–2008 *Entertainment Books* have arrived! This year's book is loaded with savings for local stores, restaurants, entertainment sites, and travel opportunities. The savings from using one or two of the coupons alone will cover the price of just one book.

Purchase your 2007–2008 *Entertainment Books* by stopping by the Main Office between 7am and 4pm. Books are only \$20 this year, with all profits going to the WMS Associated Student Body Fund.



Getting Ready, *continued from page 1*

music from the seven section leaders of the WMS Orchestra. The *Bite of Washington* and *Bite Olympics* will take place in just a few days, with over 500 students, family members, and WMS staff expected to attend. Fall's Soccer and "Ultimate" seasons are off and running with great turnouts greeting both coaches as the seasons began; and by the time this reaches you, *Picture Day* will have come and gone.

The real momentum for the school year has begun in the classrooms. In the two weeks since school opened, I have had the chance to visit every classroom at least once, and most classrooms multiple times. **Mr. Powell, Ms. Guenther, Mrs. Jones,** and even Middle School Director, **Ruth Medsker** have joined in the visits to the classrooms, giving all of us a chance to look and listen for the excellent instruction and learning that is taking place. Of high note to all of us is the level of expectation seen in all of the classrooms. The staff has come in with a wonderful level of preparation, and has hit the ground running. Because of this, our students are writing every day, attacking math and reading, learning new languages, making music, and building a community of learners committed to being successful.

In his book *Good to Great*, **Jim Collins** describes how great organizations focus their energy, much the way an engine focuses its energy on turning a flywheel. At first, the flywheel moves ever so slightly, but over time, with focused energy, the flywheel begins to spin and as momentum grows, spins faster and faster, energy growing and growing with each successive rotation. So it is at Washington these opening few weeks. The flywheel has begun to spin faster and faster, a positive and intentional instructional focus building momentum that you can't help but want to be part of. Thank you for believing in public education, in Seattle Public Schools, and most importantly in Washington Middle School. It really is going to be a fantastic year!

Errors and Corrections

My apologies for the high level of errors found in the opening communications sent home to our WMS families. We strive to make every communication accurate and well-written, but, in the case of our August letters, we failed to meet that standard. We will do better.

Jon Halfaker, Principal



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Washington Middle School PTSA 6.15.390

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**Next Pawprints Deadline
NOVEMBER 15TH, 2007**

2008 Auction Saturday, March 15

MARK YOUR 2008 CALENDARS NOW! Washington Middle School's most important fundraiser of the year will take place on Saturday, March 15, 2008. The PTSA and *Friends of Washington Music* (FOWM) are hard at work gathering fabulous items for the auction and planning a wonderful evening of music, dinner and fun.

Every year, the community raises money for Washington Middle School through the auction. **All WMS students benefit from this event.** The auction proceeds help buy supplies for classes ranging from music and art to science and reading. The money also helps fund the *Saturday School* where students can get extra help with their schoolwork.

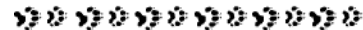
We need help asking for donated items from time at vacation cabins to tickets to major league sporting events. We also need your assistance with the live auction, silent auction, set up, decorations and clean-up. Please consider how you can help. You can chair a committee or spend just a few hours helping set up for the big event.

Included in your First Day packet was an Auction form. One side asks how you can volunteer; the other side asks what you can give, or what you can ask someone else to give. Please fill out the form and return it to school.

For more information, contact this year's auction co-chairs, **Su Chase**, 722-1103 or **Elizabeth Lowry** (725-0288) or e-mail wmsauction2008@hotmail.com.

Advanced Learning Testing

Information packets and nomination forms are available in the Main Office of Washington Middle School for Advanced Learning testing for the 08-09 school year. Current 6th and 7th graders may be nominated. Forms are due MONDAY OCTOBER 8, 2007. For more information check the website: www.seattleschools.org/arealadvlearning/index.xml



WMS Student Directory

Have you handed in your permission form? Be included in this year's student directory. Although the deadline has passed, the directory is still in production, so submit your signed form right away. You can sign, scan and email the form to: leveckemas@hotmail.com. Please contact me with any questions.

Levecke Mas, Student Directory Chair

October Calendar

- Oct 3 *Friends of Wash. Music (FOWM)* Board Mtg, 7pm
- Oct 10 PTSA Board Meeting, 7pm
- Oct 11 CURRICULUM NIGHT
- Oct 12 NO SCHOOL—Professional Development Day
- Oct 23 PTSA General Meeting, 7pm
- Oct 31 EARLY RELEASE, 12:15pm