

The Whittier Greenleaf



Monthly Newsletter for Whittier

September 2013

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From the Principal's Pen

Welcome Back!

Welcome to the 2013-2014 School Year! After weeks of planning and watching our new playgrounds take shape, it has been invigorating to have students and families at Whittier once again! This past summer,



Whittier, Mann, Hatch and Irving Schools all had updates made to our schools' playgrounds. I want to thank the Whittier PTO Leadership for working closely with me and providing significant funds to realize a new playground that reflects the input of our staff, parents and students. In addition to the new Whittier playgrounds and water fountain, security cameras have been added to all of the entry doors and the playground, ensuring that all 10 District 97 schools have these tools to ensure safety. On another safety note, I want to encourage parents to contact the office should you ever note a need for us to attend to safety concerns in or around Whittier School, or on the way to or from Whittier School. With the assistance of VOP Police Officer Razzino, we are scheduling safety drills to be conducted in the opening weeks of school that include: fire drill, bus evacuation drill and lock down drill. Later in the school year, a severe weather drill will also be scheduled.

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Conversation with the PTO Co-Presidents

Welcome Back Wildcats!

Welcome back to all new and returning Whittier families! We hope our new families are settling into the Whittier Community, and we're sure our returning families are getting back into the swing of things. Back to school is such an exciting time and we were so happy to see many of you at the PTO Meet-and-Greet on the playground during the first day of school drop off.

As we're sure you've noticed, our new playground is shined up and ready for the students! Many thanks again to the parents, teachers and everyone else who helped make our new playground awesome. However, there are still some important additions we need. This year we'll be working toward our goal of new benches as well as trees and other landscaping pieces. Stay tuned for the ways you can help us make these essential additions as the year goes on.

Coming up

Join us for the annual back to school picnic! On September 19 we'll come together as a community for dinner and a good time. We hope to see everyone there! Also, keep an eye out for information about this year's Fun Run... it will be here in no time!

Finally, Fall WISE sign up is right around the corner and registration starts Tuesday, September 3. Information will be sent home soon.

There are so many ways to get involved with the PTO and we would love to see everyone using their talents and skills to make Whittier an even better place. Please join us for our first PTO meeting of the year on Tuesday, September 3rd at 7pm. We hold the meetings at Whittier and encourage anyone who is interested to join us in sharing ideas and learning more about what's happening this year. We have several leadership spots open, and you can check those out at Whittierpto.org.

Please know that our doors are always open! If you have any questions, ideas, or are interested in getting involved in any way with the PTO please email us directly. Here's to a great year!

Sincerely,

Tara Pappalardo, Co- President
tara.pappalardo@gmail.com

Katie Tomlinson, Co- President
katiebarmantje@yahoo.com

PALM Leaves

Hello everyone,

Welcome to PALM Leaves, the section of the Greenleaf dedicated to news from your "special areas": Physical education (PE), Art, Language (Spanish FLES), and Music. Each issue will bring you an update of what we are up to in our learning, any special events going on, links to learning resources, etc., so TUNE in for more! Please contact us at our op97.org e-mail addresses with any questions or concerns.

Looking forward to a great year!



<http://www.flickr.com/photos/12836528@N00/5984056383/>

Art

Whittier students,

Welcome back to school. I hope everyone has had a fantastic summer. I believe our 2013-2014 school year will be a good one. We start our artistic year with a focus on self, and go from there. I am also



very interested in working on some sculptural projects as soon as possible.

Speaking of 3D, Architecture Adventure, for our 4/5 multiage classes, will be offered earlier than past years. I just need to work with the lead architect to determine the focus. Whatever it will be, it will be fun for us all.

Chess club members and parents need to know that Whittier will be hosting the District 97 Chess Club Tournament this year. We will need volunteers to help out in all areas. My area of concern is finding someone that can help set up a program that will assist us with game pairings and totaling scores. This could be our year, so start working on your game.

Lets work together to have a great year. I'll see you in the art room soon.

Mr. Patterson

Physical Education

Welcome to another fantastic year of Physical Education! My name is Mr. Coglianese and I'm the Physical Education teacher here at Whittier. This is my 11th year of teaching at Whittier and I am excited for another wonderful school year.

In Physical Education, our main goal is to enjoy moving our bodies so that in return, we can learn how to live healthy and active lives. With the activities in the gym we put an emphasis on sportsmanship, teamwork, and, effort/participation as well as learning the basic physical skills of each unit.

Here is a link to the Whittier Physical Education website. Here you can find information that you will need for the 2013/2014 school year.

<http://www.op97.org/scoglianese/>

From the Music Room

Welcome to another year at Whittier School! I look forward to making music with your children!

Some of the topics we'll be looking at in our first month of school will include Pop Music in the Media, tying music into children's literature, Hispanic Heritage Month via classroom instruments and songs, as well as gradual review of last year's learning.

4th & 5th grade students: Look for the sign-up sheets for Chorus and Recorder Club, coming soon!

Mrs. Duckett-Edwards

Noticias de español

Hola todos,

Yo me llamo Sra. Deaton and I teach Spanish to all students K-5, except for three classes. I look forward to helping your students grow. I have been teaching at Whittier for over 15 years. I have lived in or visited Mexico, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, Spain, and Cuba. Hopefully Argentina will be next. When my son was young, I spoke to him only in Spanish. Now he also speaks Japanese and is teaching English in Japan.

We once again welcome Sra. Ruiz to Whittier, teaching Spanish to the MAP K-2 classes. Sra. Ruiz is a native of Sevilla, Spain. She has taught Spanish in the district for a number of years, primarily at Lincoln but also traveled to help cover "overloads." She introduced herself and her friend Manolo el toro to her classes this week. Her little girls, Sarah and Isabel, who just started kindergarten, are growing up bilingual in Spanish and English

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The first few classes will concentrate on getting reacquainted, meeting new friends, and getting our Spanish channels re-activated after thinking in *inglés* all summer. And Hispanic Heritage Month and Mexican Independence Day (¡Viva México!) are right around the corner. We will work on introducing ourselves and asking others their names, talking about how we are feeling, what we did over the summer, and other basics. And along with this of course, movement, music, and other fun activities! Then we will dig more fully into our themes.

Each year we welcome more students to Whittier who speak more than one language. It's so exciting! Especially in our younger grades, many have had very intensive early Spanish language exposure – Spanish speaking home, day care, immersion pre-school, etc. – and come to school very fluent in spoken Spanish and able to read and write at some level. This year we will start some lunchtime enrichment to help them maintain those skills. And Spanish club for 4th and 5th graders will be up and running in October. Watch for further communications on this and other happenings from the *aula de español*.

¡Feliz año nuevo! Happy New Year! It is so exciting to be back with your children. We are off to a fun start!

Gracias y hasta pronto, Sra. Deaton y Sra. Ruiz

New Staff

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I would like to take a moment to introduce several new staff members who are new to the Whittier Community this year:

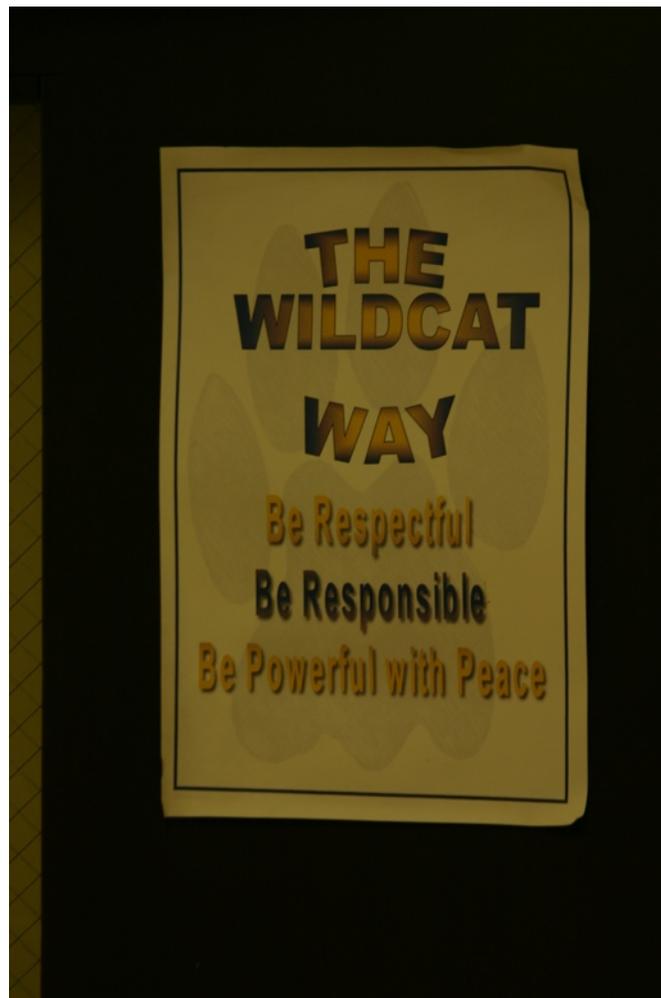
- Claire Downs is joining the Whittier staff as a primary instructional teacher. Having grown up in River Forest and attended

Fenwick High School, she knows quite a lot about Oak Park. Claire had an opportunity to work during the ESY Summer School program at Holmes school this past summer, and is excited to join our staff!

- Gina Landfair has worked as an Occupational Therapist in Texas and Michigan in addition to Illinois. She is also a District 97 parent. Gina will work with both the Early Childhood program as well as the K-5 population at Whittier School.
- Anne Guerrier joins Whittier School as our new nurse. She has already met many families as the new year has gotten underway. If your child has any long-term or short-term medical needs, please be sure to contact Anne. Like Gina, Anne is a District 97 parent, and has gotten to know some of the Whittier families as an Oak Park parent through children's programming and sports teams.
- Leslie Weiss has taken the helm of Mrs. Roskos's class while she is on a maternity leave. Leslie brings teaching experiences from Pennsylvania and Arlington Heights, IL, as well as long-term substitute assignments in District 97. Like several other new Whittier staff members, she is a District 97 parent, as well.
- Lauren Blanford will serve as the Whittier Teacher Librarian while Mrs. Conley is on her maternity leave. Lauren earned a Masters in Library Science in 2012 after volunteering in her children's school library and seeing what a positive impact the Teacher Librarian has on both students and the entire school community.

- Stephanie Brackett joins Whittier as our Physical Therapist. After working in the medical community, Stephanie is joining school PT work for the first time. Stephanie will work with one other District 97 Physical Therapist to meet these specialized needs throughout the district.
- Keren Richardson is our new Lunchroom Manager, and joins Whittier School after holding a similar position in Forest Park. Keren also is in charge of the Whittier Breakfast program, which is served each school day, beginning at 7:15 am. Keren will be in touch with families when it is time to add more funds to students' lunch accounts.

We welcome each of our new staff members to the Whittier Faculty and Staff. It is a pleasure to add their energy and enthusiasm to our staff as we set goals for the new year.



Communication

As we go further into our school year, be sure to look for school communication to come home each Thursday by email or in hard copy, per your preference. In addition to school communication, there will be a variety of community-based opportunities available in the District 97 digital backpack, <http://www.op97.org/digital-backpack/index.cfm> , and Whittier-specific information available on <http://www.op97.org/whittier/dp/> .

Carol Young, Principal

What does a waste-free lunch look like?



Whittier Grows Green in the Lunchroom!

No, we're not talking moldy lunch! Quite the opposite. The PTO Green Team is excited to encourage everyone to pack a waste free lunch this year. This is accomplished in two main ways:

1. Class competition for the **Golden Lunchbox** - the classroom with the most waste-free lunches on the last Wednesday of the month wins the honor of having the coveted Golden Lunchbox for the month!
2. Ongoing **lunchroom participation in the Village's CompostAble program**, which allows all food and food-affected paper to be composted in a special facility on the south side run by Waste Management. Kids will continue to sort their "trash" into recycling, compostables and landfill material in the lunchroom.

It has been estimated that on average a school-age child using a disposable lunch **generates 67 pounds of waste per school year**. That equates to 18,760 pounds of lunch waste for just one average-size elementary school. So consider going waste free! It's a great habit and simple enough to maintain once formed.

A Typical American Lunch (DISPOSABLE)

- sandwiches sealed in plastic bags
- fruits and vegetables in plastic bags
- prepackaged chips, cookies, fruit bars, granola bars, cheeses, and fruit leathers
- prepackaged yogurts, applesauces, or puddings
- crackers, pretzels, chips, and other snack foods sealed in plastic bags
- disposable juice boxes, juice pouches, pop cans, water bottles, and milk cartons
- plastic forks and spoons
- paper napkins
- reusable lunchboxes and disposable paper and plastic bags

A Waste-Free Lunch (REUSABLE)

- sandwiches and other main dishes, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and treats in a reusable lunch container
 - cloth napkins
 - stainless-steel forks and spoons
 - reusable drink containers
 - reusable lunchboxes
- *With this type of lunch, lunch food items can be bought in larger quantities. The packaging can be left at home for reuse or recycling. Waste-free lunches are not only a wise environmental choice, but they are less expensive as well.

For more info, visit www.wastefreelunches.org