

Dear Willett families,

We have had a wonderful first few weeks of school. I am always so amazed by how much adult support we have on campus, whether parents, grandparents, interns, tutors, staff, etc. Our students are so lucky to have so much adult involvement in their lives, and I want to thank you for all you do for Willett. In addition, many families are generous with their money by donating to our school. I thought I would give you a bit of an overview of where the money goes.

Thank you to our amazing PTA for their work in so many areas. Our Outdoor Education fundraiser garage sale/bake sale/ car wash brought in over \$2,000 toward our sixth grade trip. Parents have come forward to create our Auction Night on March 17th at Vet's Memorial – put it on your calendar now! More details will come soon. We had a family donate funding to pay for an Owl costume for our school. Hootie the Owl will be out and about at events and on campus. School connectedness is a huge indicator of student success in school – I wrote my Masters thesis on it – and having a mascot that our children can connect with will be a great addition to our community. Thank you!

I so appreciate all the donations for the Unfundraiser (PTA direct donation) – the money is used in many ways on our campus. This year, PTA has funded some reading room paraeducator support, our new school counselor, classroom mini grants, chorus, Afternoons with T, Battle of the Books, BRAVO, Challenge Club, gardening, library supplies and books, playground equipment, Pub Club and many more!

Fun events are organized such as the UCD football game on September 17th, Willett Family Food Nights, the Fun Run – October 23rd – sign up online!, and the Auction Night. These events bond our community together and keep families connected to our school. Thank you for helping organize and attending these events!

When I first arrived at Willett in 2008, there was a large sum of gift money that I was able to use to purchase materials and new technology on campus. Over the last few years, this funding has decreased and will most likely be gone by the end of the school year. We were able to purchase classroom supplemental materials, substitutes for classified absences, testing materials, new tables for classrooms, new blinds for the science rooms, screens, playground equipment, LCD projectors, boom boxes, VHS/DVD players, ladybugs (document cameras used in 3rd-6th grade classrooms daily), more current, efficient computers for Laurie and Tara in our office and many more materials that teachers asked for throughout the last few years. I just recently purchased backpack hooks for first and second grade classrooms that will be mounted outside the classrooms in the next couple weeks. There is still so much more we would like to do on campus.

Just a few ideas are:

- Update all of our site computers – both in the two labs and also in classrooms.
- Work with our Maintenance department to look at options for creating a more welcoming environment in the front of the school.
- Benches for the entrance to the school and the area by B Building facing the quad.
- Repaving our playground and parking lot.
- Purchase more benches for the playground and quad.
- Replace the trees on the field that died over the summer.

- Installation of cameras on site to defray the weekend vandalism that takes custodial time each week to clean up and leaves our campus a mess.
- Painting our school buildings.
- Updating our phone and bell system.
- Backpack hooks for all classrooms.
- Decomposed Granite under the tree by C Building so it is not muddy in the winter.
- Most importantly, having the ability to pay for people or substitutes for teachers to attend trainings, collaborate or observe other teachers. Staff who have been paid out of this gift fund are the Intramural Director, extra yard supervision, and time carding extra hours for the Instructional Computer Specialist, counseling, guest speakers, etc.

If you are interested in making a direct donation to the school, it would be greatly appreciated. You can write a check to Willett Elementary School as a gift donation. I realize families have given to classrooms and to PTA, and that is incredibly generous.

In addition, all of our staff put in countless hours outside of their contracted time to support our students and families. One of the many ways they give is by running school activities. Some of these are listed below. Please encourage your children to attend and read the Who's News for information on these activities.

Before and After School Activities at Willett:

Chess Club and Math Support, Tuesdays and Fridays before and after school, room G-36, Mr. Dapkewicz

Computer Lab and Crafts, Monday and Thursdays at lunch, C-14, Mrs. Cuetara

Challenge Club, Monday and Tuesdays at 2:35, field, Mrs. Tanji

Pub Club, Thursdays at 3:10, room D-16 Ms. Downes and Mrs. Berger (parents)

Afternoons With T, Mon., Tues., Thurs., Fridays at 2:35, room G-36, Mrs. Stapleton

Thank you, again, for all you invest in our school. Willett truly is a wonderful place to be, and I am honored on a daily basis, to work with our community.

Heidi Perry
Principal