

WESPTSA Newsletter

January 2020

PTSA Events & Activities

The PTSA could not offer the activities and events we do without our dedicated volunteer coordinators. The PTSA wants to thank the Fall event and activities coordinators for a successful end to 2019:

- Camilla Fritts - Fun Run Coordinator
- Box Tops - Kelly Chase & Amy Convey
- Fall Fest - Amy Convey
- Teacher Carts - Denise Donahue
- PTSA Summer Reading Program - Angie Herek
- Holiday Sale - Camilla Fritts & Kae Dubai
- Discovery Reading Wall of Fame - Rachel Piner
- Directories - Melissa Indish
- Dr. Spina State of the Schools - Melissa Indish

The PTSA also looks forward to successful Winter and Spring 2020 Programming. Make sure to note the following activities and events and an upfront thanks to those who make them successful:

- Used Book Sale - Heather Galecka & Ryan Edberg (3/16-3/20)
- Family Reading Night - Georgina Montgomery (3/20)
- Mileage Club - Kae Dubai & Staci Jansen (4/13 start)
- Ice Cream Social - Melissa Indish (5/7)
- Wharton Center - Angie Herek (TBA for each grade)

1

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

[https://
www.facebook.com/
WESPTSA/](https://www.facebook.com/WESPTSA/)

2

VIEW OUR WEBSITE

[http://
wesptsa.weebly.com/](http://wesptsa.weebly.com/)

3

COME TO OUR
MEETINGS

Generally 2nd Thursday
each month at 7pm

Upcoming WESPTSA & School Events:

1/9: PTSA meeting
(Discovery library
7-8:30pm)

1/17: 1/2 day

1/20: No school
(Martin Luther King
Jr Day)

2/12: Membership
count day

2/13: PTSA meeting
(Discovery library
7-8:30pm)

2/14: 1/2 day

2/14: Box Top
Collection due

2/17: No school
(President's day)

3/5: PTSA meeting
(Discovery library
7-8:30pm)

3/6: 1/2 day

3/9-3/13: Used
book collection

Get Involved!

We would love to get you involved in the WESTPSA! There are many, many ways to be involved in the WESPTSA... from being an event coordinator, to assisting in an event, to donating materials or helping out one time! We welcome all types of volunteers and whatever you can do/give is enough. Many thanks to Camilla Fritts, who is our volunteer coordinator. She is the go-to person for all WESPTSA volunteer needs! We will collect volunteer information via a form. You can also reach out to Camilla (frittscam@gmail.com), or fill out our [online volunteer form](#). Camilla will also reach out to parents for assistance as well as donations throughout the year. Please see the coordinator list below and reach out to those people!

Here are next year's needs (note the election will occur at the April or May 2020 meeting but self or other nominations are sought prior to then):

- PTSA President
- PTSA Vice President
- PTSA Secretary
- PTSA Treasurer
- Multiple coordinator or co-coordinator positions (please inquire!!!)

Game Time!

Playing games with kids does a lot more than pass the time! [Scholastic Parents](#) discussed multiple benefits of playing board or card games with your kids, including: allowing you to unplug, helping kids develop their executive functions (e.g., decision making, planning), support math or language skills, work on sustained attention or focus, re-enforce teamwork skills, and teach kids how to win and lose with grace. What are some of your favorite games to play right now? Here are some we enjoy:

- [Ticket to Ride](#)
- [Farkel](#)
- [Dix It](#)
- [Where in the World is Carmen San Diego](#)
- [Tenzi](#)

Of course, we love our old standbys too - Sorry, Clue, Uno, Skipbo, Guess Who, and Apples to Apples.

Discussing and Protecting Food Allergies at Williamston Elementary Schools

Williamston Elementary Schools are peanut and tree nut free as a means of protecting students with food allergies. This is inclusive of all rooms and spaces within the elementary schools aside from the cafeteria. The cafeteria allows food with peanuts and tree nuts as there is at least one table reserved in the cafeteria for children with food allergies.

First, what are food allergies? A food allergy is a “a serious and potentially life-threatening medical condition.” It occurs when a body reacts to food item as an allergen. The reaction can vary from individual to individual - from the mild (e.g., hives, abdominal pain) to the severe (e.g., anaphylaxis). While many students must consume (even in the smallest or trace quantity to have a reaction, some students can experience a reaction through exposure, such as touching someone who ate peanut butter but did not wash their hands or even via airborne exposure). In the US, we discuss the top 8 food allergens: peanuts, tree nuts (e.g., hazelnut, walnut, almonds), milk, egg, soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. Of course, individuals can be allergic to other foods (e.g., sesame, particular fruits). Sesame is often now considered the ninth most common allergen.

Second, what does it mean for classroom spaces to be peanut and tree nut free? It means that no food item - whether store bought or homemade - that contains or may contain peanuts or tree nuts should be brought or and/or consumed within the space. In the US, it is a requirement that food products - outside of fresh produce, eggs, fresh meat, and particular highly refined oils - to be labeled for the top 8 allergens. Regardless of the amount of allergen within a food item, it must be labeled. Although it is not a requirement to label a top 8 allergen may be in an item (i.e., referred to as cross-contamination), many companies voluntarily add a warning such as stating an allergen may be present or that an item may contain.

Third, why should I be concerned with food allergies if my child does not have one? For one, food allergies can be serious; they can be life threatening and across the world children and adults with food allergies have died from consumption or exposure to their allergen(s). In addition, students who have food allergies are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 protects students from discrimination and provide reasonable accommodations. One such accommodation is a learning environment free from their allergen. Williamston Elementary Schools provide students with food allergies a universal accommodation by making the learning spaces - outside of the cafeteria - free from peanuts and tree nuts.

Fourth, what can I do? You can help protect all children by making sure you do not send food items with allergens to school to be consumed within classes, especially peanuts and tree nuts which are explicitly listed.

National and Michigan PTA

The Williamston Elementary Schools PTSA is part of the Michigan PTA and the National PTA. As such, parents can take advantage of the resources and information available from both sources. To provide a few examples, we are linking some resources that are available to parents from the National sites, but please feel free to explore their sites more in-depth.

National PTA:

- [Helping your kids with math](#)
- [Developing your child's reading skills](#)
- [Raising a scientifically literate child](#)

These 3 resources provide parents with ideas about supporting reading, math, and scientific literacy at home (and in the community) across a variety of ages!

Michigan PTA

Did you Know? Keeping you in the Know...

- Did you know that 4th graders can get a free pass for National Parks. Current 4th graders can have a pass. Check out the [website](#) to learn more about the program and how to get a pass!
- Did you know that you can sign up your child to receive 2 free games of bowling every day all summer? Check out the [website](#) for more information and to register your child. In Lansing, the Royal Scot Bowling Lanes and Spare Time Entertainment are participating and City Limits Bowling Center in Mason. Click [here](#) for a list of all Michigan locations.
- Did you know that the MSU Science Festival is coming April 1-30 (2020)! Check out the Expo and Early Childhood Zone events, among other options at the MSU Science Festival. For example, kids can mix baking soda with different liquids and observe what happens or check out the Colossal Connect 4. Check out the [website](#) for more information and a complete schedule
- [The Broad Museum at MSU](#) offers 4 free family weekend workshops throughout the year. Check it out if the next one interests you and your family.
- The [Michigan History Museum](#) in Lansing is free to all on Sundays!