

# WORD FROM WILLIAMS

September 21, 2009

## Brand New Williams PTO Website Makes Parents Lives Easier

Forget what time that PTO meeting will be held? Wondering when you son needs to turn in his Read-A-Thon sheet? Looking for a piano teacher or tutor? The new [Williams PTO website](#) gives you all that information and much, much more.



- Learn about the [cool programs](#) the PTO runs.
- Contact your [child's teacher and learn a little about him or her](#).
- Find out all about [upcoming events](#) at the school.
- See the links that allow you to [donate money while you shop](#).
- Get the answer to virtually [any question](#) you have about having your child at the Williams School.
- Search the [community listings](#) to learn about community events, sports sign-ups, extracurricular activities for your child and more!
- Explore the many educational resources available on the [Williams Library website](#).

## Williams Fall Calendar

### September

- 21 Picture Day
- 22 6:30 Back to School night
- 28 Yom Kippur NO SCHOOL
- 29 7:30 p.m.: PTO Meeting

### October

- 1 First full day of kindergarten, Group B
- 5 First full day of kindergarten, Group A
- 12 Columbus Day NO SCHOOL
- 22 EARLY RELEASE
- 30 Fall Festival

### November

- 9 - 13 Read-A Thon
- 10 Election Day Bake Sale
- 13 10 a.m. Book Fair
- 13 6 p.m.: Family Movie Night
- 25 Thanksgiving break starts



# A Welcome Note From Dr. Midge Connolly

We have had a very successful school year so far thanks to the very hard work of teachers, staff, and families! Many teachers were in the school throughout the summer participating in professional development opportunities and getting classrooms ready for students. September 8<sup>th</sup> was wonderful for me because I was finally able to see the children in the Williams School after having spent most of summer in a pretty quiet building!



I just wanted to share with you some thoughts and reminders that will assist in the school year going smoothly for all students.

First, you received the letter from Nurse Dolly about the H1N1 flu. Please read this document carefully, and talk with your children about the importance of hand washing, safe coughing/sneezing, and other measures to keep children healthy.

Secondly, I would like to remind the community that there is **no** parking in the Blue Zone in the front of the school. There is live parking allowed only at the beginning and end of the school day. That being said, drop-off and pick-up has gone pretty well and for that, I say thank you! Lastly, please be sure to check in with the office when you enter the building outside of regular drop-off and pick-up times. We ask even those who we know really well, to please stop, sign in and get a visitors pass.

We will soon be soliciting school volunteers in all sorts of areas. As many of you already know, Williams lost all of its Title I funding this year. As a result we have had a significant reduction in classroom aide time. To help relieve some of that loss, we will be asking parents who are willing and able to volunteer time in the school and share their special talents. If you are interested, please contact me. We would also very much like to start a school newspaper which would be an after school activity. Again, if you are interested or have ideas, please contact me.

I would like to thank all of those who were able to make it to the coffees this past week; it was a wonderful welcome for me and it was great to meet so many of you. This really is a tremendous community and it is fantastic to be a part of it!



# Simplify Your School Year Donations With EZ Pass



Too much fundraising traffic during the school year?

The EZ Pass Campaign is the Williams PTO's annual fundraising drive. We ask that families consider making a one-time donation of \$175 to the Campaign (suggested membership dues of \$25 plus \$150 EZ Pass contribution). PTO funds are used to support a variety of important programs that enrich the lives of our children including Creative Arts and Sciences, school performances, technology, teacher tools, and playground improvements. Your contribution early in the year will enable the PTO to get going with these programs right away!

Last year, through your generosity, we raised \$14,000 through the EZ Pass Campaign. We hope to exceed this goal in the coming year. Gail Sokoloff ([Gasok@aol.com](mailto:Gasok@aol.com)) and Carol Bradford-Roe ([cjb\\_roe@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cjb_roe@yahoo.co.uk)) are co-coordinating the PTO Fundraising Committee and the EZ Pass Campaign. If you have questions about the Campaign or would like to volunteer to help with fundraising, please feel free to contact us.

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## Amazon School Rewards – We're Off To A Great Start!



When you are shopping at Amazon.com, you are also donating to the Williams PTO, without spending an extra dime. [Enter Amazon through here](#), (Bookmark this now!) and Amazon will donate 4% to 6% of the purchase price to the Williams PTO!

Since school opened a little over a week ago, Williams community members have used the Amazon School Rewards to purchase \$550 worth of merchandise on Amazon.com and earned \$28 for the Williams PTO.

We expect this program to take off in the upcoming months as more and more parents start using the Amazon School Rewards link. Please remember to bookmark the [Williamspto.org](http://Williamspto.org) website and click on the Amazon School Rewards icon, or click on the link in this article.



# PTO Co-President's Column



## Welcome Back

Have you adjusted to the new routines of the school year? Can you feel the optimism and warmth of this great Williams Community? We can! Welcome back everyone! We are looking forward to a wonderful year here at Williams and working together to make that happen. Please check our website [www.williamspto.org](http://www.williamspto.org) for updated news and information.

## PTO Meeting, Tuesday, September 29 at 7:30 p.m.

Our first PTO meeting of the year will be held next week Tuesday, September 29 at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium. Please come to this critical first meeting where our Treasurer, Elizabeth McVittie, will present the PTO 2008-2009 budget. In addition, we'll hear about this year's exciting Technology Plan for the school. We invite committee chairs to come and speak about your efforts, solicit volunteers and share your work with the community.

## Back-to-School Night, Tuesday, Sept. 22 6:30 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

This is the "don't miss" event of the year! Come hear from Dr. Connolly and your child's teachers about their plans for the school year, meet Williams School teachers and staff, and learn more about the PTO. Schedule for the Evening:



- ★6:30 - 6:45: Opening and Introductions in the Auditorium for ALL Parents
- ★6:45 - 7:15: Grade K-2 parents go to their child's classroom
- ★Grade 3-5 parents go to "PTO Get Together" in Cafeteria
- ★7:15 - 7:45: Grade 3-5 parents go to their child's classroom
- ★Grade K-2 parents go to "PTO Get Together" in Cafeteria

What to expect at the PTO Get Together:

- Learn more about the PTO and enjoy refreshments.
- Pay your dues, \$25/family
- Sign on for EZ Pass, \$150 contribution + \$25 dues/family
- Buy a Williams T-shirt or other Williams Wear item
- Volunteer for a committee!
- Remember to bring your checkbook or credit card with you.

## **A Word About the Word**

*A Word From Williams* (WFW) is our monthly newsletter that is usually published on the third Monday of the month. It is our way of keeping you up to date on what is happening around Williams and community events that impact the Williams community. All parents are welcome to submit information for the publication in upcoming issues of the WFW. The deadline for submissions is the Wednesday prior to the Monday distribution date. You can submit an article by either emailing to [editor@williamspto.org](mailto:editor@williamspto.org), or placing your submission in the WFW mailbox on the PTO table, which is located just across the hall from the main office. In addition to the WFW, the PTO will send out a “blast” each Friday about upcoming events, and for other pressing information.

## **Attention PTO Volunteers**

Thanks to all who signed up last spring for PTO volunteer assignments for this school year. This is your reminder to please start on your respective volunteer jobs. If you have forgotten what you signed up for, please contact one of us and we will be happy to fill you in. If you would like to sign up to volunteer, see one of us as well. We are grateful for all of the contributions parents are willing to make, and couldn't do it without you!

## **Basic PTO Information aka The ABC's of the PTO**

If you have a child enrolled at Williams, you are automatically enrolled as a member of the PTO. We do, however, collect PTO dues of \$25 per family. These dues are not mandatory, but our goal is 100% parent participation. In upcoming issues of the WFW, we will let you know how your PTO dollars are being spent. The main goal of the PTO (Parent Teacher Organization) is to provide services or funds that enhance the school-based learning environment for each child at Williams. We do this through volunteer work in and out of the school. Our hope is that a large number of parents get involved in the work of the PTO, since our work benefits each and every child. New parents and Kindergarten parents, please do not think you have to wait to get to know the school better before volunteering. This is a wonderful way to meet other families and help the school. Welcome back returning families! We hope every family at Williams this year will take an active role in the PTO. There is a job or task that will suit everyone's needs!

## **To All PTO Committee Chairs**

A reminder to all PTO Committee Chairs, supplies (copy paper, staplers, paper clips etc) to promote your committees and events can be found in the PTO closet. The PTO closet is located on the first floor across from Room 114; the PTO supplies are in the big plastic cupboards in the closet. The copy machine the PTO uses is the Risograph which is located outside the Auditorium on the way to the gym. Mrs. Callaghan is happy to give instructions to anyone who needs to use it. Thank you for all your hard work and please let us know if there are any questions.

As always, we leave you with a quote:

***Every single one of you has something you're good at. Every single one of you has something to offer. And you have a responsibility to yourself to discover what that is. That's the opportunity an education can provide. –President Barack Obama from his Speech to Students***

Carie Michael, Donna Whitham, Katie Greeley and Wendy Hurwitz

Williams PTO Co-Presidents



## H1N1 News From Nurse Dolly By Dolly Staulo, RN

Welcome back to the old gang, and a great big welcome to all of our new families. I know you are probably already sick of the talk of H1N1. I won't go on and on about it. What I would like to reiterate to you what you can do to help yourselves and others stay healthy. As always, first and foremost is: **WASH YOUR HANDS.**

Hand washing is the simplest and most effective way to lessen the transmission of any germs/virus. Soap and water, and alcohol-based hand gels are equally effective. Both are available in each classroom, and our staff is always reminding children about the importance of proper hand washing! We also regularly review coughing and sneezing etiquette with the children. We tell children to sneeze/cough into the bend of their elbow, not into their hands or the air. We also emphasize blowing their noses into tissues, not their sleeves, and of course, **washing their hands.** I know I sound like a broken record but truly these simple acts are our best defense!



The PTO sent all parents (via an email blast) a letter from the Commissioner of the City's Health and Human Services Department, David Naparstek, and our current School Superintendent, James Marini. This letter reviews Newton's current H1N1 policy, such as:

1. what to do if your child is sick
2. the NEW 24-hour post-fever exclusion
3. mask use & picking up sick children at school
4. surveillance and school closure
5. H1N1 vaccine
6. seasonal influenza vaccine
7. additional prevention measures



Please refer to it. Also, I have commandeered the bulletin board outside the main office. It is now my "Flu Bulletin Board" just outside of the office, to the right of the glass windows. I will post whatever information

I receive from the state and the city. Take a look at it when your near the office, you just might learn something!

Ok, enough already...I know I said I wouldn't go on and on! The next few months may present some health challenges for all of us. But if we all do our part by keeping our children home if they are sick, insisting that they wash their hands regularly, and reinforcing all of the above mentioned preventive measures, we just might get through this flu season with a minimum amount of lost school and work time!

Please call me if you have any questions or concerns, my door is ALWAYS OPEN!  
HERE'S TO A QUIET, HEALTHY AND FUN SCHOOL YEAR!!!

# Walking to School Builds Health, Community, and Memories

Walk Your Child to School at Williams on  
Oct. 7 and Every School Day



I remember walking home from kindergarten when an older child ran up to us to tell us that a couple of 4-year-olds had mixed gasoline and chlorine in a shed and blown it clear to smithereens. (Thankfully, no one was hurt.) I also remember

walking back from school and my best friend in 7th grade announcing her mother's shocking pregnancy. (Shocking because the moms in the homogenous 1970s neighborhood stopped having babies a decade prior.)

Exploding sheds and alternatively-timed pregnancies aside, walking to school occupies many of my childhood memories – and probably many of yours. Many children today will not have those memories, since fewer of them are walking or bicycling to school. In 1969, 42 percent of all children between the ages of 5 and 18 walked to school. By 2001, that number had dropped to 16 percent. The decrease is caused by various changes ranging from neighborhood schools closing to parents' safety concerns.

Fortunately, here in Newton we have 15 neighborhood elementary schools, so many children should be able to walk or ride their bikes to school. Take a look at the congested traffic around many of those schools, however, and you will find that many parents in Newton are driving their children to and from school. This congestion can frustrate commuters and parents, and make school arrival and dismissal times unsafe.

**There are lots of different routes Williams families can take that will get their children to school safely. In the past, Williams families have organized walking school buses. We will do it again this year for International Walk to School Day on Oct. 7, and every Wednesday after that.**

So as you are getting the backpacks and school supplies together and gearing up for another academic year, think about a new mindset when it comes to getting your children to and from school. Think about getting your kids walking there and back. Chat with other parents to see if they are interested too, and you can get a gang together.

Children who walk to school have started off their day with a little exercise, and hopefully some socializing. Walking to school is a great way to meet other people who live in the neighborhood. One less car on the road means less air pollution, too. Plus, as a mom who spends a lot of her time shuttling between dance, piano, and gymnastics, I can attest to the benefits of two less car trips a day.

Oct 7. is International Walk to School Day. Safe Routes to School volunteers in your child's elementary school can help you join a "walking school bus." A walking school bus is a group of children walking to school together with an adult. If it sounds super simple, that is because it is. A mom or dad starts walking with their child and picks some other children up on the way. Voila'! You have a walking school bus.

If you would like more information on how to get involved the effort to get more children walking to Williams, contact me at [ChristineLacey@gmail.com](mailto:ChristineLacey@gmail.com).

*Christine Lacey is the Newton Schools Coordinator for Safe Routes to School.*

## Mrs. Kosmo Looking for Arch Day Audio or Video

Welcome back!



Did anyone take audio and/or video of the staff singing the *Williams School Song* and the *The Kindergarten Wall* at the June Arch Day assembly? I have posted the words on my web site and I would love to have the audio to accompany it. I do not want video of kids, because we do not post videos of kids on the web. We can post adults, however, and all of the audio. It was a very spirited rendition and I am hoping that someone captured it. You can drop it in to the library, email me, or call the number below if you have it and are willing to share.

Also don't forget to check out the Williams Web Site throughout the school year. We are located at: <http://www.newton.k12.ma.us/williams/>

