WHITTIER greenleaf NEWSLETTER

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December 2018

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WHITTIER ELEMENTARY
715 NORTH HARVEY
OAK PARK, ILLINOIS 60302
708.524.3080
www.op97.org/whittier

Seasons Greetings Whittier Families!

Warmest wishes as we head into the winter season and celebrations!

We are definitely grateful for a much needed, extended break for our teachers, staff, and students to spend time with family. Hope your Thanksgiving was the best yet!

It was a great start to the 2018/2019 school year, now on to our second trimester. Pretty soon we will planning for the summer!

Our PTO Team has been hard at work fundraising and putting programs in place.

Last month, at our PTO meeting the board enthusiastically voted to fund a grant for the Whittier "I Belong" initiative. Be on the lookout for Mr. Robinson's new school-wide positivity plan.

We have exceeded our fundraising goals, and we have our Whittier parents to thank for that.

Whether you chaired an event, volunteered, attended or donated money (or a combination), we could not accomplish what we do without you. You are what makes Whittier the community we are all so proud to be a part of.

Thank you to Kristina Ryan for our successful second annual restaurant fundraiser with Thai Oak Park Express. Our families turned out by the dozens which was great to see.

And, thank you to the Girl Scouts and Carolyn Fitzpatrick for hosting another successful Harvest Dance! The Great Outdoors was such a fun reminder that we can appreciate nature even while jamming to tunes on a cold fall day.

Mark Your Calendars for the Upcoming Events:

Thursday, December 6th

Our next PTO meeting is our holiday gathering, which will be hosted at the home of PTO Secretary Robert Hickock at 7PM. As always, all are invited, but please note this time NO childcare will be provided. This is a BYOB, catered event. Find RSVP details in the Digital Backpack.

If you miss a meeting, you can always catch the minutes on the Whittier PTO website.

Saturday, February 9th

4th Annual Trivia night! This is a great date night and a chance to match wits with your fellow Wildcat parents. Also for those less competitive types, it's simply a great time to socialize and unwind. Or volunteer! Please be on the lookout for the volunteer sign up. If you volunteer during the event, you get in for free!

Happy Holidays!
Brigitte Brostrom and Sofia Villafuerte PTO Co-Presidents

SHOP YOUR SUPPORT

Did you know that you can support the Whittier PTO just by shopping at Amazon?

Using Amazon Smile, shop as you normally would, but now a percentage of the money you spend gets donated back to the Whittier PTO!

To sign up, visit **smile.amazon.com** and search for "Whittier School Parent Teacher Organization PTO" as the organization.

Then, when you shop at Amazon, just be sure to go back through **smile.amazon.com.**

Anything you purchase will help the PTO earn money to support our school!

Camp Edwards' Reflections

Mrs. Madsen's Homeroom

A life changing experience.

August Bartley

My favorite thing about camp was archery because is was fun and hard.

Kevin Cabrera

I loved camp. It was heartbreaking to leave and my life changed a lot.

Vayda Cooper

I conquered my fear of the woods at night. It felt really good.

Rose Kaegi

One of the most fun things at camp was the night walk. It changed me a lot.

Nora Kayzak

The coolest thing at camp was the trust walk and the arm wrestling.

Max Koschmann

The most fun thing I did at camp was the G.I.C. class.

Zeke Limberg

Camp was very fun because I conquered my fear of walking in the woods by myself.

Angie McCracken

The scariest thing I did at camp was the tube slides. Yikes!

Preeti Mirmira

I liked camp because I had never spent a night away from home before and I liked it!

Madison Ponder

When you go to camp, don't miss the nightwalk. It was amazing. I liked the skits best.

Isha Ritchie

Bonding with friends was amazing. I never knew how much I could appreciate them.

Anika Sherman

The most fun thing was getting muddy on the tube slides.

Kaiden Taylor

The coolest thing was wilderness survival class.

Bailey Tiffen

I liked how the camp chaperones were nice and let us stay up at night.

Noah Turner

The most fun activity at camp was the tube slides.

Gabriel Wasson-Farran

When you go to camp, do not miss the tube slides.

Caroline Webb

Camp Edwards' Reflections

Mrs. Heide's Homeroom

The most exciting thing about camp was wilderness survival!

Jayden Jones

I am not as afraid of walking in the dark by myself.

A.J. Noyes

The most fun thing at camp was the night walk.

Ysa Zawadowski

I conquered my fear of being alone in the woods.

Violet Schnizlein

The tastiest thing was the pasta.

Jacinda Fitzpatrick

I loved the tube slides!

Kai Ghosh-Johnson

The best thing at camp was that I got to learn a lot about nature!

Natalia Aguilar-Ripley

I loved the tube slides!

Gabi Barriuso

My advice to next year's campers is to bring a fitted sheet.

Johnny Decker

I learned how to shoot a bow and arrow!

Sean Hargrove

The most surprising thing was the food being good.

Jake Lapat

The scariest thing at camp was the night walk!

Colby McGee

The most fun thing at camp was the wilderness survival class.

Susan Ostler-Still

The most exciting thing about camp was the wilderness survival class.

Bobby Pointdujour

I'm not as afraid of bugs as I was before I went to camp.

Vaughn Sekulich

I learned how to do archery!

Jalen Martin

Camp Edwards' Reflections

Mrs. McDaniels's Homeroom

Praise the moose god Gerald!
Nicholas Coligan

After camp I'm not afraid of sleeping somewhere new!
Stella Smith

My favorite thing about Camp was the moose god, Gerald.
Sophia Fickenscher

Camp Edwards is a path to change.
Jacob Marks

I loved hanging out with the boys in my cabin at Camp Edwards.
Sorabh Gandhi

Praise lord god Gerald!
Matty McBroom

My favorite thing about Camp Edwards was being able to bond with everyone.
Natalie Green

The best thing at Camp Edwards was the low ropes course.
Rosie Ramirez

One thing I liked at Camp Edwards was the marshwalk.
Crystalyn Smith

The carpet ball game is amazing!
Joshua Lloyd

Next year when you go to Camp use the bathroom as quickly as possible!
Nathaniel Lopez

Camp taught me to always be prepared and expect anything to happen.
Ella Steffen

Camp Edwards was a great place to learn more about the people in 5th grade.
Mora Schigelone

Next year's campers, be prepared to make a lot of new friends!
Caroline McGinnis

Moose Gerald is not a god.
Kingston Petersen

I like Camp Edwards a lot because I got to do things I had never done before and there were always surprises!
Grace Zoloto

My favorite part of Camp Edwards was the food!
David Yurick

I loved hanging out in the lodge with my friends and the moose Gerald.
Ja'Vonte Pittman

My favorite part of Camp Edwards was the night hike.
Kinzie Mackey

Hooray 74th Annual Pumpkin Festival Winners!

Early Childhood, Kindergarten & 1st Grade

3rd place: "The Wizard" Will Engebretson- Mrs. Weiss
2nd place: "The Princess" Jocelyn Swaine- Mrs. Neslon/Ms. Hussey
1st place: "Elmo" Nico Robert - Mrs. Baker

2nd and 3rd Grade

3rd place: "Peacock" Nico Lopez- Mrs. Hoehne
2nd place: "The Unicorn" Anna Kaegi – Mrs. Druckmiller
1st place: "Popcorn" Madison Hart- Mrs. Johnson/Ms. Jacobson

4th and 5th Grade

3rd place: "Up House" Nathaniel Lopez- Mrs. McDaniels/ Mrs. Gawne
2nd place: "Pigeon, Elephant and Piggie" Finley Higgins-Urban - Ms. Darley/ Mrs. Mason
1st place: "Birds Nest" Mallory McConville- Ms. Darley/ Mrs. Mason

Family

3rd place: "Enchanted forest house" Finley Higgins-Urban- Ms. Darley/ Mrs. Mason
2nd place: "Mount Rushmore" Sorabh and Milan Gandhi- Mrs. McDaniels/Mrs. Gawne, Mrs. Druckmiller
1st place: "I'm So Shiny" Loie Burwell- Mrs. Druckmiller

Congratulations Turkey Trot Winners!

3rd Grade
Ian Hollinden & Alessandra Gerut

4th Grade
Troy Gerut & Juliette Azizi

5th Grade
Kingston Petersen & Natalia Aguilar-Ripley

Raffle Winner
Alex Petratis

palm leaves

Now with Library news!

Physical Education

Physical education classes through December continue to participate in fitness related activities including some sport lead up games. Older grade levels will be working on floor hockey skills.

As we move into January, Whittier will begin its gymnastics unit. All grade levels participate in gymnastics where the emphasis is to safely try new and challenging things. All students are introduced to some basic and introductory level stunts and tumbling skills.

As always there is a strong emphasis on showing a good effort and being a good sport. It is impressive to see the progress all students are making in their physical education class.

Keep up the great effort Wildcats!
Mr. Coglianese

Art

This past month has been full of art making to fill the Whittier Halls!

Kindergarten classes have begun a series focusing on shapes.

They have learned both circles and triangles this month: practicing how to fold, cut, glue, draw and paint these amazing shapes. Next up will be squares!

1st graders have been getting messy and working hard on their *Starry Night* inspired projects this month.

Students used their fingers to paint a Starry Night sky using 'cool' colors. Then they added cut paper buildings and windows using primary colors. To top off this awesome artist inspired project, students added glitter stars to their skies.

2nd graders just finished up another amazing artist inspired project looking at Fauvism and Landscapes.

All classes learned foreground, middleground, background and horizon line. They learned how having these different spaces in an image can create "depth;" drawn large in the front and small in the back. To add a creative twist students painted these landscapes with a Fauvist twist, taking something real and turning it "fake or silly."

3rd graders have been working very hard on creating realistic self portraits using colored pencil.

Students learned how proportional the human face is and how they can map it out in a drawing. After learning proportions students all looked in mirrors to make the portrait into themselves. When it came time for color students learned new techniques for how to make colored pencils "pop" off the page. We discussed layering multiple colors to create depth along with using different pressures on the pencil to get different degrees of color. Next up for 3rd graders will be creating a personal expressive painting to glue their portrait on.

4th graders finished up their color theory project this month and started their first artist inspired project.

Students looked at George Seurat's *Sunday Afternoon on La Grande Jatte* and practiced their first Visual Think Strategy session using their visual literacy from visual cues and background knowledge. Taking inspiration from Seurat, students are creating their own pointillist paintings.

5th grade classes have also finished their study on color theory and went on an inspiring Art/Spanish field trip to the National Museum of Mexican Fine Art.

At the museum, students were guided around the Dia de los Muertos exhibits. They got to practice their visual literacy using visual cues and background knowledge along with using their vocabulary and history they have learned in Spanish. From here, students will be beginning a museum inspired project!

Miss Connell

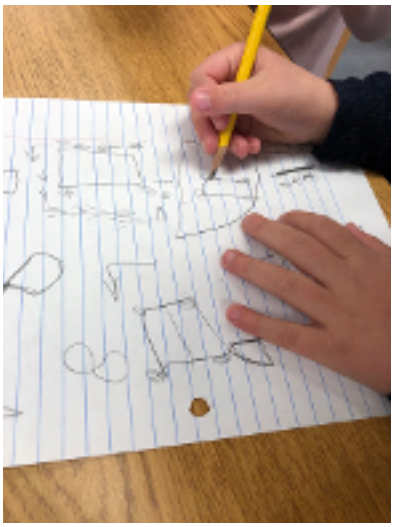
Library

Hello families,

Happy winter! We've been keeping busy in the library with lots of new books, lessons and fun resources.

This month, all grades are participating in the Hour of Code! The Hour of Code is designed to demystify coding, to show that anybody can learn the basics, and to broaden participation in the field of computer science.

In our Whittier celebration of computer science, our older students participated in 1-hour coding activities such as Flappy Bird, Minecraft and Frozen, while our younger students learned to code using robots. We borrowed Beebots from the Oak Park Public Library and practiced coding them to spell letters, get into and out of a maze and run races! We've been coding up a storm in the library!



Fifth graders are also working with robots—they are building their own LEGO MINDSTORMS robots and then coding them through a series of challenges.

We've partnered with Oak Park Education Foundation to make this happen and the kids are loving the challenge of working with these incredibly complex robots! Ask your fifth grader to tell you about this!

Younger classes are continuing to read the Monarch Books. Students read nominated titles in order to become eligible to vote.

In March, we conduct voting and count the votes for each award category to identify a Whittier winner; finally, we submit our voting totals to the state to help choose the state-wide award winners.

Winning authors are thrilled to be selected for the Illinois Readers' Choice awards as they know the selection was made by their readers: the kids!

Kindergarten, first, second and third grade classes read Monarch nominees during library classes—so far, Creepy Pair of Underwear by Aaron Reynolds has been an early favorite. Stay tuned to see which book is chosen!

Our birthday books program is also up and running—in honor of your child's birthday or other special event, you may adopt a book for our library. Please feel free to contact me if you're interested in participating and, as always, visit our library website at www.op97.org/whittier/mediacenter/.

I am expecting my third child in late December and will be on maternity leave for a few months. In my place will be a wonderful long-term substitute librarian who will begin after winter break! I will still be around the Whittier area and will spend my leave catching up on kids' books (among diaper changes, of course) so I'll be ready to go when I return!

Have a wonderful winter and holiday season!

Happy Reading!
Laurie Conley
lconley@op97.org

Music

Keep up with music week to week

- Following on Twitter @kariamusic
- Checking in on the music website mrskaria.blogspot.com

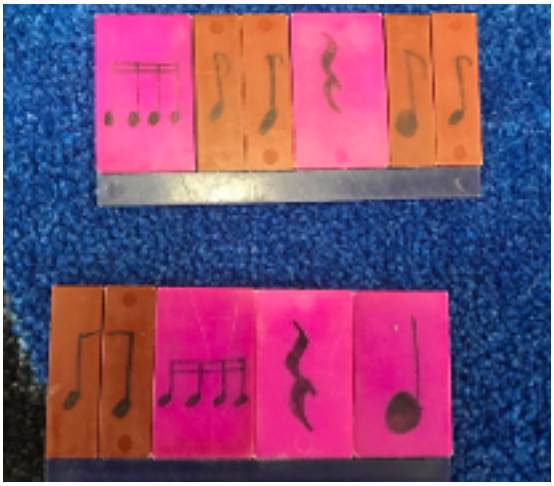
November highlights

- Singing assessments for K-5th graders on solfege (for K-3) or on a specific song (for 4-5)
- Exploring with rhythmic composition using colors (K), Spanish words (1), and rhythmic tiles (2-5)
- Exploring the different sounds of percussion instruments (K)
- Music Share Day

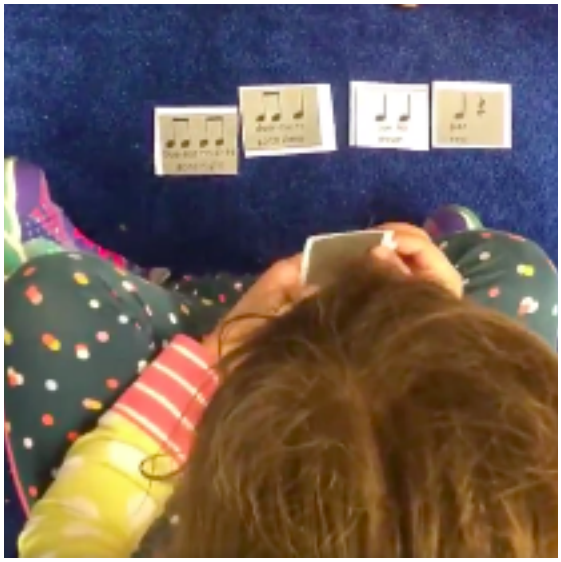
To come in December

- Nutcracker listening/ movement pieces
- Finishing our compositions
- Preparing for our in school sing along!

5th Graders learning Orff (xylophone) playing technique to the song "Simple Simon"



2nd-5th grade students compose using fraction tiles



1st graders compose using cards with Spanish phrases related to sleep.

A COLORFUL HOLIDAY

A FAMILY CELEBRATION OF BUSINESSES OF COLOR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2018
10AM-3:30PM

EUCLID UMC COMMUNITY SPACE
405 S EUCLID AVE
OAK PARK

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!

Are you an adult who likes to sing?

Email Mrs. Karia (akaria@op97.org) if you would like more details on being a part of a fun, no-pressure choir singing holiday songs at A Colorful Holiday, Saturday December 15th!

Members of the Whittier Chorus will also be singing some selections of their own.

Spanish

¡Adiós noviembre y hola diciembre! We had a short but super busy November!

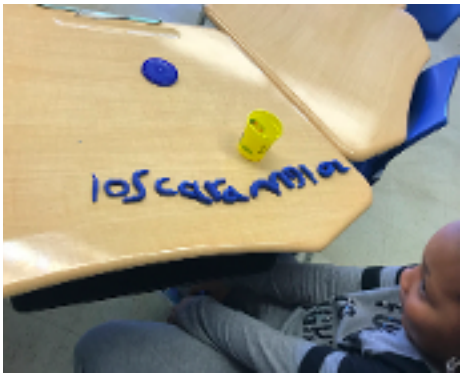
Kindergarten

We focused on the family unit during the month of October and we continued in November. Furthermore, we learned vocabulary related to the fall season including El Día de Acción de Gracias~Thanksgiving holiday.

We practiced foods such as turkey, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie, fruits, vegetables, I like and I don't like. We sang songs about the months of the year and weather using www.Rockalingua.com Everyday we continue to reinforce greetings, daily routines, days of the week, colors and numbers.

1st grade

We learned important facts about El Día de los Muertos~The Day of the Dead and we also incorporated vocabulary about El Día de Acción de Gracias~Thanksgiving holiday. One activity the kids enjoyed very much was writing words in Spanish about the things they were thankful for however they use playdough instead of paper and pencil. Students were highly motivated to practice reading, they read each word in Español while doing this fun activity!



Why Playdough?

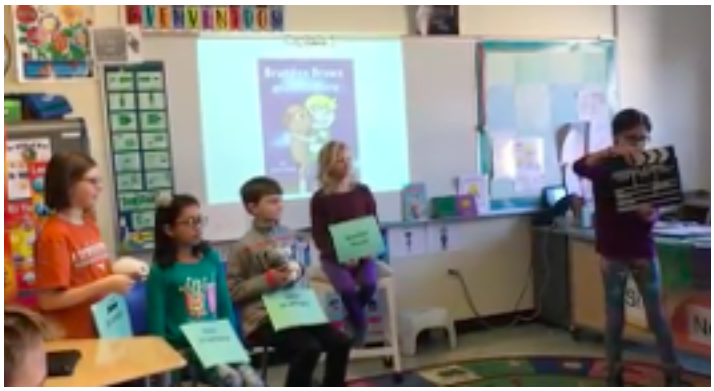
When students use playdough they also gain strength and improve dexterity in their hands and fingers, critical areas of physical development for writing, drawing, and other purposes.

2nd Grade

Second graders also learned important facts, vocabulary about El Día de los Muertos, and the Mexican culture. We reinforced vocabulary using Rockalingua games on the iPads. We will soon began our unit on professions using TPR Storytelling. TPRS is a method of teaching world languages. TPRS lessons use a mixture of reading and storytelling to help students learn the target language in the classroom setting.

4th Grade

We continue reading Brandon Brown quiere un perro. We started acting out specific details to summarize the chapters. Students will continue using quizlet.com to help them recognize important vocabulary for each chapter. Soon we will do more reading for comprehension activities such as draw for comprehension activities and listening activities using the application on their iPads called Showbie.



5th Grade

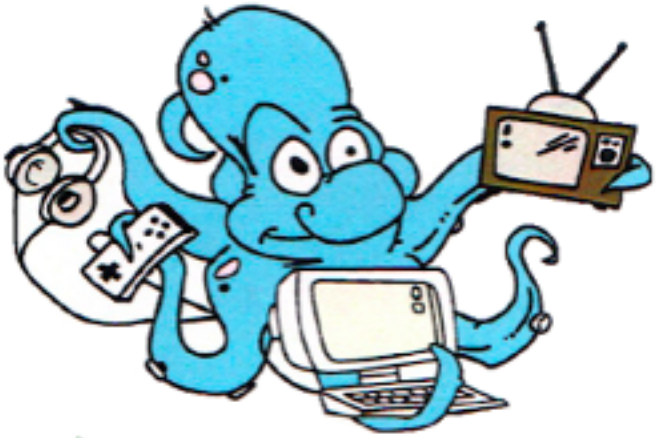
Fifth graders took a field trip to the National Museum of Mexican Fine Arts in Pilsen on November 29. Stay tuned for pictures! We continued to read Tumba by Mira Canion and students have been identifying key details about the story by drawing pictures for comprehension.

Ever get distracted?

Do you ever feel like you may need help staying focused?

If so, Ms. Ryan, Whittier's K-5 Social Worker, would like to introduce you to ***Brain Eater*** and ***Focus Tron*** from the *Superflex®: A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum.*

Brain Eater makes it challenging to stay focused and on task.



This Unthinkable makes it hard for you to focus on what you are doing or focus on others during interactions (rolls your brain away). You may get easily distracted with your own thoughts or things around you.

Use one of your **Superflex Strategies** to solve the problem and defeat the Unthinkable!

- Turn your body and eyes away from what is distracting you and think about the person talking.
- Use a fidget so that it keeps your body busy but your brain focused on the group.
- Try to notice when your brain is thinking about something else and get it to refocus on the group.

Focus Tron can help you stay focused and on task by:

- Helping you create schedule checklists
- Helping you use **Distractor Shields** on anything that is taking away your attention from what you should be doing. For example: a favored book, your computer or tablet, your LEGOs, etc.
- Helping you use positive self-talk to keep you motivated
- Reminding you to keep your body and brain in the group
- Breaking down bigger tasks into smaller, more manageable tasks

YOUR OWN *SUPERFLEX*® DISTRACTER SHIELD!

1. One strategy to defeat Brain Eater is to use a Superflex Distracter Shield
2. Print out this page and cut out your shield along the dotted lines
3. Put your Superflex Distracter Shield on anything that is stealing your attention away from what you should be doing. For example: a favored book, your computer or tablet, your Legos, etc.
4. Make as many Superflex Distracter Shields as you need!
5. Use positive self-talk to overcome Brain Eater's powers: "I can stay focused", "I can use my strategies to pay attention", "I can do this!"
6. Call on the Thinkable Focus Tron to help you stay focused!

SAVE THE DATE

2019 Parent Empowerment Workshop

presented by Beye School and Beye PTO Inclusion and Diversity Committee

Saturday, January 12, 2019

Beye School Auditorium

230 North Cuyler Oak Park, IL 60302

Session 1 / 9:30AM-11:15AM
Be a Prepared Parent: How to Navigate the Special Education World
Jackie Ross, an attorney for Equip for Equality will provide an overview of Special Education law and how it applies to our students, help us know what to expect during the referral and evaluation process and during IEP meetings, give us tips to understanding school evaluations and provide suggestions on how to best organize materials so that we can be prepared, effective advocates for our kids and partners with our schools.

11:15AM-12PM Lunch
(Pizza is provided)

Session 2 / 12-2:30
Utilizing the Collaborative Problem Solving Approach at Home or in a Classroom

Would you describe your child's behavior as "explosive" or "challenging?" Bring peace to your home or classroom by learning Ross Greene's process for identifying your child's lagging skills, how to help your child improve those skills, and how to work with your child toward collaborative and proactive solutions.

Katie Trathen is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and holds a Professional Educator's License in School Social Work. Katie is currently working at a public school district in the Western Suburbs, where she is a Behavior Specialist – training and consulting with educators regarding students with behavioral challenges and/or mental health concerns. An Adjunct Instructor at Dominican University's Graduate School of Social Work, Katie is passionate about adult learning and professional development.

Parents/caregivers are welcome to attend either or both sessions.

Advance registration is kindly requested at https://tinyurl.com/empoweredparent or email trfisher@gmail.com.

Please let us know if any accommodations or supports would help you fully participate.

THE TRIVIA NIGHT

2019

FUNDRAISER
WHITTIER
PTO

Saturday, February 9th

7:00 – 11:00pm

The 19th Century Club

178 Forest Avenue

Early bird tickets are on sale now at a reduced price of $30 through Eventbrite.com.

Trivia night is a fun filled evening with your fellow Whittier Community. It consists of 10 rounds of trivia announced by a local celebrity, a live auction and raffles.

Bar snacks & light desserts will be provided. Drink tickets for beer, wine, etc. are $5.

Teams consist of 8 people — get a group together, or sign up individually and we'll find you one! (Formed trivia teams are not required for registration.)

This fun event is one of Whittier Parent Teacher Organization's largest fundraisers of the year. The PTO is an all volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to helping the students & staff of Whittier.

Not sure Trivia is for you? You can still join in the fun by volunteering (bonus: if you volunteer during the event as a spotter or ticket seller, your admission is free!). Volunteers are essential to the success of this event. Please check your email for a sign-up link.

You must be 21+ years old to participate.

Whittier Diversity Committee

Who are we?
We are Whittier parents and staff devoted to creating a strong and supportive community at Whittier

What do we do?

General Meetings
Meet every other month
Our last general meeting was Nov. 14th at Dole Library Meeting Room. It was a very productive meeting and we look forward to the next general meeting in February 2019

Podcast Club
Meets every other month
Come join us as we watch a 20-30 minute TED talk together, then have a discussion in a safe space. We are looking for different topics to discuss, that include race, culture, gender, socioeconomics, or disability. Join the chat, share your thoughts! All are welcome.
The next Podcast Club discussion will be Wednesday, January 16th at 7 pm.

Whittier 101 Series
These are very informative presentations by our Whittier principal Mr. Robinson and other staff regarding issues that deal with behavioral support systems in place at Whittier, as well as academic support systems. February 2019 will deal with behavioral supports available to our Whittier students. Childcare will be provided.

Stay tuned for more information!

PTO HOLIDAY GATHERING
THURSDAY DECEMBER 6

COMMON GROUND
FRIDAY DECEMBER 7

REPORT CARDS
FRIDAY DECEMBER 7

WINTER BREAK STARTS
SATURDAY DECEMBER 22

SCHOOL RESUMES
MONDAY JANUARY 7

PTO MEETING
TUESDAY JANUARY 8

COMMON GROUND
FRIDAY JANUARY 11

MLK DAY - NO SCHOOL
MONDAY JANUARY 21

PTO BOOK FAIR
JANUARY 30- FEBRUARY 1

PARENT CONFERENCES / HALF DAY
JANUARY 31 & FEBRUARY 1

COMMON GROUND
FRIDAY FEBRUARY 1

PTO MEETING
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 5

TRIVIA NIGHT
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 9