



# WHITTIER greenleaf NEWSLETTER



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pto  
update

## Over and out!

With another successful year under our belts, we bid a bittersweet good-bye to our fifth graders while we anticipate the arrival of our Wildcat kindergarteners.

We would like to thank each and every one of you for making 2017/2018 a success! Whether you donated money, dropped off an item for a teacher dinner, volunteered at an event or on a committee, or held a leadership position, we couldn't have done it without you.

From fundraisers like Fun Run and Trivia Night to our Dine Out Nights and Whittier at the Movies, our Whittier family came together to meet our goals while having fun along the way.

Another great fundraiser is Box Tops that all of us have been collecting (or meant to collect) throughout the year. A special shout out to this year's champion, Ms. Volz's class with 526 Box Tops. A very close second was Ms. Darley's class with 518. Way to go team!

We are still actively planning for next year. If you are interested in getting involved, we are forming many committees to support our leadership positions. Please contact Brigitte at [bbrostrom@hotmail.com](mailto:bbrostrom@hotmail.com). We would love to have you!

Now go off and have fun in the sun! We'll see you back before you know it. Have a fabulous summer and we look forward to seeing you on the playground in August.

**Amy Soumar and Brigitte Brostrom**  
PTO Co-Presidents

### Are you our next Co VP of Fundraising?

We have one open PTO leadership position for next year we'd love to fill...won't you join us?

This position may sound really daunting, but actually isn't! We have all the subcommittee fundraiser positions already filled, so this role would be overseeing event development and making sure our fantastic fundraising events run smoothly.

## LAST CALL FOR Whittier School Supply Kits!

Don't miss out! Next Friday, June 8, is the LAST DAY to order Whittier School Supply Kits for the 2018-2019 school year! With a few clicks now, you can have one less thing to worry about before school starts up again in August. Place your order on the Whittier PTO website at [whittierpto.org](http://whittierpto.org) by June 8, and your child's school supply kit will be waiting in the classroom that first day of school.

Please note that items such as headphones, earbuds, and calculators are REQUIRED but listed as optional items in case you prefer to bring them from home. Under "optional" items, if you wish, you can also donate to our Specials Teachers' Supply Fund, which provides tissues, disinfectant wipes, and hand sanitizer for our specials classrooms.

Not all items listed on the school supply list (such as backpacks and water bottles) will be included in the kits, so if you do choose to order a kit, please plan to check your child's supply list just to make sure you have everything.

You can place orders on the PTO website [whittierpto.org](http://whittierpto.org) now through June 8.

Questions? Please contact Kathy and Rekha at [whittierschoolkits@gmail.com](mailto:whittierschoolkits@gmail.com)



# library news

Dear Whittier Families,

What a great year we've had! Here are the latest updates from the Whittier Media Center.

## One Book, One School



Whittier kids, teachers and families had such a blast with our One Book, One School selection this year—Charlie and the Chocolate Factory! Mr. Willy Wonka himself stopped by Whittier for the big reveal and then hid golden tickets all over the school. 10 lucky golden ticket finders were chosen for a special lunch!

We had a visit from Ovation Academy, starring several Whittier students, as they showed us scenes from the chapter we had read and taught us a dance! Our school was transformed into Willy Wonka's chocolate factory and students from kindergarten through fifth grade were having meaningful and insightful questions about the characters, the historical context, and the choices that Roald Dahl made.

Thanks to everyone for your support of this very meaningful program!



## Summer Reading Program Starts June 1st

The Oak Park Public Library Summer Reading Program (this year's theme—Reading Takes You Everywhere!) starts Friday, June 1 and goes all the way through the last day of summer August 21. That means more opportunities to win prizes and more levels to unlock as kids tackle reading challenges. Encourage your students to get involved in this great program!

## Reading Olympics

Another fantastic year of Whittier Reading Olympics is in the books! We held our final competition—the Ultimate round—in April. Teams competed to see who best knew facts from eighteen different books. Our winning team was The Fluffy Rainbow Kitties Eating Tacos - Adam Doyle, Evan Pisellini and Sienna Alfonsi! They represented Whittier at the all-day regional competition at the Oak Park Public Library and did a fantastic job! Congratulations to everyone who participated and worked so hard.



## Suggested Reading Lists

The Oak Park Public Library is offering their annual Reading Lists online this year! The link is here: <http://oppl.org/services/childrens-services/reading-list>. There are tons of great books on these lists. The printed versions will also be available at the library if you would like one.

## Library Books

As we wrap up the year, please look around your home for any overdue or misplaced library books! All books are now due back to the Whittier library so be sure your student doesn't have any outstanding books, magazines or playaways. We very much appreciate your help!

Have a wonderful summer and keep reading!

Laurie Conley  
Whittier Teacher Librarian

# Whittier Welcomes the Ovation Performers



Ovation performed a 15-minute piece from their full-length version of *Willy Wonka Jr.* as part of our One Book, One School program.

For the last part of their visit, the Ovation performers broke the audience up by grade and taught them a snippet of the song and choreography for "Golden Ticket" that they then performed as a whole group.

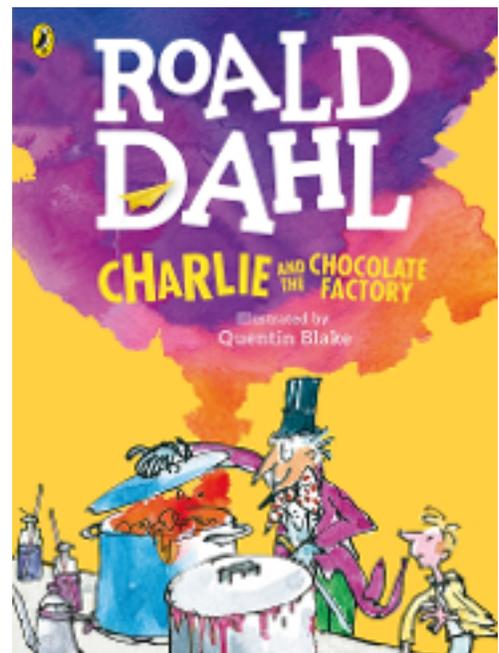
This is the same piece Ovation performed at their inaugural trip to the Junior Theater Festival in Atlanta in January where they were one of over 100 groups from around the world. JTF is the worlds largest junior theater festival in the world. Ovation won awards for choreography and music direction.



## DONATE YOUR ONE BOOK, ONE SCHOOL BOOK

Please bring your copy of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* to your teacher or Laurie Conley, Whittier's Librarian, by the last day of school.

Mrs. Conley will donate these books to another school so they can have the same wonderful One Book, One School experience.





# palm leaves

PE, ART, LANGUAGE (SPANISH) + MUSIC

## Physical Education

As this great year comes to an end, our PE classes are learning baseball/tee-ball skills along with fitness themes. Students participated in Whittier Olympic Day on Tuesday, May 29. We greatly appreciate all of the wonderful help that we get each year for that event.

As everyone moves into summer remember to stay active, stay healthy, and have fun!

~**Mr. Coglianese**

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

## In the ART ROOM

To Whittier School:

I started teaching at the age of twenty-two. It was difficult to get used to being called Mr. Patterson. There was only one Mr. Patterson in my life, and I wasn't that one. Engineering was my major, but I decided to change to art education, because I loved to draw and paint. After almost 40 years of teaching, I am pleased to say I made the right decision.

I have enjoyed exploring art with your children. Some of our Whittier parents were once my students. I just couldn't imagine sticking around and teaching your grandchildren. I have learned a great deal from you and your children. I would say that you and your children helped prepare me for fatherhood. My children are all grown now, so it is time for me to end this part of my journey. Above everything and everyone, I will miss the children, even the ones that caused me to gain weight and go bald.

Take care everyone.

~**Mr. W.D. Patterson**

Visual Arts Teacher

## Language (Spanish FLES)

Loose ends: Whittier languages

As I was writing this Palm Leaves, I realized I had not reported back on the "family languages" from National World Languages Week. It is truly amazing! Whittier families speak over 40 languages from all around the world (and I'm guessing there are others out there that just didn't make it to our list!)

English	Spanish	French	German
Pashto	Polish	Chinese	Italian
Russian	Tamil	Kannada	Malayalam
Telugu	Hindi	Urdu	Danish
Hebrew	Gaelic (Irish)	Pig Latin	Lithuanian
Dutch	Czech	Norwegian	Gujarati
Haitian Creole	Bemba	Mambwe	Nyanja
Wolof	Phoenician	Arabic	Ugaritic
Hurrian	Japanese	Geez	
Middle Egyptian		Hebrew (Classical)	
Aramaic (Imperial, Syriac)		Greek (Keine)	
Akkadian (Assyrian & Babylonian)			

And we have some real polyglots among us! One 1st grade dad speaks five languages—French, English, Wolof, Arabic, and Spanish. A 3rd/5th grade dad is a linguistic scholar and speaks 14 languages!!! English, German, French, Hebrew (Classical), Arabic, Akkadian (Assyrian & Babylonian), Aramaic (Imperial, Syriac), Greek (Keine), Ugaritic, Phoenician, Geez, Hurrian, Middle Egyptian, and Spanish. (Hopefully I got close on the spelling!)

Señorita Ojeda and I have had a great year! Spring Sing 4th & 5th—awesome job Despacito a la Whittier, Waka waka, and Wavin' Flag. We are so excited by all the fun and growth in learning that we have had with all the children. As possible, please keep them exposed to language over the summer—many options—apps, kids' TV en español, watching your favorite family DVD with the Spanish channel on (and English subtitles), cultural events around metro Chicago, reading together, and much more. We wish you a wonderful, fun, and relaxing summer! Tengan un verano maravilloso, divertido, y relajado.

~Señora Deaton ~Señorita Ojeda

## 38th annual Ethnic Festival and World Languages Day

Saturday May 5, 2018

Theme: Celebrating Diversity: The heART of Who We Are

We had a beautiful day and a great turn out for Ethnic Festival & World Languages Day. Thanks to all who could join us. Looking forward to many more families joining the celebration next year!



## Gracias y hasta luego from Señora Deaton

Words cannot express how thankful I am to have taught Spanish at Whittier to your children and so many more. I went from teaching college to elementary—who would have thought—but I definitely landed where I belonged. Being part of the Whittier family has brought much joy to my life. Watching children grow, not only in their love and use of language and culture, but as people, has been so rewarding, as has sharing so much with your families. Moving on will truly be bittersweet, but all the wonderful memories will continue to bring happiness as the years pass. Thank you for embracing me and for making Spanish learning an important part of your children's education. May they always keep their language channels humming—no matter which one. May they explore the world and embrace peoples and cultures from far and near, for if they do they will be enriched and make the world a better place. Please stay in touch (you know I'm in the neighborhood) and when you travel, don't forget the postcards. So it's really not "Adiós", it's "Hasta luego." Wishing you all the wonders life has to give.

Gracias por todo, Dawn (aka Sra. Deaton)



## PTO Lunchtime World Language Program

Please join us next year for more language enrichment. This year we offered Spanish, French, German, and American Sign Language. The kids had a great time! Watch for information about next year's language classes at in the "Back to School" materials. Maybe you even speak a language you could teach (Arabic, Hindi, ???) Contact Lori Robert if you would like to teach, volunteer to assist or have any questions [lori.robert@gmail.com](mailto:lori.robert@gmail.com). Merci to Madame Robert for coordinating this enrichment opportunity.

## World Language Advisory Committee

The World Language Advisory Committee (WLAC) is a broad-based district committee, comprised of teachers, administrators, board members, parents, and community members. All are welcome! Watch for the first meeting of the 2018-2019 school year. Please be involved—family presence and participation are very important in continuing to strengthen language learning across grades K-8 in D97.

At its May meeting, the WLAC presented the Spring Quixote Awards to those who those who advance language learning and multicultural understanding in our district and community. Among the recipients were the Whittier Refugee Project Coordinators, Shana Wills, Stephanie Thomas, and Georgina Swanson. See page 12 for more information.

I (Sra. D) was also recognized for Career Achievement for my teaching and language leadership duties. It was such an honor to receive this from the D97 language community.

# Music

## Band

Final band lessons will be May 22 and 23. Intermediate band will play for the Memorial Day ceremony on May 24.

Students who are continuing to play in band next year should bring their instruments home for the summer. Students who are not continuing—parents should contact the store they are renting from for return instructions.

D97 summer band is the week of July 30-August 3. Information. Choose from Band, Orchestra, Chorus, Jazz Improv, Orff ensemble, Chamber Music, Steel Pan Ensemble, Ukulele, and Percussion. Registration is on the district webpage at <http://www.op97.org/instrumental-music/music-camp>.

~Mr. Shannon

## Notes from the Music Room

Dear Whittier Family,

These 34 years of teaching in Oak Park have been a long and winding road of music, merriment and memories for me! Though I've taught at all 8 elementary buildings at one time or another, Whittier has been my home for 32 of those years—and I can't imagine being anywhere else.

The warmth, support, and kindness of teachers, staff, and parents has impacted me greatly over the years, as the Whittier community is a very special one. I think it says a lot about a school when former students of all ages frequently come back to visit because of the fond memories they have of their time here. As adults, some have even worked along side of us as colleagues, substitute teachers, teacher assistants, and custodians.

Having the opportunity to see children grow artistically, musically, academically, and socially from Kindergarten to fifth grade has been such a joy! Teaching children of former students has been very cool too, as well as a

reality check (I never thought I'd be like my Dad in that respect, lol!).

I will dearly miss my daily interactions with students!!

There's nothing that can compare with seeing students *getting it*, laughing, singing, playing, or trying diligently to demonstrate their learning. I'll also miss hearing about those loose teeth, new pets, new baby brothers or sisters, how great they did in soccer, the latest dance trend (FLOSS, anyone?), or seeing them in their element via Talent Show, recitals, BRAVO, or Ovation.

Thank you again and again for your children and for your kindnesses to me over the years—words cannot express what I truly feel.

~Mrs. Duckett-Edwards

**"It's so hard to say goodbye to  
Yesterday...."**



Fourth Graders  
took iPad  
photos to  
show us their  
world.

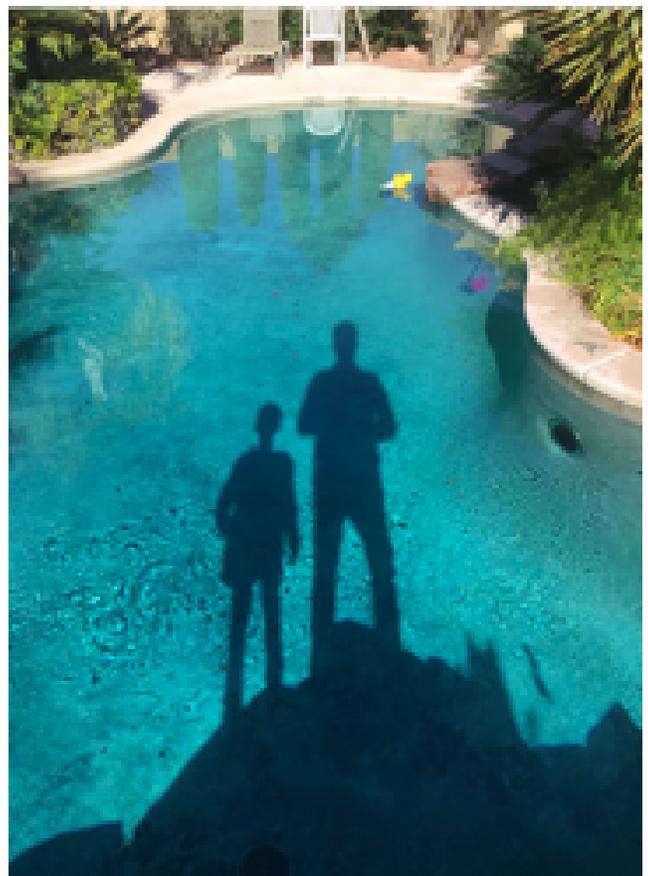


Kingston Petersen-Wezran

Here's a sampling of  
what they saw.



Anika Sherman



"On Top of the World"  
Joshua Lloyd



Caroline McGinnis



Max Koschmann



Nathaniel Lopez

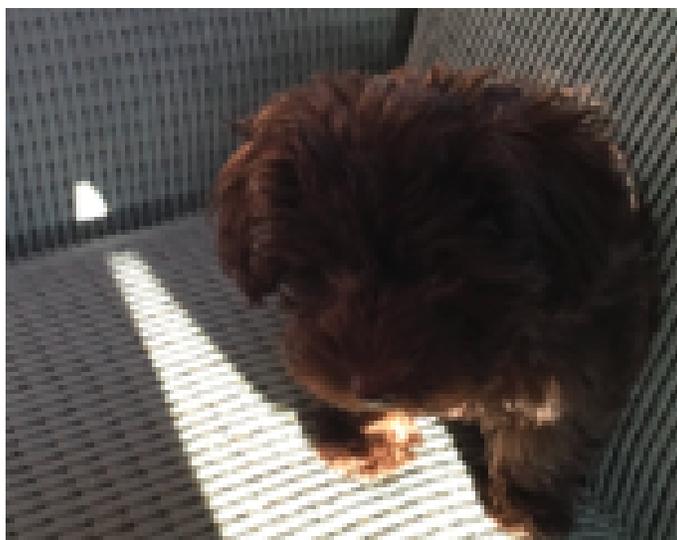


"Fossil"  
Natalie Green



"Holes in the Sky"  
Violet Schnizlein

# Pup Portraits



"Relaxin' and Chillaxin'"  
AJ Noyes



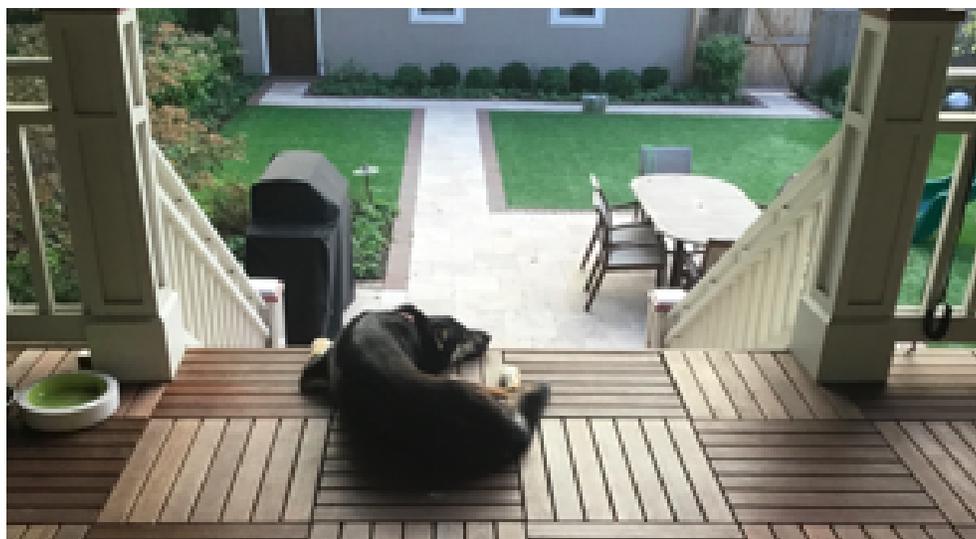
"Watchin' Netflix"  
Bailey Tiffen



"Black Beauty"  
Grace Zoloto



"Playtime"  
Violet Schnizlein



"Perched"  
Matty McBroom

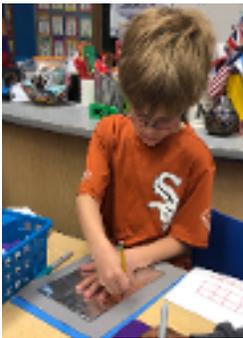
# ART

As part of the Oak Park Education Foundation's Art Start program, several Whittier classrooms participated in hands-on experiences this Spring.

Katie Grindley visited with students in Ms. Williams's, Ms. Molnar's, and Mrs. Wright's classrooms and took a field trip to the Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio to look at how spaces we live, work, and learn in are designed.



Visiting artist, Guillermo Delgado, worked with the second graders in Mrs. Druckmiller's class to create milagros.



# START

## A First-Hand Account of the Refugee Experience

On April 4th, the 3rd -5 th grade classes welcomed 13-year old Muntadher AL Maeeni as a guest speaker during a morning assembly. Muntadher was brought to Whittier as a Peer Mentor representing Refugee Education and Adventure Challenge (REACH). His presentation to the Whittier kids was part of his leadership training with REACH and he was terrific! Muntadher answered questions asked by members of the Whittier Student Council and, in doing so, he spoke of his experiences in both Iraq and in the United States.

Muntadher is an Iraqi refugee who arrived in the United States with his mother and little sister two years ago. His father was killed during the Iraqi conflict. Muntadher grew up in a nice neighborhood in Iraq where there were amusement parks and places to play nearby. But, because of the war, his mother made the difficult decision to flee Iraq with her children, leaving behind her parents. She made the decision to leave so as not to lose refugee protection status from the UNHCR, but also to give her kids a better future. When he arrived in Chicago, Muntadher spoke no English, so he had to learn quickly to keep up with the other 5 th graders in his class.

His favorite memories of Iraq are biking, playing soccer, climbing trees, and going to local museums. When asked what was the one important item that he brought with him

from Iraq, he answered, "my teddy bear." When asked about the one thing he left behind that he wished he could have brought with him, Muntadher said his dog, which he had to leave with his grandparents because he wasn't allowed to bring him on the airplane.

Muntadher now lives with his family in West Rogers Park. He loves basketball, camping and kayaking. He said that he enjoys school, his favorite subjects are math and science, and he wants to go to college to study engineering and robotics.

The Whittier kids were very gracious and polite, and they listened attentively to Muntadher's story. We hope that your child went home that evening and told you what he/she learned about Muntadher.



## FUNdraiser for Refugee Families

On April 27, Whittier kids participated in an afternoon of fun activities as part of our FUNdraiser for Refugee Families!

We had jump rope, hula hoop, dancing, basketball, tumbling, art, scooter races, soccer relay races, exercises, Simon Says,

4-square, and more! It was a beautiful day, and the kids, staff and volunteers had a great time.

A huge thank you to all of the volunteers, teachers, staff and administration for their support.

We are happy to announce

that our community raised a total of \$3,757 to be split evenly between the Iraqi Mutual Aid Society and the Rohingya Culture Center.

Thank you very much for your support!!

**Together, we raised \$3,757 for the benefit of Chicagoland refugee families!**



## Whittier Refugee Project Wins Quixote Award

Refugee Welcome Project Coordinators, Shana Wills, Stephanie Thomas and Georgina Swanson, each received the Quixote Award from Oak Park District 97's World Language Advisory Committee. The Quixote Award is presented by the D97 WLAC to those who advance language learning and multicultural understanding in our district and community.

In presenting the award, the WLAC noted: "We truly appreciate the important work you and your committee have done to bring cultures together and educate the students and broader community. You have furthered understanding on important issues that affect refugees, and in turn affect us all. You have put faces on the refugees and personalized the experience for students and families, helping to make them an active positive force for welcoming and supporting those affected."

The award was presented by Dawn Fogle Deaton and Silvia Zaragoza and the certificate reads: "For vision, perseverance, leadership and unfailing dedication in advancing language learning and multicultural understanding."



We are humbled and appreciate the recognition by the WLAC.

We'd like to acknowledge the other members of the Whittier Refugee Welcome Project Committee: Latha Chekuru, Sofia Villafuerte, Cathi Ward, Amy Unsell, Elka Ghosh Johnson and Olivia Schreiner.

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## Thank you! Gracias! Merci! Dziękuję! Danke!

The Whittier PTO wants to take a moment thank all the volunteers for jumping in to help out this year. We are an active PTO, and none of our activities could happen without time and energy of our amazing volunteers!

To all those with 5 th grade parents especially, we tip our hats to you in gratitude. You've left your mark on Whittier in so many ways.

Several tenured PTO volunteers will be moving on this year, and we want to recognize them for their years of leadership and service. As your kids move on to Brooks, we cannot thank you enough for all of your contributions!

### *Give a Wildcat high five to:*

**Tammy Adkins** – for your many contributions over the past 8 years, which include numerous PTO and Green Team projects, like building many Earth Faires and umpteen Greenleaf Garden plans (that tee pee and those rain barrels!), the brick patio and outdoor classroom and any number of PTO initiatives like the reconfigured playground.

**Kristen Alfonsi** – for your Wellness Committee (all those tastings!) and Olympic Day leadership, not to mention help with 7 Fun Runs and hosting many PTO backyard movie nights!

**Lynne Duschene** – for your years leading and volunteering WISE – what a run! And many years of K12 class parties and countless hours spent volunteering at PTO events.

**Stephanie Thomas** –for your leadership with WISE the past 3 years, Fun Run leadership, Movie Nights and Geppetto's fundraiser not to mention the thousands of dollars you helped raise for refugees.





## Summer Help Wanted!

The Whittier Greenleaf Garden is off to a wonderful start! The Sugarbeet Schoolhouse WISE class has been busy sowing seeds all spring long and now the teachers are joining the fun planting vegetables, fruits, and flowers.

Check out the garden and you will see a ton of edibles this summer ranging from a strawberry patch, two potato cages, tomatoes, green beans, carrots, lettuces, squash, pumpkins, cucumbers, herbs, and salads galore!

This is a community effort and it's now time to nail down a watering schedule.

We are asking for 2-3 families to take a week during the summer running from Sunday to Saturday.

If you sign up for a week, we encourage you to grab a friend to help out too! Gardening and harvesting is always better when you collaborate with friends.

During your week, you will be responsible for watering, weeding, thinning, staking, AND harvesting!

Please sign up at this link: <http://signup.com/go/VCPZJLq>

If you have any questions, please contact Green Team Co-Chair, Kristen Hollinden, at [kristenhollinden@gmail.com](mailto:kristenhollinden@gmail.com).

## Whittier Diversity Committee Meeting Update

The Whittier Diversity Committee held a meeting on May 2, 2018. Topics of discussion included a plan to meet every other month, alternating with the Article Club.

The goal of the diversity committee is one of general advocacy. Transparency, access, and information are important components of this process to keep in mind when putting together events and providing education.

### Planned areas of focus for the 2018-2019 school year

#### Parent Empowerment

- Potential project – a talk for Whittier parents at the beginning of the school year as a sort of 'how to' and ins/outs of d97
- Collection of questions/information throughout the school year of helpful info regarding the district and Whittier, with the eventual goal of creating a booklet with the info

#### Addressing our implicit biases

- Article club – will discuss an article every other month that will educate ourselves regarding a relevant article

#### Discipline in D97

- This was discussed in terms of needing to better understand the current policies that exist in d97, better education/action of de-escalation, further ideas regarding restorative justice

#### Consideration of the approach to projects and education

- 3 target areas include teachers, students, parents
- Current educational policies are affecting our topics
- Consider/provide planning or suggestions of policy changes

New Representative for the Diversity Committee at Whittier - Jalissa Bauman Horne, [jabh@me.com](mailto:jabh@me.com)

**Next Meeting**  
**June 22 at 7 pm**  
 Please email [munirahcurtis@gmail.com](mailto:munirahcurtis@gmail.com) for details.