



## WILSON MONTESSORI PTO

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## The *Un* Official Guide *for* New Parents

Dear New Families,

This upcoming school year is sure to be filled with many exciting experiences for you and your child. We hope that you will embrace and plug in to all that Wilson Montessori School has to offer. Our community of families has steadily increased in size in recent years, but we strive to maintain a culture of inclusivity by providing plenty of social events and opportunities throughout the year specifically designed for parents to get to know each other. There are many ways to be involved and the quickest way to get to know your school is to volunteer. We hope that you will take the time to find out where your talents would be most helpful.

We hope that this “Unofficial Guide” will help you get a great start to your new year at Wilson. We are so happy you are a part of the WMS community and we look forward to getting to know you. Our contact info can be found on the Wilson PTO website. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions you may have throughout the year. We are here to help!

Welcome,

*Melissa Hernandez, Amanda Lemaire*

*Tish Ochoa, and John Ray*

PTO Leadership Team, 2017-18

# The ABC's of WMS

**AFTER SCHOOL CARE** This service is provided for a fee by the YMCA. Please visit their table at the Ice Cream Social or call the school for more information.

**BAKE SALE** Our bake sale is held annually on Election Day as Wilson is a polling site. Parents are invited to contribute baked goods and other items for the sale. Students may purchase items before and after school. However, we ask that a parent be with them at the table as it can get chaotic at those times and challenging for volunteers. The proceeds from the sale go to support the PTO.

**BLUE FOLDER** Each Thursday, your child's teacher sends home the "blue folder." This communication folder often contains information from your teacher, from school administration and from PTO.

**BREAKFAST WITH BONNETTE** These gatherings are open to all parents. Principal Bonnette will give updates on some of the administrative aspects of the school. It is also a good place to ask questions and address topics that would be beneficial to a wide audience. For questions regarding your specific child, please call the office to make an appointment.

**BOOK FAIR** The school holds a book fair each December, just in time for holiday shopping. Funds raised from the book fair benefit our school library. This event is not a PTO sponsored event. However, if you would like to volunteer, please contact Mr. Brian Perkins.

**BOY SCOUTS & CUB SCOUTS** If you have a son in 1<sup>st</sup> grade or above and are interested in joining the local Cub Scout Pack or Boy Scout Troop, please contact Brandon Moncla at [bmoncla@yahoo.com](mailto:bmoncla@yahoo.com) or Osakwe Rikondja at [cubmaster@pack511.rocks](mailto:cubmaster@pack511.rocks).

**CAFETERIA LUNCH** Every student has an account with the cafeteria. If you would like to add money to your child's account, you may give cash to the front office or pay by credit card online at [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com). The School Café app is available at Google Play and the Apple Store.

**CELEBRATION OF LIFE** Also known as birthday celebrations, these celebrations are coordinated directly with your child's teacher. He or she will communicate their classroom's policies at Open House.

**EC or EARLY CHILDHOOD** Wilson is structured into 4 levels of progression with Early Childhood being the first level serving PreK-3 through Kindergarten.

**E-NEWS** Go to [www.wilsonpto.org](http://www.wilsonpto.org) to sign up for E-News, the PTO's electronic newsletter. You will want to read this thoroughly upon receipt as there is often time sensitive information in the newsletter.

**FAMILY CAMPOUT** This PTO sponsored event in October is a fantastic way to get to meet some of your student's new school friends! Camp for two nights, one night or just drive up for the day. Not a confident camper? Need to borrow some gear? Email the PTO to let us know what you need. We will do our best to help you feel confident in joining us for this super fun weekend!

**FIELD DAY & FAMILY PICNIC** Field Day is a wonderful time of sportsmanship and comradery for the whole family! Bring a blanket and some lunch and join us for a family picnic on Field Day. Arrive early as parking can be an issue. (See Tie-Dye Shirts for more Field Day related information.)

**FIRST FRIDAY FREE DRESS** This fun tradition is a PTO fundraiser. On the first Friday of each month, your child gets to ditch the uniform. All we ask is that your child drops a donation of \$1.00 (or more!) into the cauldron at the front entrance with Ms. Bonnette.

**FRIENDS OF MONTESSORI (FOM)** This organization is made up of volunteer parents, teachers, and community members dedicated to expanding the opportunity for, and maintaining the integrity and excellence of, Montessori programs in the Houston public schools. FOM was a driving force in Wilson becoming an all-Montessori campus and continues to support our campus.

**GALA & AUCTION** The PTO's largest fundraising event of the year is the Gala & Auction. This event takes place in the spring and is an opportunity for family, friends and community members to enjoy a fun evening in support of Wilson Montessori. Money raised at the Gala goes towards the PTO's general operating budget supporting programs and enrichment.

**GARDEN CLUB** This free after-school club is for students in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades run by Urban Harvest. This hands-on club learns about horticulture, as well as tends to the school garden. Look for a flyer in the blue folder at the beginning of each semester for registration.

**GIRL SCOUTS** If you have a daughter in Kindergarten or older who is interested in joining Girl Scouts, please visit [www.gssjc.org](http://www.gssjc.org). Also, watch the blue folder for details on a parent information evening to be scheduled in September.

**HARVEST CELEBRATION / FALL FESTIVAL** Wilson's Fall Festival is not to be missed! This is a great opportunity to spend an afternoon playing and eating delicious food, all while supporting Wilson PTO. Invite your friends and neighbors—this event is open to the community.

**ICE CREAM SOCIAL** This event is held the week before the first day of school and is primarily an opportunity for your child to meet his or her teacher. You may also check out other enrichment opportunities, pay supply fees, and purchase spirit shirts.

**LE or LOWER ELEMENTARY** Wilson is structured into 4 levels of progression with Lower Elementary being the second level serving 1<sup>st</sup> grade through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

**MS or MIDDLE SCHOOL** Wilson is structured into 4 levels of progression with Middle School being the fourth level serving 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

**MS ACTIVITY FEE** This fee of \$250 allows the Middle School students to participate in some of the pillars of their program, such as their camping trip at the beginning of the year, their evening at the Alley Theater, and the trip to Blackwood in the Spring. Only Middle School families pay this fee.

**PANCAKES & PAJAMAS** This annual pancake dinner is hosted by our teachers and all funds raised go toward library and technology expenses.

**PAW PRINT** The Paw Print is the principal's weekly newsletter sent home every Thursday in the blue folder. Please take time to read this newsletter as it is packed with event dates and important school information.

**PIZZA NIGHTS** One day per month the teachers sell Papa John's pizza for \$10 per pizza. Pick one up for an after-school snack or a couple for dinner. All funds raised go toward sending teachers to Montessori conferences.

**PTO** Wilson Montessori Parent Teacher Organization coordinates volunteer participation and raises funds for Wilson Montessori. All parents and guardians of students at

Wilson are automatically members of the PTO. No membership form or dues are required.

**PTO BOARD** The PTO Board is made up of elected and appointed members and committee chairs who serve as leadership for the PTO.

**PTO BOARD MEETINGS** Monthly board meetings are open to all PTO members. Dates and times are posted in the E-News and Paw Print. Childcare available for evening meetings!

**PTO LEADERSHIP** Rather than a traditional governance of President, VP, etc., Wilson's PTO is managed by a team of four parents who share the traditional responsibilities of a president. The term is 2 years with typically two parents rotating on and 2 parents coming off the team each year.

**ROOM PARENTS** Each classroom relies on room parent volunteers to help organize classroom parties, coordinate teacher appreciation, and assist with communications between the teacher, PTO, and parents of each class. Interested volunteers should reach out directly to their child's teacher for more information.

**SDMC** The Shared Decision Making Committee is a group of teachers, parents, and community members appointed by the Principal to review goals regarding the school budget, safety issues, and School Improvement Plan.

**START WITH A BANG** Several years ago, the PTO made a commitment to our community that we would no longer contract with outside fundraising companies to sell goods such as gift wrap, cookie dough, and entertainment books for school-wide fundraising. Instead, the PTO asks parents to make a one-time donation at the beginning of each year to help sustain the PTO's operating budget. These funds go directly to the school by way of program support, enrichment

and the purchase of supplies. We ask that you make the Start with a Bang Annual Fund a philanthropic priority.

**SPIRIT SHIRTS** Spirit shirts are uniform approved and can be worn any day of the week. Shirts can be purchased from PTO at the Ice Cream Social or from the PTO website.

**STORYBOOK CHARACTER PARADE** This loveable tradition takes place the last week of October. Early Childhood students dress up as their favorite storybook character and march in a parade after drop off.

**SUPPLY FEE** Every student is asked to pay a \$45 supply fee at the beginning of each school year. The money is collected by the PTO and distributed to teachers so that they may purchase supplies for the classroom. No need to fight over that last glue stick at your neighborhood big box store. Your supply fee has it covered! Supply fees can be paid at the Ice Cream Social or by visiting the PTO website.

**"TAKING FLIGHT" BUILDING FUND** This special campaign will kick off in October of 2017 and run for about 2 years. As you will see, Wilson is growing! Our new addition will be ready in the Spring and we will open our first new classrooms in the Fall of 2018. Unfortunately, the bond money that paid for the construction does not cover ANY Montessori materials. It is up to the parents and community to make up the difference so that we may have functioning Montessori classrooms in the new wing. We will be asking for your financial support in this effort, above and beyond your "Start with a Bang" contribution which funds our program needs.

**TIE-DYE SHIRTS** In the weeks ahead of Field Day, your child will tie dye a t-shirt in art class to wear on the big day. After Field Day, this shirt is uniform approved and can be worn any day of the week and in future years. Watch for an order form in the blue folder and opportunities to volunteer to tie dye. The art teacher will need plenty of help.

**TURKEY DAY PARADE** On this special day in November, Early Childhood children show off their homemade craft turkey floats (sometimes dressed as turkeys themselves!) and march in a parade after drop off.

**UE or UPPER ELEMENTARY** Wilson is structured into 4 levels of progression with Upper Elementary being the third level serving 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grades.

**URBAN HARVEST** Urban Harvest is a non-profit organization contracted to oversee our gardening program. They tend to our gardens, provide curriculum for our classrooms, and sponsor the garden club. This program is completely supported by PTO funds.

**VIPS** Before volunteering in the school everyone must be registered with the HISD VIPS (Volunteers in Public Schools) Program, which runs an annual background check. To register, go to [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org) and search for VIPS. Register as a new user. The final step is to present a form of identification to the front office. If you have already registered in the past, you will simply need to present your ID to the front office annually to renew your VIPS clearance.

**WILSON WONDERGROUND** Wilson Wonderground is the playground and field space that sits on Fairview between Yupon St. and Windsor St. This space is a Spark Park which means it is open to the public in the evenings and on weekends.

**WINTER & SPRING SHOWS** Every student participates in a musical showcase presented by our music department in the Spring semester. You won't want to miss this!