From the Principals Desk:

Dear Willagillespie Families,

I hope this newsletter finds you well as winter takes its familiar dark, damp place in our lives as Oregonians. My family and I spent the past two Decembers in South America. In the southern hemisphere, December felt more like June: warm weather, long days and short nights, flowers, and a long summer break. It was strange. Being home in the northwest in this season of hot chocolate, warm sweaters, and pale white skin—it suits us better than swim suits in December. And it’s wonderful to be close to family and long-time friends in this season of giving.

I want us to take our stocking caps off in recognition to our student council members, Mr. Wittlesey, Anjie Lebrecht, Judy Salisbury, Westley United Methodist Church, Rick Troxel, Monroe Middle School, Taylor Peters (our Sheldon work study student), Jayme Morse and Melanie Louie (our tandem office staff), our families who shared so much, and our teachers—all who helped gather and give foodstuffs for our long November holiday break. Thank you for showing us the way of sharing.

In this season of giving, I offer another take on supporting our students as learners. This season and every season, we can give our children the Gift of GRIT. Grit is the passionate commitment to a mission and an unswerving dedication to achieve that mission. The definition is wordy, but what it boils down to is staying power. Grit shows itself in a person's ability to overcome obstacles and stick with a task—like it’s a mission—over a period of time until it’s complete.

You can notice Grit in a fourth grader who keeps dribbling with her left hand, practice after practice and month after month, even when she feels clumsy or bad at it, because she wants to be the point guard for her team. It shows when a third grader who loves to write takes the time to make his story better with successive drafts and asks for adults to read it and help him make it better simply because he wants the story to be awesome. Grit shows itself in a hundred ways but it also can be noticeably absent. Say, when a video game player keeps starting the game over because he wants to play the easy part but won’t stay with a segment of the game to figure out the hard part and move on to the next level. Or when a student rushes through a math assignment and turns it in to be first or to be done regardless of the quality of her work.

Dates to Remember:

- **12/12**: PTO Family Game & Craft Night 530–7
- **12/15**: PTO Papa’s Pizza Fundraiser Night
- **12/19**: Popcorn Friday
- **12/22 – 1/2**: NO SCHOOL – WINTER BREAK
- **1/19**: NO SCHOOL – MLK Jr. Day
- **1/20**: PTO Meeting
- **1/21**: Site Council Meeting
- **1/23**: Popcorn Friday
- **1/30**: NO SCHOOL – Grading Day
Gymnasts, swimmers, musicians, artists, public service activists, business owners and entrepreneurs, actors and actresses, scientists…you name it, most vocations and most things worth doing take a lot of grit. The people who achieve what they set out to do have to stay with “it” until they learn how to do it well. They learn from their mistakes and press on until they achieve their mission. Grit can make the difference between wishful thinking and accomplishments, between lost dreams and dreams coming true.

I believe this generation of children (my children included) will have to work harder and longer than my generation did to achieve their dreams or even glimpse them. First, they will come of age in a flat economy and bursting global population that is increasingly capable of competing for jobs and resources that were once bound to our country of origin. Second, they are growing up in a world where media and instant, programmed technology make it so easy to just sit and be entertained rather than to develop and make something of their time and efforts. Third, our efforts to make our children feel special just for “showing up” can too often deny them a chance to experience the gratification of doing something special and building their sense of accomplishment. This is so important because children must believe their efforts will amount to something before they will persist with effort when they run into difficulties. We have a chance to provide a foundation and a place in their young lives where they learn to build stamina and staying power by doing hard things and discovering I can do hard things! Growing up is hard. Growing up doubting yourself is so much harder.

I know this is complicated. I want you to know that as a staff, we talk about Grit and staying power. We talk about what smart looks like. Smart doesn’t mean everything is easy for me. It means I have what it takes to do hard things, to stick with something long enough to get good at it, and that practice makes a person “smart.”

So, as you approach winter break, I hope you find many moments to enjoy your children’s company, energy, and character. And if time and opportunities present themselves, encourage your children when they tackle something difficult. Remind them that when they try and keep trying to master a move on a skateboard or to draw a horse or racecar, they will get better with practice. That’s just how life works—the stuff worth knowing and being able to do usually take practice. And practice takes Grit.

I wish you a fulfilling winter break.

Go Eagles. Grow Eagles!

Dr. J

If you are interested in learning more about Grit, the current guru’s name is Angela Duckworth. You can Google her name, read about her early work in chapter two of the book, How Children Succeed, by Paul Tough, or watch a short TED Talk where she presents her ideas @ http://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_the_key_to_success_grit?language=en
Common Core & Smarter Balanced Information Night
Monday December 15th
5:30pm - 7:30pm

Who: Parents of Students in Special Education

What: A venue to learn more about CCSS and Smarter Balanced, and to get answers to your questions.

Where: Ed Center Auditorium,
200 North Monroe St, Eugene, 97402

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were adopted by Oregon in 2010. These new standards show what students should know and be able to do in English Language Arts and Mathematics. For the 2014-2015 school year, Smarter Balanced is replacing OAKS as the new annual State Assessment. It is administered in Grades 3-8, and Grade 11. Smarter Balanced was developed by a consortium of states, and is a significant change from the old OAKS tests. Please come join us to learn more about CCSS and the new Smarter Balanced assessment that your child will soon be taking.
CANNED FOOD DRIVE UPDATE:
The Student Council at Willagillespie organized our FOOD DRIVE this November. It was a HUGE success, and we met our goal of 2,014 pounds of food! The food drive directly benefited families right here at Willagillespie for Thanksgiving. THANK YOU for giving to our families!

News from the PTO.....
We hope everyone had a relaxing Thanksgiving holiday. We are thankful for all the families for coming out to Dickie Jo's and Dickie Yo's in November to support Willagillespie! Also, we need to give thanks to Safeway, Albertsons, and Costco who generously made donations to our Spooktacular event.

Upcoming Events:
Please join us for two events in December:
- Willagillespie's annual December Family Fun Night is on Friday, December 12 from 5:30-7:00. We are having hot cocoa, snacks, crafts, and games! There will be a variety of crafts for kids to choose from. We invite all families to bring a board game to share or play one of ours! Watch for more information to come home on Monday, December 8.

- Papa's Pizza night is on Monday, December 15. The flyer can be printed from this newsletter or printed ones will be coming home in that Monday’s envelope.

Notes:
The Willagillespie Directory is now available to purchase for $10, which includes a Willagillespie reusable tote.

Happy Holidays!
We are hosting a PIZZA DAY at COBURG RD PAPA’S PIZZA for:

WILLAGILLESPIE PTO

Bring this flyer into Papa’s Pizza on December 15th and the organization will receive 50% of the value of the food you purchase! You also have the choice of purchasing Fundraiser Bucks that are good for all future purchases. These Bucks will earn 25% of their value for the organization.

Please come into Papa’s and help us out! With your support on December 15, 2014 we can have a really successful fundraiser!

Beverages and delivery orders are excluded. These flyers cannot be distributed at Papa’s Pizza. This fundraiser flyer is valid ALL DAY only on specified date.

Total Food Order $__________

All Gift Certificates Purchased 25% $________________
SnowFlakes of Joy

Willagillespie School, in collaboration with Willagillespie families and our school community, provides our Snowflakes of Joy holiday gift project to a number of our students each year. This project benefits our students here at WG and also generates excitement for those giving and receiving.

We will have a display in the front office with tags for taking and shopping, starting Dec 5th. Please feel free to come and grab a tag between 830am–330pm.

The information provided is confidential. The tag will list a child’s age, gender, and a few gift ideas. Each tag will include ideas for a toy or clothing item selected from a list given by the parent. Each child will then receive one toy and one item of clothing, wrapped for the holiday!

All gifts will need to be delivered to the Willagillespie office by Monday, Dec 15th, to ensure we have enough time to distribute to families by Dec 19th.

We look forward to sharing in the joy of giving with our WillaG families, community, Sheldon H.S., and Wesley Church to ensure each child participating has a gift for the holidays. 😊

Reminder to Parents:
Please be sure to check your child’s Monday folders for their lunch account slips. These fees need to be paid to the kitchen as soon as possible each week. Thank you!

PARKING LOT REMINDERS

Please remember that busses will drop off in the west parking lot by Willagillespie Rd. side of the building. Vehicle parking on that side of the building is reserved for staff only. Parents and visitors may park by the front entrance accessed off of Abby Lane. Please do not park in Abby Lane parking lot or on the side street leading to the apartments. A complaint has already been lodged with the city. We want to respect their space and be good neighbors.

WILLAGILLESPIE DAILY SCHEDULE

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:05</td>
<td>Breakfast/main entrance supervision begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Doors Open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:35</td>
<td>School Starts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:50</td>
<td>School Ends on M,Tu,Th,F</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:50</td>
<td>School Ends on Wed.</td>
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Kindergarten:  

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>AM</td>
<td>M,Tu,Th,F</td>
<td>8:35 - 11:15am</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed. only</td>
<td>8:35 - 10:45am</td>
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<td>PM</td>
<td>M,Tu,Th,F</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wed. only</td>
<td>11:40 - 1:50pm</td>
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Attendance Line  541-790-7125

Regular attendance at school is an important factor in your child’s progress. We urge parents to send their children to school every day possible. When your child is absent or arriving late, please call our attendance line. Adding a dedicated line gives us more time to answer those early morning questions that arise. Place your message by 9:00 am when possible. Thanks.