

Wilkinson School Community Council - Special Edition Newsletter (June 2014)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUMMARY

The following summary was presented by Wilkinson School Community Council Chair, Ruby Lederman, at the Annual General Meeting held on Monday June 9, 2014.

Overview of the Wilkinson School Community Council

The role of the Council is to:

- Encourage parental and community participation and input into school activities and programs that improve student achievement,
- Maintain and foster the partnership between staff and parents,
- Keep parents and community members informed about changes in education policies and programs and their effect on our school,
- Raise and distribute funds for Wilkinson Junior Public School.

We try to meet monthly to provide input to the Principal and staff on issues that affect the school and our children.

Highlights of the 2013-2014 School Year

Wilkinson Public School's council grew from 18 council members last year to a total of 20 council members. For 7 of the members this was their first year on council. With many new parents, Council benefited from fresh input into existing and new topics.

Update to the Constitution: Ensuring All Who Want to Join Council Can

- This year we had a couple of parents wish to join Council, though voting in of the Council had already taken place. We noticed that the then current Constitution did not make a provision for late comers. The Constitution now enables the Council to vote in new members so long as Council has not already met its membership limit of 10% of the student population. The [updated Constitution](#) is available online (new additions in yellow highlight).

Wil-Kitchen: connecting parents through cooking

- Wil-Kitchen hosted a holiday baking evening where cookies, truffles and other festive goodies were made and sampled.

- Wil-Kitchen hosts a Fun Fair prep night, where delicious salads and cheese triangles get prepared for the day of the event.
- Wil-Kitchen has been an integral part of our parent outreach as it brings together a mix of new and longer-term parents of diverse backgrounds and abilities to connect and learn from each other.

Safety Committee: Ensuring we provide a safe learning environment

- This year saw the front doors of Wilkinson Public School locked at all times. A buzzer was installed that connected one to the office.
- A complete walkabout of the inside and outside of the property was conducted twice.
- A number of Work Orders were submitted this year. More signage for the yard was installed, and a number of recommendations for the Dandy Lion site were made.
- Asphalt that was torn up has now been replaced.

Fun Fair: Wilkinson's day to give back to the kids

- This is Council's biggest fundraiser and community event of the year. It takes a lot of committed parent volunteers to bring together an event like the one we had this year. All one has to do is stop and look out at the people in the field to know that Wilkinson parents have made the Fun Fair an exciting, beautiful and worthwhile event.
- It promotes Wilkinson in the community and enables us to provide services and programming to the students and fulfill funding requests from the staff.

Movie Nights: flicks for fun and fundraising

- Council held 7 movie nights this year which are community events that turn a profit for our fundraising initiatives. We choose films that appeal to a wide range of audience.
- This event demonstrates the confidence the principal and staff entrust in the council to use the school premises regularly and manage all aspects of these events. This is significant for us as it fosters and maintains respect between parents and the administration.
- To make these events possible Council purchases a movie licence from XXXX which also allows us a some pre-release movies each year!

Sweetheart Sale: controlled chaos for one's sweetheart

- Council held another successful Sweetheart bake sale February 14th. This is a much anticipated event for the kids. Thank you to all the Wilkinson community who generously donated their time and baked goods to run this event.

Pumpkinfest: enjoying the fall and our community

- Pumpkinfest fell yet again on a beautiful day to be outdoors.
- A community event held in the fall that includes selling pumpkins and other items. Though this event brings in some funds from the sale of pumpkins, the focus is to bring the community together and to enjoy the fall weather.
- Free coffee and apple cider shows that community activities don't always have to be about raising funds.

Pizza Lunches: how excited the kids are on those Fridays

- The last Friday of the month has become to be known as Pizza Day.
- This year the co-leads of the Pizza Lunch program reduced the registration from three cycles to two. Feedback from parents was positive.
- This offering by dedicated parents is no small feat.
- Bringing kids together to share in a lunch is really nice to observe.

Communications: keeping parents informed

- Council was not able to get out timely newsletters this year. As Chair of the Council, I want to apologize to all parents.
- Though newsletters were few this year, frequent communications via Wilkinson's Communications emails did occur. These emails provided timely information about upcoming events or calls for support. An archive of [past newsletters](#) and [approved Council minutes](#) are available online to review.
- This year Council has a committed group of parents sitting on the Communications Committee. This group of parents have volunteered to revamp Council's website. Money has been set aside to move the website to a hosted environment and implement software that will make updating content easier.

Arts: developing appreciation through painting and performances

- This year Council paid for an Artist to come into each class (Grades K to 6) for half a day to do a special art project with the class. These sessions, much like the scientists in the classroom, were well received by both teachers and children.
- Council also sponsored a theater performance for all of the children in grades 1 through 6.
- The performances this year included [Dufflebag Theatre](#) (The Three Musketeers), [Infinitus](#), and [Menaka Thakkar](#).
- Bringing the Arts into the school ensures that Wilkinson students are given the opportunity to develop an appreciation of artistic expression in various

forms.

Aussie-X: developing confidence and playing fair

- This year Council sponsored [Aussie-X](#) to come into our school to promote active living and fair play through the game of Cricket (Grades 3 to 6) and Netball (Grades K to 2). The kids also learned a little bit about Australia!
- Each class had a half-day session with the Aussies from down-under.
- Unfortunately the parent participation evening was held on the night of a snow storm and so only a handful of parents came out to see what Aussie-X was all about.
- Aussie-X did however volunteer their time at this year's Fun Fair, so it allowed them to connect with more parents and see some of the kids again.
- As part of the program, equipment was left at the school for ongoing promotion of the sports.

Garden Party Clean-Up: Community families keeping Wilkinson "green & tidy"

- An eco-focused, community effort to keep our school yard green and a valuable asset to enhance curriculum.
- Part of the Council's ongoing support of the Native Learning Garden Revitalization
- This year two Council Members were on this committee.

Financial Highlights

- Several fundraisers were held this year: Pumpkinfest, Movie Nights, Pizza Lunches, Sweetheart Sale, and Fun Fair.
- Council provided full or partial funding for:
- Scientists in the School (1/2 day sessions)
- Artists in the Classroom (1/2 day sessions)
- Aussie-X Sports (1/2 day sessions)
- PRO Grant Workshop on Homework
- Field trips
- Performances for all grades
- Blue Spruce/Silver Birch reading programs
- School yard greening initiatives - Learning Garden Revitalization, Veggie Garden
- 1 Wil-Kitchen
- Graduation awards

Full financial details will be presented separately by the Treasurer at the final meeting of the current Council on September 8, 2014.

- End of Annual General Meeting report. -

DIRECT DONATIONS

The Direct Donations Campaign has always been an integral part of the Wilkinson School Community Council fundraising campaign but over the last two years we have seen a drop in those dollars. Every dollar counts and goes towards the many programs supported by the Council. The 2014/2015 school year will see the Council give this campaign more visibility. Direct Donations benefit many programs and can also be used on your personal taxes as a donation. We will have more details at the beginning of the school year so look out for this in the Welcome Package. - *Erin Vaillancourt*

UPDATES FROM WILKINSON SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The following are 2013-2014 Wilkinson School Community Council committees. Membership on these committees include but is not limited to elected Council members. Thank you to everyone who participated this year!

Arts Programming Committee

Members: Paul Dobson, Natalie Kauffman, Bruce MacDonald, Deanna Rosolen

The Arts Committee researches and plans live arts performances for the students at Wilkinson. This is a way to introduce students to live music, dance and theatre, and in many cases local artists. Often the artists and performances are selected to work in tandem with teachers' curriculum. The committee also chooses artists and performances that are geared to the different age groups in the school. The committee tries to ensure that each grade has at least one to two performances each year.

This year's artists and performances included:

- The [Dufflebag Theatre](#) troupe and its performance of the Three Musketeers. Dufflebag performs traditional stories through improve and often invites students and teachers to participate.
- [Infinitus](#): a group that includes three musicians who play viola, violin and cello.
- [Menaka Thakkar Dance Company](#) of Toronto, which is one of Canada's oldest Indian dance companies.

For the 2013-2014 school year, the committee added a new element and through an

organization called Blank Canvases brought art to each classroom. Natalie Kauffman, who is a local artist (and a Wilkie mom), works for Blank Canvases. Earlier this year, she came to each classroom and led students through various art projects. Students had the opportunity to work directly with an artist and experience creating art in a whole new way. - *Deanna Rosolen*

Communications Committee

Members: Catherine Hewlett (Zikkovitz) , Alison Howson, Rob Jefferson, Deanna Rosolen, Erin Vaillancourt

This year the Communication Committee looked at the [Wilkinson Junior Public School website](#). We have come to the conclusion that the website needs an update. Our goal over the summer is to put together an outline of what the website should look like and what content should be included, how it will best serve the school and the community as a communication tool. The Communication Committee will reach out to the Wilkinson community via our email account, looking for input on what you would like to see. Have a great summer , and we look forward to bigger conversation in September. - *Erin Vaillancourt*

Education Committee

Membership: AnnaBelle Lougheed, Raihana Ingar, Bruce MacDonald, Jill Spellman.

Although formed this committee was not active this academic year. This Committee looks forward to becoming active with our new Council in October.

Fundraising Committee

Members: Angelina Diassiti, Alison Howson, Raihana Ingar, Ruby Lederman, April Moon, Erin Vaillancourt

The Fundraising Committee works as a sub committee of the Wilkinson School Community Council. We are tasked with keeping the overall Council fundraising on track and within target. This committee supports all fundraising initiatives but we do not necessarily organize every event. This committee manages the master event calendar, ensures that events follow the Council and Toronto District School Board (TDSB) fundraising policies and gives guidance on how to book and pay for the TDSB required permits to use school property. Importantly, this committee tracks donations and maintains sponsor and donor lists to ensure that as a community we are not overtaxing the generosity of our donors by submitting multiple requests throughout the school year. We try to fit our events into either small revenue generating community builders, or events where we are clearly

trying to earn as much revenue for the Council as we can. We also make a concentrated effort to keep events free of 3rd party vendors or solicitation.

Last year Council approved a \$41,000 budget to cover:- artists in the school, a guest speaker series, playground equipment expenses, sports programs/equipment, a rise in the field trip supplement to widen the options for school trips, and programs that promote literacy (Silver Birch/Blue Spruce). The Fundraising Committee scheduled and liaised with event organizers to earn \$40,000 (this includes Parent Reaching Out (PRO) Grant funds).

The committee wants to thank the volunteers who organized, ran and worked at events (like those listed below) that built our fundraising goal and brought us together as a community. We also want to thank everyone who comes out to our events. We hope that we have organized a variety of events that can appeal to everyone. In the next school year we will be running the majority of our established programs and we are always looking for new event ideas. If you have any feedback for the committee, we encourage you to email us now via the Council email at wilkinsonparents@yahoo.ca. - *Angelina Diassiti & April Moon*

Movie Night

Martin Saxton is the lead.

Well, what a great year! We laughed, we cried, we sang "Let it go" over and over until everybody around us cried. Movie Nights raised over \$4,000 for programs at the school, but what makes it worthwhile for me is a gym full of kids lying in a sea of blankets and spilled popcorn, engrossed in a movie.

I couldn't do movie night on my own, and I am very lucky to have a fantastic crew to help; you guys are awesome. I particularly want to thank Brady, Kato to my Green Hornet, and the Moons, Ruby and April. I had a blast this year, and I hope you did to. Have a great summer and let's do it all again in September! - *Martin Saxton*

Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant Committee

Members: Carmen Doyle, April Moon, Deanna Rosolen, Paula Weekes Khan.

Homework Habits Workshop - Presented by [Karen Skinulis](#)

I remember when my children were babies the hot topic of conversation whenever parents got together was sleep: how to put our babies to sleep and more importantly, how to help them stay asleep for more than two hours!

Fast-forward approximately seven years to grade school and arguably the most popular topic of conversation amongst parents now is homework. Just as we have to teach our children healthy sleep habits, we also need to teach them healthy work habits. Yes we have an important role to play in assisting our kids with homework but the good news is - our children's homework is not our responsibility.

Earlier this year the Wilkinson School Community Council invited Karen Skinulis to conduct a Homework Habits workshop. Karen is an author, speaker, certified Montessori teacher, parent educator and mother of two grown daughters. The workshop was 100% funded by a Ministry of Education PRO grant.

Karen explained the parent/guardian's role is to ensure our children have enough time in their schedule, proper materials, a distraction-free workspace, and extra assistance when needed. It is the child's responsibility to understand the assignment, bring school books home and back to school, do the work, and ask for help if they are confused.

In Karen's experience, homework struggles arise from three main issues: (1) Undue attention seeking behaviour – kids who are fully capable of doing the homework but want us to sit with them and ask us questions although they already know the answers. Homework tends to take hours to complete because the child enjoys the one-on-one time with us; (2) Power struggles between a child and parent/guardian – these kids are also able to do their homework, but they want to do it on their own terms. Unlike attention seekers, these kids do not want to be watched, they do not want their work checked. Hovering over these kids will result in yelling matches and homework not getting done at all; (3) Giving up – these are the children who genuinely find the work too difficult or stressful. They do not even want to try to complete their homework because they assume they will fail anyway. These kids clearly need extra help and confidence building.

Karen gave us great examples of what to do/not do in each of the above situations. The two most important take-aways were – communicate with our child's teacher frequently and empower our children to take responsibility for their own deadlines and tasks.

The workshop was very successful, we had over 30 attendees and survey results indicated that everyone would develop at least one new homework habit with their kids. If you would like more information on healthy homework habits, please see Karen's Homework Tips attached to this email.

As a side note – Karen’s daughters are happy and successful university students now, and Karen cannot recall ever checking their homework! Ever! Prior to attending the workshop I checked my daughters’ homework 100% of the time. I now check it approximately 20% of the time. I do however check that they are sleeping soundly every night! Some habits are hard to break. - *Carmen Doyle*

Pizza Lunch Program

Vanessa Crooker and Rahat Pye are co-leads.

We are wrapping our 3rd fun-filled year of leading the Pizza Lunch program. This is a favourite of the kids (and parents) as a chance to break from the routine once a month to have a hot lunch and treat together with friends. While these moms make sure that the money is counted and the pizza is ordered; the program is only a success because of all the wonderful parents who come each month to handle the hungry hoards! A very special thank you to: - Nassema Bhayat, Chantal Benoit, Angelina Diassiti, Sara Jane Gillespie, Laura Haggart, Kerry Hayes, Cara Hunter, Raihana Ingar, Laura Payne and Farrah Spicer. (Apologies if anyone was missed!) We'd also like to thank the Wilkinson Ambassadors for keeping all the litter in the right bins and off the floor!

The Pizza Lunch Program will raise over \$3500 for Wilkinson School Community Council this year but the real reward is watching how much fun the kids have together. If you are interested in helping out next year - please don't hesitate to reach out. - *Vanessa Crooker & Rahat Pye*

Greening Committee

Members: Alison Howson, John Hykel, Jill Spellman.

This year the Greening Committee organized the Garden Party Clean-Up in May, the installation of the pergola sun canopy, continued planting of the native Learning Garden as well as supplied faculty with supplies in order to support curriculum. We encourage everyone to make use of the space over the summer months and to see how it changes. It is remarkable the difference from our clean up morning in early May! Thanks to all parents who have helped in the greening initiative over the last academic year and to Dandy Lion for keeping it up over the summer months. We hope there are some new faces next year as we celebrate the Wilkinson Centenary. Suggestions are welcome on ways to commemorate in a "green way"! - *Jill Spellman*

Safe & Caring Schools Committee

Teacher membership: Yasmin Buhariwalla, Lisa Dimodugno, Allan Kelly,

Margaret Mahovlich, Angela Vlahos, Katherine Wareham. Community Membership: Angelina Diassiti, Sarah-Jane Gillespie.

Update supplied above in the AGM document.

Another important program to our younger students is volunteer run through Wilkinson administration vs Council. It is the *Snack Program* and Chantal Benoit is the lead.

Every day, the kindergarten classes enjoy a healthy snack thanks to a group of dedicated parent volunteers. This group takes charge of purchasing and preparing an assortment of fruits and vegetables for the classes. As the lead volunteer, I'd like to send a big heartfelt thank you to all who have lent a helping hand to the program, especially to Raihana Ingar, Aisha Chhiboo-Bhayat, Steve Russell and Catherine Hewlett for their continued help and support! The smiles we get from the children in return say it all! We are looking for parent volunteers to help with next year's snack program. Volunteers are needed for a maximum of one hour each morning. If you are able to assist in any way, please let the Main Office know as soon as possible. - *Chantal Benoit*

SAVE THE DATES - SEPTEMBER NEWS

Back to School - Tuesday, September 2, 2014

Remember that if you have any questions the Main Office is open the final week of August getting ready for the academic year ahead. If you need to contact the Main Office during this time please call [416-393-9575](tel:416-393-9575).

Wilkinson School Community Council meeting - Monday, September 6:30-8pm

This will be the final meeting of the outgoing 2013/2014 Council. Minutes from the June meeting to be approved. All are welcome and encouraged to join or attend meetings to keep informed on what is happening in Wilkinson. Child care is provided.

Wilkinson School Eid Celebration - Saturday, September 13, 2014 from 5-8pm
@ Wilkinson Junior Public School

Wilkinson will be hosting an Eid Celebration, a Potluck dinner for the Wilkinson community at our school. Join us for a night of celebrations, prizes, and great food! If you are interested in helping or contributing, please contact Raihana Ingar at raihanaingar@gmail.com. More details will follow in September, but for now, be sure to save the date and we'll see you then!

Curriculum Night - Thursday September 18 from 6-7pm

This is the evening event where parents meet the Wilkinson faculty and staff, elect the new Wilkinson School Community Council and have a tour of their child(ren)s classroom and a chance to meet with their teacher. (Look for Council Nomination forms which will come in the Welcome Package early September.) Don't miss this night, get it in the calendar now! With any questions or comments reach out to us via the Council email: wilkinsonparents@yahoo.ca.

TDSB Elementary School Calendar

Take a peek at the [TDSB Elementary School Calendar](#) for all the important dates for the academic year ahead! Get them into your personal calendar now!

ROOM ASSIGNMENTS 2014-2015

When report cards are sent home on the last day of school, you'll notice that only the room number is entered. The list below indicates which teachers are assigned to each room number. Keep in mind, though, that each September a reorganization may occur based on final enrollment numbers.

Rm 1 JK/SK - Angela Vlahos/ Angela Nikolakakos

Rm 2 JK/SK - Marianne Bartkiw/Joane Truong

Rm 4 JK/SK - Helen Mangos/Tracy Danyliw

Rm 5 JK/SK - Katherine Wareham/Sabeedah Motala

Rm 6 Music - Batya Levy

Rm 7 Gr. 1 - Lisa DiModugno

Rm 8 Gr. 1 - Chris Low

Rm 9 HSP - Sean Cross

Rm 10 Gr. 4/5 - Peter Bartl

Rm 12 Library - Joel Krentz

Rm 13 Gr. 2/3 - Adelia Cerqueira

Rm 14 Gr. 2 - Marianna DiIorio

Rm 15 Gr. 3 - Kally Nastos

Rm 16 HSP - Sacha Bozabalian

Rm 18 Gr. 1/2 - Lindsey Stelmanis

Rm 19 Behaviour - TBD

Rm 20 Gr. 2/3 - Jackie Currie

Rm 21 Gr. 5 - Ted Mahovlich

Rm 22 Gr. 6 - Erica Cameron

Rm 23 EF Gr. 4 - Susan Jim

Rm 24 EF Gr. 6 - Nick Carkner

Rm 25 EF Gr. 5/6 - Noelle Butler

Rm 26 EF Gr. 5 - **Margaret Mahovlich**
Rm 27 Gr. 3/4 - **Jean Marc DePasqua**
Rm 28 Core French - **Sophie Barbier**
Rm 29 EF Gr. 4 - **Elizabeth Cooke**
Gym Craig Kasaval

REMINDERS

Using Wilkinson School grounds over the Summer

When using our school grounds it is important to be respectful of the school's role in our community. For example keep dogs on a leash and be a responsible pet owner; dispose of litter properly and register any signs of disorderly behaviour that you see.

Officer John Tierney often visits with Wilkinson students and offers the following suggestion to us. Parents or care-givers should call the Community Response Unit (CRU) at 54 Division, at [416-808-5419](tel:416-808-5419). The CRU deals with complaints on an on-going basis, through the Directed Patrol Initiative (DPI). The complaint will be taken and assigned to officers who will check the area of the complaint as directed by the caller. If you see disorderly behaviour as it is happening, Officer Tierney recommends that it is best to call the general police number at [416-808-2222](tel:416-808-2222) and provide the information.

It is important to report any misuse of our grounds, as the complaints get logged, thus creating records that show their recurrence and identify the timing and nature of issues, so that they can best be addressed.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Wilkinson Wins Quality (Daily) Physical Education Award

This year Wilkinson received exciting news! We were awarded a top honour on behalf of [Physical and Health Education Canada \(PHE Canada\)](#) for our outstanding work. PHE Canada presented us with the 2013-2014 Quality (Daily) Physical Education Award for our commitment to offering exceptional physical education to our school community and congratulated us on our outstanding achievement. Out of approximately 15,000 schools in Canada, only 500 schools receive this award each year, truly making Wilkinson one of Canada's leaders in physical education. Congratulations to the team and to the students who represent us!

GOOD BYE!

Wilkinson School Community Council would like to thank the following faculty and staff for their commitment and hard work over their years at Wilkinson: Rachel Beatty, Alexandra Cheatley, Steve Pirso and our caretaker, Rudy. We wish you only the very best in the future!

THANK YOU!

Play Day is coming up on Wednesday June 25 (rain day is Thursday June 26). We'd like to take this chance to thank the volunteers who will come out to make healthy snacks for all our students: Chantal Benoit, Aisha Chhiboo-Bhayat, Martine de Saint-Sardos, Angelina Diassiti, Raihana Ingar, Neil Mathur and Zoobia Safdar.

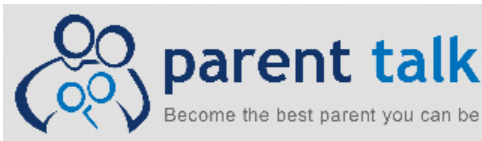
Finally, thank you to everyone who contributed to this final newsletter. If you have suggestions or comments please let us know via the Wilkinson Communications email: wilkinson.communications@gmail.com.

See you in September!

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**Wilkinson School Community Council
2013-2014**

Important: *Should you wish to be removed from this distribution list, please send a reply email with "Remove" in the subject line.*



Homework Tips

Create a Positive Atmosphere

- Take an interest in what your child is learning at school. When appropriate, relate real-life moments to school subjects, for example; notice cloud formations when you are outside. Ask child to help measure ingredients when cooking.
- Be a great role model when it comes to learning. Be enthusiastic about learning new things. Let your child observe you reading and learning. Read the newspaper and discuss interesting articles.

Make Homework part of your Daily Routine

- Great students study every day. Build effective habits early in life.
- Together with your child, create a schedule that is satisfactory for both of you. Consider everyone's needs carefully. Keep this time sacred and don't allow other activities to encroach on it.
- Check with teacher for recommendation about how much time should be spent on homework each day.

Helping Your Child

- Break difficult assignments into manageable chunks. Teach them to tackle one thing at a time.
- Check work only if child allows you to do so (remember it's his work, not yours).
- Keep comments on the positive side – minimize focus on mistakes.
- Encourage independence –be available to help as needed but don't sit with child as he works.
- If homework takes a while, encourage child to take breaks.

Know When to get Expert Help

- If child exhibits signs of 3rd goal (avoidance), consider getting extra help and testing
- Watch for signs of discouragement – says things like, "I'm stupid" or "I can't learn this"
- Grades are not satisfactory
- Gaps in learning
- Teacher has flagged concerns
- Child appears to be struggling

Be Encouraging

- More than anything else, focus on the positive
- Highlight what your child did well on each piece of work
- Notice effort over results
- Notice improvement over perfection
- Remember all children learn at different rates

