

Willow Brook is a fun place to be for volunteers

Submitted

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OAK RIDGE, Tenn. — EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the fifth in a series of submitted stories on the many volunteer opportunities available within the Oak Ridge schools.

Willow Brook Elementary School serves approximately 465 students in kindergarten through fourth grade.

"Willow Brook is the Greatest School in America! We have the greatest students, the greatest staff and the greatest parents you will find anywhere," said Principal Mardee Miller.

There are many ways that parents can help their children succeed by getting involved. Some of these include:

- **Donuts for Dad/Muffins for Mom:** In the fall, the school hosts breakfast for all of the important men in the lives of its students. Dads, grandpas, uncles, friends, volunteers, etc. are invited to eat breakfast with their special child. In the spring, the school hosts a special breakfast for students' moms to say "thank you."
- **Super Hoops Classic:** The annual Faculty vs. Parents basketball game is held each spring at the Wildcat Arena on the Oak Ridge High School campus. Parents are encouraged to play, work concessions, sell spirit gear and come for a wonderful night. All proceeds go to support the school's PTO. Contact Tim Jackson at wired@juno.com.
- **Parent Teacher Organization:** The Willow Brook PTO is an active group that offers a variety of avenues for parents to plug in and become involved. Additionally, there are many other ways parents can help the PTO. These include:
 - **Volunteering to help with events.**
 - **Reading Is Fundamental.** Three times a year every child in the building has the opportunity to select a book of their very own. On RIF days, parents are needed to help decorate, set up the book displays and help students make selections.
 - **Walk for Willow Brook.** This is the largest fund raiser of the year. There are countless ways for parents to be involved.
 - **Grounds keeping.** Twice a year the PTO organizes days to clean up the school grounds. Parents volunteer to weed flower beds, mulch, install playground equipment, and provide upkeep to the Secret Garden.
 - **Teacher appreciation events.** Through the year, the PTO finds special ways to let teachers know how much they are appreciated—from soup lunches, to tailgate parties to chocolate fests. Parents are asked to help make these days extra special, and donations are always needed.

For more information, contact Jackson at wired@juno.com.

- **Parent Training Center:** Through Title 1 funding, Willow Brook has a Family Impact Coordinator who works with parents to ensure their children are academically prepared for our classrooms. Through the FIC's office, the school offers many free classes for parents to participate in including English classes; homework help to show parents how to support their children; successful parent conferences to empower parents to be part of the parent/teacher team; and TCAP help to provide strategies to ensure their children are prepared to take the annual state test. If you would like to participate in one of the classes, or to volunteer to help, contact Gwen Black at gblack@ortn.edu.

Here are some ways to help the school.

- **Volunteer Tutors:** If you have 30 minutes a week, the Family Resource Center is looking for community volunteers to tutor and mentor a child one-on-one. Volunteers listen to students read, help them with schoolwork or just spend the time talking and letting the child know that they care about them. Call Jo Bruce at (865) 425-3205 to learn more.
- **Partnerships:** The school is always looking for business partnerships to create a win/win for the school and the business. If your business can help Willow Brook, contact Miller at mmiller@ortn.edu or Bruce at jbruce@ortn.edu.
- **Intersession:** If you can provide a great field trip, an interactive experience or a special program, or if you have a special talent, interest, skill or experience to share, Intersession would be a great place for you. To find out more, contact Miller.

To learn more or to find out how you can get involved, contact the school at (865) 425-3201.

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