TOPS Thursday Go-Home
November 20th

Give Thanks for TOPS!

TOPS community members have donated $28,831 towards our goal of $90,000!
The second mailing will go out this week. Keep your eyes open for a sweet incentive to donate early!
Check out the poster near the office that tracks our status when you come in for conferences.

Many thanks from the No Bake team!

Conferences = No School Next Week
Due to conferences and the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be NO SCHOOL the week of November 24th. If your child will miss additional days, be sure to notify Michele Lamb in the TOPS office: 252-3518 or bllamb@seattleschools.org. See the attached brochure from the WA Office of the Education Ombudsman for tips on making the most of your parent-teacher conference. And, while you are in the building....

Check Lost and Found
Thanks to Annie Barrett, Lost & Found is looking great! Remember to label your kids’ lunch boxes, backpacks, coats, shoelaces...If you do, Annie hunts down your kid and returns them!
All of the unlabeled stuff will be donated after the winter vacation so make sure you come and look when you are in the building for conferences. If you happen to have any extra full size plastic hangers, please send them in—the wire ones are awfully flimsy.

Ski Bus Scholarship Forms Due!
Middle School Ski/Snowboard scholarship forms are due in the office on FRIDAY NOVEMBER 21st!! The rest of the forms are due on Dec. 1st. Forms are available in the office or online at: http://topsk8.org/afterschool/skibus_2009/ski.shtml. The Friday evenings we ski are January 9, 16, 23, 30 and February 6. Day-between-Semesters Monday, January 26 is our all-day ski day. Questions? Contact Molly LaPatra lapatra@comcast.net detailed info is available on the website so check that out first before you contact Molly.
Penny Harvest, 2008

Please remember tomorrow Friday, November 21st is the last day we will be collecting coins for Penny Harvest. Please remember to bring in your pennies!!! Thanks in advance for your support,
Sheri Toussaint, Penny Harvest coach shtoussaint@seattleschools.org

Social Justice TOPICS Party

TOPS Coalition for Social Justice members are getting together on Friday, December 5th 6:30-9:00 pm at the home of Karen Stuhldreher & Johnny Calcagno. Join CSJ to help brainstorm and organize Social Justice TOPICS to be taught during the current school year. CSJ has generated a list of possible TOPICS with a social justice theme to be taught on Friday, January 16th (which will focus on the theme of Social Justice) and also throughout the year. A number of people have indicated an interest in helping to teach TOPICS and others have ideas of social justice themed TOPICS they want to offer. This evening of wine and light dinner will provide an opportunity for us to come together to brainstorm and organize the TOPICS to be offered this year. Please join us and bring a salad or side dish to share. Pizza will be provided. E-mail Karen at kstuhldr@sccd.ctc.edu to RSVP.

Middle School Dance

The TOPS ASB is sponsoring another school dance: “A Times Square Affair.” Winter in New York City comes to the TOPS middle school! Friday, December 5, 2008, 6:30pm – 9:00pm in the TOPS Cafeteria. Students are $6.00, Guests are $7.00 ($1 off admission price with donation for the food drive). The TOPS ASB is still looking for chaperones for the dance. If you would like to chaperone, please contact Collette Hubbard in the TOPS Office: (206) 252-3513. Thank You and Start Spreading the News!

Spirit Week will be Dec 1st- 5th. Dress up and show your spirit!

| Monday      | Elementary School   | Middle School   |
|-------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Tuesday     | Pajama Day          | Pajama Day     |
| Wednesday   | Twin Day            | Fashion Disaster Day |
| Thursday    | Wacky Hair Day      | Color War: 6th gr red; 7th blue; 8th pink |
| Friday      | Story or TV character | Nerd/Geek     |

Activity Bus

The activity leaves from TOPS at 5:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The bus is available for middle school students and their siblings ONLY. That means NO younger kids can ride it unless they are with their brother or sister. Students must complete an activity bus permission slip and turn it into the office before they can ride the bus. After turning in the slip, it takes a week before they can begin riding the bus.

Paris! London! -- Spring Break 2009

The dollar is getting stronger! You can still sign up to go with Marianne, TOPS families, and their friends on next year's spring break trip to Paris with a London add-on. Prices go up on
Dec 1st so move quickly. Students can travel with or without their parents. (Parents can even come without their kids, for that matter!) Go to www.explorica.com. Enter the Tour Center ID Trangen-7064 in the box for Students and Parents to get details. This will probably be the last trip to Paris with TOPS, so don't miss it! Questions? Contact Marianne at mptransgen@seattleschools.org.

**Middle School Spanish**

We had hopes of coordinating a Middle School Spanish Class on Friday's but due to limited enrollment and the Friday Ski Bus the program will be suspended. Contact Marcia Weaver at mweaver@u.washington.edu or 324-8936 with questions.

**Get Involved with Site Council**

Two Site Council committees are looking for additional members. If you are interested in special needs inclusion at TOPS, contact Dan Hurley 325-8367 or dhurley@edcc.edu. Tamra Kincaid and Barbara Rockey have formed TACT (“TOPS Active Communication Team.”) Contact Tamra at 545-1304 or tkincaid@aol.com if you want to help improve communication at TOPS. Site Council is also looking for someone who is willing to attend Seattle School Board meetings and report back to the group, contact Susan Welch at 755-3684 or susan.welch1@comcast.net if you can do that job. Meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 5-7 in the library. The next meeting will be Dec 10th. All TOPS Community members are always welcome to come to the meetings and provide input.

**More School District Meetings**

The Seattle School District is in the process of redesigning the assignment plan and closing or consolidating more schools. This may (or may not?) have major repercussions for the TOPS community. “The purpose of the upcoming meetings is to consult with the public in reviewing and commenting on Student Assignment Plan models, based on academic and operational principles (the impact of various decisions).”

**Thurs, Nov 20, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**
New Holly Gathering Hall
7050 32nd Avenue S

**Tues, Dec 2, 9 - 11 a.m. and 1 - 3 p.m**
John Stanford Center
2445 3rd Avenue South

See the Seattle Schools website: [www.seattleschools.org](http://www.seattleschools.org) for more details.

If you are interested in exchanging information about School District plans with other TOPS families, sign up for the TOPS_Info Yahoo group: go to groups.yahoo.com search TOPS_Info and follow the directions. Sheri Toussaint and Johnny Calcagno are moderators; contact them with questions. If you do attend a meeting, please do join the group and send your impressions to the rest of us.

**Seattle Special Ed PTSA**

TOPS parent Lawrie Williams is a contact person for this growing organization. Members are Seattle area parents, educators, friends of and students with disabilities. We strive to be a racially and socioeconomically inclusive group that is representative of the students we serve. Like any typical PTA/PTSA, we are a self-governing membership association whose purpose is to serve the needs of its members. We are affiliated with both the National and Washington State PTA/PTSAs.
General meetings will now be held on the third Tuesday of every other month at 7:00 pm. Board meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of each month from 9:45 to 11:00 am at the University Village Barnes and Noble cafe. Board meetings are open to all. If you have an item to add to the agenda please contact Janet Anderson at kenneth_anderson@comcast.net in writing at least 48 hours in advance.

- Tues. Nov. 18 - Inclusion: Continuum and Best Practices, John Stanford International School
- Dec. (TBD) - Program Fair, Meany Middle School (tentative)
- Tues. Jan. 20 - Superintendent Maria Goodloe-Johnson, Lowell Elementary (tentative)
- Tues. March 17 - Safety Issues, Garfield/Washington (tentative)
- Tues. May 19 - Speaker (TBD), Elections, Awards - Stevens Elementary (tentative)

Contact Lawrie at 722-2327 or curtlawrie@earthlink.net with questions.

Our Town

The play will be performed on Friday and Saturday Dec. 12th and 13th. If your student is involved, make sure Madalyn Corbit (Production Manager, TOPS parent) has your contact information. You can Contact Madalyn at corbitgirlsrock@yahoo.com with questions and offers to help (you don’t have to have a middle-schooler to be involved!). If you don’t do email, make sure your student has given Madalyn your phone number.

Winter Wishes and Holiday Food Drive

Every December the TOPS community comes together to support families in need, by collecting non-perishable food through the Holiday Food Drive, and supporting TOPS families who need assistance during the holidays through the Winter Wishes program. In past years, the Family Support Worker has coordinated both of these programs, but without a Family Support Worker this year (see the October TOPS News for related article), as of the writing of this article, Principal Mrs. Scott, Counselor Jennifer Murray, and Activities Coordinator Sheri Toussaint are still working out the details of how the programs will be run this year. If your family needs assistance for the holidays, please contact TOPS counselor Jennifer Murray at 252-3529 or jmurray@seattleschools.org or if you'd like to help out a family for the holidays, please contact Sheri Toussaint at 252-3510 or shtoussaint@seattleschools.org

Microwave Needed

Do you have an extra microwave lying around? The one in the front office is dead. Patty, Joann, Colette and Michele would love to take your old one off your hands. Thank you!

Come Plant Some Bulbs!

TOPS parent Pam Copeland has donated 2,500 anenome and tulip bulbs to plant on the school grounds! She's coordinating with Sarah Marks to plant them as a TOPIC on December 12th. So let Sarah slmarks@seattleschools.org or 252-3510 know if you can come and help.

Dates to Note

Nov. 20th Middle School Conferences, 4:30-8:00
21st Ski bus Scholarship forms due in the office
21st  6th grade family Potluck Movie Night, 6-9 in the cafeteria
24-26  **NO SCHOOL**- Elementary and Middle School Conferences
27-28  **NO SCHOOL**- Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec  1st  Winter Wishes/TOPS Food Drive begins
    1st  All Ski bus forms due in the office (scholarship forms are due Nov 21st)
    5th  Middle School Dance
    9th  Winter Concert 2:00-3:00
    11th  Second grade to see the Nutcracker 10:00
    12th  TOPICS
    12-13  Middle School Play — Our Town
    16th  Katie’s Class Play, 1:50 and 7:00, Lunchroom
    19th  Kindergarten sings at Louisa’s
    22nd-  **NO SCHOOL**- Winter Holiday
PLEASE DONATE TODAY to the
TOPS NO-BAKE
Our School’s ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

Our goal this year is $90,000
& participation from 100% of our generous families

* FAQs ON BACK OF THIS PAGE

• USE THE HANDY DONATION FORM BELOW

TOPS NO-BAKE DONATION FORM please donate by Dec. 31, 2008

Name ________________________________
Address _________________________________________
City __________________ State ______ Zip _________
Phone __________________________ E-mail _______________________

We would like to donate: [ ] $1000 [ ] $500 [ ] $200 [ ] $100
[ ] $50 [ ] $25 [ ] $10 [ ] $5 [ ] Other $ _________________

Method of payment
[ ] Check (made payable to Friends of TOPS) [ ] Visa [ ] Mastercard
Card Number ____________________________ Exp. Date __________
Signature ________________________________

I would like to pay in 3 monthly installments (credit card only)

Please consider giving your family and friends an opportunity to give to Friends of TOPS. Provide information below and a letter will be sent.

Name ________________________________
Address _________________________________________
City __________________ State ______ Zip _________

We’d like to thank your family by listing you as a donor in the TOPS Newsletter. Dollar amounts will not be listed. Please check the box if you do NOT want your family’s name published.

[ ] My employer will match my donation.

Company ________________________________

Please include signed company matching form.

Friends of TOPS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
Tax ID #94-3143401. All donations are tax deductible.

RETURN TO THE TOPS OFFICE OR
MAIL TO: TOPS SCHOOL No-Bake 2500 Franklin Ave E Seattle WA 98102
FREQUENTLY ASKED Q’S about the NO-BAKE FUND DRIVE

WHAT IS THE ANNUAL TOPS NO-BAKE FUND DRIVE?
At TOPS we don't bake.... We donate. It's easy!! Each fall TOPS has a good old fashioned fund drive. Just get out your checkbook, write a check to FRIENDS OF TOPS and mail it off!! We do not ask our kids to hit the streets to raise funds. We don't have a bake sale. We don't sell candy. TOPS has only two fundraisers: the fall NO-BAKE fund drive and our spring school auction. Each is vital to ensuring our continued support of FRIENDS OF TOPS.

WHAT IS OUR $ GOAL THIS YEAR?
Our goal is $90,000 this year. We hope to receive a donation from each of our 400+ families.

HOW MUCH SHOULD OUR FAMILY DONATE TO THE NO-BAKE?
We welcome your generous donation of any amount... whether your family can give $10 or $1000. Last year we averaged approximately $200 per family.

WHERE DO WE SEND OUR NO-BAKE DONATION?
Mail: TOPS NO-BAKE 2500 Franklin Ave E Seattle, WA 98102 or DELIVER to the TOPS OFFICE

WHAT IS THE DEADLINE FOR NO-BAKE DONATIONS?
Our NO-BAKE ends on December 31st - donations gladly accepted into the 2nd week of January

HOW ARE THE NO-BAKE DONATIONS USED?
Your NO-BAKE DONATION serves the children, families & community in a variety of ways. Funding of core programs, arts, student support & scholarships are made possible through your generosity. HERE ARE A FEW OF THE PROGRAMS THAT YOUR NO-BAKE DONATION SUPPORTS:

* literacy block 1st-2nd grades  *middle school & elementary plays
*our elementary art teacher, Cynthia  *school directory and newsletters
*recess supervision  *library supplies & multicultural books
*science materials for all grade levels  *volunteer coordinator
*Oleweus anti-bullying program  *childcare during evening events
*tutoring  *Writers in the Schools for 5th-8th
*8th grade Planting the Seeds  *8th grade passage
*choir program  *Taste of TOPS
*instrumental music program  *Safety committee
*3rd grade drama program  *Mandarin and 8th grade math
*supplies for every teacher & classroom  *ACT Theatre Young Playwright program
*scholarships

VISIT THE TOPS WEBSITE TO SEE THE COMPLETE FRIENDS OF TOPS BUDGET

CAN WE USE OUR CREDIT CARD TO DONATE TO THE NO-BAKE?
Yes! We can accept donations via MASTERCARD OR VISA. You fill out the Donation form in your NO-BAKE letter or download a form on the NO-BAKE link on the TOPS Website. You can also contact Wilma Angell, the NO-BAKE treasurer at wilma.angell@headveins.com or 726.0948 for more information.

IS MY DONATION TO THE NO-BAKE TAX DEDUCTIBLE?
Absolutely. FRIENDS OF TOPS is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit entity (TAX ID 94-3142402).

CAN MY EMPLOYER MATCH MY NO-BAKE CHARITABLE DONATION?
Many employers will match the charitable donation of their employees. Your employer's matching donation will double your gift to FRIENDS OF TOPS. Please contact your human resources department to fill out the necessary forms.
Prepare for a Successful Conference

BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

• Find out your child’s questions and concerns about school.
• Check progress reports, report cards and work your child has brought home.
• Write a list of questions you want to ask the teacher. Start with the form in this brochure and add to it. Bring your list to the meeting with you.
• Write down information about your child that the teacher should know, such as a family death, divorce, changed finances, illness or a new home.
• If you need a ride, childcare or a different time or day for the conference, the school can help. Call the school office and ask.
• If English is not your first language, have someone contact the school before the parent-teacher conference and request an interpreter to assist you during the meeting.

AT THE CONFERENCE

• Let the teacher begin the meeting but be sure to ask the questions on your list before time runs out.
• Ask the teacher what your child should know and be able to do by the end of the school year. Make a plan for how you and the teacher will work with your child to reach those goals.
• Find out the best way (notes, phone calls, e-mail) and the best time to communicate with the teacher throughout the school year.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

• Talk with your child about what the teacher told you, especially the positive comments. Talk about learning goals and make a plan to reach them together.
• Follow up on the plan you made with your child and the teacher every few weeks.
• Check your child’s backpack daily for materials sent home from school. Read all of it. If English is not your first language, ask a relative or friend to read the school information to you in your language.
• Contact the teacher whenever you have questions. If your child is not doing well, set up a regular check-in schedule with the teacher to monitor progress. If English is not your first language, get a friend to help you contact the teacher or to ask the school office for an interpreter.
• Send the teacher a thank-you note when something good happens in the classroom.
• Make sure your child knows that school is important. Talk with your child every day about school, attend school events, offer to help from home, volunteer in the classroom, join the parent organization.

Continue the Conversation Through the Year

Make the Most of Parent-Teacher Conferences

Office of the Education Ombudsman
1110 Capitol Way S, Suite 304
P.O. Box 40004
Olympia, WA 98504-0004
Toll free: 1-866-297-2597
Fax: (360) 586-0052
www.waparentslearn.org

Office of the Education Ombudsman A Guide for Families of Elementary School Students

Contact the Office of the Education Ombudsman if you’d like to receive this document in an alternative format to accommodate people with disabilities.

The Office of the Education Ombudsman provides information and referral services to students, families and communities regarding the public education system, promotes family and community involvement in education, and helps families and students resolve conflicts with schools.

State of Washington Office of the Governor
Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences

Most schools invite every family to a parent-teacher conference once a year. A conference is a time for parents and teachers to share information, solve problems, and form a relationship that will help the student succeed. You don’t need to wait for a special invitation though. You can request a meeting with your child’s teacher to discuss academic progress at any time.

The teacher needs to hear from you and you need to hear from the teacher. You know more about your child than anyone at school. Talking with the teacher about your child will help pave the way for your student to do well in class and will help you understand what is being taught in the classroom.

Conferences are usually short and to the point. These tips will help you make the most of your time with your child’s teacher.

Parent-Teacher Conference Notes
Mark the questions that are most important to you, and add others. Take this form to your conference.

QUESTIONS FOR THE TEACHER
☐ Can you show me some of my child’s work?
☐ Does my child finish assignments in class and turn in homework?
☐ Does my child join in class discussions?
☐ Are you pleased with my child’s progress?
☐ What does my child do well? What is my child having a hard time with?
☐ Where can we go for help?
☐ How does my child behave in the classroom and on the playground?
☐ Have there been changes recently that I should know about?
☐ How do you handle discipline?
☐ What are your expectations of my child?
☐ What tests will you give this year? How does my child need to prepare?
☐ Are any big projects coming up? How can I help my child?
☐ When do you send report cards?
☐ What are grades based on?
☐ What is the best way for us to stay in touch about my child’s progress through the year?
☐ How many students are in this class?

☐ Do you have a teacher’s aide? Do you use parent volunteers in the classroom?
☐ What suggestions do you have for me to get involved with school, and to help my child succeed?
☐ May I have a schedule of parent meetings and open houses during the school year?
☐ How is my child’s culture reflected in the classroom learning time?

Space for notes

THINGS TO TELL THE TEACHER
☐ How my child learns best.
☐ Any big changes in the family—a new home, new people in the home, death or divorce.
☐ Medical conditions that affect my child.
☐ What has helped my child learn successfully in the past.
☐ What my child enjoys about school and the classroom.
☐ What is most challenging for my child in this class.

Space for notes

FOLLOW-UP PLANS
Teacher contact information

Things to do

Space for notes