NOURISHING YOUNG SOULS

By Gary Tubbs, Principal

When was the last time you asked yourself, “What is my supreme purpose for being on this earth?” Maybe you’re blessed with complete clarity, but I’m 48 years old, and I’m still searching for the full answer. The personal and spiritual growth connected to seeking this high level of consciousness certainly has its benefits, but the work required is difficult. If I am patient, quiet, willing, and aware . . . I must believe that someday I will know.

Given that we, as adults, continue to reflect and wonder about our own lives, it’s vital we connect with the many unanswered questions of our children. In my daily work, I have begun more frequently engaging students in “heart and soul” discussions. It’s amazing how in touch they are with love vs. fear at a very young age. They know when their behaviors and feelings are from the heart and when they are not. Middle School students are already pondering existence, creation, and destiny. Wow! What an opportunity for us to guide and teach in a secular yet powerful way!

What could be more important than nourishing young souls? Creative thought, inquiry, and self-discovery via writing, poetry, dance, art, communications, sports, math, and the social and natural sciences—that’s what learning is all about! We provide tools and opportunities to help students find their path in life and pursue it with passion. By listening with our adult hearts, rather than our adult personalities, we allow the children to discover themselves. I believe the more we are successful, the more we assist our children and grandchildren in becoming self-actualized, enlightened human beings. What gift could possibly be more valuable?

Middle Schoolers discuss leadership issues at October 10 forum. (see pages 6-7)
SITE COUNCIL MEETINGS
SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

By Gretchen Chambers

All members of the TOPS community are invited to attend Site Council meetings: second Wednesdays in the Library, 5-7 p.m. Next meeting: November 8.

September Recap: Much of the September meeting was spent discussing ways to reach this year’s $90,000 goal for the No Bake Bake Sale. Other topics included the overcrowding in several TOPS classes and the Eastlake Community’s plan for improving the play facilities at Rogers field. Rebecca Sadinsky, TOPS parent and SC member, represents TOPS in Friends of Rogers Field, the neighborhood committee directing the renovation. (Stay tuned for a chance to have your name etched in a glass leaf embedded in the entrance arch to the park.) And at October’s meeting on the 11th . . .

INITIATIVE 728

Sharon Mentyka, TOPS parent and volunteer for Initiative 728, presented a summary of the initiative. (See page 19 for details.) The Site Council passed a motion in support of Initiative 728.

PRINCIPAL REPORT

Rx for Overloading: Ms. Scott reported that the District has given TOPS an allocation for class size reduction in recognition that the District did not adjust for TOPS’ low attrition rate and so overbooked several grades. The allocation will cover a .6 full-time certificated teacher to provide support to students in the overloaded classes who are experiencing learning challenges. “By working with small groups of children, this employee will reduce class size for blocks of time and reinforce critical reading and/or study skills.”

New Activities: Ms. Scott reported on the initiation of several new activities, including the Middle School Band, a Middle School newspaper, and the World in Dance program in the Elementary School. She also reported that the Middle School Leadership Forum on October 10 was a success and reviewed the program for the Site Council. (See pages 6-7)

STUDENT REPORT

Anika Steig and Eugenie Song, both 8th grade reps, presented goals formulated by the Student Leadership Council. Middle Schoolers want to enhance school spirit with more Spirit Weeks and stronger support for TOPS athletic teams. They also would like more opportunities to work with the lower grades. Other goals include a peer counseling program with Jennifer Murray’s help; a student-built web page and secure chat room; more time together as whole grades; more extracurricular activities; less restraints on self-expression; better cafeteria food; and fundraising projects.

FUND DEVELOPMENT

No Bake: The No Bake Bake Sale is underway, with 16 checks submitted as of October 11. Flyers were handed out on Curriculum Night, and a mailing followed in mid-October. No Bake coordinators also plan to make reminder calls. A hard push will be made to reach our goal of $90,000 by December 22nd. The point was made that TOPS families need more information about where the money will go.

Gym Acoustics: Penny Bolton reported that plans are underway to have acoustical panels installed and decorated in the gym before the Middle School play. Partial curtains will also be part of the acoustical remedy.

DRAMA COMMITTEE

Play dates: Committee Co-Chair Linda Korbis announced that the dates for the plays had been set: The Middle School play will be December 8th and 9th; the elementary school play will be June 8th and 9th.

INTERNET COMMITTEE

Kevin Crozier reported that technical support from the School District was “dribbling in.” A newly appointed technician had succeeded in making some networking connections. Software for the library computers had not yet arrived. The committee had held a meeting to help teachers write technical plans. Kevin said progress toward getting the school systems going was “slow but steady.”

DIVERSITY ISSUES COALITION

Garry Owens reported that members were looking into different leadership models because two co-facilitators are not involved this year, and that the Coalition is developing plans for a race relation study circle for 15 parent volunteers. (See page 18)

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Packets and Directory: Volunteer Coordinator Marlies van Bergeijk reported that all but 11 student information packets had been handed in. Andrea Akita is ably coordinating the production of the Family Directory, and Bruce Pulmano is inputting the data. They hope to issue the Directory by the end of October.

Volunteer Background Checks: The School District recommends that all volunteers, including parents and community members, undergo background checks prior to service. No check can be done without the subject’s explicit agreement provided on a form. The SC voted in favor of instituting background checks at TOPS. Marlies will begin administering the process soon.

continued on page 5
SITE COUNCIL COMMITTEES AT WORK

COMMUNICATIONS (formerly Parent Steering Committee)

This committee is responsible for keeping members of the TOPS community up-to-date on the needs and activities of our very active community and to ensure that all members are included. The committee consists primarily of the Room Reps of each class and is chaired by the Volunteer Coordinator. It oversees production of the newsletter, Family Directory, and the TOPS Handbook, as well as the execution of the “beginning of the school year packet” process. The Communications Committee also co-hosts all-parent meetings and school-wide events, including the State of the School meetings. So far this year, we have recruited Room Reps, begun compiling the Family Directory, and much more. To volunteer, contact Marlies van Bergeijk (328-3064, paul-marlies@worldnet.att.net).

DIVERSITY ISSUES COALITION

The Coalition plans several parent forums on diversity issues later in the year, as well as study circles on racism beginning in January. Coalition members and other interested parties planned to meet with Librarian Steve Haines in late October to discuss the purchase of multicultural books funded as a special Auction item last spring. Coalition funds also helped pay for the Middle School’s Leadership Forum and will subsidize Middle School discussions facilitated by members of Garfield High School’s Cultural Relations group. For more information, contact Garry Owens (782-2565, gomojo@earthlink.net).

DRAMA

The Drama Committee solicits proposals from outside talent to direct productions and works with staff, directors, students, and parent volunteers to mount two productions—Elementary and Middle School—each year. Specific tasks include coordinating costumes, sets, lights, concessions, publicity, programs, program ads, and development and management of rehearsal and performance space. For 2000-2001, TOPS Site Council gave the committee $4,000, though the Committee requested $8,000 to cover directors’ fees and a new pilot program for the 3rd and 7th grades. Because of this shortfall, the committee has reduced the directors’ fees: $4,000 will go to those fees with $1,000 to the pilot program. The difference will be funded by donations, concessions, etc. For more information, contact Linda Korbus (632-7271, lkorbuss@worldnet.att.net) or Julie Jamieson (328-5159, JULIEJ@PNB.ORG).

INTERNET

This committee uses its funds to purchase hardware to support teachers and students.

Purchases last year included:
- 950 printer
- 64MB RAM
- 250 MB ext. USB Zip
- USB Hub
- Digital camera (Olympus C-2500L)
- Digital camera accessories
- Kodak DC215 plus peripherals
- San Disk USB memory reader
- Kodak DC215 power pack
- Zip Drive

Purchases this year have included:
- 2 laser printers
- Network hub
- CD Burner

The committee uses its manpower to support the school’s technology plan. For example, this year one parent is helping set up a file-sharing server. Another will be assisting the library network. A third parent is investigating websites for teachers, and another is providing classroom support for grades 3 & 4. Anyone interested in joining the technology support team should contact Kevin Crozier (252-3510, kcrozier@halcyon.com).

WORLD LANGUAGES

The “zero period” Middle School Spanish class (combination 6th and 7th grade) is going very well. Students should cover one-half year of high school Spanish 1 this year. If they continue the class next year and pass the course, they will complete 1st year high school Spanish. Approximately 20 students are in the class, with scholarships funded by the Site Council. Signe Gilson and Ouri Malliris put in a lot of time and effort this summer coordinating the program with Librarian Steve Haines and American Cultural Exchange. Carla Griswold did a lot of the groundwork for the program last spring. Signe is also coordinating the before- and after-school Spanish enrichment classes: one on Tues./Thurs. from 3:30-4:15 p.m. for grades K-2 and one on Tues./Thurs. from 8:00-8:45 a.m. for grades 3-5.
COUNSELING OUR CHILDREN

By Jennifer Shaw

For the past year, the TOPS community has been blessed with a wonderful school counselor, Jennifer Murray. We have been able to afford a school counselor thanks to previous years’ budget under-spending. However, the money runs out at the end of this year. Unless we increase our fundraising through the No Bake Bake Sale, we will lose this important TOPS resource.

What is a School Counselor?

A school guidance counselor is a certified counselor whose primary purpose is to help children perform well at school. The counselor works with the child, her teachers, her family, and other professionals to craft an educational program that best suits the child’s needs or abilities, with a focus on the social and emotional development of the child. While families may seek assistance from counselors and therapists outside of the school for a variety of family and adjustment issues, only a school counselor is uniquely positioned as a member of the school’s staff to assist a child within his own school environment.

What Does Our Counselor Do?

You have probably seen Jennifer Murray greeting our children in the mornings as they get off the buses. She also supervises during lunch and helps herd the children back onto the buses in the afternoons. These are small but important parts of her job. By greeting the children, she makes herself visible and available. When the children know her, they are more likely to seek her out when they have a problem.

Jennifer works directly with our K-3rd grade children in the classrooms, running class meetings or teaching social skills. Jennifer uses the time to teach the children conflict resolution, mediation, and leadership skills to help them avoid problems or deescalate angry confrontations. She trains our 4th graders as conflict managers and teaches the 5th grade Family Life and Sexual Health (FLASH) course.

Outside the Classroom

In addition, Jennifer counsels K-8th grade students one-on-one and in group sessions. Topics include friendship skills, divorce, grief and loss, self-esteem, career explorations, identity issues, substance use or abuse, anger management, study skills and time management, or personal safety. The goal is to help children work through their current issues in order to get on with the important business of education. Referral to counseling can come from the child, his teachers, the administration, or parents.

When Jennifer isn’t working directly with our children, she works with the teachers, assists the staff, and talks to parents about strategies to use at home. She attends Site Council meetings, is a member of the Leadership Team, acts as a Middle School dance chaperone, and helps coordinate the ITBS, WASL, and DWA assessments. Sound exhausting? Imagine what would happen if we lost her.

How Can We Keep Our School Counselor?

Despite Mr. Tubbs’ lobbying efforts, the School District will not fund a counselor position at TOPS. The “Weighted Student Formula” system means that a school like TOPS, with few children receiving free lunch or designated as “special needs,” cannot qualify for the additional funding for a counselor. If we want a counselor, we must fund the position ourselves.

Our goal for this year’s No Bake Bake Sale is $90,000. A large portion of that amount will go to funding the counselor position. We can meet this goal and continue to provide this essential service to our children if we work together.
LEADERSHIP TEAM CONSIDERS ADDITION TO STAFF

By Dana Carey-Twight

The TOPS Leadership Team, composed of representatives from certificated and classified staff, administration, and parents has been meeting regularly since school began. This group handles the site-based budget of approximately $1.9 million, which TOPS receives from the District each year.

In addition to 2000-2001 budget decisions made last spring, TOPS has received extra funds to begin the school year. These funds come from two sources. The first source is the District: payment for the 11 “overload” students, who were assigned to us by the District, and payment for 17 students not previously funded, making a total of 28 “extra” student units of funding. These funds, totaling $74,386, have been added to our site budget for the 2000-2001 school year.

The second amount of money came to us via the Legislature, which has allocated extra funds to be used for class size reduction. Our allocations were $22,227 for grades K-4 and $7,659 for grade 6 for a total of $29,886.

After much discussion, the Leadership Team decided to use these funds to “purchase” a .6 full-time certificated teacher. The allocated amount came with several restrictions: it must be used for the grade levels indicated above; the new hire must be a certified teacher (i.e., no AmeriCorps volunteers, paid tutors from the community, etc.). Lastly, we must act immediately, because unspent funds cannot be carried over to next year’s budget.

Members of the Leadership Team reached consensus on the use of the class size reduction allocation in early October. Mr. Tubbs then sent a request to the District to post the following job description.

It will be this person’s responsibility to teach in partnership with the Special Ed. Learning Assistance Program (LAP), and the ESL teachers in providing support to children experiencing learning challenges in their regular classrooms. By working with small groups of children, this employee will reduce class size for blocks of time and reinforce critical reading and/or study skills. Since children in these programs are disproportionately children of color, this strategy will also address the disparity in achievement among different ethnic groups.”

By early November when you receive this newsletter, the Leadership Team hopes that the new staff person will have been hired and be ready to work in our classrooms.

This extra money posed several challenges for the Leadership Team, given the school year had already begun; teachers had already set their schedules for their teaching day, etc. Much time was spent working out how best to use this person in the affected classrooms.

The decision-making process opened our eyes to a different way of discussing class size reduction. As mentioned at the State of the School meeting in early September, it’s not just about getting an extra staff member. If this happens again, we hope that more advance planning will occur. The Leadership Team and the entire staff are excited about hiring a wonderful new staff member to work with our children!

BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

“Recycle” your cereal box tops and earn useful supplies for TOPS. Collection boxes will be located around the school. Rosemarie and Norman LeMoine will be coordinating this effort, which should begin soon. In the meantime, hold onto those box tops! Any questions about the program should be directed to Rosemarie and Norman at 322-0918.

Site Council Meetings continued from page 2

FACILITIES COMMITTEE

TOPS’ 20th Anniversary: Reporting for Rebecca Sadinsky, SC Chair Betsy Scott said Facilities hoped to develop a pamphlet on the history of TOPS to honor our 20th year. SC members suggested combining an anniversary celebration with the Taste of Tops in April.

No Playfield Next Year: Betsy reminded us that because of needed drainage work, Rogers Field will be out of commission for most, if not all, of next school year. Much of the downtime will involve simply letting the new turf establish itself. In the meantime, Eastlake rep Jules James reports that the playscape project is on schedule, and public fundraising will begin November 1.

OTHER ISSUES

Reserved Spots for Neighborhood Children? Eastlake rep Jules James solicited feedback on the idea of having a few spots reserved for Eastlake Community residents in the lottery assignment. He and others felt admission for at least a few neighborhood children was necessary for a strong relationship between TOPS and the Eastlake Community. A wide range of points were made in the ensuing discussion, including statements of support for Eastlake parents needing a neighborhood school, another that the District is emphasizing neighborhood schools anyway, and, conversely, that, as a city-wide, alternative school, TOPS must be open to all students on an equal basis.
The entire Middle School participated in TOPS’ first annual Middle School Leadership Forum at the Center for Urban Horticulture on October 10. Designed to help students define leadership for themselves and learn to work together to solve problems, the Forum opened with a welcoming statement from Mr. Tubbs. He was followed by a talk on “The Qualities of Leadership” by Stephen T. Wilson, a minority mental health and youth counselor affiliated with the University of Washington’s School of Social Work. Wilson outlined the qualities of a good leader and asked students to consider effective leaders in their own lives and throughout history. The students then broke into small groups for exercises dealing with leadership and informed choices facilitated by 22 students from Garfield High School’s Cultural Relations Program.

During lunch, TOPS students were entertained by young artists of the “Spoken Word,” including TOPS alumnus Ben Haggerty, Gabriel Teodros, a member of the 500 Years Collective, and a young poet. They also enjoyed a drawing for door prizes provided by generous TOPS parents.

After lunch, Garfield students facilitated a rousing session of “Big Wind Blows” on the lawn. Then the kids came inside for another exercise facilitated by community organizers Mayet Dalila and Ronnie Abrahams and designed to help them understand the nature of discrimination and preconceived notions of status. The program concluded with remarks on the history of youth leadership in the Seattle area from King County Councilman Larry Gossett. Many thanks to Ms. Scott and Tilman Smith for organizing this great event, and to the parents and teachers who helped.
STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL ELECTED

In mid-October, the Middle School elected their student representatives. Two students were elected from each class, together with one alternate. Four at-large representatives were also appointed by the administration on the basis of an excellent application and/or a notable presentation in class. Middle School students should contact their representatives with suggestions or questions they’d like addressed.

Representatives And Alternates
Lana’s class reps......... Morgan Cassell & Daniel Heller
Alternate: Christoph Krumm
Marianne’s class reps ... Isiah Hinojosa
(Tie) Jasmine Gartell-Hall & Allison Boyer
David’s class reps ...... Michael Magista
(Tie) Julia Jessie & Kyle Fleck
Mr. Ellis’ class reps..... Joseph Jessie & Devon Hale
Alternate: Claire Gallagher
Luzita’s class reps ...... Kaley Wilson & Mac Hamilton
Alternates (Tie) Theodore Barnhart & Josephine Jardin
Ms. Eick’s class reps .. Burnley D’luhosh & Rain Frost
Alternate: Anika Steig
At-large Reps .............. Austin Cassell, Karlin Castor-Peck,
Thomas Shuman, Eugenie Song

TOPS students share ideas in courtyard at the Center for Urban Horticulture. (above)
Ms. Scott introduces the day’s program. (below)
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS—SLEEPERS AWAKE!

By Dana Carey-Twigt

Many of us at TOPS have only heard about what our students have to look forward to in high school. Those of us who do not have older children are sometimes left blissfully unaware about the secret weapon of high school. It’s the schedule, stupid, to coin a phrase. I became aware of this when my high school student babysitter stayed overnight one night on a weeknight, so I could go to the Seattle Symphony. She said, “Oh sure, just get me to school in the morning!” This turned out to occur at an hour when my child and I were normally just rolling out of bed—7:40 a.m.!

I’m going to repeat myself here—7:40 a.m.! First our kids have to be in class by 9:20 a.m., then in fifth grade it changes to 9 a.m., then in 9th grade, they have to be able to get there by 7:40 a.m. I don’t even want to speculate when the school bus might come! Now I know, at first, it sounds attractive—no before-school care needs to be arranged anymore, and we can all finally get to work before 9 a.m. But our children won’t be the same children in the 9th grade. They’re going to be more tired than ever! Plus there are those after-school hours to fill. But that’s another article.

To quote from a 1998 editorial in the Seattle Times:
“Twenty years of sleep studies give us this evidence:
People’s circadian rhythms change temporarily during adolescence, making bodies secrete more slowly the hormones needed to fall asleep and wake up. That’s why teenagers often can’t fall asleep until nearly midnight and can hardly get up in the morning; they are literally, for a few years, in a different time zone.”

What might be the benefits of changing a high school start time? A better schedule for our students, accommodating their new, adolescent bodies. Schools that have tried this report better attendance, fewer discipline problems, better academic performance, and less depression. I don’t know what the start time should be, maybe the younger students should go at 7:40 a.m. and the high schoolers could go at 9 a.m.

And the cost? Apparently sometimes parents object to changing their schedules, even by 30 minutes. Teachers may object to getting home later, and after-school sports may need to be rescheduled. The last time I recall the Seattle School District discussing this, the cost of changing the bus schedules apparently outweighed any improvements that may have been cited.

My reason for writing this article is that I’d like to bring this up to the School Board again, and I’d like to know if anyone else agrees with me. As the parent of a fifth grader, I figure I’ve got less than four years to affect this change before I’m fighting that alarm clock myself. I believe the academic improvements may outweigh the costs, tangible and intangible of adjusting buses, sports, and that sacred cow (after-school jobs) to benefit our students. With the District even remotely considering having a new high school open by the fall of 2001, what if we could urge them to adopt a new start time to go with the new school? Please feel free to email me at danact@seanet.com or call me if this is an issue you’d like to participate in. We could call it LMSSI—Let my student sleep in!

MIDDLE SCHOOL TARDY POLICY

Parents and Students! Tardies are calculated on a per class basis. If a student is tardy twice to the same class or misses the 9 a.m. school start time twice, he or she will have after-school detention.

For example, a student is late to Mr. Bloedel’s class or Ms. Eick’s class: he or she will have accrued one tardy for each class. The next time the student is late to Ms. Eick’s class, he or she will have after-school detention. At that point, the student has a clean slate of tardies for Ms. Eick’s class. If the student receives a second tardy in Mr. Bloedel’s class, he or she will again serve detention.

Detention means Mr. Bloedel’s after-school “Running Club.” Parents will be contacted if their student is participating in after-school detention.

PIZZA TOPIC LUNCHES

The Middle School’s popular Pizza Topics started in mid-October and will continue through the first semester. During these “Topics,” small groups of 10 to 12 6-8th grade students gather for pizza and pop with a teacher to discuss a range of subjects. Some subjects are student-selected; others are staff-selected.

These lunches have been a resounding success over the past two years. The students have clearly enjoyed the pizza, but more importantly they have gotten a lot out of having casual time to talk and share diverse opinions with adults and students from other grades about topics that are relevant and outside the normal range of classroom discussions. Ask your children what happened during their pizza topic lunch.
**Girls’ Soccer Kicks**

*By Marisa Morales, 7th grade*

The Middle School girls’ soccer team rules! We are playing well and having fun doing it.

Last year it was all about winning. But that was last year. This is this year with a brand new coach who doesn’t care if we win or lose just so long as we are having a good time. So far we are one for three, which is pretty good for our first time playing together.

We have a great team, and every time we play, we get better. The only thing missing is our cheering fans! So come one, come all, come out, and support us!

November games: Saturday, the 4th at 9:30 a.m. and November 11 at 8 a.m.—Both at Denny in West Seattle. Playoffs are November 14 and League Finals November 18th at Memorial Stadium.

---

**Middle School Ski Program 2001 Update!**

By now you should have received the registration packets for this year’s Ski Program. If you haven’t received one and want your child to be a part of the program this year, ask for a packet from the Office or Middle School teachers Lana Fuller and Lori Eickelberg. The packet can be sent via e-mail by contacting Sue Williams (innkeeper@wolfenet.com). Please don’t forget the deadlines for turning in the applications. We will charge a late fee this year for late applications.

Do you think this is a great opportunity for your child, but you can’t afford it? Call Katie McKeon about scholarships.

We all look forward to a fun and safe season on the slopes! Questions and Comments? Call Laurie Black (285-7079), Katie McKeon (282-0352), Janet Moore (283-7284), or Sue Williams (285-0810).

---

**Ropes Challenge Course For 7th Grade**

For the third year, in mid-October TOPS 7th graders participated in a day-long ropes course as part of an overall focus on leadership and team building skills. The class was broken up into two groups by sex: the girls went one day, the boys the other. The course required groups of students to figure out together how to work their way through a number of complex physical obstacles. Everyone had to make it through each obstacle, and only the group could decide how to accomplish that. The groups were put together randomly. Those students who didn’t participate in the ropes course stayed at school to work on follow-up issues from the Leadership Forum held October 10.
Jo Marie Cunningham (parent of TOPS ’00 grad Daniel Besh) and Sally Buckley (parent of ’00 grad Ashley Felsman) exchange ideas for keeping the world on track at the 8th grade graduation in June.

2000-2001 TOPS CALENDAR

**NOVEMBER**
3 (F) .............. End of 1st quarter (Middle School grades)
8 (W) .............. Site Council meeting, Library, 5-7 p.m.
10 (F) ............. Veterans Day. No school
13-21 .............. Parent conferences
22 (W) ............. One hour early dismissal for Thanksgiving
23-24 (Th-F) ....... Thanksgiving vacation

**DECEMBER**
8-9 (F-S) .......... Middle School Play
13 (W) ............. Site Council meeting, Library, 5-7 p.m.
22 (F) ............. Winter break begins

**JANUARY**
2 (T) ............... School starts again
10 (W) ............. Site Council meeting, Library, 5-7 p.m.
15 (M) ............. Martin Luther King Day. No school
19 (F) ............. Skate King
29 (F) ............. End of semester (Middle School)
29 (M) ............. Learning Improvement Day (teacher workshops). No school

**FEBRUARY**
14 (W) ............. Site Council meeting, Library, 5-7 p.m.
19-23 (M-F) ...... Mid-winter break. No school

**MARCH**
14 (W) ............. Site Council meeting, Library, 5-7 p.m.
16 (F) ............. Teacher workshops. No school

**APRIL**
11 (W) ............. Site Council meeting, Library, 5-7 p.m.
9-13 (M-F) ...... Spring break
23–May 11 ...... WASL

**MAY**
9 (W) .............. Site Council meeting, Library, 5-7 p.m.
18 (F) ............. Teacher workshops. No school
28 (M) ............. Memorial Day. No school

**JUNE**
8 (F) .............. TOPS Art Festival
8-9 (F-S) ......... Elementary School Play
13 (W) ............. Site Council meeting, Library, 5-7 p.m.
17 (S) ............. Site Council Retreat
20 (F) ............. Last student day
21 (M) ............. Last teacher day
A WORD FROM YOUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR, MARLIES VAN BERGEIJK

September passed very quickly with the coordination of the “Beginning of the School year packet.” I am happy to report that all but 11 packets have been returned. The help of the office staff and Room Reps has been invaluable in this process.

I feel very fortunate that Andrea Akita, new TOPS parent of kindergartner Maya Zisette, agreed to take on the coordination of the Family Directory (a.k.a. “The Roster”). She is doing an outstanding job, and it appears that we will be able to mail the Directories out on time: late October. Andrea has set a goal of listing 100 percent of TOPS families. I think we will come very close.

Many of you also filled out the Family Involvement Form, and I have begun making lists of who is willing to assist with what effort. I will be forwarding that information to Committee chairs and Staff. You can expect to be contacted in the near future. Many of you indicated a willingness to do more than one thing, which is much appreciated. And please note: Maria Kovacs, one of our new AmeriCorps volunteers, will be contacting parents who indicated a willingness to teach a TOPIC.

Last but by no means least: Thanks to all parents who have volunteered their time since the beginning of the school year. It really helps that many of you diligently sign in and document those hours on the volunteer sign-in clipboard in the office. My hunch is, though, that a very substantial number of hours go unreported. This is unfortunate because at times our ability to show documentation of hours volunteered affects our ability to receive grants for programs. So please help TOPS get credit by reporting your hours.

CHESS NEWS

By Mark Morales

O.K. So your child comes home and says, “I wanna join chess club.” You want to encourage your child. You’ve heard that chess helps kids in math and other areas in school. But you know little or nothing about the game. What’s a parent to do?

You can start at the TOPS library. The library has many great chess resources available for circulation. For the beginner, I recommend Chess Rules for Children. This book is very easy to follow and includes exercises at the end of each lesson. After your child has mastered the rules, I recommend books like Chess Tactics for Students and Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess.

If your child is interested in playing tournament chess, I recommend watching the movie Searching for Bobby Fischer, with your child. This movie is a primer on how to encourage your child without putting too much pressure on him or her.

Electronic Options?

You might also consider some of the terrific chess software. I recommend Chessmates for younger children. For more advanced players, I like Tasc Chess CD 2. Both are available at the TOPS Library.

If you would like to surf the Web, I recommend the Little Chess Express at http://members.aol.com/lceeditor/lce.html. There you will find links to Yasser Seirawan/Inside Chess, Chessplayer.com, and the Chess House. Each site is informative and features links to more great information.

Local Chess Boom

I am very excited about the chess revolution lately. Seattle is becoming a “Chess Mecca,” recently hosting the U.S. championships. Twelve of the top men and ten of the top U.S. women players battled it out for two weeks at Town Hall in downtown Seattle. Twelve of our students participated in the Simultaneous exhibition on the weekend of October 7th. Each master or grandmaster played 15 students simultaneously. What a wonderful experience for our young players!

I am also thrilled to see that chess-mania has infected our kids at TOPS. Recently, I ran into a group of young chess enthusiasts huddled around the chess table in front of the school. When I went to inspect, I discovered that these innovative kids had made their own chess pieces out of some old nuts and bolts because there weren’t any “real” pieces for them to use. They were that determined to play chess. I have since made sure we have some “real” pieces to play with on the outdoor table. They are available at the office for the kids to check out.

If your child is interested in chess, but you would like to learn more, please call or e-mail me. I love to “talk chess” and I would be very happy to help out. Contact me at 325-4079 or memoral@flashcom.net.
Middle Schoolers On PE

By Justen Weber and Max Hamilton, 7th grade

So far in PE we have covered many subjects, including the Olympic Games. We have learned about the hammer throw, javelin, pole vaulting, hurdles, and many more. Don and Eric continue to come up with interesting ideas and fun stuff to do, and it pays off in physical fitness. PE is our favorite subject because we learn about different sports and can very easily stay in shape.
Brenda throws the hammer.

50-yard dash!
**TOPS OLYMPICS**

*By Henry Jackson-Spieker, 5th grade*

Since it’s the Olympic season, Don and Eric are teaching us many of the Olympic events. So far the Olympic sports we have done are: high jump, sprints, hammer throw, broad jump, javelin, and hurdles. We are also inventing our own Olympic sports. The Olympic sports we are doing in PE are fun activities and everybody seems to like doing them.

*Linea demonstrates good Fosbury Flop technique.*

*On your mark...*
Max scores on the long jump.

Zach throws the javelin.

Celia prepares for the shot put.
TOPS AMERICORPS

By Lianne Sheppard

Shortly after school began, TOPS welcomed Bryce Huber and Maria Kovacs as our new AmeriCorps members. They joined Neesa Sonoquie who will remain at TOPS through the end of November. All our AmeriCorps members are generously sponsored by Washington Service Corps with a matching contribution from Friends of TOPS. These young people volunteer their services for an 11-month term in exchange for a small living allowance and an education award. They actively work with all facets of the TOPS program. You will see them helping in the classrooms, chaperoning on field trips, working in the office, playing with children during recess, tutoring individual students during and after school, organizing TOPICS, and much much more.

BRYCE HUBER

Bryce is a former TOPS Middle School student and a recent high school graduate. He was attracted by the opportunity to work with Middle Schoolers. However, in the few weeks since he began, he has already been pleasantly surprised by how much he enjoys working with elementary students. His outside interests include playing basketball, music, and computers. He was actually helping out with Eric Herndon’s basketball camp at TOPS this summer when he learned of this position. He sees TOPS AmeriCorps as a great opportunity to explore his interest in teacher as a career.

Besides, TOPS was his favorite school, so he is delighted to be back! Welcome Bryce!

MARIA KOVACS

Maria moved from Oregon to the Eastlake area just before school started. Her initiative to canvas her neighborhood in search of work and the TOPS office staff’s astute response led to this successful match. Maria recently graduated from the University of Oregon with majors in International Studies and Spanish. She spent a semester abroad in Quito, Ecuador, focusing on Spanish, indigenous medicine, and art. She has also traveled extensively and worked with physically disabled adults and children. In her free time, Maria enjoys gardening, reading, and dancing. The TOPS BOC and ESL programs have already benefited from Maria’s foreign language fluency and multicultural experiences. Welcome Maria!

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

The TOPS AmeriCorps program successfully recruited strong candidates this year thanks to the individual actions of parent and staff members in our community. (Unfortunately, we were unable to sponsor a third excellent applicant also referred from within our community.) Thanks to everyone who shared information about our position to potential applicants. Your efforts have really made a difference! And best wishes and many thanks to Neesa Sonoquie who will be leaving us.

TOPS STUDENTS ON STAGE

The incredible Broadway Bound production of “Groovy,” by Tim Kelly, will be performed December 7, 8, and 9, at 7 p.m. at Hamilton Middle School. A musical tribute to the Sixties, the show features the rock ‘n roll group, the Lemon Bugs, and songs like “Power to the People,” and “Music, Beads, and Flowers.” The cast features 24 kids, grades 1 through 7. TOPS cast members include Brendan Griffin, Isaiah Hinojasa, Emma Salzberg, and Justin Savage. Tickets are $5 per person. For tickets, call 634-2204.

CONGRATULATIONS COACH!

Best wishes to Eric Herndon and his wife Kandace who were married on July 1, 2000. (photo by Don Zemke—who else?)
THANKS FOR NOT BAKING!

The Friends of TOPS’ No Bake Bake Sale is off to a great start! As of October 12, 2000, the “Sale” has received checks from 16 families, totaling $6,000. This money goes to fund activities and positions that the school building’s funds can’t cover, including elementary art, classroom supplies, tutors, AmeriCorps staff, science supplies, multicultural curriculum, technology, and the family roster. Last year, the No Bake raised about $30,000, and the Auction brought in a net $44,000.

Every year the Friends of TOPS receives dozens of requests for money to fund enhancements to our wonderful program. Last year, requests exceeded $147,000, but we could fund only about $84,000.

Special Needs

This year Mr. Tubbs, the Site Council, and the Leadership Team are asking you to donate more so, in addition to the extras mentioned above, we can fund our full-time counselor position and a groundbreaking co-principal position. We need to raise $90,000—an average of $250 a family—by the end of the calendar year 2000.

Our thanks go out to the very first givers this year.

  Julie Braybrooks & Greg Simon Family
  Gretchen Chambers & William Ames Family
  Roger & Virginia Chambers Family
  Galloway Family*
  Signe Gilson & John Kounts Family

Kirk & Carla Griswold Family*
Toby Harris & Ron Shure Family
Jules & Alex James*
Ganin & Janice Lovell Family
Doug & Janet Moore Family
Erica & Gene Nelson Family
Mark & Catherine Remijan Family*
Riehle & Low Family*
Scott Family*
Bob & Peggy Stevens Family
Tamura & Comstock Family*
Gary Tubbs
Van Bergeijk & Framson Family*
Eileen Young & Kaitlin Banfill Family
Mary Chao*
And four anonymous families.

Watch the mail for your No Bake appeal, and be sure and send it back as soon as you can. Even if you can’t send the cash now, please make a pledge. We can take credit card charges, and accept up to four monthly charges if you’d like to spread it over several months. Any gift is appreciated and will be acknowledged in the newsletter if you give permission to print your name. (Remember there is a time lag because of the newsletter’s deadlines. The next deadline is November 9.) Donation amounts will remain confidential. Any questions? Call Laurie Black at 285-7079 or Penny Bolton at 325-5074.

*Site Council member

HUNGRY FOR MORE

By Toby Harris

I like the idea of using this newsletter to learn more about the various religions and cultures that make up the TOPS community. I believe we have a diverse population at TOPS, but I’m not sure because I don’t hear enough about it!

Just who does go to TOPS? Thanks to Susan Davis for so bravely going first and summarizing the history and holidays about Judaism. I hope that many others will follow in sharing their families’ traditions. Increasing our knowledge and awareness of the diversity we have around us will naturally instill respect for others. Both we and our children will benefit from hearing straight from those among us! So, feed me, feed me...
**IT’S NEVER TOO EARLY TO THINK TOPS AUCTION**

The Auction Committee is already starting to gear up for this school year’s event, slated for next spring. Even though the planning is in its earliest stages, it’s none too soon for the entire TOPS community to begin thinking about procuring auction items.

As always, each family will be urged to bring in three items, everything from fabulous weekend getaways to Mariners and Sonics tickets and signed baseballs to home-cooked dinners, books, clothing, theme baskets, software, music lessons, business consultations, and six months of delicious brownies delivered right to the home of the highest bidder. More information and ideas along with procurement forms will be mailed to each family, so start thinking!

---

**RACISM & RACE RELATIONS STUDY CIRCLE**

The Diversity Issues Coalition is looking for 15 parent volunteers to participate in a special six-session study circle on racism and race relations. The study circle will begin in January 2001. Dates, times, and location are to be announced.

The sessions will use a curriculum from the Study Circle Center in Pomfret, Connecticut. Take a look at it at their website (http://www.studycircles.org/pages/racbro.html). For more information or to register, please call Diversity Issues Coalition Facilitator, Garry Owens at 782-2565.

---

**FOOD DRIVE IS ON**

A food drive, organized by TOPS students, will be held at school through November 17. Food collected will directly benefit the TOPS community. Suggested donations include:

- Macaroni & cheese
- Chili
- Dry Beans
- Spaghettios
- Ramen
- Soups, canned & instant
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Noodles
- Rice
- Canned vegetables & fruits
- Canned meats, tuna, chicken, etc.

Any and all food items will be accepted and appreciated. Household items (toilet paper, laundry soap, cleaning products, etc.) and personal hygiene products (shampoo, toothbrushes and toothpaste, lotion, etc.) are also needed.

This “bounty” will be packaged for families and delivered before Thanksgiving. If you are interested in helping with delivery, please contact Linda Downing in the office (252-3518).
TOPS SITE COUNCIL ENDORSES I-728

By Sharon Mentyka

I-728 was written by K-12 2000, a statewide organization of parents, school levy, and bond committee members, educators, and citizens who were frustrated with overcrowded classrooms and under-funded schools. Although voters in this state say education is their #1 issue, Washington still has the third-worst student/teacher ratio in the country. An extensive process of consensus building, including community meetings around the state, culminated in hundreds of people contributing their ideas for supporting education reform and the state’s new, higher standards for student achievement. The result of this grassroots effort is I-728.

Initiative 728 has been certified for the November 7, 2000 ballot, and states:

“Shall school districts reduce class sizes, extend learning programs, expand teacher training, and construct facilities, funded by lottery proceeds, existing property taxes, and budget reserves?”

I-728 provides new state funding to:

• Reduce class sizes
• Expand learning opportunities for students
• Increase teacher training
• Invest in early childhood education
• Build classrooms for K-12 and higher education

I-728 is funded by unrestricted lottery proceeds, existing property taxes, and surplus state revenues. I-728 does NOT require new taxes.

I-728 has been endorsed by the TOPS Site Council as well as by the entire education community, including:

• Washington State PTA
• Association of Washington School Principals
• The Children’s Alliance
• Washington Education Association
• Washington Association of School Administrators
• Washington Federation of Teachers
• Washington State School Directors, Association
• Public School Employees of Washington
• Washington State Labor Council

For more information, see the Washington State PTA website at http://www.wastatepta.org.

ELECTIONS OFFICIAL JOB AT TOPS

When: Election Day, November 7
Where: TOPS Library
What: Election Judge
Pay: $100.00 for 16 hours (6:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.)

Help voters vote. We have four precincts voting at TOPS, and there aren’t enough folks to work. Learn about our election process in action. It’s fun, and you will have an hour off for lunch, so YOU can vote. To sign up, call 296-1606 - King County Elections. For general information, call Sue Wardle at 547-6097. Former TOPS students are welcome if over age 18.
DONATING TO TOPS VIA UNITED WAY?

Friends of TOPS is a 501(3)© corporation and tax exempt. Those of you who participate in your employer’s United Way Drive can donate to the Friends of TOPS, and help support the diverse offerings at our school, by earmarking your donation on the United Way form: “Friends of TOPS” with our tax ID#94-3142402. Please note this is not the same as the Alliance for Education. Then just let the No Bake Bake folks know that you “gave at the office.”

VOLUNTEER HOURS = MATCHING FUNDS!

PLEASE REPORT YOUR HOURS!

With a note in the Volunteer Coordinator mailbox, on the Volunteer Hours clipboard in the Main Office, or with a monthly e-mail or phone call to Marlies van Bergeijk (328-3064, paul-marlies@worldnet.att.net).

THANKS TO G&H PRINTING, 2370 EASTLAKE E. 329-9888

The Seattle School District is an Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action employer and employs individuals without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, handicap/disability or sexual orientation. The Seattle School District provides Equal Education Opportunity without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, sex, mental states, handicap/disability or sexual orientation. The District complies with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to Titles VI, VII, and IX of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), RCW 49.60, Law Against Discrimination, and RCW 28A.640 “Sex Equality” and covers, but is not limited to, all District programs, courses activities (including) extracurricular activities, service, access to facilities, etc. The Title IX officer and 504 coordinator with overall responsibility for monitoring and ensuring compliance is John Yasutake, Manager, Affirmative Action Office, 815 4th Av. N., Seattle 98109. Phone (206)298-7175. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against in any of the District’s employment or educational activities can file an internal discrimination complaint with the District’s Affirmative Action Office.