Mr. Tubbs to Say “Good Bye”

Dear TOPS Families,

As many of you know, I have been enjoying a wonderful spiritual journey over the past couple years. Adding heart and soul to public schools became increasingly important to me and I dreamed of creating what I termed a “soul-centered school.” Well, beware of what you ask for, as it will surely come true!

In June, I was invited to consider the position of planning and future principal at a new K-8 school to be developed in the Rainier Beach Community. I met with the Superintendent and later with representatives from the New Schools Foundation Board. This Board will, through private philanthropy, be major donors in order to lower class size, extend the school day and year, and fund additional support services. My vision proved to be compatible with their dreams and I was asked to interview in early August. I was subsequently offered the position. I accepted.

This has been a difficult decision, as I truly love the TOPS community. Why would I leave a “Cadillac school” in my last few years before retirement to take on such a huge project? Elearly, this is a professional opportunity, a personal challenge, and a spiritual calling. This is simply something I must do.

For this first semester, I will work 3-4 days per week at TOPS and 1-2 days per week on planning the new school. Beginning second semester (late January), I will plan full time. Clara Scott will continue as Principal and an Assistant Principal will be selected.

TOPS is a very “healthy” learning community and with Clara’s strong leadership, the talent of the staff, and the support of the parents, this fine school will continue as such.

Thank you, TOPS Community, for inviting me to serve as your principal for 3.5 years. It’s been my privilege and honor. You are wonderful people and your children are a great source of pride and joy for all of us!

Carpe’ diem!

Gary

Save the Date!

October 4 is the All-School Curriculum Night.

Watch for details in the Wednesday Go Home Bulletin.

TOPS at Seward
2500 Franklin Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98102
Phone: (206) 252-3510
Fax: (206) 252-3511

Co-Principals:
Clara Scott
Gary Tubbs

Site Council Chair:
Betsy Scott

Newsletter Online

The TOPS newsletters are available online in PDF format, usually before the printed copy arrives in your mailbox! From the TOPS home page (http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/tops), click on Hot News Spots, then TOPS Newsletters.
SITE COUNCIL RETREAT

By Marlies Van Bergeijk

On September 15th, the annual Site Council retreat took place.

New parent representatives joined us and we had a meaningful discussion about how the Site Council can continue its work toward fulfilling the mission of the school; we also talked about community and the importance of communication.

We specifically discussed the need to improve the flow of information and communication between the parent reps on the Site Council and both the Room reps and the TOPS community at large. Site Council minutes will continue to be featured in this newsletter. You can help by bringing issues and concerns to your parent reps or by bringing them to the Site Council meeting directly.

As you may remember, last spring input was solicited from all parents to help the TOPS leadership team and the staff in general put into words what the mission of the school is and should be for the next several years. The staff and a number of parents have spent considerable time and energy articulating what TOPS is truly about. This process was initiated in part by the receipt of Gates Foundation School Transformation grant monies. Each school that receives these grants is developing a plan that fits for that school. A guiding principal in the discussions at TOPS has been the commitment to attacking the achievement gap. An outside consultant, Jed Selter, has assisted in this process. The vision still exists in draft form at this time. In the near future, it will be shared with the entire TOPS community. You will also see four anti-bias principles of education in your student’s classrooms. At our retreat we talked about the importance of sharing a common language and of having tools as parents to discuss these topics with each other and our children.

Expect to hear and read more about this in the weeks and months to come as our action plans become more defined.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS...

By Annie Gage

On September 11, I dropped my son off at TOPS, aware that I had excessive amounts of adrenaline surging through my body. I imagined that many of the teachers and staff felt the same way, and wondered how will they get through this day, responsible for all those children? But of course, they did. They contained their own fears and anxieties so that our children would feel safe, just like they did last February 28 when the earthquake hit. What a blessing to have adults we can entrust our children to during perilous times. I'm sure many of you join me in feeling enormous admiration and gratitude toward TOPS staff and faculty. Aren’t they amazing?

FROM THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

By Marlies Van Bergeijk

We just completed our second week of school and what an eventful week it was! It reminded us of the importance of establishing a list of parents who live and work within a one mile radius of school and who are able to come to school and assist as necessary in the event of a major emergency. Please contact the school at 252-3510 if you wish to be on that list.

Most classes once again have 2 Room Reps and by now you likely will have heard from them. I want to thank them for volunteering and for assisting me with distributing the packets out to families and getting them back and sorting the forms. They are also busy meeting with teachers to establish plans for the year. A goal for this year is to build on what seems to occur naturally in some grades: room reps working closely together across the grade to foster a sense of community for all families at that grade level.

I am very pleased to inform you that Andrea Akita has agreed to be our Directory Coordinator again this year. She did an outstanding job last year and we aim to have our new Directory mailed by late October.
COUNSELING SERVICES AT TOPS

By Jennifer Murray, TOPS Counselor

My counseling services incorporate classroom sessions, small groups, and individual counseling in a comprehensive counseling program. The classroom sessions include such topics as personal safety, friendship skills, anti-bullying strategies, and diversity awareness. Small groups provide an opportunity for students to work more in-depth on specific issues such as divorce, grief and loss, practicing friendship skills, and other pertinent topics. I also work with a limited number of students on an individual basis. Generally, these are students who have unique challenges or circumstances, or who are not ready for small group work.

In addition to providing direct services to students, I also coordinate weekly School Intervention Team (SIT) meetings. Typically a referral to the SIT is made when a teacher or parent thinks that a student is not making sufficient progress even after several interventions have been attempted. The purpose of the SIT is to brainstorm strategies that will engage the student in the learning process, and to make a plan to carry out these strategies.

An important goal of the SIT is to make the meetings welcoming to and supportive of parents and students. We make every effort to include parents in these meetings. If a parent cannot attend at the usual morning meeting time, we will make other arrangements with them. A student can be referred to the SIT for academic or behavioral issues. SIT referral forms are available in the main office or from me.

I invite referrals for counseling from students, parents, and teachers. Please feel free to contact me if you have concerns about your child. I firmly believe that we are a team working together to create a safe, nurturing, creative environment for our students, and will do whatever I can to help make that happen.

I can be reached at 252-3534 or through the main office.

MULTICULTURAL ASSEMBLIES

The Site Council has allocated funds to continue bringing a diverse group of performing artists to TOPS throughout the 2001-2002 school year. We welcome suggestions from the TOPS community. Thank you.

Parent Volunteers

Gloria Albetta
galbetta@evergreentreatment.org

Eileen Hynes
ehynes@fhcrc.org

TOPS STUDENTS TO PERFORM AT BOOKFEST

By Steve Haines, TOPS librarian

For the fourth year in a row, some of our students will read selections of their own writing on the Kidspeak Stage at the Northwest Bookfest celebration. On Saturday, October 20 at 12:30, TOPS students will meet Derek Munson, author of Enemy Pie. He will then be the emcee as the children perform on stage.

Northwest Bookfest is an annual event that “brings people together to celebrate the power of the written word and to promote literacy.” Bookfest takes place on October 19 and 20 from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm at the Stadium Exhibition Center near Safeco Field.

Hope to see everyone there supporting our young writers!

THERE’S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS...

Once again, TOPS students will have the opportunity to go on field trips to plays performed by Seattle Children’s Theatre. Parents are always needed/welcome as chaperones and drivers, and it’s a fun, short term way to volunteer, so get ready! All parents who attend must purchase a ticket. Student scholarships are available.

The anticipated schedule is as follows:

Johnny Tremain
Tuesday, Oct. 2, 10:00 am, for grades 3-5

Hoboken Chicken Emergency
Wednesday, December 12, 10:30 am, for grades K-3

The Wrestling Season
Tuesday, January 22, 10:00 am, for grades 6 and 8

Charlotte’s Web
Wednesday, January 30, 10:30 am, for grades K-3

Into the West
Tuesday, March 12, 10:00 am, for grades 2-4

Holes
Tuesday, May 14, 10:00 am, for grades 2-7
TOPSNEWS NEEDS YOU!

By Annie Gage

This newsletter is a way to get the word out regarding anything about TOPS that needs to be known, questioned, discussed, honored, celebrated, or cherished by the TOPS community. TOPSNEWS can be something people look forward to seeing in their mailboxes, or it can be another piece of automatic recycling (perish the thought!). We can make it a rich piece of correspondence for our school.

Please consider contributing, even if you do not feel confident about yourself as a writer—what editors are here for.

Here are some ideas about articles that parents (or students, or a parent or student team) could write for TOPSNEWS:

- Articles which educate the school community about your family’s culture
- Informational tidbits about what you see going on at the school when you volunteer during the day. Many parents can’t be at TOPS during school hours and might welcome the opportunity to know what happens at school all day
- Reviews of books about parenting and/or education.
- Mandatory testing is always a controversial topic. Anyone up for sharing some thoughts about that?
- Parent experiences and ideas doing TOPICS
- Many additional topics would make fine additions to our newsletter. Please send in your articles, photos, ideas and comments. The deadline is the 20th of every month.

Articles can be left in the newsletter box in the main office or sent to me at gagegreen@earthlink.net

By Annie Gage

This newsletter is a way to get the word out regarding anything about TOPS that needs to be known, questioned, discussed, honored, celebrated, or cherished by the TOPS community. TOPSNEWS can be something people look forward to seeing in their mailboxes, or it can be another piece of automatic recycling (perish the thought!). We can make it a rich piece of correspondence for our school.

Please consider contributing, even if you do not feel confident about yourself as a writer—what editors are here for.

Here are some ideas about articles that parents (or students, or a parent or student team) could write for TOPSNEWS:

- Articles which educate the school community about your family’s culture
- Informational tidbits about what you see going on at the school when you volunteer during the day. Many parents can’t be at TOPS during school hours and might welcome the opportunity to know what happens at school all day
- Reviews of books about parenting and/or education.
- Mandatory testing is always a controversial topic. Anyone up for sharing some thoughts about that?
- Parent experiences and ideas doing TOPICS
- Many additional topics would make fine additions to our newsletter. Please send in your articles, photos, ideas and comments. The deadline is the 20th of every month.

Articles can be left in the newsletter box in the main office or sent to me at gagegreen@earthlink.net

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