

TOPS NEWS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

By Clara Scott

Most of us celebrate the New Year each January first, but for students and educators, the first day of school truly marks the start of the New Year! The beginning of a new school year brings a fresh start and an opportunity to evaluate what we're doing. We make plans, change direction, refocus, and recommit to our ideals and vision. Teachers are busy planning events and lessons for the year, getting excited about the opportunities their new students will have. Students anticipate the New Year and wonder what it will bring. Their excitement builds (whether they admit it or not) as they purchase school supplies and new clothes. It is an exciting time.

We are pleased to welcome some wonderful additions to our teaching staff. Meredith McGahan is our new Deaf/Hard of Hearing teacher. Meredith comes to us from Roosevelt and is excited to be working with primary students again. Anna Aoki has joined us to teach 1st grade. Anna recently completed a long-term subbing assignment at Bailey Gatzert and is delighted to be at TOPS. Our new 5th-grade teacher is Venise Jones-Poole. Venise comes to us with a wealth of experience, with over twenty years in Seattle. She is excited to be part of a collaborative team that effects change for all students, in a nurturing environment. Hiromi Pingry will be back at TOPS in a slightly different capacity. Hiromi has been hired as a certificated teacher; she will continue to work with our kindergarten students and will also work with 1st-graders for an hour each day. If you see the smiling face of one of our new teachers, be sure to say hello and introduce yourself!

We are also excited about another change at TOPS. We have entered a partnership with Pacific Oaks College and have developed a teacher residency program that aligns with their certification program. Instead of working with teacher interns from a variety of schools, we will closely coordinate with one school with a mission that aligns with ours. Interns will be working in classrooms during the morning throughout the year, team teaching and leading small groups. Later, they will take over the class for their full-time experience. Since they will develop good relationships with students from the start of the year and each class will have only one intern during the year, the transition should be smooth.

This arrangement will allow our students to receive more teacher assistance and interact with more caring adults. It is also a great opportunity because we are helping shape and prepare more teachers for our area.

The fence around Rogers Field is finally down. Our students did well with limited play areas, but it sure will be nice to have access to the space again. The new playground and renovated field bring some challenges at recess time. Without your help, we are only able to provide a basic level of adult supervision. We are still in need of volunteers who can help play, supervise, and keep our kids safe. One recess each week will make a big difference and won't take up that much time during your week. Please call our volunteer coordinator to arrange your time.

Student Council is going through some changes this year. Last spring, our middle school students elected officers who will run meetings and lead Student Council. Our officers are Traci Tate, President; Morgan Cassell, Vice President; Jasmine Gartrell-Hall, Treasurer; and Helene Williams, Secretary. Our capable officers attended leadership camp this summer. They have the skills they need and are ready to go.

If you haven't made plans to volunteer in your child's class or elsewhere in the school, now is a good time to work it into your schedule. One reason TOPS is a great place is the parents who give their time here. Not only will our school as a whole benefit, but students with involved parents tend to be more successful. There are opportunities for all sorts of interests: helping in a classroom, prep work, library, gardening, lunch, recess, TOPICS, field trips, parties—and the list goes on. We hope you make volunteering a priority this year.

We have a New Year ahead of us! Let's work together to make it a great one!

Cheers!

Clara



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2500 Franklin Avenue East
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Principal:
Clara Scott

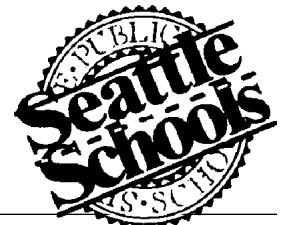
Assistant Principal:
Bruce Denton

Acting Site Council Chair:
Dave Sarju

Acting Vice-Chair:
Eileen Hynes

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.



FORUM

Editor's note: I've heard from a few people who wouldn't mind scratching our polite Northwest veneer just a tad so we could all really talk. How about getting the issues out? (Civility always recommended.) Anonymity provided on request.

ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the first monthly newsletter of the 2002-2003 school year. Teresa Nemeth is the editor. Cindy Suzumura and Margie Slovan handle layout and design. Heather Burgess and Nancy Lambert take care of the mailing.

We welcome your contributions: calendar additions, classroom news and news from the larger community, faculty notes, committee reports, opinions, profiles, compliments, congratulations, children's art, photos, and anything else significant to the TOPS community.

Submit your contributions to the newsletter box in the main office or, preferably, by electronic file to Teresa Nemeth at zongora2@hotmail.com. Deadlines for 2002-2003 will be the 10th of each month.

Anyone interested in working on the newsletter should contact Teresa at 325-8320 or at the above e-mail address.

BOYS VERSUS GIRLS: JUST A STAGE?

By Kathy Barker

Our children know enough not to laugh at someone's religion, or race, or culture. They know it is wrong to laugh at a handicap, or make a remark about a physical difference. If they do any of these things at home or school, it is likely that an adult will gently set them on the right road.

But many adults stand by benignly while the boys trash the girls and the girls trash the boys. Gender distinctions are seen as innocent: boy-versus-girl conflicts are written off as being "developmental," or "biological." It wasn't too long ago that racial conflicts were excused in the same way. Discounting half of your peers because of gender isn't developmental, it isn't natural, it isn't a stage—it is a socialization that will have a negative impact on all concerned.

We adults might need to look at ourselves—as well as the overall society—to see where this is coming from. Do the women roll their eyes when a man in the room says something, with a commiserating, "Well, what do you expect from a man?" Do the men mutter "Women drivers" bitterly on the highway? If we dismiss or disparage the gender of a person, our children will, too.

It is true that humans, when identifying with a group, will emphasize the differences between their chosen group and other groups. It is true that, with contributions from nature and nurture, there are undeniable differences between girls and boys. There is nothing wrong with noticing these differences, even pointing them out, if there isn't an unfounded judgment attached. But there are judgments attached to gender stereotypes, and there are lifelong repercussions from these stereotypes.

In education, there are a spate of books around that suggest that boys are not being served by the current educational system. The girl's loss is more visible, later in life: despite the girl's high grades in school, despite almost equal starting percentages of men and women in many jobs, most of the bosses are men. This is not lost

on kids. According to a recent article in the Washington Post, when more than 1,000 Michigan elementary school students were asked to describe what life would be like if they were born a member of the opposite sex, more than 40 percent of the girls saw positive advantages to being a boy: better jobs, more money, and definitely more respect. Ninety-five percent of the boys saw no advantage to being a female.* But those boys may later suffer from a lack of non-traditional career and lifestyle choices, and from expectations just as defined and stereotypic as those for women.

Some of the children at TOPS feel that being friends with the opposite sex will incite derision and jokes. Just a conversation with a child of the other gender can result in teasing and catcalls about boyfriends and girlfriends. This actually puts some children off friendships, as they are not confident enough to remain friends when that friendship is always being remarked upon. What a shame to start off your life with the assumption that half the people of the world will not be your friends! Especially through adolescence, when hormones are powerful and confusing, across-gender friendships can be precious and appreciated lifelines.

When I picture the society I want my children to be in, I want it to be where gender—like race, religion, culture—is part of what makes a person what he or she is, but is not the determining factor for jobs, lifestyle, or friendship. I hope my kids, all kids, will stand up against the stereotyping of boys and girls as firmly as they would stand up against any other unfair generalizations or put-downs.

Please send responses or rejoinders to this, or your thoughts on any other school-related issue (nothing political, please), to zongora2@hotmail.com.

*Sadker, David. 2000. "Gender games". The Washington Post, July 30.

WELCOME TO THE 2002-2003 SCHOOL YEAR!

By Marlies van Bergeijk

For the past two years, I have welcomed you as the volunteer coordinator. This year I am not returning to the position, because I am pursuing full-time employment. My goal had been to introduce my successor to you in this piece. However, as I am writing, midsummer, no one has been hired. Since it is posted on the TOPS website, I anticipate that, as the school year approaches, more people will read the ad and consider applying. It can be a fun job for someone who likes to be very involved, enjoys interacting with lots of people, is organized, and likes to know a bit about all the goings on at TOPS. I know I enjoyed it for those reasons. The stipend for this year has doubled from \$4000.00 to \$8000.00, with an additional \$300.00 for expenses. Ideally, someone would start in late August and work an average of 15 hours a week through June.

While the new volunteer coordinator will bring his or her ideas for a focus of efforts, one area that consistently deserves more attention is ensuring that all families at TOPS feel connected and involved. Sometimes this is a matter of being more sensitive to the challenges facing families who are non-native English speakers. Other times it may require that we all define "involvement" in broader terms. It may seem at first that you and your family have

very little in common with other families at TOPS because of real and perceived cultural differences. It may discline you to invite someone in your child's class to come and play. But very often, taking that chance pays off. I think it is great modeling for our children when we as parents take a chance and get out of our own comfort zone—especially since many of us express that we value being at TOPS, or being in the public school system for that matter, because of its diversity. So my challenge to all families is this: find a way to reach out to a parent or a student who is outside your regular circle. Experience what that is like for you and what unexpected gifts may follow.

Meanwhile, members of the Coalition for Social Justice have initiated more structured discussions about what it takes for all families to feel welcome. They are working on ways to expand these discussions to the broader TOPS community. They also have some specific ideas about how to help families feel more connected, such as finding ways for new parents to meet with veteran parents and promoting and respecting a multicultural environment. Expect to stay posted on all their efforts in this newsletter this year. Consider sharing your own stories in this forum as well.

TRAFFIC AND PARKING

By Bruce Denton and Clara Scott

TOPS has a great location in the city. Unfortunately, an abundance of parking isn't one of the amenities we enjoy here. If we all work together, we can ensure that traffic flows smoothly and our kids are safe. Please help by following these guidelines:

If you are dropping off your child before school or for before-school childcare, please use Louisa Street. You will be there before the busses, so there won't be problems. Please do not park in the parking lot. Even if you are only there for a few minutes, this forces staff members to park

on the street, where they will be forced to leave their classrooms to move their cars during the day.

Boylston is for drop-offs and pick-ups only. Parked cars will likely receive tickets from the Seattle Police.

If your child will not be riding the bus home, park in the neighborhood, then walk to the school to meet your child. Eastlake usually has empty spots.

Please do not leave your car in the parking lot unattended.

Thanks for your support in keeping our children safe!



What's a leader? Margie's 1st-graders draw their impressions

2002-2003 TOPS CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 4 (W)First student day
- 11 (W)First Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 24 (T).....Curriculum Night, 1st & 2nd grades & DHH, 6:30 - 7:15 p.m.
- 25 (W)Curriculum Night, 5th grade 6 - 6:45 p.m.; middle school 7-9 p.m.
- 25 (W) 2-hour early dismissal

OCTOBER

- 2 (W) 2-hour early dismissal
- 3 (Th)Curriculum Night, 3rd grade 6:30-7:15 p.m.; 4th grade 7:30-8:15 p.m.
- 9 (W)Curriculum Night, kindergarten 6-7p.m.; BOC 7-8:30 p.m.
- 11 (F)Professional development day (no school)
- 30 (W)2-hour early dismissal

NOVEMBER

- 1 (F)End of 1st quarter (middle school grades)
- 11 (M).....Veterans Day. No school
- 13 (W)TOPS State of the School night, 7 p.m.
- 18 (M) Elementary parent-teacher conferences start
- 27 (W) Last day conferences. 1-hour early dismissal
- 28-29 (Th-F)....Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

- 4 (W)2-hour early dismissal
- 20 (F).....1-hour early dismissal for Winter Break
- 23 (M)Winter Break begins

JANUARY

- 6 (M)School starts again
- 20 (M)Martin Luther King Jr. Day. No school
- 24 (F).....End of semester (middle school)
- 27 (M)Day between semesters. No school

FEBRUARY

- 5 (W)2-hour early dismissal
- 17-21 (M-F).....Mid-Winter Break. No school
- 26 (W)2-hour early dismissal

MARCH

- 5 (W)2-hour early dismissal
- 21 (F).....Professional development day. No school
- 26 (W)2-hour early dismissal

APRIL

- 4 (F)End of third quarter
- 7-11 (M-F).....Spring Break

MAY

- 7 (W)2-hour early dismissal
- 26 (M)Memorial Day. No school

JUNE

- 18 (W)Last student day, 1-hour early dismissal



Making hot air balloons -- a very popular TOPIC!

STAFF

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Principal..... Clara Scott
Assistant Principal..... Bruce Denton
Counselor Jennifer Murray
Family Support Worker Junne Park

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Administrative Secretary..... Helen Hundley
Office Assistant/BOC..... Linda Downing
Office Assistant/ASB Susan Larson
Office Assistant/Budget Joann Sparks
Compensatory Education..... Mike Anderson
Custodial Engineer Saream Dy
Evening Custodians..... Joe Rivers, Chau Huynh
Lunchroom Manager..... Ernese McQueen
Nurse..... Ann Uomoto
Office Assistant..... Susan Larson
Office Assistant..... Joann Sparks
Psychologist TBA
Special Education Patty Maffit
Special Education..... John Daugherty
Volunteer Coordinator TBA
Communication (CDS)..... Ann Lichtenstadter

TEACHING STAFF

Kindergarten..... Joby Moore and Joan O'Connor
Kindergarten PEAK..... Hiromi Pingry
1st grade..... Margie Butcher and Anna Aoki
2nd grade..... Carla Fetterley and Willie Jones
3rd grade..... Tracy Seefeld and Katie Waters
4th grade..... Mary Chao and Joe Drummond
5th grade..... Venise Jones-Poole and Ilsa Govan
6th grade (SS, LA) Marianne Trangen
6th grade (Math, Science) Lana Fuller
6/7/8 Art Luzita Roll
7/8 Science Dan Bloedel
7th/8th Math..... Mark Ellis
7th/8th Language Arts..... Lori Eickelberg
7th/8th Social Studies Karen Hart
BOC Primary..... Karen Wong
BOC Primary/Intermediate..... Linda Orantes
BOC Instructional Assistants Sorayya Aly and Manuel Bermudez
ESL K-5..... Nicole Titus
PE Don Zemke and Eric Herndon
Elementary Artist in Residence Cynthia Livak
Instructional Aide Katy Rohr-Smith
Librarian Steve Haines
Learning Assistant Program..... Mike Anderson
Hearing Impaired Program..... Meredith McGahan
Kids Company..... Tonja Davis

ROOM REPRESENTATIVES 2002-2003

Room representatives facilitate communication between parents and the classroom, and school-wide communication through the newsletter and selective use of the phone tree and/or e-mail messages. Being a room rep is a great way for mothers and fathers to get involved in the school community and their child's education.

When the room lists are posted on the TOPS homepage (<http://www.ssd.k12.wa.us/schools/tops/index.html>), parents are urged to volunteer for room rep positions. For more information and to volunteer, contact interim volunteer coordinator Marlies van Bergeijk (328-3064, paul-marlies@worldnet.att.net). Ideally, we need two reps per teacher in K-5 and 2 reps per grade in 6-8.

MESSAGE FROM DAVE SARJU, ACTING SITE COUNCIL CHAIR

Welcome to the returning and new members of our community. If selected by your new Site Council representatives, I will serve as Chair during this coming school year. I desire that as a community we will be motivated by our hopes and will use our fears to discover more about ourselves. I believe that each of us brings unique perspectives and gifts of service to the larger community. This is a good thing. I hope that we will hold ourselves accountable to the same high standards to which we hold our children. Please hold me accountable to these ideals.

What is the role of the Site Council? I believe that it is to contribute to the mission, vision, and goals of the TOPS

community. In order to do this, the Site Council must be a place where all voices are heard. One tangible goal that Eileen Hynes (Vice-Chair) and I have for the coming year is to increase the visibility of and access to the Site Council. Towards that goal, we hope to increase communication by liberally posting Site Council agendas and minutes, and making them easily accessible on the TOPS website.

In the time that I allot to service through the Site Council and with my strengths and weaknesses, I welcome your support.

Dave Sarju

TOPS COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

By Rebecca Sadinsky

So many activities come to mind when we think about last year's Coalition for Social Justice: race and education study circles; Taste of TOPS; anti-bias and multicultural library book purchases; thoughtful newsletter articles on the building of an anti-bias, multicultural community and learning environment at TOPS; and thought-provoking conversations at meetings and via the Coalition's list. We look forward to all this and more in the coming year, and we hope you will find a way to participate.

The TOPS Coalition for Social Justice benefits immeasurably from its diverse membership, consisting of teachers, parents of students at all grade levels, and the principals. Most of us came to the Coalition having participated in at least one set of race and education study circles—although many study circle participants have used their experience there to contribute to TOPS in other ways. The Coalition has high hopes that participation will help build a more inclusive TOPS community. To that end, we hope that most new families will participate in one or

more of the study circles in the coming year, as a kind of orientation to the new TOPS mission. This reads, "We are committed to educating our students by using an anti-bias, multicultural approach in a safe and stimulating environment. We help all students to learn, to understand and honor diversity, to respect and care for themselves and others, to be responsible, and to achieve a high level of academic excellence. By eliminating the achievement gap, all students will meet or exceed standards, including those students historically underserved by the public school system."

The Coalition has been working over the summer to develop a work plan and establish a leadership committee so we can start off running in September. Stay tuned for more news and announcements from the Coalition and consider joining in by attending a study circle or Coalition meeting, or by assisting with one of the Coalition activities. For immediate information, you may contact one of the following leadership team members: Margie Butcher, Garry Owens, or Tilman Smith.

2002-2003 SITE COUNCIL FUNDING

CURRICULUM SUPPORT

Art teacher for grades 1 - 4 and BOC classes	\$10,000
Music and dance around the world.....	4,500
Middle school & elementary drama productions	2,500
Special auction item - music program.....	11,335
Scholarships for K - 5 before / after school Spanish Program	1,500
BOC 3 - 5th grade camp support.....	1,150
Multicultural resources for the library and classroom.....	3,000
Vietnamese Artist in Residence	3,200
Visiting Vietnamese author	680
Guest speaker fund.....	1,000
Different perspectives mini-grants	800
Multicultural assemblies	1,500
K - 2 bookroom	2,300
Technology budget	5,000
Lab supplies.....	5,500
Teacher stipends for classroom supplies	5,000
School supplies (to replace Better Schools Funding Loss)	30,000
Counselor (partial salary & benefits)	15,302
Eighth Grade Passage	2,000
Topics coordinator expenses	500

OVERHEAD

School directory and monthly newsletters.....	\$4,000
Volunteer coordinator	5,300
Emergency assistance.....	1,500
Interpreting and translating services	1,500
Childcare for meetings and events	1,000
Staff appreciation	500
Anti-bias/ anti-racism book loan program	210
Lunchroom loans	200
Finance committee/ Site Council expenses	665
Contingency fund	2,000
History of TOPS project.....	500

FUNDRAISING EXPENSES

Auction and No Bake Sale expenses	\$13,000
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TOTAL BUDGET \$137,142

Money raised by parents: Auction.....76,000

No Bake Sale45,700

PEAK reserve for funding needs.....10,000

Americorps funding from prior year6,000

NEW TOPS WEBMASTER

Beginning this fall, TOPS parent and former webmaster Jack Lee is once again taking over the webmaster duties for the TOPS website. If you have any TOPS info (pictures, news, announcements of TOPS activities) that you are interested in having posted on the website, send it to Jack's home e-mail address at lee@oz.net. Virtually any format will be fine (HTML, MS Word, plain text, scanned photos, etc.), but please send electronic files only. Questions? Call Jack at 206-524-6346 (home) or 206-543-1735 (work).

ALL ABOUT BRUCE DENTON, NEW(-ISH) ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

By Hilja Welsh

Mr. Bruce Denton's first day at TOPS was Valentine's Day 2002. He became assistant principal when Co-principal Gary Tubbs left mid-school year. Despite the challenges of starting the position that late, he has transitioned into TOPS remarkably well. Fifth-grader Patrick Welsh said, "Mr. Denton is nice and understanding. He doesn't yell and he takes the time to listen." Robin Sadinsky, also a 5th-grader, had the same sentiment. "He is calm about everything. He treats kids well even if they get into trouble." Daniella Welsh, an 8th-grader, said she sees all the younger kids waving goodbye to Mr. Denton from the bus line.



In an e-mail interview, Mr. Denton answered questions about himself. Read on to find out more about him.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Seattle and grew up in Edmonds and Lynnwood. My father was a vice-principal, then principal, in the Edmonds School District when I was growing up.

What is your educational and training background?

I attended the University of Washington and studied architecture. I thought I'd break family tradition (or maybe genetics) and be an architect instead of an educator. It wasn't a good fit and I knew my heart wasn't in it, so I went to Seattle University and earned my Masters in Teaching. Later, I attended Western Washington University's Principal Certificate Program at their Seattle Urban Center.

Which school systems have you been involved with?

I did my student teaching in Seattle at T.T. Minor. I started teaching in the Edmonds School District at Mountlake Terrace Elementary. I taught 6th grade for four years, then taught kindergarten for three. Later, I taught 1st grade at Martha Lake Elementary and Westgate Elementary. I was also dean of students (essentially the same as a vice-principal) at Martha Lake.

What is your area of expertise in school administration?

Just coming out of the classroom, I think that I can relate to students and teachers well. At the same time, I understand the big picture from the view as an adminis-

trator. I also enjoy getting systems in place so everybody knows what to expect and things run smoothly.

What are your favorite activities outside of school?

Lately it feels like there haven't been a lot of activities outside of school, but when I have time I like to bicycle, read, hang out with friends, and make quilts. I say that I make quilts all the time, but I don't think I've finished one in a few years! I do, though, enjoy the design and creative aspects to the process.

What are your favorite elementary and middle school memories? Your worst?

One of the best memories of elementary school was the 3rd grade. My teacher was wonderful! I don't remember what I learned that year, but I knew that she really cared about us and loved her job. It is important to remember how much an individual teacher can make a difference. The worst part of elementary school would be when I broke both my arms while horsing around with my dad. It wasn't at school, so I don't know if that counts. But I was miserable the night it happened. I didn't get my cast and splint until the next morning.

I have no clue what the best part of middle school was. We had a wood shop and a metal shop, so it was fun to try new classes. I was on the yearbook staff and worked in the student store; both of those things were fun. Mostly I remember not liking middle school. It is such a strange time, as kids are trying to figure out where they fit in and kids can be so mean to each other. In 7th grade I was in a junior high. My sister was in 9th grade and my dad was the principal. They closed the school and I moved to a middle school for 8th grade. The student body was reconfigured and everybody had to go through the process of combining with different groups. Those things probably didn't help make the time great for me.

How will you help TOPS continue to be a strong school?

Last year, the mission and vision were modified. I think that I can help the school stay strong and keep growing by always using the mission and vision to guide my decision-making. I'll work with the principal, Clara Scott, so our strengths complement each other. We'll consider the history of the school, where we are now, and where we want to go when we make decisions.

(Continued on next page)

A DAY AT THE BEACH

TOPS 1st- and 2nd-graders spent one of their last school days in June playing at Shilshole. Here, 1st-grade teacher Margie Butcher announces leadership awards to her students (and some of Tabitha's).



First-grade teacher Margie Butcher with (almost) 2nd-graders

(Continued from previous page)

Do you see yourself staying at TOPS for an extended period of time?

I have moved around quite a bit in the last three years. I'd like to stick around for a while. I think that's when real change happens. I really enjoy working with Ms. Scott. I think we make a great team, so I don't want to break that up. However, as a district employee, I'm at their mercy. So, I'll go where they need me.

Now for fun: What are your favorite foods, type of music, color, and television show?

I love ice cream (I worked at an ice cream shop when I was in high school and ate ice cream all the time. Ah,

the joys of a high schooler's metabolism) and Pagliacci's Pizza. My musical tastes are always changing and expanding, but it's hard to go wrong with 80's music. My favorite color is navy blue. I enjoy the Star Trek shows from The Next Generation on. Lately, I've been hooked on Alias.

Is there anything else you would like to include?

I think TOPS is great! I am delighted to be a part of it!

CALLING ALL GREEN THUMBS!

Last spring, we had to make some difficult decisions with our shrinking school budget. One place we decided to save money was in the area of gardening services. We will still have a small amount of service, but definitely less than we've received previously, and not enough to really maintain our grounds. Here is how you can help. You and your family have the opportunity to adopt a garden area at the school. You will be responsible for weeding and keeping the area looking sharp. We are also in need of a gardening coordinator to keep track of the process. Gardening expertise is a bonus, but definitely not required. If you can help, please contact our volunteer coordinator (TBA).

TOPS ARTFEST 2002

By Margaret Ness

Recently I attended a seminar, which included an art project along with more didactic training. At the beginning of the art project, the instructor said, "Now, I want everyone to pretend they're five years old. Because when we're five years old, we all still believe that we're great artists." I had to restrain myself from shouting out, "My kids are much older than five and they still feel like they're great artists! And as a matter of fact, they ARE!" At TOPS, our art instructors give our children the opportunities and skills to hold onto that belief and demonstrate it as fact. The ArtFest is our chance to applaud the talent of our children and their teachers, Luzita Roll and Cynthia Livak.

Every May, I look forward to the TOPS art festival. When projects from the entire year are displayed, the school turns into an art museum. I stroll through halls hung with abstract, representational, and multimedia projects and feel very cool because I know so many of the artists. The primary students (1st- through 4th-graders), who work with Cynthia Livak, often create art that coordinates with budding writing skills. It is always fascinating to see what the children write about their work. I was particularly touched by the Family Heritage Project, in which the students combined family

photos with their art, as well as thoughts about their family backgrounds.

Luzita Roll guides the art of the 5th- through 8th-graders. Some of their projects can only be described as amazing. For example, the animal pastel project, done in 6th grade, always produces work deserving museum-quality framing and a prominent display spot (something better than your refrigerator).

The 7th-grade mask project also inspires incredible results. Each child makes a plaster gauze mask of his or her face. The child then creates a setting for the mask, reflecting some aspect of him- or herself, and writes an explanatory essay. Going through the mask gallery was a profound experience. I was moved not only by what each student expressed, but also by the children's trust in putting the masks out there for the community to see. The adolescent experiences of separation, loss, exhilaration, fantasy, and rebellion were all exhibited. I would guess that the students came out of this project with a deeper understanding of their own lives. The parents certainly did.

The ArtFest always requires many hours of preparation, not just in art classes, but in organization, refreshment preparation, and set-up. Please consider volunteering for ArtFest 2003 and you'll gain even more appreciation for our outstanding art program.



Proud teacher
Luzita Roll



Enraptured art fans



Artist at work



Fabric artists



Master sculptor

CG 599
815 Fourth Avenue North
P.O. Box 19116
Seattle, WA 98109-1116



CURRICULUM NIGHT IS COMING

TOPS staff members have put their heads together to find a way for parents to attend curriculum night presentations for their children in different grades. This year, TOPS will have curriculum night activities on four nights:

September 24: 1st Grade, 2nd Grade, & DHH 6:30 - 7:15

September 25: 5th Grade 6-6:45; Break 6:45-7:00; Middle School 7-9

October 3: 3rd Grade 6:30-7:15; Break 7:15-7:30; 4th Grade 7:30-8:15

October 9: Kindergarten 6-7; BOC 7-8:30

Mark your calendar now. We look forward to seeing you!



*THANKS TO G&H PRINTING
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