

# TOPS NEWS

February 2005 ♦ Volume 8, Issue 4

The monthly newsletter of TOPS, a Seattle Public K-8 alternative school

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Wow! Can you believe we just completed the first half of the school year? It seems like the first day of school just passed and yet we are now beginning the second semester of school.

On January 12, our 4th through 8th grade students descended upon the Eckstein Middle School campus. Our students were fortunate to hear a speech by renowned author Rachel Simmons, who wrote the book *Odd Girl Out*. Ms. Simmons shared her wealth of knowledge about students' social aggression in adolescent years. She discussed how social aggression manifests itself in the form of isolation, exclusion, cliques, and gossip. The author empowered students with strategies to combat social aggression. Later, the girls participated in a Q & A session with Ms. Simmons while the boys listened to a presentation by TeenSafari.

The Martin Luther King Jr. assembly was held on January 13. To celebrate this important holiday, many classes prepared songs, plays, or poems. We want to thank 8th grader Annie McKeon for being the Mistress of Ceremony. The kindergarten students and their 5th grade buddies sang two inspirational songs. Several 8th grade students encouraged social activism through a call to action. The 2nd grade students sang the song "Calypso Freedom." Our 1st grade and DHH classes recited two poems.

Mary's class entertained with a George Washington play and the Hummingbird and Inspire Choirs ended the assembly on a high note. Thank you to our hardworking teachers and students for making this important event possible!

The speech tournaments will commence on February 4. Students are practicing in their classrooms. We are excited to invite community members and staff from the district office into our school to judge these competitions.

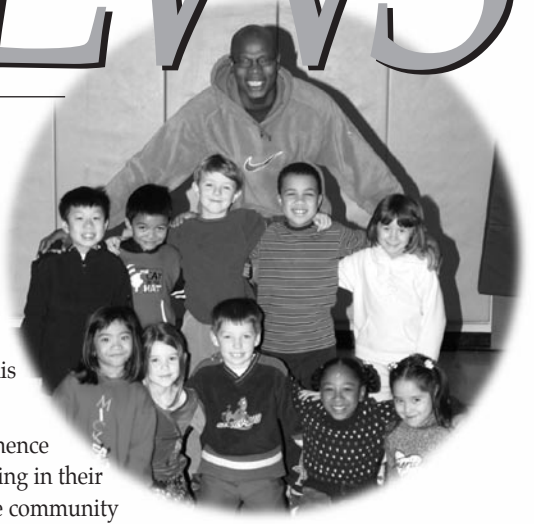
We have had many sick students in the office lately. Please make sure the office has current work and cell numbers in case of emergency. The students feel more secure when we are able to reach their parents quickly.

We had a moment of silence for the Tsunami victims. Our ASB students will be planning a forthcoming fundraising event.

Have a safe mid-winter break.

Cheers!

Clara



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**Assistant Principal:**  
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**Site Council Chair:**  
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### NEWSLETTER ONLINE

The TOPS newsletters are available online in PDF format before the printed copy arrives in your mailbox! From the TOPS home page (<http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/tops>), click on *Latest Newsletter* in the *Quick Links* section.

## NATIONAL BLACK HISTORY MONTH

By Sheri Toussaint, CSJ member

The theme in February 2005 and throughout the year is

### THE NIAGARA MOVEMENT: BLACK PROTEST REBORN, 1905- 2005

2005 marks the 100th anniversary of this moment in black history. This event took place at Niagara Falls in honor of the first African American meeting held to end racial discrimination. On July 11 through 14, 1905, on the Canadian side of Niagara Falls, 29 men met and formed a group they called the Niagara Movement. The meeting had originally been planned to take place on the American side of the falls, but the delegates were denied accommodations by racially prejudiced hotel managers. They crossed over to the Cana-

dian side, where they were welcomed and received rooms without incident.

The name came because of the location and the "mighty current" of protest they wished to unleash. The Niagara Movement's manifesto read in part: "We claim for ourselves every single right that belongs to a freeborn American, political, civil and social; and until we get these rights we will never cease to protest and assail the ears of America. The battle we wage is not for ourselves alone but for all true Americans. It is a fight for ideals, lest this, our common fatherland, false to its founding, become in truth the land of the thief and the home of the slave -- a byword and a hissing among the nations for its sounding pretensions and pitiful accomplishment." [See also "What TOPS Families Are Celebrating," p. 11.]



SEATTLE  
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SCHOOLS

# TO THE EDITOR

I'd like to thank the folks who organized the 8th graders' forum on high school selection last month. It was a lot of effort to assemble representatives from so many schools, and the evening was spirited and fun.

That said, I'd like to strongly encourage my fellow 8th grade parents to keep their commitments to public education as we make our high school selections. Our forum was a little heavy on promoting private schools (they went first, took most of the time, and their representatives were more promotional), but I hope that doesn't cause anyone to jump the public ship that has been so good to us at TOPS.

Seattle Schools will continue to thrive only if the whole community participates and enrolls our kids. We need

to maintain a city-wide commitment to enrolling every child--that's how we ensure a continued ability to raise funds, volunteer in classrooms, drive on fieldtrips, advocate in Olympia, and pass levies. There are some neighborhoods in the city where the public market share has slipped to 50% or lower; those are precisely the neighborhoods that need to boost their public enrollment.

There are many great choices for public high schools in Seattle. It's a terrific financial deal, too -- you can save your money for a trip abroad, for a fancy private college, or for SAT prep classes.

Stick with Seattle public schools, now more than ever.

~Amy Hagopian

## ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the fifth newsletter of the 2004-05 school year. Teresa Nemeth edits, Cindy Suzumura handles photos, design, and layout, and Toby Harris and Peggy Riehle get it mailed off to you. Don Zemke provides many of our photos.

We need your submissions: 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 Word file or email to Teresa at [zongora@gmail.com](mailto:zongora@gmail.com). Please send photos to [csuzumura@mindspring.com](mailto:csuzumura@mindspring.com).

Deadlines are the Friday after each Site Council meeting. The deadline for the March issue is February 18.

Would you like to edit or otherwise help with this fabulous publication? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Teresa at the above address.

## REPORT FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD

By Kathy Wickward

This month and next the Seattle School Board embarks upon the difficult task of deciding how to reduce a likely \$12.5 million budget deficit in the 2006-07 school year. While it would like to expect increased revenue from the state, this looks unlikely, according to the newly hired director of government relations, Delight Roberts. Superintendent Manhas pointed out in the January 5 meeting that Washington State ranks 46th in the nation in terms of school funding. Hence, the district is eying three very contentious and seemingly drastic solutions: closing schools, eliminating open enrollment, and reducing bus service. The district is saying it can no longer afford to offer so much choice, and that it cannot support the ideal of small class sizes.

At community forums in January, Board members sought input on a set of potential criteria to use when evaluating whether to close a particular school. District staff were unprepared at the January 18 forum to provide the kinds of cost figures community members asked for to use in evaluating the criteria. In defense of its consideration of school consolidation, the district states that it is operating with 30% excess capacity, that enrollment is expected to decline through 2012, that its agreement with SEA (the Seattle teachers union) allows for elementary class sizes of up to 26 for K-3 and 28 for 4th & 5th grades, and that closing a school would save between \$376,315 to \$480,000. The list of possible consolidation criteria is posted online at [www.seattleschools.org](http://www.seattleschools.org). It includes such categories as school location and capacity, building condition, academics and program, community interests and impacts, and financial considerations. Final criteria will be introduced to the Board on March 2, and the Board will vote March 16. The Board will not make a final decision on whether to take action on consolidation until June 15, although this date is subject to revision.

This month, the Board is seeking input on its plan to return to neighborhood schools. The plans under consideration assign every residence an elementary, middle, and high school, with some limited choices in terms of specific programs and alternative schools. The Board is seeking a solid definition of alternative schools, and will be looking at the number and location of alternative schools. Two of the meetings to specifically address this issue will be held on February 9 at the John Stanford Center auditorium at 6:30 p.m. (Board work session) and February 17 at Eckstein Middle School at 6:30 p.m.

In other School Board news, the Board voted to rebid the transportation contracts with Durham and First Student for the 2005-06 school year. Director Stewart said the district has not resolved the labor issues that have emerged in the last year and in the absence of a labor harmony agreement, the Board felt it could not accept the current contract for the next year.

The district has started a new fundraising venture: "School Kids Come First." Potential donors can access [www.schoolkidscomefirst.com](http://www.schoolkidscomefirst.com) to see a variety of projects submitted by teachers at schools that are not able to raise the kinds of funds that TOPS (for example) can to support its programs. These projects are classroom enhancements costing between \$100 and \$500 -- not basics such as textbooks. Small donations towards these projects are welcome and encouraged. Four projects were funded at its unveiling in mid-January.

The district has hired a new human resources director, Jane Westergard Nimitz. The Board tasked her office with crafting personnel reports that are more informative, particularly regarding terminations and reassignments. The district made some administrative changes between Cleveland and Rainier Beach High Schools. Finally, the

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# STEWARDSHIP STUDY GROUP #1: A GREAT BEGINNING

By Laurie Stusser-McNeil

On a very rainy night in December, a group of hearty parents, teachers, and administrators came together in the school library to consider this idea of stewardship and what a comprehensive program could look like at TOPS. The conversation was far-reaching and smoothly facilitated by Chuck Lennox, a specialist in the field of environmental curriculum.

Chuck began the session with a brainstorm on the term “stewardship” and what it meant to the 15+ participants. Definitions and related ideas included:

- ♦ Sustainability
- ♦ Connection
- ♦ Involvement
- ♦ Legacy
- ♦ Community Space
- ♦ Mentoring
- ♦ Service Learning
- ♦ Values
- ♦ Culture
- ♦ Integrated
- ♦ Teachable Moments
- ♦ Individual responsibility

We then broke out into pairs to discuss what stewardship meant to us personally and what we hoped to see in a school program. Some of the ideas generated include:

- ♦ Help the kids create automatic values – “tracks in the mind” to do the right thing (e.g. “I never throw my litter on the ground.”). The actions become automatic with enough practice and reminders.
- ♦ Develop a personal sense of responsibility
- ♦ Model behavior
- ♦ Put our words into action
- ♦ Use school grounds as classroom
- ♦ Go beyond simple maintenance
- ♦ Respect our world beginning at school; respect the environment
- ♦ Use hands-on, personal involvement
- ♦ Mentor – older/younger
- ♦ Help develop the idea “this is not about me,” but bigger, more universal

- ♦ Create a philosophy, build a sense of community

The third part of the night was focused on what Chuck calls a “Force Field Analysis” – exploring what currently supports stewardship at TOPS and what resists it. As the table below suggests, there are many positive support systems in place and a few challenges to overcome:

SUPPORTS	RESISTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Existing school culture</li> <li>♦ Supportive/available parent volunteers</li> <li>♦ Various levels of implementation possible</li> <li>♦ Living values at school</li> <li>♦ Service learning requirements for 7th-8th graders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Competing priorities – lots of other issues/interests</li> <li>♦ TOPS mission statement omits stewardship as a value, but does include respect and responsibility.</li> <li>♦ Will it last? What makes it sustainable?</li> <li>♦ Must make connections to social justice issues in school vision</li> </ul>

By the time this newsletter is printed, Study Group #2 will have taken place on January 27. At this second meeting, we will continue to explore how to make stewardship a core value at TOPS. We will have an assessment of current school programs in the area of environmental learning and community service to work from, looking for links and “holes” in the sequential flow from grade to grade. We will also further flesh out a zone concept for stewardship, replicating very successful programs at other schools that have different grades taking responsibility for different school areas (i.e., kindergarten cares for their play area, 2nd grade tends the sandbox on a scheduled basis, etc.).

The entire school community is welcome to participate in this thoughtful process and jump in anytime. Look for announcements of Study Group #3 in February or March and plan to attend!

## REPORT FROM THE BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM (BLT)

By Glen Tamura, parent representative to the BLT

TOPS is continuing to explore bullying and its consequences for students and the school environment in a number of ways this school year. This has created an opportunity for the BLT to provide momentum for the implementation of a bullying prevention program. Bullying prevention involves a comprehensive approach, with activities aimed at individuals (bullies and their targets), classrooms, the entire school, and the school community, and it will be important to build carefully a positive program that improves general climate and personal relationships. One potential program the BLT is exploring is a comprehensive bullying prevention program developed by Dr. Dan Olweus (for information about this program, go to [www.clemson.edu/olweus/](http://www.clemson.edu/olweus/) – see also the October, November, and December/January newsletters). Olweus is a framework, rather than a curriculum or program, so it would also allow teachers to

incorporate other programs designed to enhance the positive climate, such as the “Positive Discipline” program already in use in most classrooms, to evolve a consistent approach and language while allowing for changes as the children grow. A task force of interested staff are exploring the possibilities, and we welcome input from all staff, students, and families. The BLT hopes to consider a formal proposal for staff adoption in March.

In addition, the budget process looms large over us and must be completed by March 18! Assistant Principal Gerrit Kischner is developing the budget process. The BLT encourages input from the TOPS community on budget issues.

To provide input on these or other issues, contact a parent representative: Glen Tamura ([gtamura@u.washington.edu](mailto:gtamura@u.washington.edu)), Maureen Germani ([Maureen@germani.org](mailto:Maureen@germani.org)), or Holly Morris Jacobson ([holly@morrisjacobson.com](mailto:holly@morrisjacobson.com)).

# SITE COUNCIL REPORT

JANUARY 19, 2005

By Louise Bush Rosen

## INTERNAL SITE COUNCIL ISSUES

Maureen Germani announced the need to determine which Site Council representative seats will be available next year. Current representatives need to state whether or not they will be returning next year, and whether they have recommendations of parents who should be considered for next year.

## SCHOOL BOARD REPORT

Kathy Wickward gave her report from last month's Seattle School Board meeting. [See "Report from the School Board," p. 2.]

## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Clara Scott discussed a number of issues involving staff and students. She reported that the Martin Luther King Jr. assembly was a resounding success and she urged parents to let their children know they did a great job. She reported that school tours have begun, with a large turnout for the first tour. She also announced that TOPS has been designated as a drop-off site for school busses from other schools should those busses not be able to get children safely to their bus stops because of snow. Finally, she noted that the tutoring program will begin at the start of the next semester.

## BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM (BLT)

Gerrit Kischner reported that the BLT is now working on

a bullying prevention program, and that TOPS was not successful in receiving the City of Seattle grant it had applied for. He stated that pulling the grant application together was nevertheless instrumental in helping to put the program in place for next year. A group of teachers is now in charge of determining the next step towards achieving a program, and there is enough money in the bank for initial bullying prevention training for the teachers to begin.

Gerrit stated that the BLT's main focus over the next two months will be the budget for the 2005-06 school year, which is due on March 18. [See also "Report from the BLT," p. 3.]

## PROPOSAL REGARDING THE SCHOLASTIC BOOK CATALOGUE

Suzanne Oelke, a TOPS parent, spoke to the Site Council regarding the Scholastic book catalogues sent home with students several times during the school year. Suzanne's concerns regarding the catalogues stem from the "as-seen-on-TV," movie-based, toy-based, and video game-based books that are dispersed along with the educationally valuable books offered in the catalogue. She is concerned these books may violate TOPS' mission of educational excellence and social justice by blurring the lines between education and entertainment; that such books are simply tools to market the toys, movies, and video games they are based on; and that the books fail to break down gender stereotypes or promote social values. She further stated she believes such books violate the "Milwaukee Principles for Corporate Involvement in Schools," adopted by the TOPS

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## 2004-05 TOPS CALENDAR

Send your events and dates to our webmaster, Jack Lee, at [Lee@Oz.net](mailto:Lee@Oz.net).

Please check Wednesday Go-Homes and the web site for updates.

### FEBRUARY

3 (Th) ..... CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.  
9 (W) ..... Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal  
15 (T) ..... Parent math night, *Fractions, measurement, & geometry*, 7-9 p.m.  
16 (W) ..... Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
18 (F) ..... Newsletter deadline  
21 (M) ..... Presidents Day; no school  
22-25 (T-F) ..... Mid-winter break; no school  
24-26 (Th-Sa) .. Mission Ridge ski trip

### MARCH

2 (W) ..... Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal  
3 (Th) ..... CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.

16 (W) ..... Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
18 (F) ..... Newsletter deadline  
18 (F) ..... Professional development day; no school

### APRIL

7 (Th) ..... CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.  
8 (F) ..... End of third quarter  
11-15 (M-F) .. Spring break; no school  
20 (W) ..... Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
22 (F) ..... Newsletter deadline  
26 (T) ..... Parent math night, *Probability & statistics*, 7-9 p.m.

### MAY

5 (Th) ..... CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.

14 (Sa) ..... TOPS Auction, Asian Resource Center  
18 (W) ..... Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal  
18 (W) ..... Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
20 (F) ..... Newsletter deadline  
20 (F) ..... Elementary play, 7 p.m.  
21 (Sa) ..... Elementary play, 2 and 7 p.m.  
24 (T) ..... Parent math night, *Patterns and functions/algebraic thinking*, 7-9 p.m.  
30 (M) ..... Memorial Day; no school

### JUNE

2 (Th) ..... CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.  
15 (W) ..... Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
21 (T) ..... Last student day

# WAMOOOLA: AN EASY WAY TO RAISE FUNDS FOR TOPS

Sent in by Tammy Luthy

TOPS families have an easy way to make passive cash for our school. Washington Mutual Bank will contribute to our school EVERY time you swipe your Washington Mutual Bank debit card. You just need to identify TOPS as the school you wish to receive your debit card benefits.

The program, called WAMOOOLA FOR SCHOOLS, runs each calendar year. TOPS achieved over 10,000 points in

2004 with only 100 families enrolled. This should translate to about \$500 for just signing up the debit cards we are using every day.

Enroll your Washington Mutual debit card into their web site and assign your points to TOPS today.

Check out [www.wamoolaforschools.com](http://www.wamoolaforschools.com) : go to the ENROLL tab at the top of the page and start adding to the TOPS WAMOOOLA!!

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*Site Council Report continued from page 4*

Site Council in 1997, which state that "Selling or providing access to a captive audience in the classroom for commercial purposes is exploitation and a violation of public trust."

Suzanne proposed that TOPS: 1. provide an "opt-out" form for each child which would allow parents to opt not to receive the Scholastic book catalogue, 2. write a letter to Scholastic relating the concerns of TOPS parents and teachers and requesting a non-commercial edition of the catalogue, and 3. put together a study group composed of concerned parents and teachers to identify an alternative whereby teachers could continue to get much-needed books for their classrooms.

The teachers at the meeting resoundingly stated they do depend on the point system currently delivered by the Scholastic catalogue to buy books for their classrooms.

After much discussion, the Site Council passed a motion creating a study group that would identify economically accessible alternatives to the Scholastic catalogue and increase parental awareness of the catalogue, and authorizing Suzanne to draft a letter to Scholastic, to be approved by the Site Council. Members determined that the "opt-out" portion of Suzanne's original proposal would not in practice be meaningful since students share their catalogues with one another and most students would therefore see the catalogues whether their parents opted to receive them or not. It was further discussed that in addition to sending a letter to Scholastic, a petition signed by parents and teachers may also be a useful tool for informing Scholastic of the school's concerns with the current catalogue.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Steve Havas, Site Council treasurer, reported that next year TOPS should be able to put more money into a CD that will continue to earn interest. In response to a question regarding the ski bus, Steve stated that the ski club is solvent. Sheri Toussaint stated that a full report on the No-Bake Bake Sale fundraiser will be issued next month.

## DRAMA

Linda Korbus, drama committee chair, reported that despite her efforts to get more parents and students to come to the middle school play, she has not seen the attendance she would like. Linda has tried putting reminders in Go-Homes and putting articles in local papers and newsletters; members agreed that there needs to be a brainstorming session to come up with new ways to get more people to attend the plays.

## COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE (CSJ)

Galen Goff reported that the January 6 CSJ screening of the movie *Color of Fear* was very successful and valuable, as was Rachel Simmons' parent presentation on girl bullying. She also stated that at the February 3 CSJ meeting Jennifer Murray and Wayne Duncan will facilitate a follow-up discussion on the Rachel Simmons presentation. This year's Taste of TOPS will have a Japanese theme. [See back page.]

## VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR POSITION

Gerrit Kischner reported that the administration has had informal discussions with one outside person and one parent about the volunteer coordinator position, and that formal interviews will take place soon.

Kathy Cox-Czosnyka talked about the need for the formation of a steering committee that would be an advisory group to the new volunteer coordinator. This committee would ideally be made up of various TOPS committee chairs who would help the volunteer coordinator identify resources and volunteers within the TOPS community. The Site Council concluded its meeting by finalizing and adopting the volunteer coordinator job description (which can be viewed on the TOPS web site).

## UW COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FORUM: STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Tuesday, February 15 at 7 p.m., Town Hall

Sent in by Sandi Kurtz

Over the past decade, high-stakes assessments of our schools have grown in number and clout. Tying performance on these tests to high school graduation will have far-reaching implications. Three professors from the UW College of Education discuss the history, current issues, and future implications of high-stakes student assessment. Downstairs at Town Hall, enter on Seneca Street. Free, no tickets required. Call 685-6413 or email [rsvpeduc@u.washington.edu](mailto:rsvpeduc@u.washington.edu) for more information.

# TOPS MISSION AND VISION: WHAT DO WE WANT?

By Kathy Barker

When my first child started at TOPS in 1996 (she will graduate from 8th grade this year), these were the vision and mission statements:

## *VISION 1996*

TOPS students achieve academic success and emotional maturity. They are active community participants, critical thinkers, and problem solvers and they respect themselves and others. The TOPS environment has appropriate expectations in an atmosphere of appreciation and support. It encourages exploration of peers, community and the world and involves all members in on-going creation of a small, integrated K-8 program.

## *MISSION 1996*

The following characteristics of the TOPS program are designed to realize the vision statement:

- ◆ We seek to maintain our status as a relatively small, K-8 school available on a completely voluntary basis to Seattle families;
- ◆ We seek also to maintain close proximity to the central city as an important and unique member of the downtown community, encouraging the use and enjoyment of the urban environment as a rich, diverse resource and as an extension of the classroom;
- ◆ We provide a strong, academically challenging program where the core curriculum and basic learning skills are consistent with and exceed the minimum requirements of each grade level, with a goal of maximizing each individual student's potential;
- ◆ TOPS provides students with important and regular opportunities for decision making by involving them in a variety of settings including small groups, independent investigations, and elective "choice" classes in which they study courses of interest to them;
- ◆ We are committed to regular cross-age groups in a range of activities which include instructional, tutorial, and special events;
- ◆ We provide, within the regular student schedule, programs that directly address the personal, social and emotional growth of students, including skills of conflict resolution, social and personal responsibility, values and self-esteem;
- ◆ We support and encourage innovation and risk-taking on the part of the entire school community in the pursuit of an improved learning environment;
- ◆ We maintain and embrace a diverse population, strengthened by an instructional program which fosters awareness, knowledge and appreciation of the contributions of our multi-cultural and pluralistic urban society;
- ◆ We strive for an overall school environment which is engaging, active, positive, and supportive, seeking a balance between structure and nurtured independence; and
- ◆ Our community of students, their families, and school staff are seen as partners in the development and implementation of the program.

This mission and vision, along with TOPS' reputation as a progressive and alternative school, is what drew our family and many other families to TOPS. Kindergarten buddies, speech tournaments, trips through the city, and

a host of non-traditional teachers and programs made learning more fun and immediate. Students, parents, and staff as partners in education, the school integrated with the neighborhood and the city, acknowledgment of different learning styles, a multicultural approach for our diverse families, high standards for both academic and emotional ventures – what a terrific way for a school to be.

The mission and vision were shortened over the years, and in 2001, some of the specifics – such as the identity as an urban community, and a multicultural approach – were unstated:

## *MISSION 2001*

We are a relatively small, central city, K-8 public alternative school. A diverse range of Seattle families enroll here on a completely voluntary basis because they seek a balance between structure and nurtured independence for their children. While offering a strong, academically challenging program, we also enhance the personal, social, and emotional growth of students by building skills of conflict resolution, social and personal responsibility, values, and self-esteem. Our staff and faculty work with students and their families as partners in building an engaging, active, positive, and supportive school community. Working in cross-age groups, TOPS students have regular and important opportunities for decision making, innovation, and risk taking.

But this mission was replaced by 2002 with the following:

## *MISSION- 2002*

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.

## *VISION- 2002*

We are creating a school that empowers students to be active participants, leaders, learners, and contributors to social justice.

What happened?

From the December 2001 Site Council report, by Monica Hinkley: "Ms. Scott presented the School Transformation

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*TOPS Mission and Vision:... continued from page 6*

Plan. She explained that since the original mission statement no longer reflected our beliefs, the staff and parents have created a new mission statement."

The mission and vision statements are the summary of what a school is, and what it wants to be: they describe the core values and approach of that organizational culture. We had – have – what we thought to be an alternative school culture, which was very well expressed through that original mission and vision, and which would well support the specific aims of the Transformation Plan in promoting academic excellence for all students. A dismantling of the school culture and deliberate change in identity should require much evaluation and discussion among the entire community, in a very transparent process.

Even after the fact, it isn't clear who actually changed the mission and vision. A newsletter article in January '02, by Clara Scott and Jeanne Kuban, said that staff and parent representatives reevaluated the vision and mission statements in August 2001; a newsletter article by Marlies van Bergeijk said that the TOPS Leadership Team, staff, and consultant Jed Selter worked on the new mission;

another article by Sally Buckley in the June '02 TOPS newsletter said that Gary Tubbs, Clara Scott, and CSJ did the work to change the mission. Which parents? Was the Site Council involved? Some of CSJ, or all of it? Where was the input of parents to the representatives? Were all staff included? Were students asked?

These questions are important to those who believe that the identity of TOPS is as described in that earlier vision and mission and that students, parents, and staff are partners in the programs at TOPS. Under the inspiration of that mission, TOPS parents and teachers continue to initiate programs, such as the stewardship program, showing still strong identification with an alternative school mission and vision

Are we still alternative? Do we want to be? What does it mean to be alternative? And, in view of the changes going on in the district, do we need to be? There isn't even an official definition we can use to judge ourselves. Perhaps we can synthesize our approaches and define a unique way to help all students be active participants, leaders, learners, and contributors to social justice within the successful and foundation that is TOPS' great strength.

## **WHAT, EXACTLY, IS AN ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL?**

*Several years ago, Elaine Packard, then principal of NOVA, chaired a committee to look at a definition of alternative schools.*

### ***THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION***

Since the late 1960s, the Seattle School District has had a rich history of providing alternative education. Many of the principles of alternative education are deeply rooted in the school reform movement that emphasized self-determination and individual choice, hallmarks that remain today.

Although each alternative school has its own district culture, the characteristics that define most alternative schools are:

1. The **PROCESS** of teaching and learning: teacher as facilitator; differentiated instruction to meet individual student interest and needs; multi-age grouping; student-directed and initiated learning; experiential and process-based learning; learning as an individual continuum; descriptive, non-competitive assessment with focus on student self-evaluation and reflection.

2. The **CONTENT** of curriculum and learning: learning as self-growth and expression; a focus on social and emotional growth as a foundation and stimulus for academic growth; high standards that value both common and individual needs.

3. The **CLIMATE** of the school: highly personal, authentic relationships with high levels of interaction and cooperation; emphasis on community-building activities to develop interconnectedness and interdependence; high levels of safety, caring, support, and empathy; high accessibility of staff; personalization for each student often through a multi-year relationship between student and adviser / mentor; emphasis on human potential.

4. The **STRUCTURE** of the organization: shared voice and decision-making for all stakeholders (parents, staff, students) in planning, evaluation, policy-making, and hiring; district's formal acceptance of site-based decision-making; relationships based on roles rather than rank.

Since the definition of an alternative school has evolved in many places, the Seattle school district is seeking to clarify what "alternative" means, in Seattle, and at this point in time--but this definition is one that probably resounds with many TOPS members.

<http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/tops/about/whoweare.html> "Who we are," TOPS web site

# NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY AND BEYOND

By Steve Haines, librarian

*"If there is a book you really want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then write it."* ~Toni Morrison

When reading the above quote I was reminded of the fantastic assembly that we had in December, right before the break, by local author/illustrator Paul Owen Lewis. He shared with the K-5 students, staff, and parents how he received his "call to writing." It actually came through his artwork. As a youngster he always loved to draw sailboats.

Photos provided by Steve Haines



Paul Owen Lewis shares his enthusiasm for writing and illustrating with TOPS students

He became quite good at illustrating boats sailing through the seas. Later, as an adult, he purchased an old sailboat, and after teaching in an elementary school for two years he decided he would rather write and illustrate. Another local author gave him his "big push" by making a suggestion to write for himself and not make up things he thought would please others.

This inspiration led to his

first book, *Davy's Dream*, which combined his love of sailing with his keen interest in Orca whales. We learned about this



through a set of slides Paul presented telling the step-by-step process he went through to get the book in print. He did this with a sense of passion, enthusiasm that was totally infectious. He left everyone wanting to go out and create something. Paul's message is that "everyone dreams and often has difficulties in their lives. But everyone who believes in him/herself can overcome these problems and discover qualities about themselves that they didn't even know they had." After the assembly he visited classrooms and then took the time to sign pre-purchased books in the library. He left us with a beautifully autographed poster from one of his books, *Storm Boy*. It is now framed and on display in the library. We

*Continued on page 9*

## IT'S COOL TO KNOW OTHER LANGUAGES

By Mahlet Solomon, Grade 5

My dad and mom are Ethiopian. I was born in Seattle but my parents were born in Ethiopia. The languages we speak are Amharic, English, and my brother and I are learning Spanish. Not everybody who is Ethiopian can speak Amharic. A lot of people think it's special, but I think it is just cool. It's not really a big deal, but others think it is.

In the car, Maestra Rabbitt called on my dad's cell phone. After a couple of minutes, he handed the phone to me. He said, "Here." I am not sure if he said it in English or Amharic. When I found out it was Maestra Rabbitt I started speaking in Spanish. Then in English she told me my brother "Miguel" (Natty) was not going to have Spanish class on Monday. So then we said goodbye in Spanish. After that, I told my dad what she said in Amharic, with a little English. I usually like to mix Amharic and English. So they he said ok, and that is it.

I think it is nice to know two languages fluently. But I also hope I learn more languages fluently, like Spanish and French and more.

Mis padres son de Etiopia.

Yo naci en Seattle, Washington, pero mis padres nacieron en Etiopia. Los lenguajes que hablan son amharic e inglés y mi hermano y yo estamos aprendiendo a hablar español. No todos los de Etiopia hablan amharic. Muchos piensan que es algo muy diferente hablar amharic pero a mi me gusta mucho. No es gran cosa, aunque otros piensan que sí lo es.

Maestra Rabbitt habló a mi papa por su celular cuando estuvimos en el auto. Después de unos minutos me dio el teléfono. "Toma", me dijo. No me acuerdo si me dijo en inglés or en amharic. Cuando me di cuenta que era Maestra Rabbitt, le empecé a hablar en español. Entonces ella me dijo que no habia clases para mi hermano (Manuel) el lunes. Nos despedimos en español. Después le dije a mi papa, en amharic mesclado con inglés, lo que ella me habia dicho. Por lo general me gusta mesclar inglés con amharic. Entonces él dijo "bien". Eso fue todo.

Creo que es bueno dominar dos idiomas. También espero aprender a dominar español y francés y otras idiomas.

Gracias

Por Mahlet Solomon, Quinto grado, Aula de Señorita Moslo

# NOTAS Y NOTICIAS

By *Maestra Rabbitt*

I have asked my students to try to speak Spanish to the Spanish-speaking students they know in school. My goal is to get them interacting with the very people who can help them learn more Spanish, learn about Latin America and Spain, learn about Latin manners from peers, and hopefully foster some lasting friendships that are culturally inclusive.

One of the younger first-year students said he asked his friend to “Dame chicle porfavor” (my students seem to learn how to say dulce, chicle, and chambelona by osmosis, since they are rewarded in class with those items) and his friend did so. Others have said: “!Hola! ¿Cómo estás?” to their Spanish-speaking classmates.

The students who have tried, have complained that the Spanish-speaking students won’t respond in Spanish. This is an unfortunate phenomenon not uncommon in this country. Instead of being proud of being able to speak other languages besides English the social rule is to suppress your language, to “fit in.” It was not too long ago that speaking Spanish in school, if it was your first language, was forbidden in many districts, and I have friends who can remember being punished by teachers for speaking their first language anywhere on school grounds.

Spanish is now the second most widely spoken language in this country and Spanish-speaking people will soon constitute the largest “minority.” Perhaps one day we will all be expected to speak more than one language well and the halls of all our schools and other public institutions will resound with the tones of many languages.

I know my students will keep trying and soon the Spanish-speaking students will respond in kind.

Dulce - sweets  
Chicle - gum

Chambelona - lollypop  
Hola - hello

?Cómo estás? - how are you?  
Dame chicle porfavor - please give me gum

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*From the Library and Beyond continued from page 8*

also now have all of his seven titles, but of course they don’t stay in the library too long.

Our annual speech tournament is set to begin February 4. This traditional event pits students in grades 3 through 6 in a series of speeches (storytelling, expository, oral interpretation, and editorial commentary). Students choose a speech category, then prepare, practice, and present their speeches in the classroom. If the student is selected (16 students for each speech), and if he or she volunteers, the next step is the tournament. Tournament rounds take place in the library loft on successive Fridays for each category in front of four judges (adults from the community), a timer, and an administrator. No friends or family are allowed. Every participant gets a certificate of participation, and the top four places for each speech receive a trophy. Judging is based on a point system and each speech has its own set of criteria, with everything from suitability to vocal and

# NOTAS Y NOTICIAS

Por *Maestra Rabbitt*

Les he pedido a mis estudiantes que hablen en español a los estudiantes hispanohablantes. Quiero que hagan intercambio con los de su misma edad para aprender más del español, aprender más sobre las culturas de America Latina y España, aprender más sobre la conducta latina, y así también hacer amistades con niños de otras culturas.

Un de mis estudiantes le pidió chicle a uno de sus amigos y otros me han dicho que les saludan a los alumnos que hablan español.

Los estudiantes que han hecho el esfuerzo se quejan que no recibir respuesta en español. Este fenómeno es común aquí ya que hay presiones sociales para que uno no hable en su primer lenguaje si no sea el ingles, para poder asimilarse mejor a esta cultura. No fue hace tanto tiempo atrás que en algunos distritos escolares los hispanohablantes no podian hablar su lenguaje durante las horas de clase aún afuera del aula. Tengo amistades que se acuerden de haber sido castigados por sus maestros al hablar el español en cualquier lado de la escuela.

El español es el segundo más hablado lenguaje en este pais ahora y los hispanohablantes próximamente van a ser la más grande “minoría” aquí. Tal vez llegará el día en que sea requerido hablar bien más de una idioma y que en las escuelas y otras instituciones públicas, sea la norma oír hablar muchas idiomas.

Sé que mis estudiantes seguirán hablando en español a los alumnos hispanohablantes y ellos les reponderán también en español.

facial expression. I’m very proud and amazed at the quality of the speeches and the hard work that is put forth by our students. Each year many of the judges voice these same sentiments. This year we will have the 7th and 8th graders participate in oral interpretation, for which they will be given a speech made by a person in history. In the spring, all K – 2 students participate in a speech festival where they present poems. Look for more about this year’s tournament in future newsletters.

A big thank-you to those families that have donated books from the wish list (found on the TOPS web site). I especially think it is a treat for the children to catalog their selected book(s), and to affix their “donated by” stickers. Speaking of lists, the American Library Association has just come out with its award winners for 2005, including Kevin Henkes (*Owen*) for his book *Kitten’s First Full Moon*, which won the Caldecott Medal. The full list can be viewed at [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org).

# CSJ VIEWS AND DISCUSSES AWARD-WINNING FILM ON RACE AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

By Karen Stuhldreher, CSJ Member

## THE COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE INVITES YOU...

Thursday, March 3, 6:30-8 p.m. in the TOPS library.

Childcare is provided. Please call the office 24 hours in advance, 252-3510.

TOPS 2nd grade teacher Carla Fetterley will give a presentation sharing what she learned on her trip to Japan.

On the first Thursday evening of the new year the Coalition for Social Justice (CSJ) gathered in the home of a CSJ member to watch a film about racism. The award-winning video, titled *Color of Fear*, depicts a powerful dialogue between a multiracial group of men who come together for a weekend retreat to discuss race. The video is used in classrooms and workplaces throughout the country to stimulate discussions and raise awareness about race privilege and the effects of racism.

As an instructor of women's studies at North Seattle Community College, I often show *Color of Fear* in my classes. Not only do I learn something each time I watch the video, my students also report making important discoveries about the workings of racism and their own relationships to systemic racial inequality. Based on this experience, I thought the film might be a useful tool in assisting parents, staff, and administrators at TOPS in furthering the school's mission to honor diversity by cultivating a greater understanding of our racial and cultural differences. The Coalition decided to meet in someone's home to watch the film in order to increase the level of comfort and safety needed for an open discussion.

Following the film, 13 parents and administrators from TOPS shared their experiences of race discrimination, growing awareness of race privilege, and the ways in which racism affects us personally on a daily basis. Our discussion was open and meaningful as we responded to the insights and emotions conveyed by the men in the video.

One of the most memorable moments in the film is when Victor, an African American man, raises his voice in anger at David, a white man, who continually questions the validity of what the men of color say about their experiences with racism. In our discussion we talked about the importance of Victor expressing his anger openly. We also grappled with why David, like many white people, feels the need to minimize and invalidate the experiences of people of color. One white participant admitted that, not unlike David, she recognizes in herself at times the

tendency to minimize the effects of racism. A woman of color responded by echoing something Victor says in the film: "I can work with you from here." Through this exchange we recognized that when the veil on racism can be lifted and true empathy can occur, progress might be made in the form of building trust. In our discussion we talked about the challenges for white people to talk openly about race with people of color and the issues of safety that arise for people of color in such discussions. As a group we also acknowledged that as difficult as these discussions can be, they are invaluable in bringing us forward in our work as parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as in our relationships with family, friends, and coworkers.

Toward the end of the video, filmmaker Lee Mun Wah tells us that he made *Color of Fear* in part so that the participants in the film might have something to give to their children in the hope that they might grow up in a more just and equal world. CSJ members watched the video with a similar hope—that we can be more aware in order to better assist our children at TOPS in understanding and responding effectively to these complex political and emotional issues of racial inequality.

### BOOKS ON THIS SUBJECT INCLUDE:

*Privilege, Power, and Difference*, Allan Johnson, McGraw-Hill, 2001

*Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice*, Paul Kivel, New Society Publishers, 2002

*White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*, Paula S. Rothenberg, ed., Worth Publishers, 2nd Edition, 2005

*Race Matters*, Cornell West, Vintage Books, 1991

*Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And Other Conversations about Race*, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Basic Books, 5th Edition, 2003

*Killing Rage: Ending Racism*, bell hooks, Owl Books, 1996

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*Report from the School Board continued from page 2*

middle school director has left and will be replaced in the interim by Amy Herbiashi.

In public comment this month, many speakers representing ACORN and Orca Elementary urged the Seattle school district to drop the WASL. Orca parents, in particular, felt that their school's decision to administer the WASL has eroded their alternative curriculum.

The Board discovered just how disruptive the subject of school consolidation could be when it went to vote to give the district permission to advertise bids for

Maple Elementary School. Although parents, staff, and community members of the school have been working since 2003 to craft their remodeling project for BEX II (the most recent capital levy), Board members questioned the wisdom of going forward on these projects while discussing school closures as the same time. Although it is likely they will approve this first step, as it does not commit the district to the project, it is but one of several projects likely to be put on hold until possibly July of this year, when and if they reach a decision about schools that will be closed.

# WHAT TOPS FAMILIES ARE CELEBRATING

Compiled by Lynne Goodrich

Please send comments, additions, and suggestions to [goodrich\\_yas@msn.com](mailto:goodrich_yas@msn.com).

## FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month is the successor to Negro History Week, which was initiated on February 12, 1926, by Carter G. Woodson, a preeminent historian and founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Woodson was concerned that the contributions of black Americans were overlooked or misrepresented. He selected February because it included the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, who he believed had dramatically impacted the lives of black Americans. In 1976, Woodson's legacy, now renamed the Association for The Study of Afro-American Life and History, successfully lobbied to extend Black History Week into a month-long observance.

## FEBRUARY 2005 HOLIDAYS

**Feb. 2: Groundhog Day** (United States) This holiday was brought to America by the Pennsylvania Dutch (German settlers), who believed that all hibernating animals come out to check on the weather. If the animal saw its shadow, then six weeks of bad weather would follow and the animal would go back to sleep. However, a cloudy day meant that spring was coming soon.

**Feb. 8: Nirvana Day** (Buddhist) Celebration of Buddha's death when he reached total Nirvana, at the age of 80. The Buddha spent many years meditating to try to find out why people suffer. The Buddha is not worshiped as a god, but held up as an example of a compassionate way of being which all people can achieve through study and the practice of meditation. Celebrated by Mahayana Buddhists, who tend to be people from China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

**Feb. 8: Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday** (Christian) The day before Ash Wednesday when Christians "shrive" or confess their sins prior to Lent. The oldest Mardi Gras celebration in the United States takes place in Mobile, Alabama, which first observed the holiday in 1703.

**Feb. 9: Ash Wednesday** (Christian) Marks the first day of Lent in the Western Christian liturgical year. Lent is a season of spiritual discipline, cleansing, and fasting. The name comes from the custom of making the sign of the cross on the forehead with ashes.

**Feb. 9: Lunar New Year** (Chinese/Vietnamese/Korean)

The event takes place during the first three days of the first lunar month. For the Chinese the New Year is the most colorful, joyous, and important festival. For Chinese-Americans, the celebration depends on family or community customs. One popular custom is giving children good-luck money in special red envelopes. In the 12-year cycle, one of 12 animals represents each year. The year 2005 is the Year of the Rooster.

**Feb. 9: Tet Nguyen Dan** (Vietnam) Marks the beginning of the lunar new year and the arrival of spring. Tet is the most popular festival in Vietnam and has been celebrated since at least 500 B.C.E. The goal of Tet is to begin the year right, and customs include paying off debts, resolving conflicts in relationships, and giving gifts.

**Feb 10: Muharram/Hijra New Year** (Islamic) First day of the Muslim year and era. Muslims say this year (2005) is the year 1426 A.H. (After Hijra).

**Feb 12: Birthday of Abraham Lincoln** (USA) Born in 1809, he became the sixteenth president of the United States. Once regarded as the "Great Emancipator" for his forward strides in freeing the slaves, he was criticized a century later for his caution in moving toward equal rights.

**Feb. 14: Valentine's Day** (USA) St. Valentine was imprisoned for performing marriages declared illegal by Claudius II. While imprisoned, he became friends with the jailer's daughter. On the eve of his execution, he thanked her for her kindness in a note signed, "Your Valentine."

**Feb. 18: Mahashivaratri** (Hindu) Dedicated to the worship of Lord Shiva. The festival is religious in nature and universally celebrated by Hindus. Shiva is considered by many to be the supreme Indian deity.

# YOUNG TOPS PLAYWRIGHTS BENEFIT FROM ACT PROGRAM

By fill-in reporter Teresa Nemeth\*

\* "Fill-in" means I'm filling in for YOU. Please call or email to write an article: 325-8320 or zongora@gmail.com.

I call 8th grader Zoe Barker-Aderem to talk about her play, which has just been selected for development at ACT Theatre (700 Union St.), and we've barely gotten started when she advises me no bones about it that I'll need to talk to the other participants, too. She begins naming them, with an enjoyment I sense equals the enjoyment she finds talking about her own play, her own experience. I get a pretty solid reminder that something is going right around here, and not only in the way I was expecting.

But the program sounds pretty right, too. Thanks to 7/8 language arts teacher Lori Eickelberg, 12 TOPS 7th and 8th graders met twice a week for ten weeks with teaching artist Amy Wheeler and intern Sarah Guthu, both from

It sounds like it was only icing on the cake when, one evening in December, YPP participants from TOPS and ten other Seattle public and private middle schools and high schools met at a party at ACT to hear passages of some of their plays read aloud—including a monologue by TOPS 8th grader Abigail Roth. Here Zoe learned her play had been selected with eight others for a staged reading at ACT's 2005 FringeACT Festival of New Original Work, March 4 - 6. Ms. Eick notes with some pride that former TOPS student Calder Bragdon Fong also had his play selected for performance. Each selected playwright will be assigned a director, dramaturg, stage manager, and actors.

I ask Zoe how her experience with TOPS drama affected her writing. She says the great part about being an actor and writing a play is knowing to trust the actors. "You don't have to spell out every little thing in the script. You can trust the actors to bring it to life."

Zoe's play, a drama, is titled "The House on 46th and Holly" and deals with the relationship between a man and a woman who end up squatting in an old, abandoned house. One of them (Ruth) has Alzheimer's and has effectively run away from an Alzheimer's facility and a marriage that is failing because of her illness. The other (Manuel) is an immigrant who lost his family in a civil war. The story follows them as they get to know each other and as Ruth's condition gets worse and worse, forcing her to rely on Manuel.

I did get to talk to some of the other playwrights when I came to take their picture. The plays, which run about 20 minutes, have subjects that sound quite intriguing. There are trapeze triplets working out sibling rivalry issues, a cheerleader whose life isn't the perfection it seems, a little girl dealing with grown-up addiction issues,

ballroom dancing children sucked away into a fantasy world, and something (still baffling me) about rootbeer robbery. Plays generally run around 20 minutes.

TOPS Transformation Plan money paid for the YPP to come this year. Will we find a way to fund this program in future years?

Kudos to our playwrights for taking on the challenge. We look forward to seeing more of your work in the future!

Photos provided by Teresa Nemeth



Kyle Kurokawa, Fred Ness, Lucas Chapel, Abbey Leahy, Zoe Barker-Aderem, Abigail Roth, Emma Saltzberg, Michael Haruta. Not pictured: Mikael Henderson, Celia Garcia, Anna Czosnyka, and Ryan Zemke.

ACT's Young Playwrights Program (YPP). With the help of creative (and sometimes collaborative) exercises, the young writers came up with scenarios, characters, and finally plots. For Zoe, at least, the actual writing then came fairly easily: it was a matter of putting a series of initially mismatched scenes in the proper order, and then—she really grasps the process!—*deleting and deleting*. All of this was even more fun at neighboring Louisa's, where the young playwrights often went to read to each other and discuss their work.

# TOPS AUCTION 2005 IS SATURDAY, MAY 14

*By the auction committee*

Save the date and watch your mailbox! The 13th annual TOPS spring auction will be held May 14 at the Asian Resource Center. Shortly you will find the auction newsletter, with everything you need to help us procure the items we hope to sell. Also in the packet you will find information about volunteer opportunities, class projects, and the raffle. Our fundraising goal is again \$75,000.

As we get into the swing of things we will be updating the auction web site, where you can look for ideas on procuring and information on volunteering, as well as see pictures and descriptions of items already procured. So don't forget to check the site.

Every year each family is asked to procure at least three items that can go into either the silent or live section of the auction, or in the very successful raffle. As with the TOPS No-Bake Bake Sale, all money raised goes to benefit TOPS. All of the "extras," and many things you wouldn't think of as extras, are funded through our efforts.

Think of life without the elementary and middle school drama programs, music groups, library books, middle school counselor, elementary art teacher, science and technology equipment, and other programs we've come to appreciate. So please participate: volunteer positions are open on the committee and on the day of the auction, items are needed to sell, and we hope everyone can come to the auction and bid. Besides raising money for TOPS, the auction is one of the most enjoyable social events of the year – just ask any parent or teacher who has attended in years past!

Getting items for the auction is easier than you'd think. All it takes is a few quick conversations with people who can donate a product or service to the auction. You'd be surprised how often people are more than happy to contribute – it's great advertising for them! See the step-by-step guide in the auction packet for ideas. And, new this year, you can contribute a party as one of your auction items. An entire room at the auction will be dedicated to theme parties offered by TOPS parents. We like to think of it as TOPICS for grown-ups! Just think of a theme: wine tasting, scrapbooking, murder mystery, West African culture, whatever – then plan a date, decide on the number of people to invite, and fill out your donation form. Everyone who bids on a party slot wins!

Other ideas? We love to get restaurant gift certificates. These are so popular that one of your three items should be a restaurant meal, so next time you go out to dinner, ask the owner if they'd donate another dinner. Collaborate with friends to offer a service or a theme basket (anything with chocolate or wine goes over well). Can you donate a week at your vacation cabin? An afternoon sail on your boat? Music, knitting, or golf lessons? Mariners tickets? The possibilities are endless.

It's also time for your class to think about its **auction art project**. The class projects are often the highlight of the live auction...and they bring in a lot of money! The kids are really proud of their contribution to the school, the projects themselves are quite wonderful, and the artwork and the evening's energy combine to create a bidding frenzy.

The **class theme baskets** have also been very successful and fun to put together. Usually one family coordinates, informing families of the theme and the dollar limit for contributions. After all families have brought in their contributions, the coordinator puts them all together in an interesting basket or container. If your teacher is donating an event or activity, the basket can add to it. Sandy Green (328-2998) will be working with class coordinators to help with the particulars.

Be sure to fill out the donation forms for all items and have them, as well as the items, to the TOPS office by **Wednesday, April 27**. Additional forms will be available at the TOPS office. Please fill them out completely, as this will save our volunteers a whole lot of time and headache.

Last year, it cost a little over \$13,000 to put on the event. If we were able to have most of these expenses underwritten it would make a big difference--the money raised could go directly to our kids! If you or someone you know owns a business that would be willing to donate money or services to the auction, let the auction coordinators know. This year, the auction co-chairs are Tammy Luthy (322-3784) and Janet Morrison (634-2203). If you can volunteer, underwrite expenses, or if you have procurement questions or ideas, please let them know.

# AS YOU LIKE IT: A REVIEW

By Julian LeMoine, Grade 6

Photos provided by Mary Cairns

I really enjoyed the play *As You Like It*. It was the most entertaining Shakespeare I ever saw. I would say this is one of the best school plays TOPS has done. I started to get what was happening, kind of like when I hear a word in German and I know what it means because it sounds like English. I did not think the play would be very good. I was only going because Andrew [Nemeth] was in it and I would get extra credit.

They said that they made it so the play would be in a modern time. This was the one thing I would have changed about the play, because running away



to a forest does not make sense in modern time; it could happen, but nowadays it would make more sense to run away to some north European country, or at least that's what I would do.

Shakespeare had a very weird way

of talking because it sounded like there were enough metaphors to feed an entire city, and he added words that have nothing to do with the main idea of what they are trying to say.

What I really liked about the play was that there was something happening everywhere, and it was not always focused on the person talking. I felt like if the stage had real trees and it was outdoors I would have thought that it was real. This play would be fun to watch in a park.



# CARLA GOES TO SCHOOL IN JAPAN

By Carla Fetterley, 2nd grade teacher

As many of you know, I have recently returned from three weeks in Japan. I traveled with 200 educators from across the US as participants in the FMF Teacher Program sponsored by the Japanese government. The goals of this program are to further understanding and appreciation of Japanese society, with the actual experience of visiting Japan, taking part in the culture, and coming into contact with the people. In turn, the Japanese people involved in the program had the opportunity to gain an understanding of American culture through our interactions.

During the time in Japan I met incredible people, both fellow travelers and Japanese hosts and presenters. I attended lectures, banquets, and theater performances. I visited schools, museums, and historical sites, stayed with a Japanese family, and visited lots of shrines and temples!

I spent one day each in an elementary school, middle school, high school, and a university. It seems to me, Japanese students are not so very different from our kids. They smile, wiggle, spill, and run in the hallways. They listen to their teachers, do assignments, homework, and after-school sports. What is different is that they take their shoes off upon entering their school building and spend time each day cleaning their school. Elementary students do not wear uniforms but do have matching backpacks and hats! All yellow! They all eat school lunch provided by the schools. Middle and high school students wear a uniform, bring their lunches from home, and love just



Photo provided by Carla Fetterley

hanging out with their friends. Many do go to evening school called juku to prepare for entrance exams to high school and to university.

If you would like to learn more about the Japanese culture, please plan on coming to the Taste of TOPS this year, Thursday, March 17. Along with the CSJ, I am organizing several exciting events and activities to celebrate the Japanese culture. Also, please feel free to volunteer. We could use your help!

## 1ST GRADE MAKES PILGRIM DOLLS

By Jana Zisette and Julia Robaidek, Leslie's 1st grade class

These are our Pilgrim dolls. We think that Leslie had us do them to see where our ancestors were from. They come from all over the world.



Photo provided by Sheri Toussaint



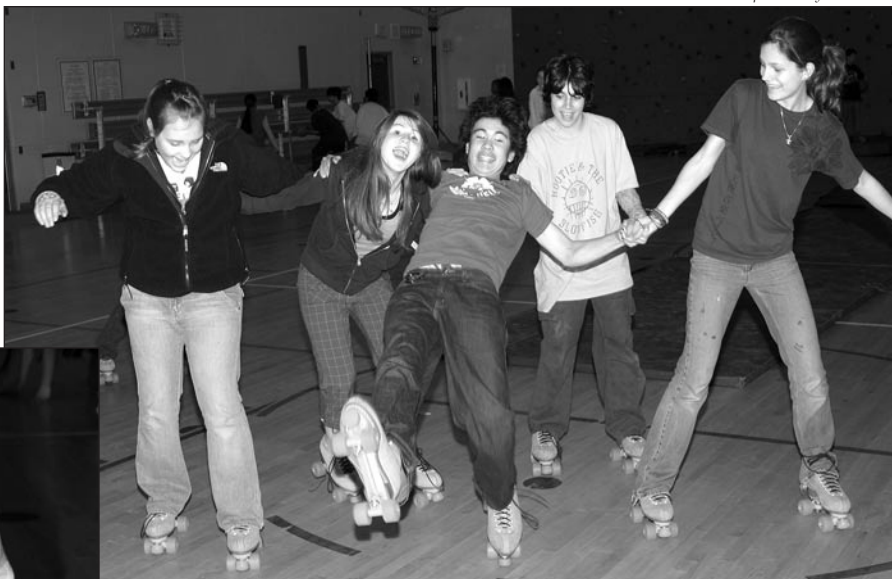
# SKATING IN PE

By Bobo Davenport, Grade 8

Every year during gym we get to skate for two weeks using the Seattle school district's set of roller skates. This year, I actually learned how!

Skating in PE opens up new opportunities for kids to have fun with their friends and could also help meet transportation needs since the cost of gasoline has gone up so much.

I really appreciate the fact that I've been able to try so many different things in PE over the years. The TOPS philosophy in PE to have fun and try a lot of different things will pay off as I become an adult and am able to participate in a whole variety of lifetime sports!



# GIRLS SOCCER 2004

By Maddy LaPatra, Maya Cohon, and Johanna Garcia, grade 6

Hi, we are players on the TOPS girls soccer team. We had a good season this year especially considering that we played with four players down at most games with no subs! We won every game except for one and not counting the two we had to forfeit.

We think soccer is a great sport because it is a way to challenge yourself and to have fun at the same time. You also get to learn how to work as a team, support each other, get to know each other better, and try your best.

We had practices two days a week and had a game on Saturday.



A couple practices our coaches took us to Daly's (the milkshake place) to relax and have fun.

All you fifth graders out there come and join us next year. We need you! Be prepared to have a blast!

# THE WHAT?

By Lindsey Pickering, Grade 6

The TOPS girls basketball team is the bomb digity. Even though we haven't won in a while, we lose with pride. We all seem really happy after the game, and have tons of fun on the bus. We keep improving. You may not see it, but by the last game you'll see our true skills. Eric has taught us to have FUN but at the same time work hard. That's the best part of having Eric as a coach.

Note from Coach Eric (Herndon):

The TOPS basketball team has shown improvement each game. The girls have had a difficult time matching up with schools who have year-round basketball players. I'm proud of the fact that the girls always play hard and they always have a good time.



# NO-BAKE CONTRIBUTORS

(\*TOPS alumni parents, \*\*TOPS Faculty)

Abrams, Kraig & Lana  
Adams, Linda & Michael  
Albetta, Gloria & Frank Fabens  
Alexander, Julie & Davis Oldham  
Allworth, Gayle  
Anderson, Garnet & David Carrell  
Anderson, Alys & Raftery, E.J.  
Anderson, Brigid & Brad  
Andrews, Sharon & Peter Carter  
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Angell, Wilma & Brad  
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Benson, Elissa & Mark Brannon  
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Cairns, Mary  
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Cerialle, Renee & William  
Chambers, Gretchen & Bill Ames  
Chapko, Michael & Marcia Weaver  
Chapman, Doug & Karol King  
Chen, Feng Ting & Ke Le Hu  
Chin, Andrea & Vance Martin  
Clarke, Stephen & Christine Naranjo-Clarke  
Cohen, Judith  
Cohen, Keith & Yumi Hiraga  
Coleman, Maren  
Comert, Piyale  
Coops, Dinah & Steve Hava  
Cotter, Susan & David  
Courtney, Michael & Christine O'Leary  
Cox-Czosnyka, Kathryn & Phil Czosnyka  
Creaven, Bernadette & Richard Kovar  
Crehan, Doris  
Dang, Duc & Paula Nguyen-Dang  
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Evans, Merv & Bev  
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Fandel, John & Mona  
Flaxman, Jamie  
Forslund, Tim & Charlene  
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Haines, Stephen & Jeanie \*\*  
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Heft, Jeff & Tammy Luthy  
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Hynes, Eileen & Tom Hoffman  
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Korbus, Betty & Hubert Korbus  
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LaPatra, Molly & Bill  
Leadon, Valerie  
Leadon, Michael

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Levin, Phillip & Elizabeth Braverman  
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Lovell, Ganin & Janice  
Low, Benson & Peggy Riehle  
Lui, Barb & Kip Tokuda  
Luke, Gary & Beth Wheeler  
Maas, Peg & Steve Schwartz  
Maclay, Cory & Bill  
Magasis, Steven & Naoko  
Maraghe, Peggy & Genghiz  
Marcano, Olga  
Marciano, Connie & John  
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McGibbon, Debbie  
McKeon, Thomas & Kathryn  
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Miyagawa, Mary & David  
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Nishida, Jon & Camille Sata  
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Oppenheimer, Jory & Kari Anderson  
Otis, Shurondia & Ollie Reeves  
Patterson, Philip & Maresa  
Pfohl, Christopher & Rebecca Sadinsky  
Pickering, Jay & Rachel  
Planert, Neil & Pam Shea  
Price, Randy & Mary Harty  
Reingold, Carol  
Remijan, Catherine & Mark  
Rorick, Michael & Ann Bergman  
Rosen, Kermit & Louise Bush  
Roth, Laurie Bohor & Mark  
Ruggeiro, Cynthia & Blake Hannaford  
Sarju, Dave & Michelle  
Scofield, Dale  
Scott, Peter & Linda  
Scott, Kim  
Scott, Clara & George Jr. \*\*

*Continued on page 19*

# A MESSAGE FROM THE NO-BAKE COMMITTEE

By Sheri Toussaint, No-Bake chair

*"If you plan for a year, plant a seed. If for ten years, plant a tree. If for a hundred years, teach the people. When you sow a seed once, you will reap a single harvest. When you teach the people, you will reap a hundred harvests."* ~Kuan Chung, writer

## THE CAMPAIGN

**WAS A HUGE SUCCESS BECAUSE OF ALL OF YOU**

**80% PARTICIPATION  
AND \$59,110 IN DOUGH-NATIONS**

The No-Bake committee would like to thank ALL of the TOPS families, friends, faculty, alumni parents, and many others for your outstanding support, valuable volunteer hours, and generous contributions to this fundraising campaign.

**227 CONTRIBUTORS GAVE**

**AN AVERAGE DOUGH-NATION OF \$268.40**

TOPS staff members go way beyond the call of duty donating their time and money to the continued success

of TOPS school. Thank you TOPS faculty, administrators, and office staff: the carnival was a huge success because of all of you. Thank you to parents, students, and alumni for your time and talents at the carnival. Thank you to Keith Toussaint for his technical expertise, Jack Lee our web site advertising manager, and a special thanks to the awesome No-Bake committee members Kirsten James, Jennifer Shaw, Ann Bergman, Toshua Henry, and Barb Lui.

The No-Bake expenses totaled approximately \$2500 and were used to support the carnival event and fundraising campaign. There were 350+ volunteer hours valued at \$6,366.50, and \$1,822.70 in underwriting donations.

## NO-BAKE BAKE SALE

**OCTOBER 2, 2004 THROUGH JANUARY 14, 2005**

Our official fundraising campaign has concluded. However, it's the yeast we can do to continue accepting dough-nations until the end of the 2004-05 school year.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY AND SUPPORT  
IN MAKING TOPS AN OUTSTANDING PROGRAM**

## ANNOUNCEMENT

For the past five years Kirsten James and I been involved with the auction and No-Bake fundraising efforts at TOPS. We thank all of you for your words of encouragement, kind gestures of gratitude, and continued support. We are now leaving the bakery, giving others the opportunity to help raise the dough.

Best regards,

~ Sheri Toussaint and  
Kirsten James

For more information  
please contact Site Council  
Chair Kathy Cox-Czosnyka

*No-Bake Contributors continued from page 18*

Scott, Kirsten & Robert  
Seefeld, Tracy \*\*  
Segel, Ginger & Robert Kubiniec  
Seibel, Gabrielle & Michael  
Seroussi, Richard & Louisa Turner  
Setzer, Luis  
Sheppard, Lianne & Bill Badgeley  
Shettler, Sandra & Clifford  
Shumann, Amy & David  
Simonson, Anne & Peter  
Sitcov, Steven  
Slaton, Catherine & Steve  
Smart, Phil & Claudia Bach \*  
Soldano, Lis & Kent Hamilton  
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Stannard, Matthew & Barbara  
Stansell, Jay & Dori Cahn  
Steele, Michael & Margie Slovan  
Stensland, Katrina  
Stusser, Helen  
Stusser-McNeil, Laurie & K.C. McNeil  
Summerfield-Evans, Jane  
Suzumura, Cindy & Cho  
Swett, Jana & Paul Loovis  
Tamura, Glen & Ken Comstock  
Tangata, Agnes  
Tarpley, Debra & Charles Manning  
Thompson, Rustin & Ann Hedreen

Timmen, Vanessa  
TOPS Class of 2009, & Mary Chao  
Toussaint, Sheri & Keith  
Trangen, Marianne & Gordon John \*\*  
Trent, Kate & Clifford  
Tuai, Greg & Benling Wong  
Ury, Lucie & Andrew  
Van Dalfsen, Pamela & Wayne Duncan  
Vasioukhin, Valerie & Olga Klezovitch  
Von Torne, Mavis  
Walker, Debrah & Daniel Baldner  
Weiner, Winifred  
Weizenbaum, Pm & Jack Lee  
Wells, Elizabeth & Jerry Allen  
Wells, Jim & Susan  
Welsh, Sandra & Greg  
Willner, Ken & Molly Reardon  
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Woestwin, Carl  
Woestwin, Anya  
Wong, Suk Ying & Tiffany Lee  
Woo, Yeanna  
Worthley, Jean  
Worthley, Heather & Don Miner  
Wrey, Tracy & Michael  
Zemke, Don & Debbie \*\*  
Zhao, Xue-Qiao & G. Gordon Davenport  
Anonymous

## EMPLOYEE MATCHING GIFTS

Bank of America  
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Microsoft  
Safeco  
Starbucks

If your name is missing from the contributors list or corrections need to be made, please contact Kirsten James, No-Bake financial coordinator, at 789-5623 or [KirstenJames@hotmail.com](mailto:KirstenJames@hotmail.com).



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## **SIXTH ANNUAL TASTE OF TOPS: "MATSURI"** *OUR THEME WILL HONOR JAPANESE CULTURE*

**THURSDAY, MARCH 17 IN THE TOPS CAFETERIA  
AND GYM**

Potluck dinner 5:30-7 p.m. TOPS cafeteria

Student Talent Showcase 7-8:30 p.m. TOPS gym

The Taste of TOPS is an all-school multicultural celebration, family potluck, and talent showcase. We will have the opportunity to share a part of us that makes us who we are through the foods we love. If you are able please bring a dish to share from your family's cultural heritage.

This year's theme honors Japanese culture. If you would like to contribute or volunteer, please contact Carla

Fetterley at [cafetterley@seattleschools.org](mailto:cafetterley@seattleschools.org).

If you would like to volunteer for potluck set-up or clean-up, please contact Marlies van Bergeijk at [paul-marlies@worldnet.att.net](mailto:paul-marlies@worldnet.att.net) or 328-3064.

Sign-up forms for the Talent Showcase will be sent home with students. For more information, please contact Sheri Toussaint at [sheritoussaint@hotmail.com](mailto:sheritoussaint@hotmail.com).

Taste of TOPS flyers are available in Spanish/Chinese/Vietnamese/Japanese in the TOPS office or by request.

This event is sponsored by the Coalition for Social Justice (CSJ).

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

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