

TOPS NEWS

February 2006 ♦ Volume 9, Issue 5

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

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Happy New Year and welcome back! Time is marching right along. We always have a lot happening here at TOPS!

On Saturday, January 7, we participated in the District-wide Kindergarten Fair at the John Stanford Center. There were many families who stopped by to hear more about TOPS and the odds of getting in! We had our first elementary visit on Tuesday, January 10. Seventy families visited our school. There are two more elementary visits—January 24 and February 14. The Middle School visits are January 19 and February 2. All visits are at 9:30 a.m.

Our Martin Luther King, Jr. Assembly was Thursday, January 12. I am very proud of our students and their stage presence. We had participation from kindergarten through 8th grade.

Our parents have organized a Ski Club again this year. The first date students hit the slopes was Friday, January 13. A big thank you to the parents who organized this opportunity for our students.

Mid-winter break is right around the corner. The dates are February 20-24.

Our Middle School students will finish their first semester soon. They are making good progress and getting ready for their high school journey. In December, we had a High School Choices Night to help our students get prepared. Many Seattle public schools and some private schools were represented.

Our Speech Tournaments will be in February and March. We will need judges from the community to help with the tournaments. If you know someone who might enjoy this opportunity, please ask him/her to call the school office, or give the office the name so that we might extend an invitation.

A special thank you to the No Bake Committee! We have surpassed our goal and are overwhelmed by the generosity



Continued on page 2

TOPS at Seward
2500 Franklin Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98102

Phone: (206) 252-3510
Fax: (206) 252-3511

Principal: Clara Scott

Assistant Principal:
Gerrit Kischner

Site Council Chair:
Marlies van Bergeijk

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.



SEATTLE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

TOPS SPRING AUCTION ON MAY 6

By Kathy Wickward & Tammy Luthy

Save the date! TOPS Annual Spring Auction will be May 6 at the Asian Resource Center. Our goal this year is \$85,000. Look for the kickoff packet in your mailbox. Every TOPS family should procure or donate at least 3 items, and that can include hosting a party! We would love to have your help! We have big jobs and little jobs. See the list below. Call Tammy Luthy at 322-3784, or email at thejeffandtammymyshow@comcast.net to volunteer for the committee or for the night of the auction.

TOPS AUCTION COMMITTEE— Ready to jump in? Bigger jobs with a bit of responsibility.

RAFFLE COORDINATOR — Create raffle promotion/ oversee a crack team of experienced raffle sale folks on auction night.

PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE CHAIR — turn up the

volume on auction procurement—oversee a variety of auction items.

AUCTION STAGE MANAGER — train this year with outgoing Stage Manager - set up during day—assist on stage at night.

DESSERT COORDINATOR — procure desserts from existing & new list of donors/ set up display on auction night/ collect bids.

MAILING COORDINATOR— supervise volunteers 3 times during auction season to jet out auction promos & thank yous.

CURRENT TEAM MEMBER BACK-UP — bring your talent to the mix—learn the job of an old-timer....maybe mine?

Continued on page 2

MARCH TOPS NEWS DEADLINE

Friday, February 10. Submissions to topsnewsletter@gmail.com

THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

Big thanks go out to all of our TOPS volunteers. You have put in over 5200 hours already this year! These hours come in many forms. Tutors, lunch and recess monitors, field trip chaperones, stewardship coordinators, Room Reps, classroom helpers, ski bus chaperones, homework correctors, elementary & middle school parent tour guides, TOPICS teachers, book-order coordinators, and various others. Many hours were put in by parents who helped out tremendously with the middle school play—did you see the car that one parent built? Your assistance with the numerous duties at TOPS helps to make it the great school that it is and our kids reap the benefits. Thank you.

~ Randi Niemer, Volunteer Coordinator

ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the fifth newsletter of the 2005-06 school year. Jamie Flaxman and Ann Simonson edit, Cindy Suzumura handles photos, design, and layout, and Toby Harris gets it mailed off to you. Don Zemke provides many of our photos. G & H Printing prints the newsletter.

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 by email to topsnewsletter@gmail.com or to the newsletter box in the main office. Please send photos to csuzumura@mindspring.com. The deadline for the March issue is February 10. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Jamie and Ann at topsnewsletter@gmail.com.

Message from the Principal continued from page 1

and commitment to TOPS by our parents, staff and community. Our students will continue to enjoy the enrichment programs that the Site Council is able to fund!

Taste of TOPS, sponsored by the CSJ, is Thursday, March 16. We look forward to this annual event that includes a multi-cultural potluck and entertainment. Many of our families/students wear ethnic attire and share food that is part of their heritage. If your family or student would like to be a part of the program, please contact Bonnie Cech at 323-3322.

Now our Auction Committee is in full swing. For parents who are new to TOPS, this is a fantastic event. The TOPS Auction raises a lot of money to help with enrichment for TOPS students. There are many volunteer opportunities. The date for this year's auction is Saturday, May 6, at the Asian Resource Center. We ask each family to contribute to the success of the auction by bringing auction items. Each grade level has a class auction project, supported by our parents. Of course we want all parents to attend and invite friends and family as well. It is a fun evening with school-

wide participation and the proceeds benefit the programs at TOPS.

Katie's 3rd grade class is practicing for their play, Shakespeare's *Mid-Summer's Night Dream*, on February 16. There will be an afternoon performance as well as an evening performance at 7 p.m.

The Stewardship program is not letting our record rainfall stop them from beautifying our grounds. They are doing a wonderful job of keeping the grounds free of weeds and litter. Many thanks to the Stewardship Committee and helping hands of our students.

The TOPS CARE program is going very well. Weekly class meetings are being held in every classroom. Students are using the reporting systems.

We are looking forward to moving into the second semester!

Cheers!

~Clara

TOPS Spring Auction on May 6 continued from page 1

TOPS AUCTION MAILINGS – 1-2 hours help with periodic mailings of auction promo & thank yous—TOP POT donuts & good fun.

AUCTION SET-UP – Big team on auction morning & afternoon—setting up of tables, placement of auction items—like a barn raising.

BANKING & RECORD KEEPING – auction night—like to file & count & keep the numbers straight? An amazing team!

RAFFLE SALES – auction night—Sell raffle tickets on auction night 1-2 hour shifts—after school shifts also available Fridays in April.

CATERING SUPPORT – auction night—Help supervise teenage volunteers—work with a dreamboat catering crew.

BARTENDING – auction night—Host a beverage station—beer, wine and soft drinks.

AUCTION CLOSERS – auction night—Literally work 5 minutes at the end of each silent auction section closing to mark closed auctions.

DESSERT DASH – auction night—Assist Desert Coordinator with the display of desserts & help collect bid forms.

CLEAN-UP COORDINATOR – TOPS tradition is that 5th grade parents clean-up. Looking for long-term coordinator to oversee the fun.

CLASS PROJECTS & CLASS BASKETS – for creative thinkers and artists.

CLASS PROJECT – Each TOPS class creates a work of art for the LIVE AUCTION. Coordination with room rep & darling kids.

CLASS BASKET – Each TOPS class creates a theme basket for the SILENT AUCTION. Coordination with room rep & class peers.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD REPORTS BEING BULLIED AT SCHOOL

By Gerrit Kischner, Assistant Principal

When we send our children off to school every morning, most parents are keenly aware of the fact that their children are on their own to fend for themselves over the course of the school day. As much as we parents aim to buttress our child's skills and self-esteem and as much as we educators work to structure our school environment for the safety and success of all students, we all know that a large public school environment requires a great deal of independence and responsibility—and, at the same time, tremendous social skills—from every child. I believe that is one of the primary reasons that families choose a school like TOPS in the first place, because we place a high value on learning to work cooperatively and productively in such a rich, diverse environment.

Of course, this dynamic—at times, frenetic—environment also fosters all of the pressures and challenges that are part of our modern society. One of the most heartbreaking reports we parents can hear at the end of a school day is that our child is being mistreated, disrespected, or teased by a schoolmate. Even worse, however, is when we don't receive such a report and our children feel they are on their own to solve (or avoid) the problem. A principal focus (pun intended) of the CARE Program at TOPS is to help students understand how best to report bullying to an adult.

The school rule around reporting bullying urges students to “tell an adult at school AND at home.” When our children are being bullied, parents and staff must work closely together to stop the bully behavior and support the target. Such cooperation is the only way that we can be sure to address the social and emotional needs of an individual child within a context of improving the overall school environment.

If you believe your child is being bullied at school, here are a few steps that will provide the support we need at school to help solve the problem:

First, validate your child's feelings—your child must know that you are there to support, that you believe in him or her, and that he or she is not alone in this. Minimizing a child's reactions to something that he or she is feeling deeply at the time will only serve to make that child feel that he or she is not being listened to. Helping to build context and perspective later, however, is part of finding strategies that will aid your child. Modeling keeping an open mind and problem solving is also an important part of the listening process. In a close community like TOPS, it is also useful to consider other aspects of the relationships your child is forming at school, such as how all the students in your child's cohort are vulnerable and developing rapidly just as your child is, how sibling relationships and friendships can play themselves out at school, and how the introduction

of a new member to a friendship group can change the chemistry substantially.

Second, encourage your child to report the bullying to an adult at school—help your child to identify the person he or she feels most comfortable with: his or her teacher, Jennifer, Don or Eric, Steve, Nicole, Clara, or myself. We know that different children will connect especially well with different adults within the school. The box in the library, reporting lockers in the Middle School, and the CARE envelopes in the elementary classrooms also provide anonymous ways of reporting. Help your child to clarify all the information that might be helpful to school staff to understand what is happening and to review the definition of bullying that involves repeated negative actions over time acting on an imbalance of power. What's the difference between tattling and reporting? We emphasize repeatedly with students that tattling is intended only to get another child “in trouble” (he took all the markers), whereas reporting serves the purpose of helping a child to get “out of trouble” and be safe.

Third, discuss solution strategies with your child. This will likely include strongly and calmly telling the bully to stop, playing and hanging out with other students, and/or ignoring the bully behavior. Don't rush to solve the problem for the children or tell your child to avoid the child engaged in bullying, and don't confront him or her (or their parents) yourself. And make sure you don't tell your child to fight back. It's also very important in these discussions to help students understand what actions would constitute revenge or retaliation, because these actions will only perpetuate and escalate a problem. I often counsel students who are inclined to respond physically to speak out loud about the control they are maintaining. Statements like, “I am not going to let myself hit you back” are powerful statements of self-control that can serve to help a child maintain a mental connection to his or her own appendages while at the same time serving to wrest control away from the child exhibiting bully behavior.

Finally, continue the conversation. It is important to follow up with your child until you are confident that the problem has been resolved. As much as we will endeavor to follow-up at school, your ability to check in regularly with your child is essential to ensuring that we all keep tabs on the progress. Incidents of bullying are complex and stopping one manifestation of the bullying sometimes only gives rise to new actions. That is one of the reasons why it is important to check in regularly with a child who has been a target of bullying. Such conversations also serve to help a student process his or her own learning and skill building. This on-going education is also critical because the target will not necessarily see evidence of the discipline (and never punishment) imposed on the student who has engaged in bully behavior.

Continued on page 13

SITE COUNCIL REPORT

DECEMBER 14, 2005

By Scott Winter

FUNDRAISING

Marlies van Bergeijk, SC Chair, reported that to date the No-Bake Sale has raised \$52,470 with 163 families, 41% of the total at TOPS, participating. The total includes \$5,450 in corporate matching, \$4,350 from TOPS staff, and \$1,460 from outside families and friends. The No-Bake Sale goal is \$72,000.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Clara Scott congratulated the drama department for their outstanding achievement with *Grease*. She also expressed her appreciation to Randi Niemer for all her fine work, including her efforts in getting tutors. Thanks was also expressed to Catrice Dennis, our AmeriCorps member, who worked with the 5th graders in putting together the "Boxes of Joy" for a Central Area senior center. The Boxes of Joy were decorated shoeboxes filled with hygiene items.

Ms. Scott reported that 2,150 food items were donated through the Food Drive. The majority of the donations were used to serve 22 families with the balance going to a local food bank.

Young Authors Day was held on December 14. Jacob Onouye's play "Under the Rising Sun" received an honorable mention award from the Young Playwrites Association. Additionally, Adam Wong's play *To Breathe or Not to Breathe* will be presented at the Association's festival this spring.

The principal of Jefferson Middle School in Columbia, Mississippi sent a letter of thanks for the backpacks and other school items sent as a part of the TOPS Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

DRAMA

Linda Korbus thanked everyone for coming out to see *Grease*. It was great to have a full house. Linda reported that while production costs for the play were \$3,700 as compared to \$2,600 in past years, income for the play was \$3,200, up from \$1,300 last year.

There was a suggestion to have additional performances of the play. The possibility of inviting other schools and reaching out to the neighborhood was discussed.

Gerrit Kischner reported the permits to have the baffles installed in the gym have been received.

COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The December CSJ meeting was cancelled due to the threat of snow. The scheduled topic was a talk by Kindergarten teachers Joan O'Connor and Joby Moore on what they do in kindergarten to introduce the social justice mission of TOPS. The talk will be rescheduled in the New Year.

The Taste of Tops is scheduled for March 16 and will have a Latin American theme.

MULTICULTURAL ASSEMBLY

Katie Waters reported on the performance called Native Voices that was held for the 5th, 6th, and 7th graders on November 29.

COMPUTER FURNITURE PURCHASE UPDATE

Gerrit Kischner noted that the furniture for the middle school computer lab has been purchased. The computers will go in the middle school lounge. The teachers have a great plan for the space which should be up and running sometime in January.

Plans are still in the works for the elementary computer lab.

DISCUSSION OF TOPS MISSION STATEMENT

Kathy Wickward gave a presentation summarizing the points made in her article that appeared in the December/January edition of the newsletter. Kathy's article and presentation raise the question: How does TOPS inform choice by clarifying and communicating our mission and vision?

A lively discussion followed Kathy's presentation. Several in attendance expressed the opinion that the current mission statement does not appropriately reflect the TOPS culture or the fact that TOPS is an alternative school. Others felt that even though the mission statement is relatively traditional, the alternative nature of TOPS might be communicated in other ways such as through a more detailed program statement.

Kathy volunteered to draft some revisions of the mission statement in an effort to clarify several areas. These drafts will be presented to the Building Leadership Team for discussion.

JANUARY 11, 2006

BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM

Gerrit Kischner gave the BLT report. The BLT has been developing a process to be used when considering proposals from parents and teachers for after school activities. The process is close to being finalized and was recently tried out on a proposal for an after school Mandarin Chinese program. The Chinese program is targeted for kindergarten thru 3rd graders.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Clara Scott began by wishing everyone a Happy New Year.

Ms. Scott reviewed some of the current school activities. The Martin Luther King assembly was held on January 12 at 2:00 p.m. There were 70 parents at the first K-5 prospective parent tour held on January 10. There are two more K-5 tours scheduled, one for January 24 and the other on February 14.

The middle schoolers will be volunteering at a local food bank. Sari Breznau, the K-8 choir teacher, has returned from out of the country.

Continued on page 6

Forrest County

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Martha Lawler
Assistant Superintendent of Education
POST OFFICE BOX 1977
400 FORREST STREET, ROOM 104
HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI 39403
(601)545-6055 Fax (601)545-6054

mlawler@forrest.k12.ms.us

December 20, 2005

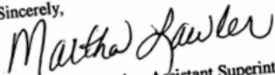
Ms. Clara Scott, Principal
TOPS Seward School
2500 Franklin Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98102

Dear Ms. Scott:

Thank you so much for the book bags, hygiene items, underwear, socks, and other supplies you sent to Earl Travillion. The children were so excited to receive these items. Your contribution came at just the right time. Many were in need of having these items replenished. We hand delivered all items to the children that had the greatest needs. At this time, we had found a great need for hygiene and underwear supplies. What wonderful timing!

Your school is doing a fantastic service for the children of your district and enriching the lives of children far beyond your school district. Thanks again for your generosity.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Martha Lawler, Assistant Superintendent
Forrest County Schools

Letters from the schools
TOPS students sent supplies
to after Hurricane Katrina.

Jefferson Middle School
611 Owens Street
Columbia, Mississippi 39429

December 2, 2005

Ms. Clara Scott
TOPS @ Seward K-8 School
2500 Franklin Avenue East
Seattle, Washington 98102

Dear Students, Faculty, Staff, and Administrators;

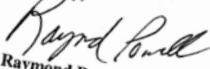
Words can not express the sincere gratitude and heart felt appreciation for your school thinking about us during our time of need. It is so important for our students to know that we have sister schools like TOPS @ Seward K-8 School who care for their fellow man.

If you watched the total destruction and devastation that Hurricane Katrina heaped upon us, just try to imagine watching from your home as a huge tree slams into the roof and collapses the entire structure. This scenario actually happened to several of our students. Many of them lost most, if not all of their possessions.

We are so grateful for your generous contribution. Our students are always giving to certain causes and now that we are in need they realize that other people are thinking about them and are willing to help. They realize that we live in the best country in the world and we always come together in times of crisis. Again, on behalf of our entire student body, faculty and staff, I want to personally thank you for the book bags, school supplies, and the other items you sent to us. The items will go directly to help our students who are in need. Please continue to keep in touch with us as we continue to make a comeback from Hurricane Katrina. Thank you and God Bless TOPS @Seward K-8 School!

Please visit our website www.columbiaschools.org to learn more about our school district.

Sincerely,



Raymond Powell
Principal
(601) 731-3762

E-mail address: rpowell@columbiaschools.org

CSJ CORNER

Welcome to the CSJ corner where you can look each month to find out what the Coalition for Social Justice has planned for its monthly meeting the first Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:00 pm in the TOPS library. Childcare is provided.

CSJ is a group of parents, staff, and administrators who work together in support of the stated mission and vision of TOPS. The purpose of our work is to educate ourselves and the school community about issues of academic equity, cultural diversity, and social justice as they affect our school and the broader community.

FEBRUARY 2 MEETING:

- ♦ Teacher Spotlight: Kindergarten teachers Joan O'Connor and Joby Moore will talk about what they do in kindergarten to introduce the social justice mission of TOPS and other aspects of their teaching.

Site Council Report continued from page 4

The school speech tournament begins February 2. Judges are needed.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR REPORT

Randi Neimer reported there was good TOPS parent involvement for the first K-5 prospective parent tour. Two TOPS parents accompanied each tour group.

The tutoring program is going well. There are currently 20 tutors. Approximately half of the tutors are TOPS parents. Four area high school students are helping out and the rest are community volunteers. There is still some unmet need for tutors.

A Grants Committee has been formed. The Committee consists of 3 parents along with Gerrit Kischner and Randi Niemer. The first task will be to identify items currently supported by the Friends of Tops budget that might be good candidates for grant applications.

Randi asked the Site Council to set guidelines for determining what is appropriate to include in the Go-Home or to send out to the community in an email.

The No Bake Sale met its goal! The total brought in as of the meeting date is \$77,498.

SCHOOL AUCTION

The Auction is scheduled for May 6 and will again be held at the Asian Resource Center. This year's goal is to raise \$85,000. Packets to parents will be sent out February 1. Donation forms are available on the TOPS web site.

DRAMA

The elementary school play will be presented May 19 and 20. The drama department is in the process of lining up a director.

- ♦ Continuing discussion of the film *Last Chance for Eden* shown at the January meeting. See the article on page 7 for responses to the film. (If you would like to view the film prior to the February meeting, please contact Karen Stuhldreher.)

MARCH 2 MEETING:

- ♦ Teacher Spotlight: Third Grade teachers Katie Waters and Tracy Seefeld will talk about aspects of their teaching and curriculum that relate to the TOPS mission/vision statement. Tracy will also tell of her recent experience visiting parts of Mississippi after the hurricanes.
- ♦ Nate Windle, Senior Training Consultant for Learning Disabilities of Washington, will share what he has done concerning learning differences at other schools in the area.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Marlies van Bergeijk noted that the Finance Committee is in the process of being formed. The Finance Committee develops the Friends of TOPS budget.

COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

The film *Last Chance for Eden* by Lee Mun Wah was viewed at the January 5 CSJ meeting. The documentary is about eight men and women discussing the role of race and gender in their lives. A discussion followed and will be continued at the February CSJ meeting.

FUTURE OF THE INTERMEDIATE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Judy Holben, the Intermediate Special Education teacher, reported that the District has proposed closing the program. This program serves 3rd through 5th graders. The District has been assigning students to a new program in another elementary school. TOPS also has a Middle School Special Education program that is not a part of the closure proposal.

Judy, along with the assistance of some parents, will be appealing the decision to the School Board at their meeting on Wednesday, January 18. Judy requested a letter of support from the Site Council. Marlies van Bergeijk agreed to work with Judy on the letter.

CARE PROGRAM

Jodi Newman, a UW graduate student in educational psychology, gave an excellent presentation on the work done as a part of this anti-bullying program. Jodi is assisting the school on implementation of CARE. CARE stands for Coaching All to Respect Everyone.

Site Council Report continued from page 14

MANDARIN CHINESE CLASSES AT TOPS

Presently we are planning to start our after school classes in February. We've decided to start small, with a class for 1st through 3rd graders, and a kindergarten class, on Thursdays after school. Details will be forthcoming. If you are interested in being on the contact list, please email Deborah at homeferguson@yahoo.com by January 31st.

DR. CAPRICE HOLLINS TO SPEAK AT TOPS

By Karen Stuhldreher

What does it mean that staff at TOPS is working toward increasing *cultural competence*? How is this affecting the curriculum in your child's classes and your child's learning? Why do our kindergartners do "Family History Projects?" What else is happening at TOPS and at other schools in the district to increase awareness about differences? These are questions that will be addressed when TOPS and the Coalition for Social Justice host a presentation by Dr. Caprice Hollins on Thursday, February 9 at 7:00 pm in the TOPS cafeteria. (Childcare will be provided.)

Dr. Hollins has been the Director of Equity and Race Relations for the school district since 2004. Her job is to support the educational mission of the District by providing guidance and resources needed to develop cultural competency and equity within the school system. Her work involves developing programs to train staff, parents, and the community about cultural awareness. TOPS Principal Clara Scott describes Dr. Hollins' assignment more specifically as working to assist teachers, administrators, and parents to help our children gain the awareness and skills needed to relate comfortably to people who are different—who look different, who speak different languages, come from different countries, or who grow up in different families.

The daughter of a white mother and an African American father, Dr. Hollins grew up in Seattle's Rainier Valley and graduated from Franklin High School. In an article published in the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* she is quoted as saying, "Diversity is my life, and I want to help other people know how to make it work. This is part of who I am, so to serve this community in that way ties in to the difference I want to make."

Dr. Hollins received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Seattle University and a doctorate degree in Clinical Psychology from the Alliant International University in Los Angeles. Upon returning to Seattle in 1998, Dr. Hollins worked at the Atlantic Street Center, a local mental health agency primarily serving at risk youth and families of color. In that position and in her work with the African American Academy, she has had the opportunity to work closely with children and families from diverse racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. She has also taught courses on cultural diversity at a number of colleges and universities in Seattle including Antioch, Seattle Pacific University, and the University of Washington.

In January Dr. Hollins worked with TOPS' Assistant Principal Gerritt Kischner and Social Studies teacher Tom O'Connor to plan for an upcoming staff training in cultural competency. According to Mr. Kischner, the District used to conduct one standard training for all schools that was delivered by video feed. In contrast, Dr. Hollins believes that it is important to work with each school individually to find out "where they are" and "where they need to go." Part of what Dr. Hollins will discuss at the upcoming TOPS forum is these questions.

Also a parent of two children, ages 3 and 5, Dr. Hollins will share with the TOPS community some of her own personal stories and experiences about raising children in a diverse and changing world.

For an informative article on Dr. Hollins see the September 2005 issue of *Seattle Woman* magazine.

JUSTICE CLUB

By Catrice Dennis, AmeriCorps Member

I would like to introduce the "Justice Club" to our middle school students at TOPS. The Justice Club fits right into the TOPS VISION! The primary focus of the justice club is on injustices that different communities may face. I want to create a safe place for students to come after school to discuss and take a deeper look into social injustice that has taken place around the world and in our communities and in our lives. It will give students a chance to discuss different issues that they may have encountered or may encounter. I will educate the students on topics they're interested in, as well as current event topics that take place in our nation and in our everyday lives. We will also participate in a project that will help a community in need.

I want each student to have the tools to recognize injustice and know how to respond in a constructive way that will

advocate for change. My goal is for each student to be instilled with confidence and individualism so they will know that they can make an IMPACT in this world and they can feel confident within themselves to make a stand for social change!

Please accept my invitation to the Justice Club. I am looking forward to this opportunity and to each student's involvement in the club!

For those who need transportation, the activity bus will depart at 5:00 p.m. Please contact the office to arrange this transportation at least a week ahead of time.

The Justice club will meet every Thursday starting January 12, 2006, until the end of the school year from 3:30 to 4:45. If you have any question/concerns please feel free to contact Catrice Dennis, AmeriCorps volunteer at TOPS, 206-252-3510.

COURAGEOUS CONVERSATIONS

From members of the Coalition for Social Justice

Thought-provoking experiences—with the power to change us and give us more freedom in the way we think, greet and treat other people—can take place during meetings of the Coalition for Social Justice.

Last year, we began a discussion stimulated by the viewing of *The Color of Fear*—a film about the pain and anguish that racism has caused in the lives of eight North American men of Asian, European, Latino, and African descent. In January, CSJ members experienced another film by award-winning director and therapist Lee Mun Wah, *Last Chance for Eden*. In this film, eight men and women discuss issues of racism and sexism—examining the impact of society’s stereotypes on their lives in the workplace, in their personal relationships, and within their families and their communities. Once again powerful dialogues emerged—both in the film and afterward in our group. We continue the discussion here ...

“Viewing *Last Chance for Eden* reminds me how painfully difficult the dialogue about racism is. I was particularly struck by one Native American woman’s observation that the pain is disproportionately borne by people of color, who often have to tell a personally hurtful story to help a white person (like me) ‘get it.’ I feel disheartened by this, and at the same time, compelled to continue to examine my own life and the ways in which I likely perpetuate racism.”

“I found the film to be engrossing and emotionally intense—it raised some issues about points of view between people engaging with each other in the film, that if I am being honest, I am not sure I truly understand. I am looking forward to the February meeting to be able to have a dialogue with other CSJ members.”

“The film left me silent and I realize that this silence comes from my avoidance of discussion about racism. I learned that those who were willing to tell and listen came away from the discussion more aware and hopeful. The film made me realize that we should talk about racism. The discussion will make us feel uncomfortable, but if we don’t open ourselves up, we won’t make any progress. I am ready to join in the dialog and I am going to feel uncomfortable, at least for a while. That’s okay.”

“I think that the film provided for me an insight into my own prejudices. I feel that we are always looking at others’ but the film forces you to look at your own. I feel that we have the opportunity to be challenged to become the school that is able to have the serious conversation. Our mission statement is a powerful one in that we were bold enough to challenge ourselves as a community.”

“There are many moments in the film *Last Chance for Eden* that struck me and have stayed with me. One is the feeling that so many of us who are privileged on the basis of our race or our class have when involved in conversations about race or class inequality and that is the feeling of ‘walking on egg shells,’ as one of the participants in the filmed

workshop expressed it. That fear of saying the wrong thing and being written off is what keeps men from talking about sexism with women and white people from talking about racism with people of color. I learned from the film about the importance of coming to the table and admitting these fears and making the mistakes. It was particularly powerful to hear people of color in the film say that it helps to hear white people admit their fears and their stories about being racist because it validates what people of color know and experience, but what is so often denied. This is where truly meaningful dialogues can begin.

“I was also struck in watching this film by the importance of people wanting and needing to tell their stories, no matter how painful. The film makes clear how personally painful racism and sexism are on both sides. It’s painful for people who are privileged by these systems of inequality to have to acknowledge their role in it and it’s painful for those who are marginalized not only to experience the discrimination, but to have to relive it when telling their stories—like the Native American woman who told about the winning American Indian girls’ basketball team whose members were examined to insure that they really were females. But something I am increasingly aware of is that whenever there is an ‘aha’ moment on the part of someone who is privileged, it is usually at the expense of someone who is not.”

“If there was one thing that struck me, it is how much I want everyone who is not a person of color to have the kind of ‘aha’ moment experienced by a white woman in the film. For the first part of the film, she looked resistant—comparing age discrimination to race discrimination and not seeing how the latter is something people of color have to deal with an entire lifetime. Not that I want anyone to feel guilt. That serves no purpose. What I want is for everyone to feel compassion—and sometimes that takes the kind of awakening that this woman had when she realized that her own denial made her the kind of person who is more dangerous to people of color than are people with outright prejudice.

“Also, watching the film I recognized that like the Native American woman, I too leave what may be the best part of me out of the room in many situations. In fact, I’ve done it for so long that I realized I don’t even know who that best part really is.”

“I’m glad that we will continue the discussion at the next meeting. I was sorry that I’ve missed the ending of the movie and the brief discussion following the film. Personally for me, it was hard at the time to feel my own pains as well as observing the process of ‘extracting’ pains from others, knowing quite well how vulnerable yet courageous one has to be all at once lest one would be quickly dismissed as being a ‘cry baby.’ One has to feel the rage without appearing to be unreasonably angry. I am looking forward to the next meeting!”

*Note: If you would like to see **Last Chance for Eden**, contact Karen Stuhldreher at kstuhldr@sccd.ctc.edu. The next CSJ meeting will feature a discussion with kindergarten teachers Joan O’Connor and Joby Moore, followed by a continued discussion of the film.*



STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

By Laurie Stusser-McNeil

Wander by campus and take a look around: on almost every day of the week, various teams from different grades are outside—even in the recent never-ending rain fest—picking up litter, planting bulbs, brainstorming projects, or learning about the environment. This is Stewardship in Action at TOPS.

The new Zone assignments give each student a sense of place and responsibility (“I love our new zone!” squealed an enthusiastic first grader), and the kindergarten/5th grade buddy system is getting a boost as well. 7th and 8th graders are digging in too, caring for their zone and planning beautification projects. Even a

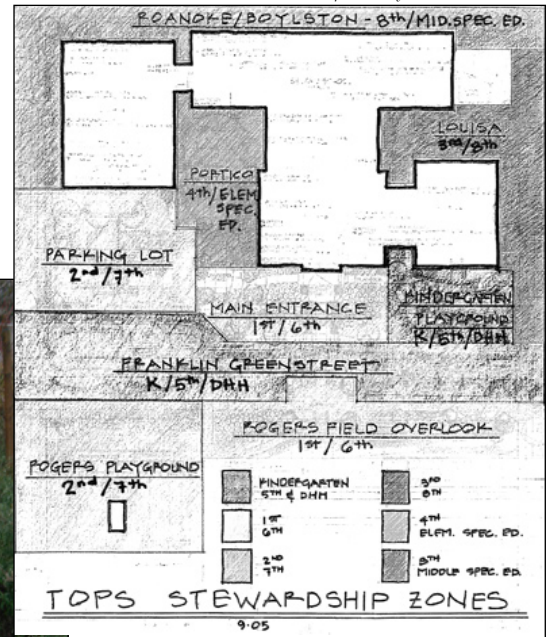


It was a wet but wonderful first foray into their new Zone for 1st Graders and their 6th Grade buddies.



5th Graders and their Kindergarten buddies, exploring the many seeds of a sunflower.

Photos provided by Laurie Stusser-McNeil



The Stewardship Zones give every student a chance to care for their school's environment.

15 minute session has an impact as students work together and look at the world around them.

Join the team! Every grade band could use more parents helping out. Contact Laurie Stusser-McNeil (ljustusser@comcast.net) and we'll get you plugged right in.

TOPS FAMILY SKI WEEKEND

By Julie Braybrooks

FEBRUARY 23, 24, 25, 26, 2006

If you haven't tried this TOPS tradition before, try it this winter. The latter part of our mid-winter break leaves the Mission Ridge slopes uncrowded with plenty of dry snow, bright sun, and a smashing view of the Columbia River. It's easy to caravan or carpool with other families. Bring a student friend or two.

Mission Ridge Ski area, only twelve miles from accommodations in the town of Wenatchee, offers alpine skiing and snowboarding lessons as well as tubing and cross country skiing nearby. Non-skiers have also found snow shoeing is great fun on trails alongside ski slopes. Go to www.missionridge.com for more information.

The Cedars Inn has set aside a block of rooms for TOPS families to reserve. The deadline for reservations is February 3, 2006. Rooms are at the low rate of \$63 plus tax per night. The Cedars Inn is just 20 minutes from Mission Ridge across the road from the mighty rolling Columbia in East Wenatchee. They offer an improved continental breakfast with a waffle maker and espresso machine, indoor pool, and a new outdoor hot tub. They've also spiffed up the rooms.

Reservations: 1-800-358-2074 or 509-886-8000 (tell them you are with TOPS school)

Traditionally we have held a family potluck Friday night (6:30) in a banquet room the Cedars Inn provides. Bring a dish for 6 - 8 people and a beverage to share. Many families prefer to drive over on Thursday to have a full day of skiing on Friday.

If someone would like to organize a group purchase of lift tickets (15 or more), look on the Mission Ridge website at group sales. If you have a Summit at Snoqualmie season pass bring it along; in 2004 we were given a 30% discount for showing it. Also that year Texaco gave "buy one get one free lift ticket" for Friday skiing with any gas purchase. One year Subway shops did; keep your eyes open and let us know if you see any Mission Ridge lift giveaways this winter.

For more information contact Julie Braybrooks at jab.ges@earthlink.net

This is a parent-sponsored event that has been ongoing for... how many years?

Is there someone who can tell us if this is a twelve, fifteen years or more tradition?

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY AND BEYOND

by Steve Haines, Librarian

"A book is like a garden carried in the pocket."

~Chinese proverb

If you were a "mouse in the corner" at TOPS this past December 14, you would have noticed the students in grades 1-5 actively engaged in listening to stories and sharing their own writings to a cross-grade section of students. The annual Young Author's Celebration started

Photos provided by Steve Haines



in the morning with storyteller Merna Hecht regaling the 3rd – 5th graders with stories from around the world. While that was going on the 1st and 2nd graders were treated to the stories and works of published author Nancy Carlstrom. In the afternoon the students broke into 41 small groups led by 5th graders and adult volunteers, and that were located in every

nook and cranny of the school. It was a rewarding time to have our students able to share their valuable writing and to discuss it with their peers.

SPS (Seattle Public Schools) is making a big leap by finally implementing new browser based software for its library system. Our new catalog system will have a similar look of the SPL (Seattle Public Library) catalog. This idea was born several years with the vision being "To have children of our city, 'birth to death' learning one library automation search engine (Horizon/SIRSI Dynix); maximizing the resources of the District and City; and to build on the strengths and synergy of both organizations." TOPS is one of 5 schools that will be piloting the system which will "go-live" the week after spring break. Between now and then we will be meeting monthly to plan for the change over. There is much to be decided upon. With the new system there will be one database for all of the schools instead of one for each library. That means aligning all of the call numbers along with the prefixes and suffixes.

Speaking about SPL they have a rather new service where you can download audio books and e-books. These books

can be read on computers or transferred to portable devices (not iPods). Library cardholders can download six books at a time. Books are automatically returned after 3 weeks. First time users must install free software called "Overdrive." There are hundreds of titles for all readers featuring both fiction and non-fiction. Doesn't that make you want to curl up with your computer one of these soaking wet Saturday mornings? Speaking of curling up, I'm reading Frank McCourt's new book, *Teacher Man*. The Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Angela's Ashes* tells about his 30 year teaching career in 5 different New York high schools. He didn't have an easy time of teaching coming from Ireland to the states, and then working with American teenagers.

Don't you just love waiting for the next book in a series or the second or third book in a trilogy? It started this summer with the newest Harry Potter and then this fall with the 3rd book in the Lionboy trilogy, *Lionboy: the Truth*. I can't wait to get into the final book of the Bartimaeus trilogy, *Ptolemy's Gate*, by Jonathan Stroud. But first there's *Eldes*, the 2nd book of Christopher Paolini's Inheritance series. Reading is way too much fun.

Our annual Speech Tournament is coming up starting in early February on Friday mornings. We will have four speeches for the 3rd-6th graders: Storytelling, Expository, Oral Interpretation, and Editorial Commentary, and one, Oral Interpretation, for the 7th-8th graders. We are always looking for adult judges, so if any of you know of someone who would enjoy having an educationally stimulating morning, please contact Helen in the office.

Winter (especially this one) brings the students inside



and that means after school in the library which is open until 4:30. We are trying to build an atmosphere that is conducive to study. We have students being tutored and others doing homework. So if that isn't for your child please have them go elsewhere. For those of you reading this please pass it on. Thanks.

A SUCCESSFUL NO-BAKE SALE

Team No-Bake sends out a huge THANK YOU to all that contributed to our No-Bake fundraiser. WE RAISED OVER \$77,000! Your generosity will help to sustain many of the programs we have here at TOPS. The support you gave is extraordinary and we can't thank you enough. Please accept our sincere appreciation for your donations. A special thanks

to all of our mailing party volunteers and to Janet Morrison for her assistance with our cupcake graphics.

TEAM NO-BAKE,

Judith Gille Kim Hobbs Kris Johnston
Tammy Luthy Maggie McDonald Randi Niemer

NO-BAKE CONTRIBUTORS AS OF JANUARY 15, 2006

Kraig and Lana Abrams	Dave and Susan Cotter	Blake Hannaford and	Norman and Rosemarie LeMoine
Tsegareda Adal	Francia and Anand Cousins	Cynthia Ruggeiro	Fang Liang Hui
Linda and Michael Adams	Alan Croft and Anita McEntyre	Elena Hannon	Yuehong Ling
Andrea Akita and Walter Zisette	Kathy and Phil Czosnyka	Bob Hardy and Susie McDonald	Hsiang Mei Liu
Gloria Albetta and Frank Fabens	Per and Karol Danielsson	Kate Harkins and Mats Myberg	Katherine Logan
Alem Travel	Katy and Jeff Davis	Mark and Lynn Harmann	Jim and Sally Lord
Bill Ames and Gretchen Chambers	Colleen and Dan Dejneka	Toby Harris and Ronald Shure	John and Penelope Lord
Brad and Brigid Anderson	Eileen Del Donno	Peggy and Mike Hatzenbeler	Roseanne Lorenzana
Garnet Anderson and David Carrell	Nancy and Richard Dickinson	Kirsten Haug	Ben Low and Peggy Riehle
Kari Anderson and	Michael Drew and Doriane Nieburgs	Steve Havas and Dinah Coops	Barbara Lui and Kip Tokuda
Jory Oppenheimer	Carole Drewyer	Alice Hayakawa	Gary Luke
Sharon Andrews and Pete Carter	Catherine Duva and Paul Shannon	Jeff Heft and Tammy Luthy	Anne Lyons and Christopher Voss
Brad and Wilma Angell	Allison and Ted Dworkin	Esther Hexter	Peg Maas and Steve Schwartz
Jane Ao	Harry Ehlers and Carolyn Hughes	Rich and Wendi Hirshberg	Bill & Cory Maclay
Jim and Mary Austin	Lisa Emlen and Robert Takahashi	Minh Ung Hoang and	Steve and Naoko Magasis
Bill Badgeley and Lianne Sheppard	Eric and Annette English	Hong Thi Nguyen	Daniel Maguire
Barbara Bengtsson	Joan Erickson and Tracy Wayman	Mark and Kimberly Hobbs	Henry Mah and Grace Palisoc
Elissa Benson and Mark Brannon	Liz and Al Espiritu	Robyn Holloman	Guo Ying Mai and Wei Chao Liu
Jeff and Mary Beth Bert	John and Mona Fandel	Nancy Hom and John Dickson	Doug Manelski and Julie Fisher
Scott and Jessica Bishop	Deborah and Keith Ferguson	Laura Hopkins and Bret Baba	Peggy and Genghiz Maraghe
Dana and Eric Blazevic	Jamie Flaxman	Ted and Lee Howard	Connie and John Marciano
Marc and Cheri Bloom	Barbara Flood	Xiao Ling Huang	Joan Markman
Gisela Boxer	Charlene and Tim Forslund	Dan Hurley and	Jon and Ellen Markman
Jean Bradbury	Paul Framson and Marlies van Bergeijk	Michelle Pennylegion	Jason and Mollie Martin
Elizabeth Braverman and	Larry Fung and June Hayakawa-Fung	Mr and Mrs Jerry Ikegami	Daniel Masler and Kristina Hagman
Phillip Levin	Linda Furney and Carsten Stinn	Jules James	Richard and Carolyn Mattox
Julie Braybrooks and Greg Simon	Mike and Gretl Galgon	Julie Jamieson	Jim and Maggie McDonald
John Brummet and Keelin Curran	Donna Gamble	Alex and Kristin Johnston	KC McNeil and Laurie Stusser-McNeil
Liz Bullard	Jorge Garcia and Barbara Schinzinger	Eve and Kris Kaiyala	Sharon Mentyka and Stephen Schlott
The Burke Family	Joe and Maureen Germani	Levin Karovsky	Lance Mercer
Shelley Butler and Larry Hubbell	John and Angela Giaever	The Kavanagh Family	Merrill/Dickinson Family
Johnny Calcagno and	Sinh Giap	Rick Kellogg and Anne Dettelbach	Gary and Carol Mills
Karen Stuhldreher	Judith Gille and Paul Atlas	Gerald and Terrie Kennedy	LeaAnn Miyagawa and Scott Winter
Ina Carlton	Sheila and Colin Gilligan	Karen and Matt Kent	Elaine and Kent Moberly
Bonnie and Frank Cech	Signe Gilson and John Kounts	Brita and Darrell Kimmerly	Michelle Moore
Renee and William Ceriale	Remy and Joseph Ginez	Karol King and Doug Chapman	Howard Morishige
Mary Chao	Debbie Girts and Rich Phillips	Beret and Michael Kischner	Bob & Janet Morrison
Michael Chapko and Marcia Weaver	Galen and John Goff	Gerrit Kischner and Nancy Bacon	Vicki Moseley and Geoff Mathay
Lois Chapman	George Goodall	Deborah Klein and Charles Fleming	Anonymous
John and Gail Chase	Lynne Goodrich and Dennis Yasukochi	Hubert and Betty Korbus	Alan Ness and
Feng Ting Chen and Ke Le Hu	Ty Graham and Missy Chow	Linda Korbus and Greg Flood	Margaret Bergmann-Ness
Andrea Chin and Vance Martin	Barbara Green and Annie Gage	Robert Kristjanson	Son Nguyen and Hoa Mai
Steve and Christine Naranjo Clarke	The Griffin Family	In memory of Allen Kurtz	Randi and Jim Niemer
Michele Coad	Karen and Paul Gruen	Bill and Molly LaPatra	Richard and Dorothy Niemer
Therese Coad	Toni Hahn	Valerie Leadon	Jon Nishida and Camille Sata
Judy and Sarah Cohen	April and Bob Hale	Jack Lee and Pm Weizenbaum	Mike and Moira O'Brien
Piyale Comert	Karla Hangsleben, Debra Kaysen	Jill and Judith Lee	Chris O'Leary and Mike Courtney
Ken Comstock and Glen Tamura	and Carter Wickstrom	Andy Leikin	

Continued on page 12

TOPS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By Toby Harris, TOPS parent since 1993

1982-91?: TOPS AS A CITY SCHOOL

TOPS was the recipient of a Title IV-C mini-grant from the State of Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction during the 1982-83 school year. The project title was *CITYBOUND: Survival Skills for the Urban Environment*, with Harper Welch listed as the contact person. The project goals were to encourage children to assume greater personal responsibility for meeting their needs, and to safely and comfortably seek meaningful and enjoyable activities in the urban environment.

According to a press release written by Harper Welch, TOPS teacher, on May 17, 1983, fifty-four 3rd, 4th and 5th graders spent one week downtown in their Urban Classroom on the third floor of the Great Western Savings Building at Fourth and Pike. Much of their time was used to explore downtown by visiting other buildings, plazas and hotels; navigating the streets; and riding buses.

Seven skills were identified in the project:

- ♦ using transportation systems and understanding basic geography of the city;
- ♦ personal safety skills and getting immediate physical needs met;
- ♦ using information sources;
- ♦ gaining consumer skills;
- ♦ participating as urban citizens.

Activities ranged from students with clipboards taking data on street corners and surveying business owners, to acting as urban consumers, evaluating whether downtown

served their needs. Was there access to restrooms, water fountains, and shelter from rain? Mayor Royer attended an awards ceremony where students awarded orchids or onions to developers and owners according to the results of their evaluations. Students submitted their own designs for new skyscraper tops for display in addition to other drawings, photos, and information about downtown construction.

The curriculum integrated many subjects including language arts, math, art, architecture, sociology, urban planning, economics and more. Examples of homework and worksheet questions students needed to answer:

- ♦ Plan a Metro route from their home and meet their teacher downtown;
- ♦ Memorize names and sequences of downtown streets;
- ♦ What kind of things are people on the bus carrying?
- ♦ At what streets do most people get on and off the bus?
- ♦ List the jobs you see people doing at or near this corner.
- ♦ What are the rules here? List as many as you see.
- ♦ Which building looks the least inviting? The friendliest? The oldest?
- ♦ Make a list of goods and services provided in our community. As a hint, you may want to look in the yellow pages.
- ♦ Interview 3 working adults. Determine whether they work at providing goods or services.
- ♦ What form of transportation do these workers use to get to their jobs?

TOPS continued various types of CITY SCHOOL curriculum and programming until about 1991.

No-Bake Contributors continued from page 11

Alida and Douglas Oles	Betsy and Bruce Scott	Jane Summerfield-Evans	Jim and Susan Wells
Peter Olive and Karen Johnson	Clara Scott	Jana Swett and Paul Looovis	James and Anna West
Tamae Onaga	Linda and Peter Scott	Page Tanagi and Sharon Nakamura	Cecilia and Jim Whisman
Yvonne and Barry Onouye	Seattle Spine & Rehab Medicine	Agnes Tangata	Casey and Ron White
Millie and Gerry Oppenheimer	Ginger Segel and Bob Kubiniec	Debra Tarpley	Wickward Family
Laurice and Michael Palmer	Don Setzer	Cynthia and Sinclair Temple	Carl Woestwin
Jay and Rachel Pickering	Jennifer Shaw and Mark Morales	Rustin Thompson and Ann Hedreen	Dennis and Kit Wong
The Pingry Family	Pam Shea and Neil Planert	Keith and Sheri Toussaint	Liane and Kam Wong
Essex, Cindy and Kathryn Porter	Cliff and Sandy Shettler	Tran Ngoc Hung	Gasborie Wong
Randy Price and Mary Harty	Jutong Si and Bin Huang	Chinh Tran	Brad Wood
David Quasha and Jennifer Crowe	Harold and Carolyn Simonson	Kate and Cliff Trent	Heather Worthley and Don Miner
Mark and Julie Rathbun	Peter and Ann Simonson	Greg Tuai and Benling Wong	Michael and Tracy Wrey
CB Reingold	Ruth Singer	Pamela Van Dalfsen and Wayne Duncan	Marjorie Wylie
Mark and Catherine Remijan	Kim Smith	Valeri Vasioukhin and Olga Klezovitch	Ying Quing Yang
Paul Robaidek	Lis Soldano and Kent Hamilton	Richard Voss	
David and Roxanne Robinson	Mark and Jessica Son	Keith Weinberger and Ellen Levi	If your name is missing from the contributors list or corrections need to be made, please contact
Kermit Rosen and Louise Bush	Rob and Traci Soo	Winifred Weiner	Kris Johnston, No-Bake financial coordinator, at 285-0824 or
Laurie and Mark Roth	Peter Stevens and Nicole Titus	Susan Welch	kjohnston@columbiahospitality.com .
Rebecca Sadinsky and Chris Pfohl	Isabel and Herb Stusser	Elizabeth Wells	
Dave and Michelle Sarju	Michael and Vanessa Stusser		
Myrna and Barry Schwartz	Jon and Brendalee Suga		

A MONTHLY CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS

WHAT TOPS FAMILIES ARE CELEBRATING

Compiled by Lynne Goodrich, CSJ member

* 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 pre-eminent 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 whom 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 2006 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. 2: Imbolc (Wiccan) Ancient festival that celebrates the middle of the season of long nights and anticipates the upcoming season of light.

Feb. 2: Canelaria Day (Mexico) All of Mexico celebrates this religious holiday with dances and candlelight.

Feb. 12: Lantern Festival (Taiwan) Also known as Shang Yuan Festival, taking place on the fifteenth day of the new moon. Decorative lanterns are carried by children or adorn temples. Lantern contests are held in many cities. Also celebrated by eating tang yuan, a glutinous rice dumpling symbolizing family unity.

Feb. 12: Birthday of Abraham Lincoln (USA) Born 1809 and 16th 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 towards equal rights.

Feb. 13: TuB'Shevat (Jewish) Also known as the "New Year for Trees." Celebration of the coming of spring and the

season in which the earliest blooming trees in Israel emerge from winter sleep and begin a new fruit bearing cycle.

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. 15: 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. 26: 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.

Feb. 28: 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. The city most famous for celebrating Mardi Gras is New Orleans, Louisiana.

What To Do If Your Child Reports Being Bullied At School continued from page 3

As you help your child to strengthen his or her response to a bully, it is useful to consider four "antidotes to bullying" suggested by Barbara Coloroso, author of *The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander*. These antidotes are 1) a strong sense of self, 2) being a friend, 3) having at least one good friend who is there for you through thick and thin, and 4) being able to successfully get into a group. Coloroso notes that a bully "will try to sabotage all of these, first by harassing your child, chipping away at his sense of dignity and worth; second, by effectively isolating him so that he is unable to develop critical relationships skills with his peers; and third by

enlisting peers to join in or at least not stop the bullying—further shutting your child off from any positive peer relationships and critical friendship." Helping a child to build up these antidotes also provides a proactive, empowering way to emphasize that the bullying is not the fault of the target.

This is important on-going work, and by aligning the response to incidents throughout the TOPS community, we will work most effectively to strengthen all of our children. Thanks for your help.

2005-06 TOPS CALENDAR

Send your events and dates to our webmaster, Jack Lee, at Lee@Oz.net. Please check Wednesday Go-Homes and the web site for updates.

FEBRUARY

2 (Th) Middle School Tour, 9:30 a.m.
2 (Th) Speech Tournament: Storytelling,
9:15-11:45 a.m.
2 (Th) End of semester
2 (Th) CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.
2 (Th) Middle School dance, 6:30-9 p.m.
3 (F) Day between semesters; no school
7 (T) 1st & 3rd grades, Elem. SE to SCT
8 (W) Professional development block
time; 2-hour early dismissal
8 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
10 (F) Speech Tournament: Expository,
9:15-11:45 a.m.
10 (F) Newsletter deadline
14 (T) Elementary School Tour, 9:30 a.m.
14 (T) BLT meeting, 4 p.m.
15 (W) DHH to SCT
16 (Th) 3rd grade play – Katie’s class
17 (F) Speech Tournament: Oral
Interpretation, 9:15-11:45 a.m.
20 (M) Presidents Day; no school
21-24 (T-F) Mid-winter break; no school

MARCH

1 (W) Professional development block
time; 2-hour early dismissal
2 (Th) CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.
3 (F) Speech Tournament: Editorial
Commentary, 9:15-11:45 a.m.
8-10 (W-F) ... 6th grade to Camp Moran
8 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
10 (F) Middle School Speech Tournament:
Oral Interpretation, 9:15-11:45 a.m.
14 (T) BLT meeting, 4 p.m.
14 (T) Newsletter deadline
17 (F) Professional development day;
no school
21 (T) 6th-8th grades, Middle school SE to SCT
22-24 (W-F) ... 5th grade to Camp Orkila
31 (F) Middle School dance, 6:30-9 p.m.

APRIL

5 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
6 (Th) 2nd-5th grades to SCT
6 (Th) CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.
10-14 (M-F) .. Spring break; no school
18 (T) Newsletter deadline
21 (F) End of third quarter

MAY

4 (Th) CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.
6 (Sa) TOPS Auction at the Asian
Resource Center
9 (T) 5th grade to Thornton Creek
9 (T) BLT meeting, 4 p.m.
9 (T) Newsletter deadline
10 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
12 (F) Kindergarten to SCT
17 (W) Professional development block
time; 2-hour early dismissal
18 (Th) 5th grade and Kindergarten to
Children’s Festival
24 (W) 1st-3rd grades and Elem. SE, DHH
to SCT
29 (M) Memorial Day; no school

JUNE

1 (Th) CSJ meeting, 6:30-8 p.m.
9 (F) Middle School dance, 6:30-9 p.m.
13 (T) BLT meeting, 4 p.m.
21 (W) Last student day

Site Council Report continued from page 6

Much of the efforts thus far have been focused on introducing language and definitions of the program. Jodi reviewed activities at four levels; the student level, the classroom level, the whole school level, and within the broader community.

The Council expressed their appreciation for Jodi’s work.

SITE COUNCIL RECRUITING

Maureen Germani noted that the process of recruiting new members for the Site Council is beginning. Maureen asked each current Site Council member to identify two parents as potential new members.

MISSION STATEMENT

At the December Site Council meeting, Kathy Wickward offered to draft possible revisions to the school mission statement. Kathy presented several options to the Building Leadership Team. As the BLT considered the options, they realized that any significant revision to the mission statement warranted a more thorough process. As a result, the BLT decided to recommend adopting a grammatical correction to the last sentence of the current statement, and to create a more extensive process to look at rewriting the school mission and vision statements.

The Site Council voted to endorse adoption of the proposed revision.

GREASE WAS AN AWESOME EXPERIENCE

By Georgia Jamieson, Grade 8

Doing Grease was an awesome experience. This was my 9th TOPS production, but the first musical. I had a wonderful time working with Susanna Wilson and Jon, our musical director. It was fun working on all the specific song and dance numbers. I think what made this production really special is that a lot of people were involved; for some people it was their FIRST TOPS play. Perhaps doing something as popular as "Grease" is a sure way to involve more people in the future. The time period of the 50's is fun to costume, I wouldn't want to do "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum" and be stuck in a toga all the time.





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Permit No. 3904

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE SEVENTH ANNUAL TASTE OF TOPS

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2006
in the TOPS cafeteria and gym

5:30-8:30 P.M. POTLUCK DINNER AND STUDENT TALENT SHOWCASE

Our theme honors Central America, South America, and Mexico. 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. We invite you to join the planning team or volunteer at the 2006 Taste of

TOPS! For more information, please contact: Bonnie Cech (bcech@cechsystems.com).

Taste of TOPS planning team:

TOPS Teacher Julie Gillett

Bonnie Cech	Galen Goff	Lynne Goodrich
Suzanne Oelke	Karen Stuhldreher	Sheri Toussaint

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

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