

TOPS NEWS

June 2007 ♦ Volume 10, Issue 9

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

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

AS WE SAY GOOD-BYE TO THE CLASS OF 2007, WE WISH THEM A SUCCESSFUL AND ENJOYABLE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE.

A special thanks to our co-chairs of the auction, Janet Morrison and Tammy Heft-Luthy. Thank you parents, staff, and friends for one of the best-ever auctions! The goal of \$100,000 was exceeded and checks and donations are still coming in! More than \$26,000 has been raised for our special auction item—our Physical Education program. That is a real statement as to how important the program is to our families at TOPS!

There will be summer school for students completing 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades who have not met District academic standards. Letters from the summer school office have been mailed. Parents need to notify the

school office if their student(s) will attend summer school so that transportation can be set up. Please let us know as soon as possible.

Our WASL testing has been completed. A special thank you to Jennifer Murray, our test coordinator, and all our 3rd-8th grade teachers for their diligence and patience in carrying out the administration of the tests.

May was a busy month with the Elementary Play—*Jungle Jam*. Thank you to Julie Jamieson and all the parents and staff who participated in organizing the Elementary Play. Kudos to Luzita and Cynthia and our wonderful parents, staff, and students who did a spectacular job on the ArtFest! 7th Grade Camp, an Honor Roll Awards ceremony, Young Authors' Day, and many other field trips and events took place in May!

June is one of the busiest months of the school year. Some of the events we look forward to are:

- ◆ Sari & Inspire Choir to EMP: Friday, June 1
- ◆ 8th grade Camp: June 5-8
- ◆ 3rd-4th grade Camp: June 7-8
- ◆ Camp Long K-2: Thursday, June 14
- ◆ 8th Grade Passage: Friday, June 15
- ◆ 5th Grade Moving Up Ceremony: Monday, June 18
- ◆ M.S. Wild Waves: Thursday, June 21
- ◆ Elementary Field Day: Thursday, June 21

Check your calendars for all the other important events!

An Honor Roll Awards Assembly was held Thursday, May 31. Those who were on the honor roll for first semester received a certificate. Almost two-thirds of our middle school students made it! Congratulations and keep up the good work.

Cheers! ~Clara



Photo by Don Zembke

TOPS at Seward

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

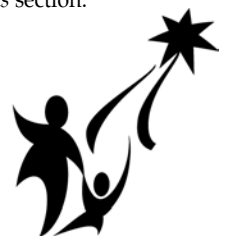
Principal: Clara Scott

Assistant Principal:
Gerrit Kischner

Site Council Chair:
Glen Tamura

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.topsk8.org>, click on *Latest Newsletter* in the *Quick Links* section.



SEATTLE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

THE TOPS NEWSLETTER NEEDS YOU!

The TOPS Newsletter comes to you each month, because of volunteers. The Site Council provides funding for the printing, and volunteers put the newsletter together. In order to continue the newsletter, we need a volunteer (or volunteers) to step up beginning with the September newsletter to do the monthly layout and design work. With more than one volunteer, it's possible you could alternate months during the school year.

A template exists and training is available to help you over the summer. Layout experience required. Existing newsletter files are in Adobe InDesign CS2.

Time commitment is approximately 8 hours/month, generally the 3rd week of the month. This is a great way to meet and exceed your TOPS volunteer requirement.

Please email topsnewsletter@gmail.com if you're interested in helping.

SEPTEMBER TOPSNEWS DEADLINE

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

SITE COUNCIL REPORT

APRIL 18, 2007

By Scott Winter

ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the ninth and final newsletter of the 2006-07 school year. Jamie Flaxman and Ann Simonson edit, and Jane Summerfield, Peggy Maraghe, and Roxanne Robinson get it mailed off to you. Don Zemke provides many of our photos. G & H Printing prints the newsletter.

Sharon Mentyka has done a wonderful job with layout this year, and we are looking for a new volunteer to do layout for the 2007-08 school year. Please email topsnewsletter@gmail.com if interested.

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. The deadline for the September issue is August 10. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Jamie and Ann at topsnewsletter@gmail.com.

PRINCIPAL REPORT

Clara Scott reported that there are plans for a "lockdown" drill in May. Faculty will discuss lockdown procedures with the students prior to the drill. There will be a code word used for initiating the lockdown. When the code word is broadcast, students will immediately return to their rooms. Administrative staff will confirm that all students are in classrooms and that all classroom and exterior doors are locked.

Ms. Scott was pleased to announce that no teachers were injured during the Skate King outing just prior to spring break.

TEACHER EXCELLENCE FUND

Four TOPS teachers have applied for funds from the Teacher Excellence Fund to support their pursuit of National Board Certification. National Board Certification is a rigorous process that provides a credential that goes well beyond state licensure requirements.

TOPS WEB SITE

Jack Lee and Vance Martin gave the Site Council a preview of a new snazzier look to the TOPS web site. In addition to aesthetic improvements, the new design creates more consistency between the web site and the recently created TOPS brochure.

There was discussion about possible approaches to creating a section of the web site that would be password protected. Among other benefits, a password protected section would allow the TOPS directory to be available online.

MEMORIAL PROPOSAL

TOPS parent Wayne Duncan joined the meeting to discuss the possibility of a memorial for Susana Stodden, one of the Seattle women murdered near the Pinnacle Lake trail last summer. During the 2005-2006 school year, Ms. Stodden worked with TOPS 3rd graders on the Finding Urban Nature program. Wayne proposed raising funds to purchase a sizeable tree that would be planted in her honor. While the idea was well received, there was discussion about broadening the scope of a memorial to include others from the TOPS community. Wayne was willing to continue working on the idea. He will bring a revised proposal back to the Site Council at a later date.

COMMUNITY BUILDING BRAINSTORMING

The Council spent the remainder of the meeting brainstorming ideas for better integrating new families, in particular new parents, into the TOPS community. A variety of ideas were brought up including holding more parties, especially at the beginning of the year. Other ideas included assigning a mentor to new parents or having a class volunteer position focused on welcoming new parents. There was discussion of renewing the expectation on parent volunteer hours. Time spent volunteering can be an opportunity for parents to connect with the broader community. The Council will continue to work towards specific recommendations on ways to better connect with new families.

LAKEFEST @ TOPS SEWARD SCHOOL!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING AUGUST 11, 2007?

Mark your calendars for Eastlake's annual summer party, LakeFest! On Saturday, August 11, from Noon to 10 pm we'll be rocking out at TOPS at Seward. Bring your pet to the annual pet parade, or come by for the kids' activities, food, bands, and local vendors. We also have our kickball championship games and a lot more fun planned. This is our fifth year, it just keeps getting better! This year, we're also an official SeaFair community event.

If you're interested in working with us, please visit our website <http://www.lake-fest.com>, or email info@lake-fest.com. We're looking for people to help staff the event as well as help with the planning.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE FUND: GUIDING LIGHTS WEEKEND

By Gerrit Kischner, Assistant Principal

Fifteen TOPS staff members made for a formidable presence at the Guiding Lights Weekend in January, a celebration of mentoring, organized at the Seattle Center each year by TOPS parent Eric Liu. This made for the first school-wide application for the Teaching Excellence Fund, and provided an excellent opportunity for public school educators like us to consider the teacher-student relationship from a rich and non-traditional perspective.

The conference provided each of us with an opportunity to engage in three workshops with mentoring leaders from around the country, many of whom were featured in Eric's book, *Guiding Lights*. We worked with presenters as diverse as Dan Wilson, the Mariner's pitcher who spoke on the subject "what happens when your game plan fails," to the founder of Cinnabon, who reflected on the value of food in nurturing and shaping human

relationships. I myself attended workshops by James Hampton, a community organizer, and social services entrepreneur, Rafe Esquith, a fifth grade teacher who has won international acclaim for his use of Shakespeare in the classroom and author most recently of *Teach Like Your Hair is on Fire*, and Kristin Hayden, the founder of the nationally acclaimed One World Now project.

There were very few traditional educators at the conference, which made this professional development opportunity particularly enlightening for many of us. We work so closely with students within the confines of being successful at school, on the WASL, within very structured student-teacher relationships, that the perspectives we gained this day helped us to see our students and our own roles in a new light. We often forget that children are learning constantly, not only when they're sitting in their seats in the classroom. The relationships children build, the interactions they have with each other, and the interactions they witness between adults, all shape the lessons they learn, and hearing different views of learning in a wide variety of contexts was enlightening.

The Teaching Excellence Fund made attending a conference as a team like this possible, and we're looking forward to returning next year to continue to build our perspective.

TEACHING EXCELLENCE FUND: LINGUISTICS REMEDIES

By Nicole Titus, ESL Teacher

Thanks to the Teaching Excellence Fund, I was able to take classes in the Linguistics Remedies program. Inspired by the enthusiasm of Carla Fetterley and Katie Waters, I jumped at the chance to learn!

Linguistics Remedies is a program targeted to help students with specific reading disabilities through phonological awareness (awareness of sound units within spoken words), articulatory awareness (awareness of how the mouth forms speech sounds), guided discovery teaching, and analytic language instruction in reading and writing. The program was developed by Barbara Wise, and the classes were taught by the very capable and energetic Laura Rogan.

While the program is aimed at students with challenges in reading, it gives a solid foundation in basic linguistics, phonological awareness, and articulatory awareness that can be helpful for all teachers and all students. Research has shown that teachers who have a greater understanding of how the written and spoken system of language works are more able to guide students in learning the structures of language. Basically, the more a teacher understands about language, the better she will be able to understand student errors and development.

The aspect of the class which was new to me, and a great addition to my repertoire of teaching strategies, was the guided discovery teaching of articulatory awareness. We assumed the role of students and discovered how our mouths move to form sounds. We played learning games with mouth picture cards, and learned teaching strategies and stories to guide our students in learning to feel how sounds are made. The theory is that students will then be able to use these mouth feelings to increase their ability to organize and represent sounds in syllables. This was all connected back to reading and spelling, again through games and practice.

I particularly appreciated the articulatory awareness piece since I work with the ELL population. If certain sounds are not reinforced in a first language, it may be challenging for students to hear the sound. (I could totally identify with this because when I lived in Hungary it was initially very difficult for me to hear the difference between the Hungarian vowel sounds.) This articulatory awareness training gives students another way to feel and understand the sounds in a word, particularly if they are having trouble hearing and distinguishing the sounds. I learned so much from these classes, and continue to learn as I work with my students. Thanks again for all the support!

CARE PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT: MAY 2007

By Jodi Newman

The CARE program aims to Coach All to Respect Everyone. This fall, goals for the CARE program were established. These goals were based on our experiences during the first year of program implementation. Now, at the end of the second year of the CARE program, it is time to revisit those goals and assess our progress so that we can develop plans for the future.

GOAL 1: INCREASE PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- ◆ We have worked to provide parents with information about core CARE concepts.
 - Parents were given the opportunity to learn about Second Step, Steps to Respect, and Let's Get Real lesson materials at the fall curriculum night.
 - CARE program goals and activities were presented at the State of the School and at a CSJ meeting.
 - A sheet describing how to handle disrespectful behavior when volunteering at TOPS was developed and distributed.
 - Questions to prompt family discussion on the CARE monthly themes have been added to the Go-Home.
- ◆ In addition to providing information, we have maintained parent involvement on the CARE committee.
- ◆ Increasing parent involvement will continue to be a CARE program goal. If you have ideas for ways that we can involve more parents in the CARE program, please contact Jennifer Murray or Gerrit Kischner at (206) 252-3510.

GOAL 2: INCREASE STAFF INVOLVEMENT

- ◆ The CARE program is designed to be a school-wide effort, involving every member of the TOPS community. One way we have increased staff involvement is by inviting more members of our community to participate in class meetings. A lesson plan was developed that included members of the office and janitorial staff in class discussions of respectful communication and behavior at TOPS.
- ◆ As the program continues next year, we look forward to involving more staff members in our class meetings. In addition, we are committed to supporting new staff and substitute teachers in implementing the CARE program.

GOAL 3: INCREASE AWARENESS OF AND APPROPRIATE INTERVENTION IN BULLYING SITUATIONS

- ◆ In an effort to increase community awareness of bullying we have:
 - Improved our playground supervision

- Checked the bully-report box on a daily basis
- Worked at tuning-in to the specific needs of our middle school students
- Conducted teacher meetings aimed at deepening our understanding of bullying and belonging at TOPS
- ◆ These efforts appear to have contributed to program improvement. Reports from teachers and administrators suggest that:
 - Fewer students are being sent to the office for behavioral issues
 - When discipline issues arise they are resolved in a timely fashion
 - Students and staff are developing and using a consistent language when confronted with disrespectful behavior such as bullying
- ◆ This month we will be gathering student input on the CARE program. Student and staff feedback will be used to further refine our intervention practices for next year.

GOAL 4: CONTINUE TO SUPPORT TEACHERS IN PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- ◆ This year we implemented developmentally appropriate classroom meeting curricula. Now that some of the classes have completed these materials, we are developing curricula for the end of the year. Classes are being encouraged to engage in service projects and reflect on what it means to care for and respect themselves, their community, and the environment.
- ◆ Next year, we will continue to refine the curricula and develop other ways that we can support teachers in implementing the CARE program.

GOAL 5: CONTINUE PROGRAM EVALUATION

- ◆ In a continuing effort to assess our progress, we will be asking students to anonymously answer questions regarding their experiences with and thoughts about bullying. This month, students will answer the questions during their weekly CARE class meeting. Jodi Newman from the University of Washington will summarize the responses and report information to the school community in aggregate form only. The results may be useful to other schools, therefore they may be published in scholarly research journals. If you have any concerns, or if you do not want your child to participate, please contact Gerrit Kischner, Assistant Principal at (206) 252-3510. If you have any questions about the survey or your child's participation in this study, please contact Jodi Newman at (425) 417-3609. Thank you for your ongoing support of the CARE program.

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY AND BEYOND

By Steve Haines, Librarian

"When I step into this library, I cannot understand why I ever step out of it." —Marie de Sevigne

We are very fortunate at TOPS to have a library that is large enough, and centrally located, to accommodate our school's many activities. We are in our busiest time of year with the Art Fest and upcoming 3rd grade States Museum. Just concluded was the 5th grade Science Fair. This year the library has also been able to accommodate the 6th grade Egyptian projects, 7th grade History Day projects, the 2nd annual Hot Wheels Derby, CSJ movie nights, a chess tournament, various TOPICS, reading groups, tutors, and the Taste of TOPS. The library is a great place to celebrate our accomplishments.



Of course the library wouldn't run half as well without the many volunteers that help out. From the 8th grade TAs to the parents who drop in to shelve books, they get things done. Two very special volunteers really keep it going. Alex Soldano, (grandmother of Allie, 3rd) comes in every Wednesday and takes on the shelving and straightening of library books. I first knew about Alex when she worked at the Northeast branch of the Seattle Public Library. I remember seeing this dynamo scooting around helping people whenever I visited the library. Then last year she showed up and I immediately recognized her. What a joy to have her now working in our library.



Pat Palagi, (grandmother of Carmelita, 4th and Asa, 7th) comes in on Tuesdays and helps catalog new and donated books for our library. She also does volunteer work with Ryther Children's Center, procuring books, and we have been able to donate some of the books that the TOPS community has given to the library. TOPS is blessed with the many volunteers who dedicate their time to help make the school operate more efficiently. Thanks to all.



Many of us, especially you Harry Potter fans, know what happens on July 21. It's the date of the long awaited 7th and final book in the series. *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* sounds ominous and foreboding. It's hard to believe that the first book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, came out in October 1998. J.K Rowling has certainly brought pleasurable reading to many people these past nine years. I'm sure many bookstores will be having big parties on the 21st, like All for Kids Books, www.allforkids.com, near University Village or Secret Garden Books in Ballard. Both of these stores go out of their way to help children and adults find the perfect book. Also don't forget the Seattle Public Library, www.spl.org. They will be having summer reading programs for all ages, and with many newly remodeled neighborhood libraries, it is a great way to spend a summer day.

CALLING ALL BOOKS!

The end of school also means closing our library down for the summer. That means getting all of those favorite books back to the library so that I can take an inventory after school closes. For the most part, the books find their way back home. It sometimes takes some effort to search all of those places that we have for our "stuff," but the students are quite happy when the book is returned and they don't have to be nagged by me anymore. Remember, books that are accidentally sent to the public library eventually come back to us, and conversely if I find any public library books I will return them. Have a restful summer and READ ON!

Photos by Steve Haines

TOPS AUCTION A ROARING SUCCESS!

Three hundred TOPS supporters came together on May 5th to raise more than \$105,000 to support programs funded by the Friends of TOPS. PLEASE remember to ask your employer if they have a MATCHING FUNDS program for your donation to Friends of TOPS.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the event. Save the date for next year's event, May 3, 2008.





Photos by Michael Drew



STEWARDSHIP THOUGHTS

FROM THE 6TH GRADE

I think that TOPS does an ok job at the stewardship program. The camp they do each year is good because we learn about the environment and still have a lot of fun and that gets us to like the environment. ~ *Isaiah Hoban Halverson*

I think stewardship is great! You get to work with your 1st grade buddies and have a lot of fun at the same time. The idea of stewardship is to help the environment. You plant new plants, weed bad weeds, and at the same time learn and have lots of fun. ~ *John Tamura*

Stewardship is a wonderful opportunity for volunteers to come and help students clean up their school campus. I think that Stewardship is really important because it gives kids a chance to get outside and work to make the environment a nicer place to live, play, and be in....We could improve stewardship by making more jobs for kids to do, being more detailed with what the volunteers need you to do, and letting the students look all over for trash or let them plant anywhere on the school campus. I think we should improve stewardship because the first graders can feel more involved in helping clean up the school grounds, so we can get more kids outside at one time and to let the kids interact with nature. ~ *Maya Zisette*

I think that stewardship helps the TOPS community. I really like stewardship because it does help the community itself, and also we, the 6th graders, get to spend time with our buddies. ~ *Katie Toyoshima*

3RD GRADE STEWARDSHIP

By Elizabeth Dickinson

"Think globally, act locally!" has been the theme for 3rd grade stewardship, as we take on the challenge of the bus zone in front of the lunchroom. Each week, a group of 12 students weeds and picks up litter, after estimating how many pieces they will find, usually--and accurately--in the hundreds. For the past month we have been digging, planting, and watering plants donated by families. Check out the arbor vitae and grasses by the TOPS sign on Louisa Street, and the pansies and perennials along the delivery driveway! Encourage your children to treat these new plants gently. Third graders will tell you they help make a habitat for happy bees, butterflies, and other insects!



Photos by Elizabeth Dickinson



EARTH DAY TOPICS

A GROUP OF FIRST TO FIFTH GRADERS PARTICIPATED IN A WONDERFUL NATION-WIDE CELEBRATION OF EARTH DAY. THEY DECORATED OVER 150 GROCERY BAGS FOR THE NEW WHOLE FOODS AT WESTLAKE AND DENNY AS PART OF THE GROCERY BAGS PROJECT. THE BAGS WENT BACK TO THE STORE WHERE THEY WERE GIVEN TO SHOPPERS OVER EARTH DAY WEEKEND. CHECK OUT MORE PHOTOS OF THE TOPS KIDS AND OTHER STUDENTS AND THEIR BAGS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AT [HTTP://WWW.EARTHDAYBAGS.ORG](http://www.earthdaybags.org).



Photos by Laurie Stusser-McNeil

CSJ COMPLETES A SUCCESSFUL YEAR OF EVENTS

By Karen Stuhldreher

TOPS' Coalition for Social Justice (CSJ) tried something new this year in an effort to get more families and staff involved in supporting and promoting a greater understanding of the mission and vision of TOPS. The TOPS Movie Nights, which began in October and concluded in April, brought many families and staff members together to see documentary films dealing with issues of cultural diversity, class differences, the media, and social justice. Following the movies, we had lively discussions about the ways that the issues the films raised affect our own school, our families, and the broader community we live in.

Nearly 40 people attended the very first TOPS Movie Night in October. As we munched on Vietnamese sandwiches, chips, and popcorn, we watched the award-winning film, *People Like Us: Social Class in America* which is a very humorous, yet serious look at class differences in the U.S. Downstairs children watched *Mad Hot Ballroom* and *Akeelah and the Bee*, two age appropriate films also dealing with class differences. The discussion ran long that first night with people engaged and reluctant to leave. There has been talk of wanting to continue the dialogue about social class at TOPS, so next year we hope to host another movie on this topic. As children and parents watch movies on similar topics such as class differences, the hope is that dialogue will be generated in families and throughout the TOPS community.

In January, CSJ hosted the showing of *Just Black?*, a film about the experiences of multi-racial students and their families in the U.S. The discussion following this film was also lively and ranged from political policies and the impact of census data to personal stories about what it is like to be bi-racial. In April, the TOPS Movie Night Series concluded with *Captive Audience*, a film about the effects of advertising in our schools. Again, a number of TOPS parents and staff members came together to watch an award winning film and to talk about the issues it raises in relation to our own school community.

CSJ plans to continue the TOPS Movie Night Series next year and is seeking suggestions of films we might show. CSJ members will preview movies this spring and summer and put out a schedule in the fall. If you know about a film that you would like to see as part of the series or a topic you would like to have a film be about, please send an e-mail to Bonnie Cech at bcech@cechsystems.com.

Also this year CSJ hosted Teacher Spotlights so that parents could meet different teachers and hear about the ways in which their curricula speak to the TOPS mission and vision. Sixth Grade teacher Marianne Trangen came in December, and 4th grade teachers Joe Drummond and Leslie Spurr talked with us in March. Though the turn-out

for these evenings was fewer, those of us who attended valued the opportunity to talk with teachers about what they teach and how. It is wonderful to hear how teachers think through a unit of study, connect knowledge across disciplines, and create projects for students to learn. We are very appreciative of these teachers taking the time to come and talk with parents.

We also heard from University of Washington graduate students who are doing research in connection with TOPS. Jodi Newman came in November to present an update on the CARE program. Pamala Trivedi talked with us briefly about her study of multi-racial identities for which she has been interviewing students in 4th and 5th grades at TOPS. In the fall, the TOPS community will be invited to come and hear Pamala Trivedi discuss her research and findings. This will be a presentation and discussion you won't want to miss.

Finally CSJ sponsored a very successful Taste of TOPS this year, honoring the cultures of India and South Asia. Brought to us by our very ambitious and energetic Middle School staff, Taste of TOPS provided opportunities in the classroom for students to learn about the music, art, theatre, and experiences of these different cultures. Students then shared what they learned at the Taste of TOPS, about Rangoli drawing, shadow puppets, and the rhythms of India. It was a rich evening of discovery and great food!

With these different events and presentations this year, the TOPS community has had the opportunity to engage in learning and dialogue about important issues that relate to our mission of social justice, diversity, and equity. From class differences to multi-racial identities to bullying to the impact of advertising and the media in the classroom, we have gained some perspectives and talked with one another to learn more.

CSJ is seeking more input and participation from YOU. Please join us next year at TOPS Movie Nights and presentations so you can be an active part of the dialogue. Please bring your ideas to the table and consider helping to organize these events. Your ideas and energy are needed and welcome. Have a great summer!



TOPS GOES TO PARIS AND LONDON 2007

By Marianne Trangen, 6th grade LA and SS,
7th grade French teacher

During spring break — April 6-15 — TOPS sent its biggest group ever to Paris for our usual weeklong visit, and to London for a first-time two-day stay. This group was larger than all of the previous three groups combined! A total of 48 participants included TOPS students from the 4th – 8th grades, TOPS parents and grandparents, friends of TOPS students and parents, and TOPS staff members. Comprised of seasoned travelers, first time visitors to Europe, and everything in between, our group made the most of this terrific opportunity to travel abroad as a community. We savored the time spent socializing with close friends and loved ones, getting to know acquaintances better, and making new friends during our trip.

As usual, we took in the major sightseeing destinations in Paris — the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, the Musee d’Orsay, Notre Dame, and the Latin Quarter to name a few. We spent one glorious day in the Loire Valley where we visited Chambord, an enormous chateau with a spectacular double spiral staircase designed by da Vinci, and Chenonceau, “The Ladies Chateau,” a charming castle built by Henri II with gardens designed by Diane de Poitiers and Catherine de Medici. TOPS students particularly enjoyed the maze on the castle grounds. We ended the day at the famous Chartres cathedral with its exquisite stained-glass windows.

From Paris we took a train through the Chunnel to London. Though we had only two days there, we packed in a great deal of sightseeing and shopping. Covent Gardens, St. James Cathedral, and Buckingham Palace were among our favorite stops. Some group members

peeled off to visit relatives, play soccer, and attend performances of “Les Miserables” and “Equus” on their own.

The most surprising feature of our trip was the extraordinarily warm weather. We enjoyed sunny skies and temperatures in the 70’s every day. This meant that even more Parisians, Londoners, and visitors like us than usual could be found out in the parks and open-air cafes of these charming cities. Typical temperatures at this time have been about twenty degrees cooler on previous visits.

If you want to hear more details about lost and recovered passports and how to retrieve a suitcase that flies out of your bus when one of the cargo doors opens without warning, ask anyone who was in our group. If you want to sign up for the next TOPS adventure to Europe, please contact Marianne Trangen (6th grade LA and SS teacher and 7th grade French teacher) at marianne.trangen@stanfordalumni.org. The next trip will almost certainly be in April of 2009.

SOMETHING COMPLETELY NEW!

Explorica, the tour company through which our TOPS groups have traveled to Paris over the years, is promoting a tour of Egypt. Contact Marianne if you’d like to see the pyramids during spring break 2008.



"JUNGLE JAM"

AN ADAPTATION OF RUDYARD KIPLING'S
CLASSIC STORY

DIRECTED BY JULIE JAMIESON

MUSICAL DIRECTION BY DON DARRYL RIVERA

MAY 18 & 19, 2007



Photos by Ann Simonson



TOPS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By Toby Harris

It's time for P.E.! There are no assignments (usually), no tests, and a multitude of success-oriented choices. Oh yes, and also those two popular guys – Don and Eric! Don and Eric have been teaching partners for 11 years, since the 1995-96 school year. They both consider it a treat to work together but Don does acknowledge, “just like any other marriage, we have our moments.”

Eric has been at TOPS for 15 years, and worked with three others prior to Don's arrival. He began in the 1991-92 school year, the year TOPS moved to the Seward building. Eric started off 1/2 time and taught with Chuck, who brought physical education, military style, to the TOPS students. The middle schoolers rebelled and Eric became full time while Chuck went to 1/2 time. Then came the quiet football coach, Tam; next came the high-strung Jean Marie. Finally, Don was hired 1/2 time for a year or two, and once TOPS reached two middle school classes per grade, he became full time.

The old Seward gym was in the original 1893 building, which also housed the lunchroom. Not the ideal facility—it had low ceilings, under-regulation hoops, chicken wire on the windows, an old crusty small closet, and came with very little equipment. The students had foam soccer balls, other balls, jump ropes, and unicycles with broken

Can you believe they unicycled in the parking lot?



seats. They often went to Rogers Field and some of the younger students thought Eric was Roger! Eric's favorite activity is playing basketball though he speaks very fondly of football as well. He did suffer a broken thumb once during a TOPS P.E. football game. The students thought he was joking as usual and help was delayed until he could really prove it! A highlight of his TOPS career was when one of our very own middle school students

was selected to ask then-President Clinton a question. He chose Eric as the one to take with him to Washington D.C. for a weekend of pampering. Eric got to visit the White House, and shake hands with and get a picture taken with Bill! He once used the old TOPS gym to show off his basketball skills (even though the hoops were low) and got to act in commercials after that audition. Did you know that Eric was a member of the Screen Actors Guild and has represented many products on TV?



Physical education has changed a lot over the years. The emphasis has shifted from team activities to a more cooperative, success-oriented, child-centered philosophy. Bud Turner, head of the former Seattle Public Schools Health and P.E Department, created a model for this new P.E. curriculum and mentored Don. Don brought these new ideas with him, along with his own new unicycles, and started the circus arts program and double dutch jump roping. Co-Motion Dancers brought the old gym alive and got all the students moving for a few years, thanks to Don successfully obtaining grant funds. Later, he started after-school sports teams such as volleyball and ultimate Frisbee. Don is very proud of the fact that TOPS now has three ultimate Frisbee teams, the largest number of players in a public middle school! Money was raised and school district officials were convinced to build that great rock wall after moving back into the newly remodeled Seward and getting our terrific gym. Another passion of Don's is sailing so he approached the Center for Wooden Boats a few years ago and now TOPS middle schoolers can learn sailing for P.E. at the end of the day in the Fall and/or Spring (for a fee).

When TOPS was at McDonald School for a couple of years during the remodel of Seward (1997-1999), there was nowhere for P.E. class except in this covered but wet, dusty, dirty space on the north side of the building. They eventually put up a portable metal shed as the gym. Eric found the metal shed gym “heavenly” compared to the old Seward gym. Don, on the other hand, found it quite unpleasant and says he suffered some hearing loss because of the tin can acoustics. In any case, physical education at TOPS has gained support and moved up in the world now.

Both Don and Eric feel blessed by the incredible gym and equipment we have, and they adore the students and their families. Their focus on providing a multitude of choices for the students and helping them develop a life sport is something both Eric and Don genuinely love doing and it shows! The TOPS community is fortunate to have this P.E. team — their hard work and humorous antics! And don't forget about all the possibilities for physical activity this summer!



*(above, middle) The old Seward gym.
(above and right) Comotion Dancers
movement classes in the old Seward gym.
Photos of Don and Eric sometime in
the mid-1990s.*



POETRY

By Acacia Salisbury, Grade 4

I LOVE TO RUN

IT'S A LOT OF FUN

I LIKE TO PLAY

EACH AND EVERY DAY

EVERY SPORT, THEY ARE FOR ME

THAT'S WHY I CAN'T WAIT FOR MY P.E!



All photos courtesy Don & Eric.

*Eighth graders (left)
Cleo Stannard and Preston
Hale and (right)
Johanna Garcia and
Madeline LaPatra.*



WHAT I REMEMBER ABOUT P.E.

By Jessica Badgeley, Grade 8

If someone were to ask me what I remember about P.E. at TOPS I would say, "You know what? I remember always having fun, choice time, learning how to unicycle, Hip-to-be-Fit, the mile, and most importantly our fantastic P.E. teachers Don and Eric." Then they would ask, "Why did you like P.E. so much?" "Why did I like it so much?" I would say in an exasperated tone, "I loved P.E. because it was a time to let go, have fun, learn a new sport, and let all of that energy flow out of you and the teachers Eric and Don would let you do all of that because they were such great teachers."* They would ask me what I remember specifically about each grade and I would tell them everything and at the end I would tell them again how wonderful my P.E. teachers were. And I would tell them this twenty years from now.

"I don't remember much about the early grades because they all sort of mush together and I can't tell specifically what happened when. From the early grades I remember having handstand contests where Taylor and I would always be the last ones up. All the girls would be cheering for me and all the boys would cheer for Taylor. I would have perfect form and he would have his legs splayed out, his knees bent, and his back arched. Sometimes I would win and other times he would."

"I remember the whole grade having scooter races across the floor, playing a game where you had to find certain cards to win, playing spot, playing pins oakum, and playing capture the flag outside."

"I remember sitting on the tennis courts and stretching

and Don always saying butt-er-fly and everyone cracking up."

"I remember learning how to unicycle. It was so hard, and it took forever to master, but once I mastered it I couldn't forget how. Then the day came when Mika and I made it so many times around a circle that Don bought us a pizza for lunch."

"I remember Don spotting me and a couple of other people on a back handspring on the mats and then on the floor."

"I remember getting nine minutes and eleven seconds on the mile with Maya and how proud we were."

"I remember doing double-dutch during P.E. and after school. Cleo and I could almost do the wheelbarrow perfectly and I could do a round off into the ropes. I also remember that Cleo and I were the best turners and some of the best jumpers."

"I remember in 6th grade I beat all of the best ping-pong players (Andrew and Alan among them) except for Jack who won (and might I add that he always wins) the competition. Also in 6th grade I beat Maddy at bad-mitten in the competition but lost to Joe or Zach right after my victory."

"In 7th grade I remember learning how to fence with Don and then having to write about our experience. I also remember sailing after school and having a blast."

"And last of all I will remember scatter ball and sailing after school."

*I'm not just saying that. I really mean it.

A FANTASTIC SEASON

By Koji Pingry, Grade 8

If I were to describe this year's boys' soccer season in a word, it would be "awesome." I know I kind of sound like a loser but that's the only way of thinking of it. About ten of us have been on the team for nine years just waiting for an opportunity to get a crack at that championship.

As 6th graders, some didn't play as much as others but we were still a team and we were still competitive. We finished in 4th place and got to the playoffs for the first time in many years. The coaches were ecstatic but we were not satisfied at losing in the first round and sent back to sulk for a new year. With a new found confidence the next year we entered the season strongly. With a solid group of 7th graders and good 8th graders we thought we were going to do really well. But because of injuries and other commitments we once again barely made the playoffs at 4th place and once again lost into the first round.

Coming into this year all we could think was, this is our year; this is our time to shine. And shine we did. With an all star line up like ours no one could stop us we thought, not only had we been playing on the same team



for the past two years, we all shared a bond that only comes from spending more than half your life with these kids. Once again I know this sounds corny but I trusted every one of my teammates and I think that trust made us a stronger team. Anyway we entered the season very strongly even though this year we had been moved to the north division. The north division is said to be harder. Nonetheless we accepted the challenge and kicked butt. We won our first two games 2-0 and 3-1 versus last years' 3rd and 2nd place teams, Blaine and Eckstein. I personally believe that we had the hardest schedule in the whole city. We had to play the top four teams from last year in our first four games. But, coming from the south division, no one expected us to do any good. Our third game was against Whitman, last year's champs in the north. We tied them 2-2 in a thrilling match where we came back from a two-zero deficit. The same thing happened against Hamilton, a 2-2 finish with both teams scoring one after the other. Some could argue that we should have beaten both of those teams but I'm sure they are saying the same thing. We won our last three games quite easily; all of them multiple goals, no goals against. We finished the



season with four wins, two ties, and that record was good enough to get first place in the north division for possibly the first time in our history. Hamilton and Whitman tied in the final game of the season putting them both at three wins and three ties. We felt great. We know this was our year but I'm sure no one believed that we were going to get 1st.

We had one more small mountain to climb before the championship, winning our first playoff game. Though we struggled at first, maybe because we were nervous, we pulled through with a 5-1 victory against Mercer, their goal coming from a penalty kick. Now we have a game against Whitman on Friday and then the championship on Saturday. I would've liked to finish this article after the final but as there is a deadline I have no choice but to leave you with this. If you really want to know what happens at the end of this "Cinderella story" ask one of the stars of the north division champions.

Editor's Note: We were very appreciative of Koji's efforts to meet our deadline, so we contacted him for the results of his games. Unfortunately the team lost to Whitman on Friday night, 2-0. They clearly played a great game, because the score was 0-0 until the last 10 minutes. They also suffered a loss on Saturday to Hamilton, but once again played extremely well – it was an over time loss with a score of 3-2. The team appreciated having the support of Ms. Scott, Tom O'Connor, and Don Zemke at the Friday game. They are also grateful to their wonderful coaches, Joe Foye, Mark Morales, and Shaun Kavanagh. It truly was a fantastic season.



Photos by Don Zemke

P.E. BOWLING

By Noah Boudra, Grade 5

Every year we get to bowl for 2 weeks in P.E. Carpet lanes, bowling pins, and heavy rubber balls get delivered to the TOPS gym from Sunset Bowl.

I really think that bowling is a fun activity. The more kids get a chance to bowl the better they get and the more success they will have.

At the end of the two weeks Eric and Don pass out bowling cards that are good for free bowling throughout the whole summer!



Photos by Don Zemke



A MONTHLY CALENDAR OF HOLIDAYS

WHAT TOPS FAMILIES ARE CELEBRATING

Compiled by Lynne Goodrich, CSJ member

JUNE IS GAY/LESBIAN PRIDE MONTH

Cities all over the world hold Gay Pride festivities on different dates in the month of June. Many cities choose the weekend closest to June 27-29 so that the celebration will coincide with the anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising (see below).

JUNE 2007 HOLIDAYS

June 2: Native American Citizenship Day (United States) Congress enacted a law in 1924 permitting Native Americans to become citizens of their own country.

June 5: World Environment Day (United Nations) The 2007 slogan is "Melting Ice-A Hot Topic?" In support of International Polar Year, the WED theme focuses on the effects that climate change is having on polar ecosystems and communities and the ensuing consequences around the world. Celebrations this year will be held in Norway.

June 6: D-Day (United States) On this day in 1944 during World War II, allied forces invaded France, an action long awaited and hoped for by occupied Europe. Intense fighting in Normandy lasted many weeks.

June 11: King Kamehameha Day (Hawaii) Kamehameha was the name of the first five monarchs of the Hawaiian Islands.

June 14: Flag Day (United States) First observed in 1877 on the 100th anniversary of the Continental Congress' adoption of the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States.

June 17: Father's Day (United States) First celebrated in Spokane, Washington on June 19, 1910. Sonora Smart Dodd originally thought of the idea while listening to a Mother's Day sermon the previous year. Dodd and her five siblings were raised by their father after her mother died in childbirth. It was not until 1966 that a presidential proclamation declared the third Sunday of June as Father's Day. This proclamation by President Lyndon Johnson was made permanent by President Richard Nixon in 1972.

June 19: Juneteenth (United States) Celebrates the freedom of over 250,000 slaves at the close of the Civil War. The holiday is based on events that occurred mainly in Texas but is now celebrated nationwide. The celebration takes its name from June 19, 1865, the day federal troops finally arrived in Galveston to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation.

June 20: World Refugee Day (United Nations) On the sixth anniversary of the UN designated World Refugee Day, thousands of organizations in hundreds of countries

will come together to focus global attention not only on the plight of refugees and the causes of their exile, but also on their determination and will to survive and on the contributions they make to their host communities.

June 21: Summer Solstice Longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere, and shortest day of the year in the Southern Hemisphere.

June 22: Last day of the school year at TOPS!

June 28: Stonewall Rebellion Day (United States) The Stonewall Inn was a gay bar in New York City where spontaneous resistance to police harassment inflicted on the homosexual community occurred in 1969. It sparked a new and visible phase of political organization for gay rights.

**NEEDED: NEW CREATOR OF THE
MONTHLY TOPS HOLIDAY CALENDAR FOR
THE 2007/2008 SCHOOL YEAR!**

Lynne will be passing the torch to another family after three years of compiling the holiday calendar for the newsletter. She has many web addresses and past calendars to pass along.

Keep this tradition alive for the TOPS community in your own way—continue a monthly calendar or highlight one holiday a month or perhaps interview other families about their unique celebrations.

Contact Lynne Goodrich at 206-412-2359 or
goodrich_yas@msn.com.



**SEATTLE
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS**

CG-599
Seattle School District No. 1
PO Box 34165
Seattle, WA 98124-1165

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Seattle, WA
Permit No. 3904

2007 TOPS CALENDAR

Send your events and dates to our webmaster, Jack Lee, at webmaster@topsk8.org. Please check Thursday Go-Homes and the web site for updates.

JUNE

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 (F).....Inspire Choir field trip to EMP with Sari | 15 (F).....8th grade Passage |
| 5-8 (T-F).....8th grade camp | 18 (M)5th grade Passage |
| 7 (Th)5th grade to Thornton Creek | 20 (W)3rd grade States Museum in Library |
| 7-8 (Th-F)3rd and 4th grade camp | 21 (Th)Field Day, elementary grades |
| 12 (T)6th and 7th grade Orientation | 21 (Th)Wild Waves, middle school |
| 12 (T)BLT meeting, 4 p.m. | 22 (F).....Last student day |
| 12 (T)Kindergarten Puppet Show, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | |
| 14 (Th)K, 1st, 2nd grade to Camp Long | |
| 15 (F).....3rd grade to Alki | |

SEPTEMBER

- 5 (W).....First day of school

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

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