

# TOPS NEWS

September 2006 ♦ Volume 10, Issue 1

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

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Ahh... the smell of new reams of paper and freshly sharpened pencils, new backpacks, the excitement of new school clothes, and the anticipation of seeing old friends and greeting new teachers. Must be time to get back to school again. So I guess a celebratory greeting would be in order... Happy New School Year to one and all! Yes, the dog days of summer are slowly coming to an end. I hope that you have enjoyed the beautiful Seattle weather and time with family and friends. The custodians have been hard at work in our building and it is sparkling clean!

Mr. Kischner and I have been planning for the new school year using the TOPS transformation plan as our guide. Our academic

focus will continue to be on math, writing, and reading. This will be our first year without our math consultant, Emily Lauderbach, and I am confident that our teachers will continue to offer a challenging math

curriculum utilizing the TOPS math continuum for each grade level. Also, we will continue the "Handwriting Without Tears" program throughout the elementary grades.

We are pleased to welcome our new staff for the 2006-07 school year: Kristina Stoneberg, 1st

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**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.

## There's a New TOPS Website

*by Jack Lee, Webmaster*

[www.topsk8.org](http://www.topsk8.org)

As of this fall, the TOPS website has moved to a new server, with a much easier-to-remember address: [www.topsk8.org](http://www.topsk8.org). Take a look! For the time being, the new site will have the same look and content as the old one; but our new server will allow us to do many more sophisticated things, such as making information available online in dynamic databases, making certain pages password protected, offering printer-friendly versions of pages, and making it much easier for teachers to post information. Stay tuned for more new developments throughout the year.

Another thing the new server provides for us is the ability to create lots of email addresses of the form [abcs@topsk8.org](mailto:abcs@topsk8.org), which members of the community can use for TOPS activities. For starters, there's a new TOPS webmaster email address: if you want to request additions or changes to the website, send email to Jack Lee at [webmaster@topsk8.org](mailto:webmaster@topsk8.org). If you'd like to create a TOPS email address for your TOPS activity, just send a request to the webmaster.

Happy surfing!

## OCTOBER TOPSNEWS DEADLINE

Friday, September 15. Submissions to [topsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:topsnewsletter@gmail.com)



# A MESSAGE FROM THE SITE COUNCIL CHAIR

by Glen Tamura

The Site Council extends a warm welcome to all families as we start another wonderful school year at TOPS. We invite each and every one of you to come and attend one or more meetings, which are open to any interested parent, staff member, or member of the larger community. They are held each second Wednesday of the month from 5-7 p.m. in the library, beginning September 13. Regular Site Council meetings will be preceded by our annual retreat on date, location and time TBA. This is an excellent time to come and share your thoughts about what might be accomplished this year.

New Site Council and BLT Representatives have been elected. They are, by grade band: Jamie Flaxman (BLT, K-4), Glen Tamura & Casey White (K-2), Bill Maclay (3-5), and Shurondia Otis (6-8). Returning representatives are: Elizabeth Dickinson (BLT, 5-8), Kathy Wickward (K-2), Brad Angell & Eric Blazevec (3-5), and Ellen Markman & Ivy Teng (6-8). They attended their first meeting on June 14 and elected their new officers: Glen Tamura (chair), Kathy Wickward (vice chair), Ivy Teng (treasurer) and Ellen Markman (secretary and Site Council BLT rep). Thank you to everyone who voted and particularly to everyone who ran for office! We are fortunate that many of the staff members who served last year will continue to serve another year. They are: Clara Scott, Gerrit Kischner, Lori Eickelberg, Marianne Trangen, Carla Fetterley, Steve Haines, and Ian Mullins. Joby Moore will join us as well this year. The staff's insightful comments and helpful feedback regarding how suggestions and ideas might play out in the classroom setting allow the Site Council to be more effective – and their sense of humor keeps us all from getting bored.

Last, but by no means least, I want to thank outgoing Site Council Chair Marlies Van Bergeijk, out-going Vice Chair Maureen Germani, parent representatives Judith Lee and Linda Korbus, and out-going faculty representatives Judy Holben and Katie Waters.

During this coming year, we want to keep the TOPS community informed about Site Council activities. We hope to accomplish this via minutes and other items in the *TOPS News*. Your grade band parent reps will have additional ways to keep the lines of communication open. We encourage you to contact us with your questions, suggestions, and concerns. TOPS is a great school only as long as we ask ourselves "How can we make this school even better?," and input from parents is vital to making positive changes happen. You may contact your grade band representative or myself directly. The TOPS website has a link to the site council and our email addresses.

## THANK YOU AND WELCOME

With this edition of TOPS News we express our grateful thanks to two wonderful TOPS parents: Cindy Suzumura and Toby Harris. Toby has handled the mailing of the newsletter since September 2003, faithfully getting it ready for bulk mail and delivering it to the school district for mailing. Cindy has been handling layout of the newsletter since September 1999! Talk about dedication . . . she has used her design talents to give the newsletter a sleek and professional look. As new editors last year, we truly appreciated Toby and Cindy for their sense of humor and patient guidance as we learned our job. They were both so helpful and we will miss talking with them on a regular basis. We now have some new parents to thank for taking on these jobs! Toby has recruited THREE parents to take over for her. We're happy to welcome Jane Summerfield, Peggy Maraghe, and Roxanne Robinson. They will be handling the mailing of the newsletter this year. Doug Manelski has graciously agreed to take on the job of layout editor. We're looking forward to working with Jane, Peggy, Roxanne, and Doug.

Thank you to all!

Ann Simonson and Jamie Flaxman, co-editors

# A MESSAGE FROM THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

A warm welcome back to returning TOPS families and to all the new families who join our wonderful community this year. It promises to be a fun and valuable time in our kids' lives and our success depends on all of us working together. We need your help

There are plenty of volunteer opportunities at TOPS. In addition to the annual TOPS events that need numerous volunteers – the No-Bake Sale, elementary & middle school plays, Taste of TOPS, the Auction and the ArtFest - there are many more chances to contribute your services. Some are: daily recess and lunch help (this is critical),

Room Reps, class stewardship coordinators, tutors, field trip coordinators, grant-writing folks, class or grade book order coordinators, and of course, help in the classroom. In your Back-to-School packets that will be coming home with your kid(s), there is a sign-up sheet for you to return to TOPS, with what you would like to volunteer for. However, if you already know how you can help, contact me at [raniemer@seattleschools.org](mailto:raniemier@seattleschools.org) or 252-3541.

I look forward to working with you all in making this the best year for the TOPS community and our children!

- Randi Niemer, Volunteer Coordinator

grade, will team with Sarah Marks; Leslie Hazelwood-Spurr, 4th grade, will team with Joe Drummond. Sheri Toussaint will join the Kindergarten team as the breakout Peak teacher for one year while Lana Fuller is on a one year leave of absence.

We also will have many interns joining us this year. We thank our teachers for assisting colleges and universities in preparing highly trained teachers for the field of education.

From Seattle University:

- Andrea Hugill, 2nd Grade, Julie Gillett
- Kelly Hampton, 2nd grade, Tracey Seefeld
- Katie Billings, 6th grade, Marianne Trangen
- Sara Zoref, 7th grade, Lori Eickelberg

From Seattle Pacific University:

- Jarred Wiley, Physical Education, Don Zemke, Eric Herndon

Principal Intern: Felecia Wells joins us as a principal intern. She has taught at the New School and Zion Preparatory Academy.

We will have a new scoreboard in the gym thanks to Ted Howard, a TOPS parent and principal of Garfield High School, who answered my request for both the scoreboard and the display case. Please remember to thank him when you see him around. These new additions to our gym and hallways will enhance our sports programs and our

## WELCOME NEW STAFF

By Ann Simonson

### Leslie Hazelwood-Spurr, Fourth Grade

Leslie will join our staff this year as the new 4th grade teacher. She has been teaching for 13 years; the last eight were spent at Olympic Hills in Lake City. Her experience there was extremely varied – she taught Kindergarten, a K-1st grade split class, a 4th-5th grade class, and she was the resource teacher for special education. Before that she spent several years in the Highline School District, mostly teaching preschool and Kindergarten. Leslie received her B.A. in American Literature from Middlebury College in Vermont, and her Masters in Education from the University of Washington. She also worked on a Masters with a hearing impaired concentration at Boston University.

Leslie discovered at Olympic Hills that she really enjoys 4th graders. Her favorite part of teaching is the interaction with the children, their inquisi-

building.

The staff will be in professional development the week of August 28-31, where we will be continuing our work as a professional learning community and preparing for the 2006-07 school year.

Welcome to all of our new students and families. We are excited that you have chosen TOPS and look forward to your participation in the school. Please remember to attend the new student orientation, Tuesday, September 5, at 11:00am. We hope you can attend.

I look forward to seeing you all on September 6. Enjoy the rest of your summer.

Cheers!!!

~Clara

**Plan now to attend  
Curriculum Nights:**

Kindergarten: September 26, 6:00

1st/2nd Grade: October 3, 6:00

3rd/4th Grade: October 3, 7:15

5th/6th Grade: September 28, 6:00

7th/8th Grade: September 28, 7:00

D/HH: October 3, 5:00

## ABOUT THE OUTRAGEOUS PUBLISHING SERVICE

Welcome to the first newsletter of the 2006-07 school year. Jamie Flaxman and Ann Simonson edit, Doug Manelski handles photos, design, and layout, 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.

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](mailto:topsnewsletter@gmail.com) or to the newsletter box in the main office. Please send photos to [dougmanelski@gmail.com](mailto:dougmanelski@gmail.com). The deadline for the October issue is September 15. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Jamie and Ann at [topsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:topsnewsletter@gmail.com).



Leslie Hazelwood-Spurr

tive nature at this age, and their enthusiasm for new subjects. They're so open to exploring topics, and Leslie thoroughly enjoys sharing her knowledge with the kids.

Leslie is clearly very busy – she has three kids, a husband, and a dog! Two of her children are in middle school and one in elementary, all in the Seattle public schools. She enjoys hiking, cross-country skiing, knitting, playing the cello, and reading, which these days involves lots of kids' literature.

Leslie is looking forward to a change and a new challenge. She's very excited about the strong parent involvement and support at TOPS, and looks forward to a positive environment with families who are happy to be at TOPS.

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## Sarah Marks and Kristina Stoneberg, First Grade



*photo by Kristina Stoneberg  
- Sarah on the left, Kristina on the right*

This year at TOPS we welcome two new first grade teachers. We know Sarah Marks because she has been at TOPS since February as a long-term substitute. She was officially hired in June. Kristina Stoneberg joins Sarah to complete the first grade team.

Before arriving at TOPS in February, Sarah spent 2 years in substitute positions, including two long-term positions. She taught Kindergarten at Highland Park in West Seattle, and at the New School. Sarah received her education degree from Illinois State where her education included a year of study at the University of Guam. Sarah was first drawn to teaching when she did some volunteer work as a tutor. Her favorite part of teaching is "hanging out with kids all day!" TOPS was Sarah's first experience as a first grade teacher, and she has discovered she enjoys this age even more than Kindergarten because the children are still so young, yet they can do so much more.

In her free time Sarah enjoys reading, biking, baseball, World Cup soccer, walking her dog, and spend-

ing time with her boyfriend and friends in general. She's also looking forward to biking to work. Sarah is very excited about teaching at TOPS because she's so impressed by the sense of community and the partnership between the parents and staff. She has enjoyed the healthy and supportive environment. She's also a big fan of TOPICS!

Kristina Stoneberg comes to TOPS after spending two years in a volunteer position (similar to AmeriCorps) with her husband in inner city Atlanta. She worked with an organization that teaches children leadership skills, using dance as the medium. Before that she spent time teaching in San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Hong Kong. She also spent part of last year as the resource teacher at Thurgood Marshall for K-5 learning disabilities. Kristina received her education degree from Bethel College in Minneapolis.

Kristina was drawn to teaching partly because it gave her the opportunity to work with families. She's really looking forward to teaching first grade because she loves children at that age, and "they keep me young and laughing!" She enjoys mixing movement and learning, and is excited about the prospect of having the freedom to do that at TOPS. Kristina enjoys dancing (couldn't you guess), knitting, camping, and taking her 2-year-old son to the park. Her husband Jared has been a chef for the last 15 years and now will be a stay-at-home Dad.

Kristina is very excited about the prospect of team teaching at TOPS with Sarah. She lives close to TOPS, and is looking forward to being part of the TOPS community.

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## Principal Intern, Felecia Wells

This fall we will have a principal intern at TOPS, Felecia Wells. Felecia's internship is part of her study at City University. She has been teaching at the New School since the day it opened four years ago. She's had a variety of experiences there, teaching Pre-K, 1st grade, and Reading and Math Acceleration. During her last year at the New School she also worked part time at Zion Preparatory Academy as a Title 1 teacher. Felecia received her B.A. in Law and Justice with a minor in Psychology at Central Washington University. She then moved on to education with a Masters in Education at Heritage University in Toppenish, WA.

Felecia was drawn to teaching once she had her own children, and she wanted to find a career that would allow her to spend time with her children.

She also had a husband who was a teacher. She decided to work towards becoming a principal because she enjoys working with the entire community of a school: the students, teachers, and parents. She wanted the opportunity to move beyond the focus of just one classroom.

Felecia has two children, ages 8 and 9, and her husband is the Principal at Zion Preparatory Academy in South Seattle. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family, reading, shopping, and walking. Felecia is looking forward to her time at TOPS because she's eager to learn exactly what makes this school so special. She's looking forward to learning how TOPS meets the needs of so many different children and families, and she's happy she'll be part of the TOPS community this fall.

# TOPS Staff, 2006-2007

## Administrative Staff

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# Second Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Classroom Added at TOPS

by Cindy Beck, Seth Ziegler, and Kelly Hampton

A really big “hello” to the TOPS community from new staff Cindy Beck, Seth Ziegler, and Kelly Hampton! We are very pleased to be here. Our previous school home was View Ridge Elementary which had classrooms for Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing students from September of 1971 until June of 2006. Because of the benefits of housing all of the elementary D/HH students in one centrally-located building, the program at View Ridge was moved to TOPS.

Cindy Beck is a teacher of Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing children. She has been a teacher at View Ridge for many years, and even knew Mrs. Scott’s son Reggie when he was a student there. Cindy loves teaching D/HH children and feels very fortunate to have worked with and cared for so many students during her career. Seth Ziegler is a special education assistant extraordinaire! Among the specialties of this very talented educator are storytelling, drama, and visual arts. Kelly Hampton is a highly-skilled sign language interpreter. In addition to interpreting, Kelly has worn many hats during the past two years - interpreter, assistant, and student teacher. Seth and Cindy will be teaching in the D/HH Program at Eckstein Middle School in the morning and TOPS in the afternoon. Kelly will be at TOPS full-time.

Both Cindy and Seth have hearing losses. Cindy is hard-of-hearing and Seth is profoundly Deaf. Cindy can speak and understand speech in many, but not all situations. Seth’s primary communication is through American Sign Language. However, for short conversations with non-signers when no interpreter is available, Seth is very creative in communicating through notes and gestures. Kelly, on the other hand, can hear just about anything!

Having Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing staff in addition to D/HH students will bring a new dimension of diversity to TOPS. Many people - both hearing and D/HH - have not had the experience of getting to know a Deaf adult. Seth offered classes in sign language to the View Ridge parents, staff, and students and his classes were always “sold out!” He plans to offer sign language classes at TOPS as well. Seth has many interesting things to teach and tell about his experience growing up Deaf, about Deaf Culture, and how he functions very successfully in a hearing world.

We have heard many wonderful things about TOPS, and are all three very excited about becoming part of this top-notch school community. We are in Room B-203 so please do stop in and say “hi.” We look forward to meeting you!

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## Teacher Excellence Fund

by Gerrit Kischner, Assistant Principal

As the “special auction item” in May of this year, the TOPS community generously funded a commitment to supporting TOPS educators in their ongoing professional development. A flurry of last minute paddles raised the fund to a substantial \$26,000, and the TOPS Teaching Excellence Fund (TEF) was born. The Building Leadership Team (BLT) was charged with laying out the ground rules and procedures for ensuring that these monies are well-spent. This summer, the first four teachers made use of this great opportunity.

The Building Leadership Team will manage this fund through August 2008. Its name is intended to reflect the fact that it is intended to fund significant professional development opportunities for all staff, certificated and classified, at TOPS. The BLT decided first to divide the fund into five categories in order to ensure equitable distribution of the monies:

- funding for all-staff or cross-grade band programs;
- funding for K-2 staff;
- funding for 3-5 staff;
- funding for 6-8 staff; and
- funding for specialists and staff serving all students.

Proposals for funding will be evaluated by the BLT on a monthly basis. The central criterion by which the BLT will evaluate proposals will be their connection to helping staff support the mission and Transformation Plan of TOPS. Proposals that are accompanied by matching funds or additional funding will be favored as proposals for which the greatest benefit could be derived for the amount granted. Appropriate uses for this fund include the following:

- multi-day workshops;
- conferences for state and national professional associations;
- contribution towards foreign travel for curriculum development and professional growth;
- honoraria, materials, and/or meals for in-building retreats and programs;
- contribution toward the cost of national board certification;
- per-diem payment for curriculum study group during summer months; and
- supporting a peer collaboration group for looking at student work.

We are excited about the great opportunities that

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the TEF fund will make possible for our staff. We know that the new ideas and excitement about learning that staff gain through their experiences will be shared broadly beyond the walls of the individual teacher's classroom. In addition, the TOPS community can expect to hear from recipients in a number of formal venues. The BLT stipulates that each recipient write an article for the newsletter, present formally to the faculty, and report to the Site Council about their experience.

This summer, the first four teachers took advantage

## Teacher Excellence Fund – My Experience

by Tracy Seefeld, Grade 2 Teacher

"Imagining the Classroom of the Future through Brain Research"

Presented by Dr. John Medina

Dr. John Medina developed this class as a way to present what he and other scientists are learning about how the brain learns. He presented 12 Brain Rules that are areas of inquiry where brain scientists and educators might do research together. This was the second time he had taught this class. I will present a few rules, and how I will make some changes to see if it makes a difference in helping the learning process take place with students.

### Rule #1 - Memory is not fixed at learning - short term memory

We can hold seven pieces of information for 30 seconds in our declarative memory. If you repeat the information in 30 seconds it moves to working memory. The information needs to be repeated in 1-3 hours or it may not be retained. One thought for homework, if the assignments are not in the short or working memory, the homework is a new piece of learning for the student.

### Rule #2 - Memory is not fixed at learning - long term memory

At the working memory point, if the information is repeated within 1-3 hours, it moves to long term memory. The learning may take up to 10 years for the brain to find a resting place for it. The hippocampus moves the short term memory to long term memory.

My focus will be on the homework assignments. Often students struggle to complete homework assignments for a variety of reasons. My hope is that the positive impact for all students will be that they are able to complete the homework assignments, and turn them in on time by repeating the information that is in their long term memory as they work on the assignments.

The steps that I will take include thinking about relevant homework assignments that relate to the content that we are studying. One assignment is reading for 20+ minutes, seven days each week. This assignment involves reading books that you can comprehend. One strategy will be to teach students, with the help of the school librarian, how to find books that they can read. This will be done over and over this school year. In class we will have time each week to have 4 books at our desk at all times for silent reading time in class. One book will be a book at their reading level, a second

of some excellent opportunities. Tracy Seefeld attended a four-day workshop at Seattle Pacific University entitled, "Imagining the Classroom of the Future through Brain Research for Practitioners." Katie Waters and Leslie Nilan, our new third grade team, attended a three-day workshop on using digital photography in the classroom. And our new Reading Specialist, Carla Fetterley, attended a week-long institute at the University of Washington on linguistic remedies for reading disabilities. We look forward to hearing from these teachers this fall!

book that is non-fiction, and two other books of their choice that they can read. I'm thinking of taking the class on a tour of the central library in downtown Seattle in the fall to tour and check out books, and then to take them 3 more times during the school year.

Another assignment will involve learning addition math facts that all second graders at school need to learn. Before this is given as a homework assignment, we will spend weeks looking at facts we already have memorized, talking and working with strategies to help us remember the math facts. Since I will build on what they learned in grade one, I will need to see if this is new learning for anyone or if they have some facts and strategies already in their long term memory. We will do this through class discussions, games, and individual verbal assessments of facts as they look at or read the given math fact.

Homework assignments will be given on a weekly homework page on Mondays. I will write the assignments on the paper for awhile, a few months before I start to have the students write down some of the assignments.

### Rule #3 - Sleep and human learning

The brain is most active when we sleep. During the first hour of sleep the brain repeats (thousands of times) the most recent information/learning stored in our long term memory. The nap zone is the time 12 hours past the midpoint of the previous night of sleep. No learning takes place during the nap zone. If you awake at 8 a.m. and go to sleep at 8 p.m., the nap zone is from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Your brain is fighting to stay awake or go to sleep during the nap zone.

The afternoon recess stops at 2:10. Some students go to the library for recess. My plan is to have the entire class do some exercises together or walk or run around the field or perimeter of the school grounds for up to 10-15 minutes before we go back into class to learn for the last hour of the day.

A big THANKS to the TOPS community for supporting professional development training through our 2006 auction. This is known as the Teacher Excellence Fund. In the spring of 1986, I graduated with my undergraduate degree. To keep my teaching certificate current for the state of Washington, I am required to take 15 credits every five years. We pay for these classes ourselves. There are different requirements depending on the time of your graduation.



Delivering on the  
**TOPS**  
The Option Pro





*Dream @ Seward*  
**SK-8**  
*gram @ Seward*



*photos by Don Zemke*

## Middle School Ultimate Frisbee 2006!

*by Don Zemke,  
P.E. Teacher*

Middle Schoolers; get ready for another fantastic season of Ultimate Frisbee. Practices will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays after school until 5:00 beginning Tuesday September 12th. Plan on attending the Ultimate informational meeting at lunch-time on Friday, September 8th.

Reminder: All Middle School athletic participants are required to have a Seattle School District participation and physical form on file at school. The physical forms are good for 2 years.



*Photo by Don Zemke*



*Photo by Don Zemke*

## 6th Period Sailing at the Center for Wooden Boats

*by Don Zemke, P.E. Teacher*

TOPS P.E. and the Center For Wooden Boats is again teaming up this fall to provide TOPS 7th and 8th graders with the opportunity to sail during P.E. on Fridays. You can pick up information packets from Don.



*Photo by Don Zemke*

## Revamped After School Sports...

by Don Zemke, P.E. Teacher

Don and Eric have changed the structure of the after school sports program in an effort to provide students with more opportunities in a more structured, safe environment. We plan on conducting eight week sessions that students will sign up for prior to the session. This will ensure that our numbers are manageable, all students are accounted for so that parents can be notified if a student forgets and takes the bus home, and students can experience a richer variety of life sports.

So far we plan to offer sessions on Juggling, Double Dutch, Unicycling, Roller Skating, YoYo, Gymnastics, Cooperative Games, Bicycling, Ping-Pong, Futsol (Brazilian indoor soccer), Hockey, Basketball, and more. Our first sessions will begin the first week of October.

If you have any suggestions or would like to teach a session, please let Don and Eric know.



Photo by Don Zemke

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# A Monthly Calendar Of Holidays

## What TOPS Families Are Celebrating

compiled by Lynne Goodrich (CSJ Member)

### September IS National Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15 to October 15 is National Hispanic Month and calls upon the peoples of the United States, especially the educational community, to observe such month with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

#### September 2006 Holidays

**September 4:** Labor Day (USA and Canada) Declared a national holiday in 1894 to honor all working people. First celebrated in the United States on September 5, 1882. The association of the holiday with trade and labor unions has declined over the years.

**September 8:** Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Catholic) Commemorates the birth of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. One of the Holy Days of Obligation.

**September 16:** Independence Day (Mexico) National holiday in Mexico. El Noche del Grito is the night on which at midnight between the 15th and 16th of September 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo issued the proclamation "El Grito del Dolores" (the Cry of Freedom) uniting the Mexican forces against the Spanish.

**September 23:** Autumn Equinox Equinox is either of the two times during the year that the sun crosses the celestial equator, an imaginary line through the sky, and appears directly above the equator, the imaginary line that divides the earth into northern and southern hemispheres. When this occurs, the length of the day and the night are approximately equal at every place on earth. This day also marks the beginning of autumn.

**September 20:** Higan-E (Buddhist) Celebrates the equinox which symbolizes peace, equality, and harmony.

**September 22:** Native American Day (USA) Several states celebrate this on the fourth Friday in September. Congress has considered legislation to make it a national holiday, but it has not passed yet.

**September 23:** Rosh Hashanah (Jewish) Jewish New Year 5767. Begins at sunset on September 23 and concludes at sunset September 25. This major holiday begins the most holy period of the Jewish calendar, the High Holy Days. On the first night special foods are eaten, including honey which symbolizes the desire for a sweet year.

**September 24:** Ramadan (Muslim) The Holy Month of Ramadan is a time when Muslims fast during daylight hours to celebrate the time when Allah revealed the first verses of the Qu'ran, the holy book of Islam. It is a time for spiritual reflection, prayer, doing good deeds, charity, spending time with loved ones. It teaches self-discipline, self-restraint, generosity, and understanding of those less fortunate.

**September 24-30:** Deaf Awareness Week



Photo by Don Zenke

# TOPS Site Council

*The Site Council is the parent, faculty, and student governing body for TOPS. It meets each month during the school year. All are welcome to attend.*

## **Site Council Members Representing Staff**

*TOPS principal - Clara Scott*  
 cscott@seattleschools.org

*TOPS assistant principal - Gerrit Kischner*  
 gakischner@seattleschools.org

## **Site Council faculty reps**

*Kids Co. - Ian Mullins*  
 tops@kidscompany.org

*K-2 - Joby Moore*  
 mjmoore@seattleschools.org

*K-2 - Carla Fetterley*  
 cafetterley@seattleschools.org

*3-5 - Leslie Nilan*  
 lsnilan@seattleschools.org

*6-8 - Lori Eickelberg*  
 eick@qwest.net

*6-8 - Marianne Trangen*  
 marianne.trangen@stanfordalumni.org

*Other certified - Steve Haines*  
 shaines@seattleschools.org

## **Site Council Members Representing Parents and Community**

*Site Council chair, parent rep: K-2 - Glen Tamura*  
 gtamura@u.washington.edu

*Site Council assistant chair, parent rep: K-2 - Kathy Wickward*  
 wickward@raincity.com

*parent rep: K-2, Site Council treasurer - Ivy Teng Luong*  
 cfoilt@vmmc.org

*parent rep: 6-8, Site Council secretary - Ellen Markman*  
 ellenmark@hotmail.com

*parent representative: K-2 - Casey White*  
 therwhitehouse@comcast.net

*Parent representative: 3-5 - Brad Angell*  
 bws@headveins.com

*Parent representative: 3-5 - Bill Maclay*  
 bmaclay@juno.com

*Parent representative: 3-5 - Eric Blazevic*  
 blazevic@comcast.net

*Parent representative: 6-8 - Shurondia Otis*  
 renee06@qwest.net

*Eastlake community representatives: - TBA*

*Coalition for Social Justice rep: - Galen Motin-Goff*  
 ggoff@fhcrc.org

*Middle school student council rep: - Koji Pingry*

## **Coordinators and Committee Chairs**

*Volunteer Coordinator - Randi Niemer*  
 raniemer@seattleschools.org

*Communications committee chair - TBA*

*School board reporter - TBA*

*Webmaster - Jack Lee*

*webmaster@topsk8.org*

*Drama committee chair - Linda Korbus*

*L.korbus@comcast.net*

*No-Bake Coordinator - Randi Niemer*

*raniemer@seattleschools.org*

*Council for Social Justice chair - Bonnie Cech*

*bcech@cechsystems.com*

*Stewardship Chair - Laurie Stusser-McNeil*

*lstusser@comcast.net*

*Newsletter reporter for site council - Scott Winter*

*swinter@u.washington.edu*

*Newsletter editors - Jamie Flaxman & Ann Simonson*

*topsnewsletter@gmail.com*

*Music committee representative - Johnny Calcagno*

*johnny@stickerville.org*

*Art committee representative - TBA*

# NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY AND BEYOND

by Steve Haines, Librarian

"A library should be like a pair of open arms." ~ Roger Rosenblatt

## Welcome to the 2006-07 school year

**LIBRARY HOURS ARE 8:45-4:30, M-F.**

Once again I'm looking forward to working with the TOPS community. The Seattle Public Schools vision for its libraries provides for "academic achievement for every student ... by ensuring that students are effective users of ideas and information by allowing full access to resources, and full instruction to all students." I would add providing "full access to all in our community."

The library is open all day. It's open after school for those wishing to do homework, research, or to read. When I am available, I'm more than happy to help with schoolwork. Adults are always welcome. We have 14 computers in the library with (filtered) Internet access. Students wanting to

access the Internet need to sign an Internet Access Form. Supervision of our children is a huge issue especially after school, and especially when the library and school office close. Our library/school office is not set up to provide day care. Kids Company, which is located on campus, can accommodate students needing supervision. They are open before school and until 6 pm. Students still waiting to be picked up after everyone is gone are putting themselves at risk without proper supervision.



## "Batter Up"

Summer opened with an enjoyable experience with three fortunate TOPS students, Anna, Lani, and her brother Makara, as we watched the Mariners top the Giants 8-1 on a sun baked Saturday afternoon at Safeco Field. The students learned how to score a baseball game as they worked their way through cotton candy, and other "dentist friendly" delectables. This was made possible through the TOPS Auction with box seats donated by the Markman family. Thank you to everyone who made this satisfying experience possible.

## State of the Library

The end of the school year found 64 books with a value of \$750 still checked out of our library of approximately 8,200 volumes. Hopefully some of those are sitting at home waiting to be returned. Every year after school lets out, I perform an inventory of all the books. Following is a look at the 2005-06 school year.

### Marked as Missing:

Those materials not checked out from the library and not on the shelves at time of inventory - 73 volumes

Replacement cost (not reflecting cost increases) .....\$700

### Marked as Lost:

Books reported lost by patrons or from students who have left TOPS - 44 volumes

Replacement cost (not reflecting cost increases) .....\$523

This is slightly better than last year, and hopefully some of the books will work their way home or will be, and have been paid for by patrons. This still reflects a large portion of an ever-shrinking book budget, which unfortunately is not provided for by the school district but is bestowed by the Friends of TOPS. We are also fortunate to have generous families donating funds for books. There is also a "wish list" that can be found at the TOPS website under Academics/Library. If anyone would like to see a list of the books that are missing/lost for this year, check in the library.

## Et Cetera

\*I reported last year that the Seattle Public Schools would be moving to a new library operating system called Horizon Dynix. This new system would be similar to the Seattle Public Libraries system. Well, don't look for it any time soon. Glitches galore. Look for it hopefully later in this school year.

\*\*"Banned Book Week" will be Sept. 25-29, and for the third consecutive year we will have a Book-It presentation concerning banned books for our middle school students.

\*A great web site to check is the Online Resources for Students that can be accessed at home. Access information can be found on the TOPS home page, [www.topsk8.org](http://www.topsk8.org) at the library link under Academics. This is an invaluable resource for students and adults.

\*I had a great time reading the first four books of the Underland Chronicles by Suzanne Collins. This contemporary fantasy set under New York City, where all the creatures are large and the humans small, has Gregor involved in many adventures. This is perfect reading for boys seeking action.

## Seattle Public Library Book Sale September 16-17

The Friends of The Seattle Public Library Fall Book Sale is September 16-17 at Magnuson Park (9-5 on Saturday, 11-4 on Sunday). Come shop our 200,000-item inventory for books, CDs, DVDs, videos, and art prints. Student and adult volunteers are needed at the event, beginning with set-up on Thursday afternoon Sept. 14 and running through clean-up Tuesday morning, Sept. 19. Contact the Book Sale office at 523-4053 or [book.sale@spl.org](mailto:book.sale@spl.org) for more information, or visit [www.splfriends.org](http://www.splfriends.org) to volunteer online.

# 2006-2007 TOPS Calendar

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



*photo by Doug Manelski*

## ***TOPS LIME GREEN PAPER***

Once again, we will be using lime green paper only for communiqués that need a signature or should be returned to TOPS. These include Back-to-School Packet materials, permission slips, and similar correspondence.

This will make it easier for all of us to locate the important, time-sensitive papers, and get them returned back to our teachers and staff immediately.

Please take note as soon as you see a lime green paper come home with your child. Read and return without delay!

**September**  
 5 (T) New Student Orientation, 11 a.m.  
 6 (W) First day of school  
 9 (S) Site Council Retreat  
 13 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
 26 (T) Curriculum night – Kindergarten, 6-7 p.m.  
 27 (W) Professional development block time;  
 2-hour early dismissal  
 6th-8th grade individual pictures  
 28 (Th) Curriculum night – 5th-6th grades, 6-7 p.m.  
 7th-8th grades, 7-8 p.m.  
 K-5 individual pictures

**October**  
 3 (T) Curriculum night – DHH, 5-6 p.m.,  
 1st-2nd grades, 6:15-7:15 p.m.,  
 3rd-4th grades 7:15-8:15 p.m.  
 11 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
 13 (F) Professional development day; no school  
 25 (W) Professional development block time;  
 2-hour early dismissal

**November**  
 8 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
 9 (Th) End of first quarter  
 10 (F) Veterans Day; no school  
 22 (W) 1-hour early dismissal  
 23-24 (Th-F) Thanksgiving holiday; no school

**December**  
 15 (F) 1-hour early dismissal  
 18-29 (M-F) Winter break; no school

**January**  
 1 (M) Winter break; no school  
 2 (T) Classes resume  
 10 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
 15 (M) Martin Luther King Jr. Day; no school

**February**  
 1 (Th) End of semester  
 2 (F) Day between semesters; no school  
 7 (W) Professional development block time;  
 2-hour early dismissal  
 14 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
 19 (M) Presidents Day; no school  
 20-23 (T-F) Mid-winter break; no school

**March**  
 7 (W) Professional development block time;  
 2-hour early dismissal  
 14 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
 16 (F) Professional development day; no school

**April**  
 4 Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
 9-13 (M-F) Spring break; no school  
 20 (F) End of third quarter

**May**  
 5 (Sa) TOPS Auction at the Asian Resource Center  
 9 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
 16 (W) Professional development block time;  
 2-hour early dismissal  
 28 (M) Memorial Day; no school

**June**  
 20 (W) Last student day

# Stewardship in Action

## *New Year, New Zone*



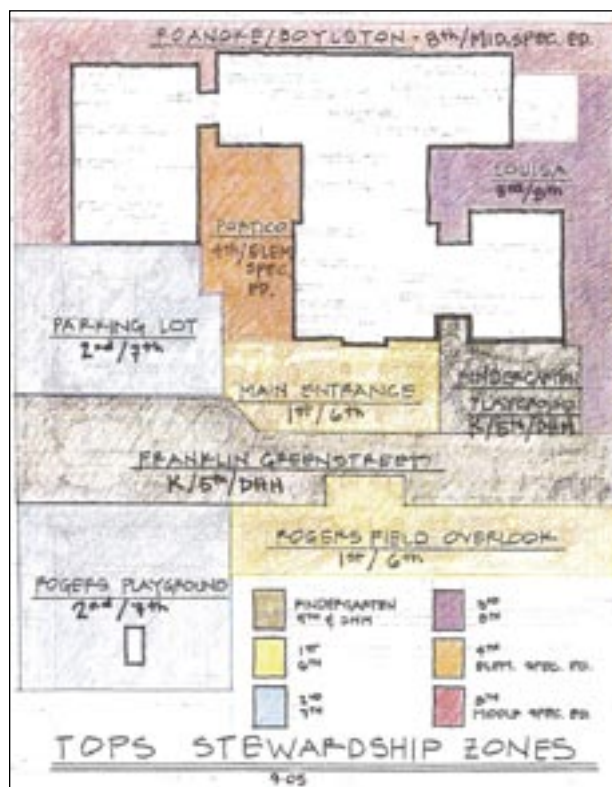
By Laurie Stusser-McNeil

Welcome back to a new, green school year. As kids settle into their new classrooms and adjust to the realities of being in a new grade, one change just may be more exciting than more homework: moving up to care for a new Stewardship Zone. Each grade is assigned an area of the school grounds and adjacent public space to care for and nurture in the coming school year—ask your student if they know their new Zone yet.

As parents, it's time for us to start thinking about how we'll get involved at school this year. Why not consider Stewardship Coordinator in your child's classroom? The Stewardship Coordinators for each class work closely with the teacher to develop environmental learning opportunities and a regular program for caring for the class's Zone. They have plenty of support from the Stewardship Committee, and have the chance to actively work with students for positive change in their world. You'll hear more and have a chance to sign up on Curriculum Night.

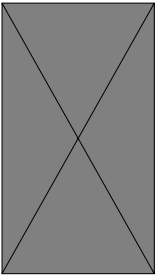
In the meantime, talk to your kids about stewardship. Ask them what they know—they may surprise you! A lot of planting, litter and recycling awareness, and environmental work went on last year in almost every class. Help them get ready for a new year as responsible environmental stewards.

And look for upcoming information on our newest project: Cafeteria Composting. Talk about making a difference! Kindergarten and 5th grade students will be transforming how we look at garbage at lunch and reducing waste by the barrelful.



### To get more involved in stewardship at TOPS, you can contact:

Cheri Bloom (cmblooms@comcast.net)  
Molly LaPatra (lapatra@comcast.net)  
Maggie McDonald (maggiecmcd@msn.com)  
Rebecca Sadinsky (rsadinsky@comcast.net)  
Laurie Stusser-McNeil (ljustusser@comcast.net)



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INFORMATION ABOUT THE  
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COMING SOON!***

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