MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Thank you parents, students, and staff for another fantastic year at TOPS! A special thank you to all the volunteers who make TOPS a better place for all of our students. In addition to the big events such as the No-Bake, Auction, Art Fest, and plays, parents are in our building every day helping in the classroom, lunchroom, playground, and tutoring. Many parents, who are not able to come during the school day, volunteer on field trips and camping. Others grade papers, sort book orders, and do other activities from home. Thanks to ALL of you!

Most of our students enroll in activities in their communities during summer months; some of our students attend summer school, and some of our older students are doing internships. Some of you will be traveling around the United States seeing sights and visiting family and friends. Summer is an important time for students and families to refresh and renew.

Continued on page 8

8TH GRADE PASSAGE

By Lauri Palmer

1,593 days. 1,593 days of school have passed since they sat cross-legged with Joby and Joan learning sign language to sitting on stools with Mr. Bloedel balancing molecular formulas. It seems like just yesterday that the class of 2008 was celebrating their first 100 days of school. Most of the eighth graders have been at TOPS since 2000; the kindergarten class of 2000 is the first to go through the new building – Clara Scott’s first class and Helen’s last class. By now they know where they are going to high school, but for the next couple of weeks there will be time spent reflecting on where they have been. A series of 8th Grade Passage events helps with the transition.

Continued on page 12

SEPTEMBER TOPS News Deadline

Friday, August 1 • Submissions to topsnewsletter@gmail.com
Farewell to Helen

By Ann Simonson

I have walked into the TOPS office more times than I can count, and I believe every time I’ve encountered Helen in the office, I’ve been greeted with a smile and a “can I help you?” I’m sure I’m not the only one who will miss her. Helen has been a part of TOPS for ten years, so all of the students and parents currently at TOPS will feel her absence next year.

We wish you well, Helen, and bid you a fond farewell. We hope to see you stop by now and then to say Hi. Thank you for all you’ve done to help make TOPS a great school!

Farewell to TOPS

By Helen Hundley, Administrative Secretary

My time at TOPS has been wonderful in so many ways.
- “My” office staff
- The students
- The parents
- The staff

I have been at TOPS 10 years this year. This is the second class that I have seen go from crayons to 8th Grade Passage. There is nothing like watching the growth of a child and seeing him/her become a wonderful young person.

TOPS has some of the most talented students that I have ever seen. I love the originality of each one. Sometimes when I am walking back from Lake Union Mail or Louisa’s, I just smile looking at the hats, striped stockings, and all the other apparel that makes each one so unique. TOPS kids have been stars in academics, art, music, speech tournaments, dance, and athletics. There is no doubt I will hear and read about many of our students in high school, college, and beyond.

I am so grateful to have been a part of a school community that offers so much enrichment to the students. I truly believe they learn so much when they are out in the community on field trips, camps, and service projects.

TOPS truly has the most dedicated staff that I have had the privilege to work with. There is a lot of camaraderie and teamwork.

Joann, Colette, and Michele have been fantastic to work with! Joann and I started the same year. I feel very fortunate to have worked with Clara and Gerrit as well. They have been a great team!

I am looking forward to new adventures—not sure exactly what my next job will be yet!

Paul and I are looking forward to living on Whidbey Island when he retires in a few years. I also look forward to having more time with my family and two granddaughters, Nicole, age 14, and Cora, four years old.

I would like to thank the entire TOPS community for welcoming me from the very start and continuing that support through all the years. TOPS will always be a part of me. Thanks for the memories!
### June

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>8th grade camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>3rd and 4th grades to Camp Arnold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BLT meeting, 4:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kindergarten Puppet Show 6:30 p.m., lunchroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Honor Roll Assembly, 2 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Site Council meeting, 5 - 7 p.m., library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>K, 1st, and 2nd grade to Camp Long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Awards Assembly 2 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>8th grade passage, 7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>5th grade Moving Up ceremony, 2 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Field Day – elementary grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Wild Waves – middle school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Last student day, 2:20 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 2007 - 2008 TOPS Calendar

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

---

By Sheri Toussaint, Penny Harvest Coach

The most valuable pennies known to exist were minted in 1793, and the only four known to exist today are worth $275,000 each.

The Penny Harvest Service Learning Event has concluded for the 2007-08 school year. Thanks again to all of the students at TOPS that supported the event by collecting and donating over a thousand pounds of coins.

Students in Leslie Nilan and Joe Drummond’s classes were given the honor and responsibility as Philanthropy Roundtable Group Leaders to learn about their community and decide how TOPS school could give back to others. During March and April I met weekly with Leslie and Joe’s classes; my job was to help guide the students as they surveyed and researched the TOPS community and not-for-profit organizations to determine how $1,200 in grants would be awarded. Students took a lot of time discussing, brainstorming, debating, charting, and voting on the needs of the community, the environment, and the world as a whole.

Leslie Nilan’s class voted to address animal care so they awarded $600 to the Feral Cat Project located in Seattle on Roosevelt Avenue. The Feral Cat Project’s mission is to save the lives of homeless cats by providing free spay/neuter surgery in a safe and humane environment. This process allows these cats to stay healthier and helps put an end to feline homelessness.

Joe Drummond’s class voted to address animal care and health-care/wellness so they awarded two $300 grants. One $300 grant was given to Animal Talk Rescue located in Seattle on Roosevelt Avenue. Animal Talk Rescue is a “no-kill” animal shelter and while their rescue focus has been primarily with cats and kittens, rescue of any abused, abandoned, or neglected companion animal is undertaken provided there is space available.

The second $300 grant was given to the American Cancer Society in Memory of Virginia Travers (mom of Skyler Manelski, second grade student at TOPS). The Society is helping to fund new cancer treatment technologies and research, reduce cancer in minority and other medically underserved groups, provide everyone access to free cancer information, and support community programs that help patients and their families cope with cancer.

These young people did an awesome job of making educated decisions, developing a sense of caring and social justice, and further developing their leadership, communication, and teamwork skills. Penny Harvest is an outstanding program/curriculum that teaches students to collect money for a good cause and have the students themselves decide which community problems to tackle and how to get the job done. Bravo!

Students from Joe Drummond’s class present a check to the American Cancer Society to 2nd grader Skyler Manelski — Photo by Sheri Toussaint
TAKING CARE OF THE EARTH—COMPOSTING NEWS

By Sandy Shettler

One year after launching the TOPS composting program, it is time to reflect on the effect that the program is having on factors ranging from the trash collectors’ route to gas prices and climate change. We hear a lot about “change” these days . . . what has changed at TOPS?

- We only see the trash truck once a week.
- Our fifth grade trash monitors get bored because no one needs their help.
- The compost gets to decompose in Everett or Auburn, not guzzle gas to destinations like central Oregon.
- And unlike food which goes to landfills, our food waste doesn’t produce methane—instead it becomes useful soil in 120 days.

Bad news for methane and trash trucks . . . fantastic news for our earth, our children’s understanding of their connection to their earth, and our community! Here are the details.

DUMPSTER DECREASE: Our weekly trash output has diminished by almost 35 percent since November! We recently installed a new garbage dumpster which is slightly larger than our old one, BUT we have reduced our pickup from twice weekly to just once.

GREEN PARTIES: Most parties and events at TOPS now follow our “green guidelines” (posted on our website). We are meeting our goal of REDUCING all waste, including compost. Scott, our evening custodian, reports a dramatic reduction in waste following parties. We even composted and recycled the waste from the TOPS auction.

LUNCHROOM: Most students are now familiar with the proper sorting of their lunchroom trays—the 5th grade monitors comment that it’s sometimes “boring” since so many people correctly sort their trays without help. (But we still need their leadership!)

KITCHEN: Annie, our lunchroom manager, and her assistant Ray, now compost all the kitchen food waste in their own bin.

CLASSROOMS: All elementary teachers have begun classroom composting, and most classes now designate compost-delivery as one of the student jobs. Students at Kids Co. and the DHH program also separate their compost and recycling.

OFFICE: The office staff has their own compost bin too. Mrs. Scott is so excited to compost that she carries her banana peels into school so she can be sure they won’t end up in the trash.

Composting food helps the earth in so many ways. Our TOPS food waste makes a very short trip to Everett or Auburn, instead of all the way to central Oregon where our garbage goes—an enormous savings in transportation and greenhouse gases. And within 120 days of landing in our lunchroom compost bin, TOPS food waste has been turned back into healthy soil amendment to help gardeners. If the food waste had gone into the Oregon landfill, it would slowly decompose anaerobically, producing methane gas—a greenhouse gas 21 times more potent than carbon dioxide!

We’ve had a great year and our goal for next year will be to take waste reduction and composting to all corners of our school.
TOPS Memorial Underway

By Wayne Duncan

**REMEMBRANCE** — *noun.* Something serving to celebrate or honor the memory of a person or an event; a memorial


A group of TOPS parents and staff has been working to establish a memorial for TOPS staff who have died in recent years. These people played a large part in the lives of our children and were committed to their success. It is fitting that we take the time, and make the effort to create a place where we can pause to reflect on the contributions these loving people made to our lives.

A Japanese maple has been planted in these TOPS staff members’ honor. It is located near the landing next to the northern-most set of stairs from the playground up to the TOPS building. But the area won’t really be complete without a bit more work, and for this we are asking for your help. We are hoping to raise enough money to install seating nearby. We will be looking for volunteers to help water several new plantings this summer. See the Memorial Tree article for more details. We will have a Fall Landscape Work Party so watch for information once school starts. Once again thanks to all of our hearty volunteers and hope to see lots of helpers in the fall!

---

Spring Landscape Work Party

By Molly LaPatra

Amid the snow flakes, sleet, rain, and general cold weather, about 30 brave volunteers turned out for the TOPS Spring Landscape Work Party, Saturday morning April 19, to commemorate Earth Day. Students, parents, alumni parents, and alumni students all joined forces to weed, mulch, pick up litter, and plant a memorial tree. We worked steadily for over 3 hours with a hot chocolate break to warm us up. A huge thank you to our steadfast volunteers; we had fun, got some exercise, and helped prep TOPS’ grounds for the dry summer months ahead (hard to believe it will ever be warm and dry!) when our mulching will help keep the soil moist and weed growth down. We will be looking for volunteers to help water several new plantings this summer. See the Memorial Tree article for more details. We will have a Fall Landscape Work Party so watch for information once school starts. Once again thanks to all of our hearty volunteers and hope to see lots of helpers in the fall!

---

Excellent library collection at TOPS. She died in 2003.

- **Venise Jones-Pool** taught fifth-grade at TOPS from 2002-03, after teaching for many years at Stevens, Hawthorne, and other Seattle elementary schools. In addition to her classroom teaching, Venise was a well known soprano soloist in the Seattle area. She died in 2005.


We believe that this installation will be a lasting legacy for years to come. Please, if you are interested in making a donation, indicate TOPS Memorial on your check or envelope addressed to Friends of TOPS. Donations can be sent to the TOPS office. Once processed, acknowledgement of gifts will be sent to donors.

Questions? Contact TOPS parent Wayne Duncan (phone: 206.329.6531; email: swayne@nwlink.com) or TOPS teacher Tracy Seefeld (phone: 206.252.3510; email: tseefeld@seattleschools.org).
**Time Stood Still**

**Seward School Reunion**

*By Marilyn Kavanaugh*

TOPS at Seward School hosted a gala reunion of 50 Seward Moms and Staff on May 7, 2008. Fifty Moms (and a few dads) from the 1970’s returned to school! Included in the five hour event were a student-led tour of the renovated buildings, a discussion of the new programs, lunch, and happily much time for renewing old friendships. Many of those attending continue to live in the north Capitol Hill area and have remained active and interested in the community and public school education.

In 1973 and 1974 “Super Seward” parents campaigned hard and succeeded in keeping the school open after repeated threats of closure. It was then (and continues to be we discovered) one of the finest elementary schools in the city. To say we were impressed is an understatement! On several occasions over the years this group has met informally to celebrate a wellspring of memories, support, and camaraderie. The last time was in October, 2001 when friends felt called to come together following the 9/11 tragedy.

The group maintains a sense of camaraderie as well as accomplishment. “We did so much” said Linda Quirk, a co-chair of the event. “We founded the Choice Program, offering our kids enrichment activities that we put together. This program spread to a number of other schools as Friday Clubs. We began to integrate the school successfully. We tutored, we painted…” Linda had students at Seward for seven years.

Joan Stewart, a longtime advocate for Seattle Schools and another event co-chair said, “We built a wonderful playground, using ideas from the Junior League and our own Bob Buchanan and his UW Landscape Design students. Do you remember Seward’s Trolley? And the Seward cookbooks?” Joan had children at Seward for 11 years.

Marilyn Kavanaugh, who has a kindergarten granddaughter, Gabriela Vera-Kavanaugh at TOPS now, and whose five children all attended Seward in the 1970’s, brought her idea of a reunion and school tour to principal, Clara Scott, in March. “She was wonderfully gracious, very enthusiastic. She gave us not only her school but her heart,” said Marilyn. “The Librarian, Steve Haines, Helen Hundley, and Annie Meyer, each welcomed us and smoothed the way for an informative, exciting day. Students and staff who spoke made the TOPS program alive for us; the tours were comprehensive and fun. Gerrit Kischner, Assistant Principal, attended Meany and Garfield with several of our group’s children.”

Eighty-four invitations were issued following diligent address sleuthing by the trio of planners. Among the attendees were nine former staff members: Garry Breitstein, Lilly Ikeda, David Lamb, Toshi Okamoto, Bea Perkins, Ann Rotermund, Joan Sharkey, Carol Starin, and Naomi Terui. For 16 years Lilly and Toshi ran the school from the main office! Former PTA presidents included Marjorie Jones who served in 1965-66, attending with her alumnus, Paul Jones, and presidents Pat Thibaudeau, Jan Prodzinski, and Margaret Symons who all served in the 1970’s.

Audrey Van Horne, co-founder of the CHOICE program of enrichment classes, which were replicated throughout the district attended, and was awarded a flowering plant for her service 35 years ago. Peggy Corley enjoyed the reunion as an alum as well as a parent and spoke of Seward’s history. She attended Seward from 1942 until 1944 and was a parent in the 1970’s. She was instrumental in Seward being listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, and also was awarded a plant for her service 35 years ago. If not for her, Seward might well have been demolished!

**Excerpts from Marilyn’s message**

“These stomping grounds, our school yards are hallowed ground where we and generations before and after us have gathered with our young ones. This is a sacred space. Where we worked together and allowed each other to nurture and support our children. And we became such friends that we can gather after a number of years and have that same feeling of trust. A great well-spring of memories, and camaraderie.
A firm foundation was given to us—first the land donated by David T. Denny and Henry Fuhrman (and their wives I must add), then the good schooling offered—Seward became a Demonstration school in 1932 and has served as a shining example for other teachers and students ever since.

Just like the teachers of a century ago who every Wednesday ate t-bone steaks grilled by the janitor over coals in the furnace of the partial basement—we gathered together too. Sometimes in that same basement where in the 1970’s we stored wheelbarrows and playground construction materials. And those furnace ashes could still be seen on the dirt floor! And we accomplished fun and wonderful things—just like those teachers of a century ago. Of course we could teach French cooking, of course we could make 14 cradles from bleach bottles for the carnival, and of course we could gather recipes and produce a Seward cookbook. Yes, we could paint the interior of the lunchroom/gym, and this library too. Yes, we could do anything that was needed. Of course we could, of course. Just look at the desserts—14 delicious examples of what we can do.

Damaged by noise from the I-5 freeway & then subsequent neglect by the school district, our school was slated for closure. We saved Seward school! That’s our biggest accomplishment. We rallied, devised strategies, and won a several year battle.

So this is magical, sacred ground where generations have labored. And this is our enduring message to current parents and staff.

Greetings from the generation before you. And thank you for your caring and productive efforts. It’s an amazing and wonderful school! We encourage you to honor Seward’s history, recall how your school was saved for you, and remember this sacred land where we are gathered.”

---

**News from the Library and Beyond**

*By Steve Haines, Librarian*

“Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few are to be chewed and digested.”

*Francis Bacon*

They came from across the city and beyond to congregate in the library to reminisce about how Seward School was in the “old days,” and to hear about the school as it stands today. Organized by Marilyn Kavanaugh, a former parent at Seward School, and grandmother of a current kindergartner, there were over 50 former Seward parents and staff that came to enjoy each other’s company. The last time they met was in 2000 in Marilyn’s living room. Marilyn knew it was time for another gathering, but she also knew that her house wasn’t going to work. After much planning and encouragement by Clara Scott, the “Seward Reunion 2008” was held in early May. This activist group was instrumental in saving Seward from closure in the early 70’s when enrollment in the district was declining.

It was interesting to hear that they had a “Friday Choice” program much like our own TOPICS. I have also heard the story before that there was a teacher in the brick building who, because of the noise from the freeway, had to use a microphone to be heard. Come to find out that it was actually a majority of staff that used microphones in those days. They also worked hard to get doubled paneled windows installed in the brick building. Meanwhile, the Eastlake community worked tirelessly to get a wall by the freeway built. The state moved a bit slower on that one as the wall went up.

Several years ago, I enjoyed looking at historical pictures and old yellowed newspaper articles regarding this historic property. It was a true “living history” experience. Those of you who would like to know the whole story of the Seward School environs would do well to go to www.seattleschools.org/area/historybook/seward.pdf. No Internet access? I have the information in the library.

**Read a Million Words**

The district’s first year of the Read a Million Words program is coming to an end. Many students have been busy logging in their final books. There have been incentives to work for along the way including a certificate for a book from a local bookstore. One fortunate family will be receiving a year pass to the EMP/Science Fiction Museum through a drawing of participants to be held in June. Thanks to the parents of many students for helping them keep track of their reading through the school year.

**Calling All Books!**

The end of school also means closing our library down for the summer. That means getting all of those library books back to the shelves so that I can take an inventory after school closes. For the most part the books find their way back to the library. 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. We don’t have overdue fees for books, but books that are lost must be replaced or paid for. 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 keep reading. Remember the Seattle Public Library has great summer programs for all ages.
Message from the Principal continued from page 1

Our Annual TOPS Auction was very well attended. $105,000 was our total for the evening. $30,000 was raised for our special project, The Building Enhancement Fund. This is an event that is supported by so many people in the community and, of course, our parents. The organization and teamwork that takes place is truly amazing.

We are pleased to announce that two new beautiful trees have been planted at TOPS. The Red Japanese Maple is a memorial tree in honor of previous staff members who have passed. The other tree is a Shade Elm. Many thanks to Wayne Duncan, Gretchen Chambers, and other committee members for securing and planting the trees.

Please remember to let us know in advance if your student(s) will be absent. We have forms for long-term absences, which are five or more school days. Please remember to call in for daily absences and tardies as well.

On May 7, we hosted approximately 60 former staff and parents of the old Seward School. The last regular classes of Seward were dismissed in June, 1989. In 1991-92, The Option Program at Seward moved into the Seward building and became known as TOPS. The fond memories of the Seward School live in the hearts and minds of the Seward Reunion group. The event was organized and hosted by Marilyn Kavanaugh, grandparent of Gabriella Vera-Kavanaugh, a kindergarten student at TOPS. The group toured the building, had lunch in the lunchroom, and shared many, many fond memories.

Many year-end activities are coming, and we look forward to them.

- 8th Grade Camp—June 3-6
- 3rd/4th Grade Camp Arnold—June 5 & 6
- K Puppet Show—Tuesday, June 10 at 6:30 in the Lunchroom
- Honor Roll Assembly Wednesday, June 11, 2 p.m.
- K-2 to Camp Long on Thursday, June 12 all day
- Awards Assembly—Friday, June 13 at 7 p.m.
- 5th Grade Moving Up—Monday, June 16 at 2 p.m.
- Elementary Field Day the morning of June 16
- Middle School Wild Waves—all day Monday, June 16

As the year winds up, please talk to your student(s) about making good use of class time. Students become restless and distracted when the nice weather is here. Every instruction day counts.

Happy summer!

Cheers!

~ Clara

---

Bring the World into Your Home . . .

By Nancy Bacon

FIUTS, the Foundation for International Understanding Through Students, is a non-profit based on the UW campus that connects UW international students with our community. In April, FIUTS brought over 30 international students to TOPS for “World Cultures TOPICS.” Given that all our kids learned in two hours, imagine what they can learn about the world in a week?

FIUTS is recruiting hosts and friendship connections for Fall 2008. Hosts welcome international students as they arrive and house them for about a week until they find an apartment or move into dorms (and often stay connected through the year). Friendship connections do not host students but are a local family connection. You can request based on your interests and availability.

My top five reasons to host an international student:

1. It is a cooking class packed in human form. My Indian cooking is better since Sita told me to use more turmeric. My kids have rolled their own ravioli, and who knew that Ugandan Munyawa (fish with peanut sauce) tasted so good?
2. My kids learn that there are many languages spoken in the world. They can identify Hindi and know to sing when speaking Italian. They have played card games in Swedish and know that they don’t understand a word of what Violeta from Serbia has to say when she talks with her Croatian friend.
3. Hosts join a local community of individuals and families interested in meeting people from around the world. For 60 years, FIUTS has promoted international understanding through friendship.
4. We have a growing list of destinations to which to travel once the dollar strengthens. Thailand, India, Serbia & Croatia, Sweden, Italy . . . how to decide?
5. These students are wonderful people who give us a personal connection with the world. What better way to teach our children about international friendship than to model it in our own home?

Information can be found on the FIUTS website: http://fiuts.org/community/ homemay18/index.htm

You are welcome to email me (nancy@bahiastreet.org) or alicia@fiuts.org.
Sustaining TOPS - Building for the Future

By Kelly Griffin

The TOPS auction was a great success! Great food, great fun, and incredible generosity from all of the families who attended.

We grossed over $105,000 with $30,000 going straight to our special auction item “Complete a Classroom.” All 100 Golden Raffle tickets sold and lucky Missy Chow chose a week in the Molokai beach house. And the winner of the raffle to the Methow Valley was Kathy Schmid.

Among the highlights of how the funds were raised:

- Fund-an-Item for Complete a Classroom: $30,000
- Centerpieces: $815
- Methow Valley Raffle: $1,580
- Golden Raffle: $2,500
- Class Baskets: $2,660
- Class Projects: $6,925
- Teacher Activities: $9,925
- Desserts: $6,790

As usual, this wonderfully smooth event would not be possible without the hard work and generosity of all those who contributed:

- Our fabulous sponsors and underwriters:
  - Gloria Albetta & Frank Fabens
  - Blake Annaford & Cynthia Ruggeiro
  - Brad & Wilma Angell
  - Doug Chapman & Karol King
  - John & Gail Chase
  - Warren Clemens & Kathryn Schmid
  - Stephanie Colony
  - Roxanne Dover-Robinson & David Robinson
  - Wayne Duncan & Pamela Van Dalfse
  - Ted & Allison Dworkin
  - Joan Erickson & Tracy Wayman
  - Erin Fairly & Bill Patz
  - Greg Flood & Linda Korbus
  - Tim & Charlene Forslund
  - Larry & June Fung
  - Annie Gage & Barbara Green
  - Jorge Garcia & Barbara Schinzinger
  - Sheila & Colin Gilligan
  - Kelly & Duncan Griffin
  - Paul & Karen Gruen
  - Glen & Michele Isom
  - Mary & Jonathan Kauffman
  - Sandra Kurtz & George Goodall
  - Lake Union Mail
  - Liesl & Troy Langley
  - Molly & William LaPatra
  - Valerie Leadon
  - Jill & Judith Lee
  - Eric Liu
  - Maggie & Jim McDonald
  - Christiana Muoneke
  - Jon Nishida & Camilla Sata
  - Yvonne & Barry Onouye
  - Amy Paige
  - Richard Phillips & Debbie Girts
  - Romany Surla & Ian Brown
  - Glen Tamura & Ken Comstock
  - Cynthia & Sinclair Temple
  - Cliff & Kate Trent
  - Pamela Trividi
  - Andrew & Lucy Ury
  - Marlies VanBergeijk
  - Sara Waterman & Curtis DeBasperi
  - Jim & Susan Wells
  - Janis White & Richard Silverstein
  - Curtiss & Lawrie Williams
  - Julie Wroble & Richard Kolpa
  - Akiko & Munegisa Yabuki
  - Walter Zisette & Andrea Akita

- The auction committee and our fearless leader Janet Morrison;
- The volunteers who helped set up, work in the kitchen, and clean up on the day of the auction;
- The teen volunteers who served our meal and helped on stage;
- Families, teachers, and classrooms who donated and procured auction items; and
- Those who spent their hard-earned dollars to benefit our school.

Thank you to all who made the event happen. It was a tremendous success!
Chinese Program Wraps Up Third Year at TOPS

By Deborah Wang Ferguson

Did you know that if you learn just 10 words in Chinese, you can count in that language up to 100? For example, how do you say 17? Simple. Shi qi, which means 10-7. What about 70? Just reverse the two numbers. Qi shi means 7-10. Chinese may be a difficult language to master, but some parts of it are easy to pick up. The Chinese number system is simple and straightforward. Chinese grammar is also uncomplicated, since verbs never have to be conjugated!

The TOPS Chinese language program just wrapped up its third year. More than 30 kids in Grades K-5 were enrolled in the program’s three classes. Our teachers, Xiao Yu Jackson and Pollyanna Wang, focused on basic language instruction through games, music, math, and art.

The kids began the year learning how to greet one another. They moved on to colors, shapes, food, parts of the body, and the complex Chinese system for naming family members. They also celebrated the Chinese New Year and read stories about the Chinese Zodiac.

We are pleased that both Xiao Yu and Pollyanna plan to be back in September for another great year of Chinese at TOPS!

On May 6 the kids had their individual portrait taken by alum parent Lisa Brown and Yuen Lui. The kids will be given their 5 x 7 portrait – a gift to the student from the school. Don Zemke will take the class picture that will hang in the entry of the school joining past classes.

Every year the graduating class presents the school with a legacy gift. This year the 8th graders will present TOPS with a “Center of TOPS Universe” sign. The sign will have destinations of many places the students have been during their career at TOPS from Louisa’s to Mt. St. Helens. The kids will work on the sign and it will be set in cement outside of the offices and presented at the award ceremony on June 13.

From June 3 through June 6 the 8th grade class heads out to Deception Pass for their final camp. Activities will include whale watching, beach walking and tide pooling, sea kayaking, and, most importantly, being together.

8th Grade Passage continued from page 1

On May 6 the kids had their individual portrait taken by alum parent Lisa Brown and Yuen Lui. The kids will be given their 5 x 7 portrait – a gift to the student from the school. Don Zemke will take the class picture that will hang in the entry of the school joining past classes.

Every year the graduating class presents the school with a legacy gift. This year the 8th graders will present TOPS with a “Center of TOPS Universe” sign. The sign will have destinations of many places the students have been during their career at TOPS from Louisa’s to Mt. St. Helens. The kids will work on the sign and it will be set in cement outside of the offices and presented at the award ceremony on June 13.

From June 3 through June 6 the 8th grade class heads out to Deception Pass for their final camp. Activities will include whale watching, beach walking and tide pooling, sea kayaking, and, most importantly, being together.

Friday, June 13 is 8th Grade Passage. Passage is a celebration and recognition of the years spent in elementary and middle school. In the morning the 8th graders will walk through the school handing out scrolls with their words of wisdom. In the afternoon there will be an all school awards ceremony and in the evening is the actual passage ceremony and reception.

After the official day of passage it’s back to school on Monday when the entire middle school will go to Wild Waves, a student favorite. Finally, on the last day of school, Tuesday the 17th, the 8th graders will be whisked away for one last day together to a surprise location, code name: Last Day of School Event! This event was planned over several months and is designed to be a fun filled day of activities and food while allowing the kids to be together as a class one last time. At 2:20 the buses will line up the hill, the girls will cry and the boys will say “see you around dude.” One by one the buses will pull out and school will be out for the summer. Next September a new kindergarten class will walk through the doors and start day one of a new journey, 1,592 to go.
**Reflections on the Dalai Lama**

*By Simone Framson, Grade 6*

Going to see the Dalai Lama is something I’m sure I’ll remember for a long time. One of the things I really liked about hearing him speak is that you can tell it’s all from the heart because there’s no script in front of him. No speech written out word for word. Not even a cheat sheet of ideas. All honestly coming from him to everyone who’s listening. Not filtered through media, editors, or anybody else. I liked his chuckle. And his refreshing modesty.

This is kind of random but it’s something I thought about because it was reasonably close to our Roman unit and we studied prefixes a lot. I was thinking about the word compassion and then I thought about the word compass because of our China unit. Then I was thinking compassion. Compassion needs understanding, forgiveness, and kindness just to name a few. And with those keys, compassion will point us in the right direction, just like a compass.

Here are just a few facts about the Dalai Lama. He is said to be the 14th reincarnation of the Dalai Lama, a very important spiritual leader of Tibetan monks. He was recognized to be the Dalai Lama as just a 2 year old boy. His birth name is Tenzin Gyatso but is now always referred to as His Holiness. At the age of 23, he left for India because it was unsafe for him to stay in Tibet. He still lives there now at the age of 73.

The fourteen Dalai Lama’s birth names are: Gendun Drup, Gendun Gyatso, Sonam Gyatso, Yonten Gyatso, Lobsang Gyatso, Tsangyang Gyatso, Kelzang Gyatso, Jamphel Gyatso, Lungtok Gyatso, Tsultrim Gyatso, Khendrup Gyatso, Trinley Gyatso, Thubten Gyatso, and of course Tenzin Gyatso. The word “gyatso” means ocean.

One of the things His Holiness talked about is female power and rule. He said even though we talk a lot, men talk more. I agree. I think it’s time for a change. One of his quotes is “open your arms to change, but don’t let go of your values.” Our voices are just as strong, meaningful, and valuable as any man’s and it’s time for them to be heard.

“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive,” he said. Imagine what the world would be like if not one stopped to think, “What is the right thing to do?” We still have a long way to go, but we have come far. How hard is it to reach out with a helping hand? To lift someone up can mean to lift the corners of their mouth into something that seems so simple but can mean so much. A smile.

---

**By Connor Cech, Grade 6**

The Seeds of Compassion event that I went to was the one at Qwest Field. To me it seemed like there was a lot of security there and that might just be because I have never seen someone so important in my life before Saturday. In the middle of the field there was a big yellow circle with the words “SEEDS OF COMPASSION” printed in red. Then about 40 yards away from that there was the stage with the Dalai Lama, a Tibetan monk, Governor Gregoire, and owners of businesses. To the right and to the left of the stage there were large TV screens so that people far away could see the speaker. At the end of the show we were told to braid the “Strings of Compassion,” the ones that we got in the beginning when we entered.

The message that I got from the Dalai Lama was that kids are our future and the next generation so we should be teaching them how to use dialog to solve problems and teach them compassion. I also got the message that the world is one big family and we should love each other and teach compassion and treat each other like a family member, and there would be a lot more love in the world. Another thing I brought away from the Dalai Lama’s speech is he kept saying, “What would the world be like if we were all family?” There wouldn’t be any violence, we would all love each other, and there would be a lot less conflict in the lands. I can’t believe that I’m saying this, but I agree with the Dalai Lama that women tend to be less of a troublemaker as men are. So if we could teach men compassion there would be a drop in violence around the world.
THE ODYSSEY

Drawing by Abby Takahashi
The 5th grade Science Fair is a highly important day for the entire school, teachers, students, and parents alike. This year, just like last year, the students that were involved were nervous, excited, anxious, and occasionally bored. In this second annual Science Fair, kids battled for the vote of whoever was reading their boards, and whoever had a scoring paper. This year, kids really pulled some hard stops, including two live rats.

If you are going into the Science Fair, I have a suggestion. Try to get as far away from the big attractions as possible. In this Science Fair, Jameson Goff and Wilder Brannon did a classic rat maze and raked in around 70 people while people like Henry Eliot and Fausto Montagna, who were really near the rats (the animals, not the students) got around 12 readers. Other experiments included molding oranges, dropping basketballs, and throwing paper airplanes. Talk about fun for the students!
Recentlly, I had the chance to chat with Miriam Schwartz, a TOPS graduate and a member of the 10-kid team of hosts for the new PBS television show called Biz Kid$. Biz Kid$ teaches kids how to make and manage their money—selling anything from lemonade to skateboards to DVDs.

Here’s what she had to say about being on a TV show—

S: True confessions. I don’t own a TV, so I don’t know much about the show. What’s it about?

M: It’s by the same people who created Bill Nye the Science Guy. Our target audience is kids ages 9 to 13, teaching them about money, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship. For example, if a kid has an idea for a business, we teach them how to manifest it into something for themselves or for society.

The show is fast-paced with three different styles of teaching: direct information when the host talks to the audience and gives straightforward facts and information; sketch comedy with returning characters that are both kids and adults; and real-life examples of kids all over the US who have inspiring stories to tell about their businesses.

This kind of information isn’t really taught in classes in middle school or high school. Most people think that parents will teach their kids about money, but the truth is they don’t, so a lot of kids misuse credit and get into serious debt in college.

S: How did you get the job as one of the hosts?

M: I got really lucky and met the executive producer by chance through my mom’s work. Most kid actors have agents, but I didn’t. I was very lucky. My mom told the producer that one of her kids was an actor. The producer saw me in a show at Roosevelt High School. I sent her a resume and a headshot, got a call back for an audition, and eventually got the job.

S: Is the sketch comedy all improv, or do you work from a script?

M: Everything is scripted, but the nice thing is that we have a lot of input. The writers are people who were trained to write for TV, but we get to help with the dialogue and get to re-work things so they sound more like the way we would really say them. It gives us a chance to bring out our own personalities more, which is great because I’m not really playing a character. I’m playing myself.

S: I know you’re a senior at Roosevelt High School. What are you going to do after graduation?

M: I’m going to go to the University of Minnesota to work on my Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree.

S: Who was your favorite teacher at TOPS?

M: That’s hard. That’s really hard. Probably Ms. Eick. Also, Todd Jamieson was a parent who directed the middle school productions I was in. He passed away from cancer. He was incredibly influential to me.

Biz Kid$ airs Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. on Channel 12, the Tacoma public station, and in Seattle on Channel 9 at 11 p.m. on Sundays.

---

**PoEtry**

By Ralph Redmond, Grade 4

P.E. helps us grow up big and strong,
   P.E. helps us live a life so long.

Running laps can be a lot of fun too,
   Especially when running without our shoes!

P.E. helps us stay really fit
   When I’m running fast to beat out a hit.

Doing stuff in P.E. helps with reading, writing and math,
   And after all the exercise, we really need a bath!

Word!
The Volleyball Season

By Kolena Dang, Grade 7

As the last Thursday of the volleyball season rolls around, players are disappointed by the abrupt end to their favorite after school sport. Much thanks to our coaches Molly, volleyball player extraordinaire who is the best assistant coach around; Thea, an awesome player and head coach; Electra, a great former volleyball player at TOPS; and Jessica, another former volleyball player at TOPS who is super sweet. We will of course commemorate and miss the 8th graders who’ve done nothing but encourage and power us! Last but not least, thanks to the 6th and 7th graders who’ve made volleyball practice a whole new experience.

This year has been great no matter how many hundreds of crunches and jumping jacks were forced on us. One thing that I think everybody would agree on was the large number of friendships that were formed and the number of laughs we all had that sometimes ended us up running laps. Everybody gave in a huge amount of effort that made us a “team,” and I think everybody did a great job under any circumstance. All of us did an amazing job, junior varsity and varsity, working together to be victorious. It doesn’t matter what the score was because we all won our own game.

The drills were really suiting and fun, combining lessons of each play. I can’t say nobody improved because in different ways we all have. The coaches worked us hard, but I think that was what gave them the respect we now have towards them. We learned how everything counted, every quiet “Mine!” and every angle of our shoulders. We learned many things that will stay with us forever from play strategies to teamwork.

I am so grateful for having joined the team. I know we’re not near perfect nor as any other team but meeting new people and learning new things really made my joining worth it. Next year, is when a fresh volleyball season starts. If anybody is interested in taking up a new sport, then sign up! Maybe you’ll discover a new talent, or maybe you can improve your volleyball skills. No matter who we have as coaches, no matter who we have on junior varsity and varsity, TOPS players will transform practices and games. It will always be fun from the beginning to the tearful end.
Ultimate Frisbee
By Evan Hobbs and Acacia Salisbury, Grade 5

5th grade won their Ultimate Frisbee game, yeah! It was a nice game of 13 to 11. It was full of excitement and action as the teams collided and blocked the Frisbee. We really had fun and enjoyed ourselves. We hope to have another game. Sasha in 5th grade blocked a magnificent pass right at the beginning of the game; the same goes for Gene, Evan, Cole, and Andy. By half time the score was tied, 5-5. Suddenly out of nowhere Manny, on the other team, dived and on the tip of his fingers caught a fabulous throw that was slightly veering off to the left. Next thing we knew it was 10-11, the other team was winning. Soon Teddy had scored the team a point, next Maria broke the tie by scoring an outrageous point. Then for the final winning point the team worked together to score a final winning point by Henry Chapman. The TOPS team included Maria, Cole, Zoe, Valentino, Sasha, Gene, Acacia, Evan, Asha, Andy, and Cassandra.

P.E. Spring Sailing at the Center For Wooden Boats
By Emma Sadinsky, Grade 7

I'm Emma Sadinsky and I've been sailing for five years now. The TOPS middle school sailing program is a great way to get experience sailing different kinds of boats.

In our sailing class of 12, we are learning to sail El Toros. El Toros are small boats, short mast, almost square, and they’re less than eight feet from bow to stern. Just in comparison with the boats I’ve sailed, El Toros are not as fast but are way, way easier to rig, (also easier to keep upright).

I think this program is really fun whether you have sailing experience or not. Chris and Zack are good teachers. Every afternoon, before we go out on the water, they tell us more about right of way (which are sailing rules in terms of avoiding collisions). Being someone who knows how to sail, this is just refreshing my memory and getting me ready for sailing this summer.

I think it’s great that we can sail as part of our P.E. class. If you haven’t checked out the CWB you definitely should!
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 status, 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 26A.440 “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.

Thanks to G & H Printing, 2370 Eastlake E.  329-9888