MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

It’s hard to believe how fast the time is passing by. After a beautiful autumn we are heading quickly into winter with colder, longer nights. At TOPS, winter also signals wonderful school and community activities that continue to make TOPS a special place to be. The No-Bake Sale is a great example of the TOPS community pulling together for the benefit of our students – it’s off to an impressive start. Through the month of December, please consider giving what you can to the No-Bake.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to have a meeting with a teacher during Parent-Teacher Conferences. Your interest in your child’s life at TOPS is greatly appreciated. It was nice to see such a good turn-out for these important conversations with TOPS teachers.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the TOPS Food Drive. The donations to Northwest Harvest are another example of the caring spirit of our school. An additional opportunity to share and give is available on our Giving Board. Selecting a name or family from the Giving Board will make someone’s holiday a little brighter. These are uncertain times for many and all of these community-minded activities provide us with opportunities to share our good fortune and teach our students caring citizenship.

Congratulations to our Ultimate Frisbee teams! The 6th and 7th grade teams enjoyed an undefeated season. At the city tournament in November, TOPS 6th graders took the prize and 8th grade took second place. Many thanks to Don and Eric for providing TOPS students with such an excellent experience of learning and sportsmanship. We are all proud of the positive team spirit displayed by our Ultimate Frisbee teams.

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NO-BAKE IS ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

By Julie Wroble

TOPS community members have donated $28,831 towards our goal of $90,000! So, we’re about 32% of the way towards our goal and we’ve had about 19% participation. What a great start! Let’s keep that momentum going. Each year, TOPS families donate an average of $200 to the No-Bake Sale. Please do your best to give $250 or more this year. Some of you can give $1,000 and some of you can give $25. Please give generously – the more you give, the more we can do for TOPS students. No gift is too small. One of our most important goals this year is 100% participation. Remember, it’s getting close to the end of the year, if you’d like to deduct your donation to Friends of TOPS on this year’s tax return, you have only until December 31 to make your No-Bake contribution. Keep your eyes peeled for the poster near the office that will track our status!

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It’s Like Coming Home for Jeanne Kuban
*By Jamie Flaxman*

TOPS’ new Assistant Principal Jeanne Kuban wasn’t looking to become an assistant principal when she applied for the position, but was drawn to it because it’s TOPS! You see, during the 2001-2002 school year she completed her internship at TOPS, while earning her administrative credential, working with then Principal Gary Tubbs and Assistant Principal Clara Scott, and she fell in love with the school. She was so impressed with the teaching, the holistic program for the kids, the collaboration between the principal and the assistant principal, the parent involvement, and the livelihood of the school, and now she also saw the chance to work with Mrs. Scott. She is so excited to be here.

Ms. Kuban has a strong educational background. She was a classroom teacher in grades K-4 for twenty years and a reading specialist for grades K-6. She has also worked as an instructor in the University of Washington Bothell campus’ teacher certification and professional certification programs. Most recently, Ms. Kuban worked for the Seattle School District as a Literacy Coach, working with schools and teachers on how to use the Writing Workshop, the same writing curriculum that TOPS uses. Ms. Kuban had the opportunity to go to Columbia University in New York (which developed the Writing Workshop) several times and will be able to bring to TOPS what she learned from Columbia about the Writing Workshop.

Ms. Kuban has a Master's in Multicultural Education from the University of Washington and a Bachelor's in Fine Arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana. Her teaching certification is from Seattle Pacific University. She grew up on the south side of Chicago, but has lived in Seattle for 32 years, having moved here in the late 1970's. She chose to move here because she wanted to live in a beautiful place, with water, mountains, and lots of green. She has two grown sons, ages 30 and 27, who are both University of Washington graduates, and five stepchildren. Her husband, Charlie, is a technical writer.

Among her hobbies, Ms. Kuban is a yoga fanatic, an avid distance walker, a cyclist, a runner, and a reader. When asked if she would teach a yoga TOPIC, she said she would if there is interest. Right now, she is into reading non-fiction, and she is thinking a lot about a book she read this summer, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, by Michael Pollan. She lives in the Ballard/Fremont neighborhood.

At the time of this interview, Ms. Kuban had been at TOPS almost six weeks. She said the biggest challenge she had encountered was that when she started, school was already underway, but she “just went along with the tide.” She sees her role to support academics and the well being of all the students. She loves collaborating with Mrs. Scott, and she has learned a lot from the teachers. She has felt very welcomed and included by the entire community. Students have come up to her and introduced themselves. She loves the environment, “it’s a wonderful community!”

Submit your contributions by email to topsnewsletter@gmail.com or to the newsletter box in the main office. Please send photos to javabrain@msn.com. The deadline for the February issue is January 9. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Jamie and Ann at topsnewsletter@gmail.com.
Winter Wishes and Holiday Food Drive

Every December the TOPS community comes together to support families in need, by collecting non-perishable food through the Holiday Food Drive, and supporting TOPS families who need assistance during the holidays through the Winter Wishes program. In past years, the Family Support Worker has coordinated both of these programs, but without a Family Support Worker this year (see the October TOPS News for related article), as of the writing of this article, Principal Mrs. Scott, Counselor Jennifer Murray, and Activities Coordinator Sheri Toussaint are still working out the details of how the programs will be run this year.

Please watch your Thursday Go-Homes for details. In the mean time, if your family needs assistance for the holidays, please contact TOPS counselor Jennifer Murray at 252-3529 or jmurray@seattle-schools.org, or if you’d like to help out a family for the holidays, please contact Sheri Toussaint at 252-3510 or shtous-saint@seattleschools.org.

CSJ Corner

This is where you will want to look each month to find out what the Coalition for Social Justice has planned.

Coalition for Social Justice is a group of parents, staff, and administrators who work together in support of the stated mission and vision of TOPS. The purpose of the events that CSJ sponsors is to promote dialogue and educate ourselves and the school community about issues of academic equity, cultural diversity, and social justice as they affect our school and the broader community. Please plan on being part of the conversation this year!

Mark your calendar for the following events!

Friday, December 5, 6:30-9:00 p.m. at the home of Karen Stuhldreher & Johnny Calcagno

TOPICS PARTY: Join CSJ to help brainstorm and organize Social Justice TOPICS to be taught during the current school year. CSJ has generated a list of possible TOPICS with a social justice theme to be taught on Friday, January 16 (which will focus on the theme of Social Justice) and also throughout the year. A number of people have indicated an interest in helping to teach TOPICS and others have ideas of social justice themed TOPICS they want to offer. This evening of wine and a light dinner will provide an opportunity for us to come together to brainstorm and organize the TOPICS to be offered this year. Please join us.

E-mail kstuhldr@sccd.ctc.edu to RSVP.

Friday January 30, 6:00-9:00 p.m. in the TOPS Library

TOPS Movie Night presents Kids on the Ave—a documentary about teen homelessness in Seattle.

Join us to learn about the TOPS Middle School Planting the Seeds Project and view a remarkable documentary about homelessness in Seattle. Kids on the Ave chronicles the lives of several homeless teenagers who populate this well known Seattle street. This movie reveals the ways these teens survive life on the street as well as the circumstances that have caused “The Ave” to become their home. Through this closer look into how these teens come to rely on one another for support, we begin to gain a greater understanding of “Life on the Ave.”

Doors open at 6:00 pm and the film will show at 6:30. There will be time for discussion following the film. The evening will end by 9:00. Come when you can.

A light dinner of sandwiches, snacks, and drinks will be provided. Childcare is available and pizza, snacks, age appropriate movies, and games will be provided for children at Kids Co. Call 252-3510 to make a reservation.

Don’t miss this opportunity to enjoy a free night out for dinner and the movies, engaging conversation and childcare included.

Friday February 27, 6:00-9:00 p.m. in the TOPS Library

Save the date for the next TOPS Movie Night

Save the Date – Thursday, March 19, Taste of TOPS – This Year Celebrates the Country and Culture of China
"What's a book?
Everything or nothing.
The eye that sees it all."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Thanks to the generous donations from the Friends of TOPS, our students have been involved in many enriching activities this year that they won’t soon forget.

My time with Mr. Merwin, By Kellen Lambert-Vail, Grade 7 (W.S. Merwin)

The WITS (Writers In The Schools) program invited me to read a poem of my work for an opening to Mr. Merwin’s recent Seattle Arts & Lectures Poetry performance at Benaroya Hall. Of course, I accepted but I asked myself, “who is W.S. Merwin?” He is a poet, a very famous one. He has so many books of his writing out that you might as well devote an entire year to reading them. The only reason that this reading of his was to celebrate a new book called The Shadow of Sirius. The reason that I was chosen to be there was that my style of poetry was a lot like Merwin’s. More about Merwin, He is 81 years old and lives in Hawaii.

The night that I met, him I felt very honored. If I could talk to him I would have. I did get a pretty good chance to because we had to delay for a good 20 minutes and we, (my dad, Merwin, and I), talked about politics and how he hoped that I would keep writing. I told him I would. Then I walked out on to the stage to read. Here is my poem:

Moon Seed
Calling the air
The moon emerges from a seed
Unable to think
Windy lives
Pretending to hear but no knowing a thing
Smoke rising from a glass of water
Holding my head perched on its throne
Passive coastlines
Capturing dreams till my net is full
Slow boat to who knows where at an impatient pace
The wall isn’t interesting but it caught my attention
I am receding to a star
If you call my name I might as well not be there
A flowing sea of leaves

Afterwards I got a chance again to talk to him while sitting next to him at the signing table. It was 9:30 p.m. so my dad decided to take me home and get some dinner. That was a wonderful experience.

Thank you WITS!

5th Avenue Theatre

Our 1st through 4th graders were treated to a musical performance recently from the touring company from the 5th Avenue Theatre. They brought to TOPS “Northwest Bookshelf 2: The Stories Continue!” The idea behind the musical review is that five children visit their library searching the shelves for the perfect book on which to do a book report. The six different books that they find have all been written by authors from the Pacific Northwest, including former TOPS parent Arthur Dorros. The adaptations were very imaginative and left the audience in rapt attention throughout the performance. The audience learned that there are many creative people that are needed to put a musical together. We even had another local connection as Danny Sullivan, parent of 3rd grader Mia, is the musical director for the show.

Have you seen David Macaulay’s new book The Way We Work? The Caldecott medallist author of many books including The New Way Things Work has created another masterpiece. This book about the human body was a long arduous undertaking for the author. He started the journey because he knew little about how the human body works. Writing about this phenomenon is one thing but illustrating it is another, and he started and stopped this project more than once over several years. He said his wife was the motivating force behind him finishing the work. You can get a sampling of his work at www.davidmacaulay.com. The TOPS library would love to have a copy of this book. Hint, hint!

Photo by Steve Haines
No-Bake continued from page 1

No-Bake letters should have arrived at your house by now – note that donation forms were mistakenly left out of most envelopes. There is one attached at the end of the Go-Home, or you can download one from the web site. The donation form lets you pay by credit card and pay by installments; it also identifies how you want to be listed in the newsletter and it gives you the chance to send a No-Bake request to your friends and relatives. Also, if your company matches charitable contributions, you can make your dollar go farther. Check the box on the donation form for more information about corporate matches.

Some of the items that Friends of TOPS is able to fund thanks to parent support include the following:

- Tutoring
- Writers in Schools
- Visual Arts/Artist in Residence
- Drama
- Literacy Block
- Music – choir program/band/strings
- Supplies for science, art, math, the library

Contact Marlies van Bergeijk at (206) 328-3064 or marliesvanb@att.net with questions or offers to help! If you didn’t get a No-Bake letter, then contact Maureen Germani at mwgermani@seattleschools.org or (206) 545-1771.

Thanks to everyone who has taken the time to contribute to the No-Bake as of November 9:

Andrea Chin & Vance Martin
Anne Barrett
Barb Lui & Kip Tokuda
Brad & Wilma Angell
Camille Sata & Jon Nishida
Can Zheng Zhao
Catherine Duva & Paul Shannon
Charlene & Timothy Forslund
Christopher Drajem & Patrick Sexton
Cliff & Sandy Shettler
Dan & Beth Malone
Dan Hurley & Michelle Pennylegion
David & Susan Cotter
Davis Oldham & Julie E. Alexander
Duncan & Kelly Griffin
Elissa Benson
Elizabeth Jane Kavanaugh
Ellen & Jon Markman
Ellen C. Levi & Keith A. Weinberger
Emily Sullivan
Eric P. Liu
George & Clara Scott
Ginger Segel & Robert H. Kubiniec
Howard Choder & Robin Freedman
Huong Thuy Nguyen
Hyeokji Ko
Ian A. Brown & Romany Surla
James & Sally Lord
Jamie Flaxman
Jana M. Swett & Paul Loovis
Jennifer L. Smith
John & Gail Chase
Karen & Peter Olive
Kermit F. Rosen & Louise D. Bush
Lester Eastlick & Sigrun C. Denny
Linda G. Furney
Linda Korbus & Gregory Flood
Marc & Cheri Bloom
Marc A. Sumner
Mark & Kimberly Hobbs
Marlies van Bergeijk
Mary P. Ranahan & Keith Galloway
Maureen & Joe Germani
Maureen McCleery & Vital H.J. Imbert
Meiun & Xuehuan Zhou
Merran & John Kubalak
Michael & Tracy Wrey
Minh Yo & Trang Nguyen
Munehisa & Akiko Yabuki
Paul Robaidek
Richard Kolpa & Julie Wroble
Rocio Sanchez Ojeda
Ronald A. Chew
Roxanne Dover-Robinson & David Robinson
Sara Waterman & Curtis DeGasperi
Sarah & Gershon Parent
Sheila Anderson
Stephen Page
Steven Magasis
Susan & Daniel Welch
William & Leslie Spurr
William Patz & Erin M. Fairley
Ying Quing Yang
Yvonne & Barry Onouye

Looking for fun activities for your child after school?

Check out Kids Co.!!!

The Kids Co. program at TOPS has openings in our before school program (7:00-9:00am) and our after school program (3:20-6:00 pm). We run a high quality program with fun and enriching activities. Please call Aaron at 709-8487 to register your child!
This is the fourth in a series on the new state standards. This month I am highlighting the 4th and 5th grade. This is meant to be a brief introduction to the state standards called “performance expectations” at each grade level. I used as my resources handouts from the OSPI summer institute and the new state standards. For more specific information and a complete list of all performance expectations you can visit www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/Mathematics/RevisedStandards.aspx.

4th Grade

A central theme in Grade 4 is using multiplication. Students learn multiplication procedures, including algorithms, and apply those procedures in different contexts. Area is a direct use of multiplication, and procedures for finding equivalent fractions (including translating between fractions and mixed numbers) can also be an application of multiplication. Decimal notation extends place value knowledge.

Selected Performance Expectations
4.1.A: Quickly recall multiplication facts through 10 X 10 and the related division facts.
4.1.B: Identify factors and multiples of a number.
4.1.F: Fluently and accurately multiply up to a three-digit number by one- and two-digit numbers using the standard algorithm.
4.2.B: Read, write, compare, and order decimals through hundredths.
4.2.C: Convert a mixed number to a fraction and vice versa, and visually represent the number.
4.2.E: Compare and order decimals and fractions (including mixed numbers) on the number line, lists, and the symbols <, >, or =.
4.2.G: Simplify fractions using common factors.
4.3.A: Determine congruence of two-dimensional figures.
4.3.C: Determine the perimeter and area of a rectangle using formulas, and explain why the formulas work.
4.4.A: Represent an unknown quantity in simple expressions, equations, and inequalities using letters, boxes, and other symbols.
4.4.D: Graph and identify points in the first quadrant of the coordinate plane using ordered pairs.

5th Grade

A central theme in Grade 5 is relating division and fractions. Students consolidate their computation skills by learning the procedures for division of multi-digit numbers and for adding and subtraction of fraction and decimals. Working with algebraic relationships helps extend understanding of the properties of numbers and operations.

Selected Performance Expectations
5.1.C: Fluently and accurately divide up to a four-digit number by a one- or two-digit divisors using the standard long-division algorithm.
5.1.E: Mentally divide two-digit numbers by one-digit divisors and explain the strategies used.
5.2.C: Given two fractions with unlike denominators, rewrite the fractions with a common denominator.
5.2.D: Determine the greatest common factor and the least common multiple of two or more whole numbers.
5.2.E: Fluently and accurately add and subtract fractions, including mixed numbers.
5.2.F: Fluently and accurately add and subtract decimals.
5.3.A: Classify quadrilaterals.
5.3.C: Identify, describe, and classify triangles by angle, measure and number of congruent sides.
5.4.A: Describe and create a rule for numerical and geometric patterns and extend the patterns.
5.4.B: Write a rule to describe the relationship between two sets of data that are linearly related.
5.5.B: Determine and interpret the mean of a small data set of whole numbers.

Looking at the bold words in each of the opening statements gives you a sense of the essence of that particular grade. I chose some of the standards that I thought would be interesting and easy to understand at a glance. Remember these are just Performance Expectations that I have highlighted; there are more at each grade level. My choice of which standards to highlight does not mean that that Performance Expectation is any more important than any other Performance Expectation. Students are required to master all of the Performance Expectations at a grade level as the minimum accomplishment in math for any one particular year.
By Debbie Bermet, Math Specialist

Playing games reinforces mathematical concepts in a valuable and engaging way. Games also lay the foundation for learning increasingly difficult concepts. They help students practice their basic math facts and develop increasingly sophisticated strategies.

By now, all students in grades 1-5 should have received a password that enables them to play Everyday Math games online. They are also loaded on the computers in the TOPS library. These are computerized versions of the same games your students are playing in the classroom with dice, paper and pencil, etc.

I strongly encourage you to balance the amount of time your youngsters spend playing online games with the amount of time you spend as a family playing “brick and mortar” games. In my own family, Friday night is family night. We alternate between watching a movie and playing board games.

Developmentally, children learn math concepts in the following order: concrete, representational, and then abstract. Here’s an example of each developmental stage:

Concrete: There are 3 cookies on the plate. My sister ate one. There are 2 left.

Representational: A picture of a cookie represents a cookie.

Abstract: symbols represent concepts 3-2=1

Playing board games provides concrete experience that builds the essential foundation for moving to representational and abstract understanding in a fun and meaningful way. Each time a young person physically moves his or her marker 7 spaces (instead of clicking a computer mouse) it reinforces how much 7 is (3 spaces before “GO,” 1 space after the last person who just rolled a 6, etc.). Strategy games (such as Chess or Clue) help children learn to think several steps ahead, which is important in solving multi-step math (and other) problems.

Board games, with their distinct boundaries, can have another benefit. Living in a complex society, children need clear limits to feel safe. By circumscribing the playing field — much as tennis courts and soccer fields do with sports— board games can help children learn to respect boundaries, play fair, and have positive interactions with other people.

Below are a few examples of games that help with various skills. There are numerous more. A couple stores I can recommend for finding games are Math ‘n Stuff (in the Maple Leaf neighborhood) and Blue Highway Games on Queen Anne. Thrift stores often carry a good selection of used board games and puzzles as well.

COUNTING, ADDITION, AND SUBTRACTION

- Sorry
- Uno
- Rack-O
- Trouble
- Monopoly

MULTIPLICATION, DIVISION AND FRACTIONS

- Iguana Factor multiplication game
- Pizza Fraction fun
- S’Math

ATTRIBUTES, PATTERNS, GEOMETRY

- SET
- Rummikub
- Tangrams
- Crazy Eights card game

STRATEGY GAMES AND SPATIAL PERCEPTION

- Connect 4
- Chinese Checkers
- Jenga
- Checkers and Chess
- Mancala
- Othello
- Battleship
- Settlers of Catan (my children’s current favorite)

Cards are another inexpensive and powerful game source. There are numerous web sites that provide the directions to some of my favorite card games to play with children: Casino, Rummy, Hearts, and 24. If your family needs a deck of cards, please let me know.

Another great math game for children (approx. 3rd grade and older) is Yahtzee. It is a dice game that provides practice in addition, pattern recognition, probability analysis, and strategic thinking. Although Yahtzee is a commercial game, with its own components, it can be played with just five dice, a pencil and paper, and the knowledge of the rules and scoring.

Have fun playing and learning together!

Debbie Bermet is TOPS’ Math Specialist and a game playing mom. Debbie can be reached at dsbermet@seattleschools.org or 252-3534.
TOPS Skiing and Snowboarding ’09
By Teresa Nemeth

Here’s hoping that as you read this, snow is falling at 3000 feet and the mountains are turning a beautiful white. The slopes await our middle school skiers and snowboarders, who will head to Summit Central at Snoqualmie Pass for five evenings and one full day of fun with their friends in the snow. It all starts after winter break: the buses will leave TOPS Friday afternoons at 2:45 on January 9, 16, 23, and 30, and February 6, and Monday morning, January 26, at 9 a.m.

Parents can help by not parking on Boylston around drop-off and pick-up times, because those big luxury buses need the space. Families can also help by unloading skis and gear when we return, as parent chaperones will be tired. Please arrive on time to pick up your child, so the chaperones can go home. We try to have everyone call when we are getting close to Seattle. If your child is being picked up rather than riding the bus back, please send a note for the chaperones, so they don’t hold the bus and search the slopes and lodge.

Many thanks to Molly LaPatra for once again managing the program. It’s a big job. At a meeting on November 12, students and parents learned about the program, turned in forms and checks, and watched resident filmmaker (a.k.a. P.E. teacher) Don Zemke’s fun instructional video, which included footage from last year. We also had our second annual equipment swap. Many students will rent gear on the mountain: it’s just $99 for the season, and then you don’t have to carry boards and boots back and forth. Families that are renting need to remember to make an equipment reservation by 2 p.m. at the latest on the day BEFORE going up to ski. Visit www.summitseasonrentals.com, use your name and customer number, and indicate the date, type of equipment, and base area (Summit Central).

Students also have the option of taking lessons at a special group rate with other TOPS students at the same ability level. It’s a good way to get out of that wedge. Every year we work to make it a more inclusive program, so finances shouldn’t hold anyone back.

Juan Perla (laperla@perla.biz) and Mark Brannon (mkbran@u.washington.edu) are coordinating the 6th graders this year, Frank Cech (frank.e.cech@boeing.com) and Sheila Gilligan (sheila_gilligan@hotmail.com) are coordinating the 7th graders, and Ellen Markman (ellenmark@gmail.com) will coordinate the 8th graders. Thanks to Vanessa Stusser for taking charge of the morning equipment drop-off in the lunchroom, and to Maggie McDonald for depositing the checks.

You can find good information about the ski program on the TOPS website. Don’t wear cotton, as it is well known that cotton kills. Do wear a helmet. Wear warm and waterproof or water-wicking clothes, as it can be very cold and wet up there. Lots of parent chaperones will be on hand in the lodge and on the mountain to help with whatever comes up. Chaperones and extra-vehicle drivers receive free passes to ski, if they wish.

Finally, even if you don’t have a middle schooler, consider joining other TOPS families at the now legendary ski weekend at Mission Ridge, the last weekend of mid-winter break (Feb. 19–22). It’s a blast! Ron and K.C. White (therwhitehouse@comcast.net) will organize the trip again this year. Look for information in this newsletter or on the website. The Cedars Inn in East Wenatchee makes a block of rooms available at a discounted rate. Friday evening, families gather for a potluck at 6:30 in the Cedars Inn banquet room. During the day, you can look forward to meeting lots of other TOPS friends on the sunny eastside slopes. It’s a laid-back and family-friendly ski area, and there are also some nice snowshoe trails nearby. If anyone would like to coordinate the group discount tickets this year, I would be happy to pass the information on, as I have done it for the past two years but most likely will not this year. Call me at 325-8320 or email me at zongora@gmail.com.
I f you haven’t tried this TOPS tradition before, try it this winter. The latter part of our mid-winter break leaves the Mission Ridge slopes with plenty of dry snow, bright sun, and a smashing view of the Columbia River. It’s easy to caravan or carpool with other families. Bring a student friend or two. Some families arrive as early as Wednesday, some not until Friday or Saturday. Mission Ridge is a great family mountain with gentle terrain for the young skier, steeper drops and bowls for the thrill seeker, and even an airplane wing monument to a bomber plane wreck that occurred half a century ago. And the amazing thing is there aren’t any lines!!!

The Mission Ridge ski area, only twelve miles from Wenatchee, offers a wide range of terrain to satisfy all types of skiers. Cross-country skiing is nearby. Non-skiers have also found snowshoeing is great fun on trails alongside ski slopes. Go to http://www.missionridge.com for more information.

The Cedars Inn has set aside a block of rooms for TOPS families. The rate for a room with two queen beds is still being negotiated, so check future Go-Homes for updated information. The Cedars Inn is in East Wenatchee at 80 9th St NE, just 20 minutes from the ski area and across the road from the Columbia River trail. They offer a continental breakfast with a waffle maker and an espresso machine, an indoor pool, and an outdoor hot tub.

There are several ways to keep the cost down:

★ The 3.0 club is a good deal for students 13 and over, offering a great per day discount ticket. Please visit Mission Ridge’s website for more details and information. You’ll need to bring a report card and student ID.

★ Groups of 15 or more adults can buy daily tickets for a discount as well. But you’ll need to pay together and in advance. If someone would like to organize a group purchase, find details on the Mission Ridge website, and let me know that you would like to lead this group purchase effort.

★ If you’re a complete beginner, you can arrange for three days of lift tickets, three group lessons, and three days of equipment rental for a very sizable discount.

★ In some past years, some gas stations have offered a 2 for 1 coupon that were valid on Thursday or Friday. If you hear about this (or any other good discounts), pass the word around.

Any questions, contact Ron White at therwhitehouse@comcast.net. Updates on all details will be coming soon via the TOPS website and the Go-Home.

This is a parent-sponsored event that has been ongoing for approximately 20 years now!
Middle School Dance

By Clara LaPatra and Tuuli Snow, Grade 8

The school dance on October 24 was the bomb like tick, tick. Every one busted out their best moves and got down. The diner theme was great fun because there was hekka good food and I could get reenergized from all that dance work out. We made all these new dance buddies and got to hang out with people that normally we would never get to see.

I think school dances are great because kids have a chance to express their feelings through there bodies. When I was in sixth grade the dances were all about getting the perfect partner to dance with during slow dances. In seventh grade it was about being cool and flaunting your stuff. But this year it was all about having fun and recognizing your friends for who they are and how much fun they can be, no matter what grade.

It is interesting and fun to see people settling into their comfort zone.

Thanks for taking pictures Don!
The TOPS Penny Harvest is about local philanthropy done by kids ages five through fourteen. The objective of the Penny Harvest at TOPS school is to join together in the act of helping those who need it most. Our goal is to fill 25 sacks that hold 30 pounds each and donate them to a charity of our choice. This is a wonderful way to get involved in the community, and also teaches the value of money—from pennies to dollars—to children who still think four pennies are worth more than a quarter.

Each classroom was given a container that can hold approximately ten pounds of coins, and a representative from each room is sent to calculate their grade’s total each week. When each container is full, we all pour them into a large sack that, as forementioned, can hold up to thirty pounds, and thus collecting fifty dollars worth of pennies.

Charity is known throughout the world. In Pakistan, it is called almsgiving, where those more fortunate than others would give food, drink, blankets or money in the hope to help. This has become widespread even, although here at TOPS, we give it a different name. The Penny Harvest aims to better our community and raise awareness in local schools, thus prompting us towards a life of giving and generosity. Think about it ladies and gents, the next time you are separating your colored socks from your lacy white blouses and you find a couple pennies in your pockets, give those pennies to your children, and allow them the satisfaction of helping another human being.

Generosity is key, let’s not get locked in a room.

**2008 Penny Harvest classroom Representatives:**

Don’t miss the Middle School production of:

**Our Town**

by Thornton Wilder,
under the direction of Paul Stetler.

Friday, December 12 at 7 p.m.
and Saturday, December 13 at 5 p.m.
Message from the Principal  continued from page 1

Did you know that one of our own TOPS staff is the Coordinator of Deaf Connection? Seth Ziegler, Instructional Assistant in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program (D/HH), coordinates reading education with a focus on English and American Sign Language in libraries and book stores for the hearing challenged. Seth recently held two storytelling sessions at University Village Barnes and Noble. He read books with a voice interpreter. Many interpreter training students attended Seth’s story sessions, as well as the general public. If you have ever seen Seth sign a story he reads, you know these were special events!

Middle school ski season is starting in January. Last year approximately three quarters of the middle school students participated in the ski program. If you are new to the TOPS Middle School this year, this is a fun way to get to know classmates better while you enjoy the slopes.

Our celebration of the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is scheduled for January 15. Please join us as we honor this great man at a school assembly. All families are welcome to enjoy our students’ presentations that help us to remember the ongoing need to focus on Dr. King’s work. This is always a wonderful event for everyone involved.

One last housekeeping word from the lunchroom...please help us keep our students safe by not sending popcorn to school for the microwave ovens. We’ve lost two microwaves so far from burning popcorn. So for the safety of our students, please no microwave popcorn!

Cheers!

Clara

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### 2008 - 2009 TOPS CALENDAR

Send your events and dates to our webmaster, Michael Drew, at webmaster@topsk8.org. Please check Go-Homes and the website for updates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>December</th>
<th>January</th>
<th>March</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (M) Winter Wishes/TOPS Food Drive begins</td>
<td>1-2 Winter Break; no school</td>
<td>4 (W) Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal</td>
<td>1 (F) WASL testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (F) Middle school dance, 6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>5 (M) School resumes</td>
<td>2 (S) TOPS Auction, 5 p.m.</td>
<td>2 (S) Grade 1 and DHH to SCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 (T) Winter Concert, 2 p.m.</td>
<td>7 (W) K &amp; 5th grade to SCT</td>
<td>6 (W) Grade 1 and DHH to SCT</td>
<td>8 (F) TOPICS, Earth Day theme, 1-3 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m., TOPS library</td>
<td>8 (Th) Grades 1-4 to SCT</td>
<td>10 (F) End of third quarter</td>
<td>8 (F) 2nd Friday of the Month Club, 4:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 (Th) 2nd grade to The Nutcracker</td>
<td>9 (F) 2nd Friday of the Month Club, 4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>13 (F) Professional development day; no school</td>
<td>8 (F) 5th grade Science Fair, 9 a.m., Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 (F) End Food Drive</td>
<td>13 (T) Elementary school tour, 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>25 (W) Young Author’s Celebration, 2:10 p.m.</td>
<td>13-15 (W-F) 7th grade Camp, Mt. St. Helens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 (F) TOPICS, 1-3 p.m.</td>
<td>19 (M) Martin Luther King Day holiday; no school</td>
<td>26 (Th) Grades 6-8, SPED to SCT</td>
<td>13 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m., TOPS library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 (F) 2nd Friday of the Month Club, 4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>23 (F) Last day of semester</td>
<td>27 (F) Kindergarten ABC party, 1 p.m.</td>
<td>15 (F) Art Fest, 6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 (F) Middle school play, 7 p.m.</td>
<td>26 (M) Day between semesters; no school</td>
<td>27 (F) TOPICS 1-3 p.m.</td>
<td>15-16 (F-S) Elementary school play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 (F) Middle school play, 5 p.m.</td>
<td>27 (T) Elementary school tour, 9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>30-31 (M-T) Spring Break; no school</td>
<td>20 (W) Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 (T) Katie’s class play</td>
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<td>25 (M) Memorial Day; no school</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 (F) Kindergarten Songs at Louise’s, 1:30 p.m.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>27 (W) Grades 1-2 to SCT</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 (F) Early dismissal, 2:20 p.m.</td>
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<td>29 (F) Middle school dance, 6:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>22-31 Winter Break; no school</td>
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</tbody>
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**FEBRUARY**

| 4 (W) Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal | 1-3 (W-F) Spring Break; no school | 1-3 (W-F) Spring Break; no school |
| 5 (T) Middle school tour, 9:30 a.m. | 8 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m., TOPS library | 8 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m., TOPS library |
| 10 (T) Elementary school tour, 9:30 a.m. | 10 (F) End of third quarter | 10 (F) End of third quarter |
| 11 (W) Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m., TOPS library | 10 (F) 2nd Friday of the Month Club, 4:30 p.m. | 10 (F) 2nd Friday of the Month Club, 4:30 p.m. |
| 13 (F) 100 Day Celebration | 13-30 WASL testing | 13-30 WASL testing |
| 13 (F) 2nd Friday of the Month Club, 4:30 p.m. | 24 (F) TOPICS, Cultures of the World theme, 1-3 p.m. | 24 (F) TOPICS, Cultures of the World theme, 1-3 p.m. |
| 16 (M) Presidents Day; no school | | |
| 17-20 (T-F) Mid-winter break; no school | | |

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**APRIL**

| 2-5 (T-F) 8th grade Camp, Deception Pass | 2-5 (T-F) 8th grade Camp, Deception Pass |
| 2-5 (T-F) ASB Elections | 2-5 (T-F) ASB Elections |
| 4-5 (Th-F) 3rd and 4th grades to Camp Arnold | 4-5 (Th-F) 3rd and 4th grades to Camp Arnold |
| 12 (F) 8th grade Passage, 7 p.m. | 12 (F) 8th grade Passage, 7 p.m. |
| 15 (M) Elementary school Field Day | 15 (M) Elementary school Field Day |
| 15 (M) Middle school to Wild Waves | 15 (M) Middle school to Wild Waves |
| 16 (T) Last student day, 2:20 p.m. dismissal | 16 (T) Last student day, 2:20 p.m. dismissal |
Principal's Report
Ms. Scott reported on the State of the School which was held twice in conjunction with curriculum night. The first night it was extremely well attended, the second night there was a smaller group but it was better than recent years. The coaches (e.g., math, reading) had sessions at curriculum night that were well received. Ms. Scott received some positive emails from parents about inclusion of the State of the School in curriculum night.

She reported on the Writers In The School (WITS), published writers working in the 5th-8th grade classrooms. T.A. Barron, a published author, was at TOPS for an assembly. Todd Moore is the playwright for Young Playwrights. The first Planting the Seeds parent meeting will be October 23 from 7-8 in the lunchroom. 8th graders will begin preparation for Planting the Seeds by attending a photography exhibit called “Outsiders,” an exhibit of photos of homeless people. She also mentioned picture day, upcoming parent conferences which will be on a new schedule for middle school, Chess Club, after-school bus, Kindergarten and 5th grade buddies field trip, middle school play auditions for “Our Town,” and early dismissal 10/29.

Special Report on the Middle School Special Education Classroom
Judy Holben explained that the Middle School Special Education class is a self contained classroom (reading, writing, math in one class) with students with many different disabilities. “Self contained” means that students don’t rotate into a variety of classrooms but stay together for most of their academics. Many of the students in the program first enter TOPS at middle school. In addition to basic academic skills building, socialization is a big part of the program. The classroom is staffed by Judy and an assistant. With one IA it is sometimes difficult to support students going into other regular classrooms. Students get mainstreamed to P.E., health, art, and field trips, including things such as September experience.

Discussion from Site Council members included the need to have clear communication to special needs families coming to the school about the nature of the program. Possible venues for this communication are the website and new family orientation. The importance of family-to-family outreach to include these families in the school community was also discussed. The importance of having a special education parent on the Site Council was discussed. Dan Hurley’s sub-group will take up these issues.

Volunteer Coordinator Report
Maureen Germani has had a busy month sending, receiving, and processing back-to-school packets. Most have been returned. She is currently working on assigning volunteers where most immediately needed, e.g., No-Bake, classroom. She is trying to do a better job of linking parent tutors to opportunities to tutor and is working with Patty Maffit on scheduling. The communication workgroup, led by Tamara Kincaid, may be able to help work on ways to make the volunteer system more efficient, i.e., how to better match when parents are available to needs for volunteers. Go-Home is moving toward electronic opt out, to begin toward the end of November. Maureen is also working on volunteer name tags, and the directory and mailing lists.

A few other details covered by Maureen: subscription to Survey Monkey is paid for by FOT. Gerrit paid for it on his credit card and will need reimbursement. Ellen Levi and Wayne Duncan are applying for a grant from Lowe’s to put toward the memorial tree and bench. They can apply for up to $5,000. Maureen also mentioned a need for a room rep. meeting to talk about inclusion, translation, etc., i.e., keeping room reps aware of how to reach out to families in the community.

Coalition for Social Justice Report
Karen Stuhldreher is the new chair of the CSJ and will represent CSJ on the Site Council. A successful first music and ice cream social was held on Sunday, October 5. The “No-Bake” fundraiser was kicked off at this event and raised $5,000. The first CSJ movie night, October 17, will feature Including Samuel. The film raises questions and issues about inclusion of special needs kids; it connects to anti-bullying and Care programs. To accommodate Jewish families and others not available on Fridays, some CSJ movie nights will be held on nights other than Friday this year.

Treasurer’s Report
Funding for “Brain Dance” was discussed. Funding for this ($1,325) is going to be drawn from the teacher excellence fund. Cliff Shettler presented this year’s budget. Corrections to project managers were given to Cliff. The Balance Sheet shows equity equal to budget for this year. There was a discussion of the fact that there is a line item for scholarships.

Chairperson’s Report
Susan Welch reported that parents from the Seattle Schools Central Cluster meet to talk about topics of common interest. She asked for a volunteer to attend the meeting, but no one at Site Council was available. Susan will ask Maureen to help find a parent to do this. Wayne Duncan sent a notice about aSeattle Schools community meeting re the assignment plan for schools: October 23, 6:30-8:30 at Ingraham.

There was not time for discussion of the three Core Objectives workgroups. Susan suggested that these three groups (Communication – Tamara Kincaid, Special Education – Dan Hurley, and Financial Resources – Betsy Wells) convene prior to the November meeting and bring plans to that meeting. Barbara Rockey volunteered to be added to the Communications group, Cliff Shettler to the Resources group, and Clara Scott to the Special Education group.
What’s a Site Council? And why should I care?

By Tamara Kincaid, TOPS Site Council
Assistant Chair

Each month, news from the Site Council is featured in our TOPS newsletter. This is one of the articles it’s easy to avoid reading, yet the Site Council is one of the most important, and least understood, parts of the TOPS governance structure.

Everyone is familiar with a PTSA. Yet not very many of us understand the difference between a PTSA and a Site Council. Unlike the PTSA, the Site Council serves as one of the governing bodies of the school, with responsibilities for leadership, advocacy, fund raising, financial stewardship, and strategic planning to assure the highest standards of educational excellence and an inclusive supportive school community. We operate under the current school district policy with regard to Site Councils.

Another important difference between a PTSA and a Site Council is membership. The Site Council has members representing every part of the TOPS community—students, classified staff, teachers, administrators, parents and the neighborhood. In a traditional PTSA, the PTSA represents the school community, but only those people who pay dues are actually members. In true TOPS tradition, our Site Council includes everyone!

So what does the Site Council do each year? By our by-laws, the Site Council is responsible for:

1. Advance the mission of TOPS
2. Support staff in their efforts to facilitate and enhance student learning
3. Enable families to become informed about and help shape the educational and extracurricular programs at TOPS
4. Build community and communication within TOPS, and between TOPS and the broader community of Seattle
5. Provide direction to the Friends of TOPS in allocating funds raised by TOPS families, consistent with the school mission and the Site Council strategic plan
6. Evaluate the state of the school and parent-funded programs
7. Advocate for the interests of TOPS with the Seattle School District and the City of Seattle
8. Attend to other issues, such as student safety or facility maintenance and improvement, as they arise.

Each year, the Site Council holds a retreat to develop areas of focus for the coming school year. This year, we adopted the following Core Objectives:

- Practice effective stewardship of resources – including fundraising, transition planning, and creating a framework for parents to bring their ideas and plans.
- Create avenues to foster effective two-way communications in the TOPS community.
- Include the special ed. families in all aspects of the TOPS community, so no one is left out.

As the fundraising arm of TOPS, the Site Council also serves as the Board of the Friends of TOPS. Site Council manages the money, and sends out requests for proposals each year. The money raised by Friends of TOPS is used throughout the school, funding music and art education and much more.

This year, in addition to the Core Objectives, we are facing the issue of proposed school closures by the School Board. While we do not know at this time if TOPS will be threatened with closure, we will be there to support our school and community.

Escrip Update!

By Julie Wroble

Since the start of the school year, 17 more families have signed up for Escrip! Thanks to all the new families who have signed up. Now, even more families are earning money for Friends of TOPS.

What’s stopping you from signing up? If you have no idea what your Safeway Club card number is, all you have to do is call 1-877-Safeway and they will give you the Club card number. You can also sign up other credit cards or retail cards (Visa, Mastercard, Macy’s, etc.).

Escrip is a great way to help earn money for Friends of TOPS. Registering your cards is quick and easy, and once that is done, a small percentage of every purchase you make at participating vendors will be sent to Friends of TOPS for use in the general fund. In the Seattle area, the following merchants participate in the program: Safeway, Whole Foods, Eddie Bauer, Office Max, Shutterfly, Linens ‘n Things, and Sierra Trading Post (see escrip.com for a complete list of participating merchants).

You also have the opportunity to register credit cards and debit cards or do on-line shopping at www.shopping.escrip.com.

Feel free to contact me with questions or suggestions at jwroble@comcast.net or (206) 324-4829.

Photo by Don Zemke
**BrainDance**

*By Kristina Stoneberg, 1st grade Teacher*

The last few days of August found the majority of the TOPS staff dancing. Thanks to the Friends of TOPS, most of the staff had the opportunity to learn about BrainDance from its founder, Anne Green Gilbert, as an in-service day before school started. BrainDance is a movement experience that goes through eight core movements which encourage neurons to connect, a higher focus level, and results in more learning. BrainDance is being introduced at all grade levels, so don't be surprised if your child comes home from school: spinning, crossing their midline or doing eyeball exercises! For more information visit [www.creativedance.org](http://www.creativedance.org) or email Kristina at klstoneberg@seattleschools.org.

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**Bonjour Paris—Spring Break 2009**

As the new sparkling lights of the Eiffel Tower prove, Paris is still the City of Light. Moonlight dances on the surface of the Seine, the Arc de Triomphe and Notre Dame shine in spotlights, the crystal pyramid at the Louvre glows from within. Whether your eyes light up at the thought of French art, history, food, or fashion, you’ll have eight radiant days to live la vie élégante.

Travel with your friends and 6th grade teacher Marianne Trangen to Paris and London over Spring Break 2009. **Price will increase on December 1, so register now!**

Go to [www.explorica.com](http://www.explorica.com). Enter the Tour Center ID Trangen-7064 in the box “For Students and Parents” to get details. If you have questions, contact Marianne at mptrangen@seattleschools.org.
SOCCER!

What’s Been Going on in P.E. . . .

By Don Zemke and Eric Herndon, P.E. Teachers

Double Dutch, basketball, soccer, unicycling, climbing on the rock wall, Frisbee, football, Wii Fit, table tennis, foosball, Chinese yo-yo, juggling, conditioning, jogging, stretching, strengthening, air hockey, volleyball, BrainDance, Break Dance, group games and activities, cartwheels and handstands, different forms of movement, partner and group challenges, badminton, CARE meetings, and the Presidents Physical Fitness Test!

Photos by Don Zemke
TOPS Sixth Grade Seattle School District
Ultimate Frisbee 6th Grade Champions for 2008!

By Sasha Vasioukhina, Grade 6

After finishing the season undefeated, the TOPS sixth grade Ultimate Frisbee team started the tournament in the pouring rain against the African American Academy. After easily beating them, we played AS1 and easily claimed another victory which put us in the championship against Whitman Middle School whom we had beaten during the regular season in sudden death by one point!

Now we were in the finals and we were playing one of the hardest teams, Whitman. Our breath was taken away with the marvelous play, Teddy had some incredible defensive stops and great catches, Fausto scored two goals, all of us girls did great, and finally the winning point was scored when Tessa threw the golden pass to Andy and he caught it. WHOOOOOOO! First championship TOPS has ever won!

It’s been a great season and playing Ultimate is a blast!
TOPS Ultimate Frisbee 2008...Student Champions in More Ways Than One!

By Don Zemke, P.E. Teacher

This fall was dominated by a large number of TOPS students playing Ultimate Frisbee in the Disc NW sponsored Ultimate Frisbee league. With our small school fielding three teams, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, we were not only very competitive, but also represented our TOPS community well.

Our 8th grade team, playing in the top division, placed 2nd in the league championship. During the course of the season, TOPS was the only school to beat much larger and undefeated Eckstein Middle School. In the tournament, TOPS eliminated Whitman and Aki Kurose to advance to the finals against Asa Mercer. In the Championship game, TOPS had an early lead but was overcome by some very skilled Mercer kids. The final score was Mercer 12 and TOPS 7.

Even though it was very hard to lose with this particular group of kids, I’m amazed at how hard they competed, their incredible level of talent, how well they played together, and their overall sportsmanship which can be tested playing at this high level. When I think about coaching these kids for the last three seasons I consider myself very lucky and have many excellent memories.

Our 7th grade team tore up the “B” division during the regular season. They finished the season undefeated and beat every one of their opponents, not allowing any one of them to score more then two or three points! They were the number one seed in the tournament, but got a surprise from Pathfinder when they showed up with some very tall, fast 8th graders who eliminated them in the first round! Oh well, we have high expectations for them next year.

Our 6th grade team made history by becoming the first TOPS athletic team to win an athletic championship. They finished the regular season undefeated and then won the Seattle School District tournament beating Whitman Middle School by a score of 8-6! I see two more years of fun and good competition for this group of kids.

Even though only one of our teams won a championship, I see every one of our kids as a champion with the way they handled themselves in this self refereed sport that’s based on “The Spirit of The Game” and sportsmanship.
Winter Concert

Tuesday, December 9 • 2:00 p.m.
In the TOPS Gym

Featuring
Hummingbird and Inspire Choirs
TOPS Orchestra and TOPS Band
TOPS String Quartet

Come hear our musical groups perform!

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

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