We’ve just spent a month focused on compassion. Our guiding advice was, “Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.” We are teaching our students to understand that kindness is something you do. And there is always a choice to be kind or not. It is so important to reach out to the larger community with kindness. It’s also critically important to teach kindness in our everyday lives, with the people we rub shoulders with the most.

Another focus of ours has been safety. Staff members recently updated their First Aid and CPR certification. Our Safety Committee has been working all year to tighten up our fire drill procedures. Additionally, the Safety Committee arranged for an Emergency Response Specialist to meet with our parent community and the Eastlake Community Council. Meeting any emergency with a total community response will ensure the best outcomes for our students, families, staff, and larger Eastlake community.

You can help our safety efforts every time you visit school. Please make sure that you sign in at the office counter and get a visitor/volunteer badge. We need to identify you as someone with legitimate presence in our building. When you sign in, we also know who needs to be accounted for in the event of an emergency evacuation or drill. This is an important safety practice, and we thank you for your cooperation. Don’t be surprised if school staff asks you to identify yourself and your purpose if you are “unbadged!”

In celebration of Earth Day, parents and students worked to beautify our natural surroundings. It does look very nice around TOPS, doesn’t it? With some more nice days we’ll all be convinced that it really is spring.

The WASL is finished for this school year. Now we wait to see the scores. It’s always rewarding to see how well our students perform, demonstrating all that they have learned over the years. Many thanks to all of you for getting your students here on time.

We love our teachers!

By Jamie Flaxman

Every May we honor our teachers during Teacher Appreciation Month. This year we asked students and parents to tell us what they like or appreciate about the people who spend hours each day teaching our students. Throughout this issue of the TOPS News, you’ll find photos of our teachers, with a selected quote. For many teachers, we received more than one quote. The newsletter editors had the very, very difficult task of choosing just one quote to go with each photo, and on pages 18-19 you’ll find the remaining quotes that were submitted.

(Editor’s Note: We apologize if your comment was left out. Every attempt was made to include all submissions by students and parents that were received by April 8. Comments were left as submitted, except some minor editing was made by the editors for style and spelling purposes.)

June TOPSNews Deadline

Friday, May 8 • Submissions to topsnewsletter@gmail.com
Welcome to the eighth newsletter of the 2008-09 school year. Jamie Flaxman and Ann Simonson edit, Paul Loovis handles photos, design, and layout, and Jane Summerfield, Peggy Maraghe, and Roxanne Robinson get it mailed off to you. Don Zemke provides many of our photos. G & H Printing prints the newsletter.

We need your submissions: calendar additions, classroom news and news from the larger community, faculty notes, committee reports, opinions, profiles, compliments, congratulations, children’s art, photos, and anything else significant to the TOPS community.

Submit your contributions by email to topsnewsletter@gmail.com or to the newsletter box in the main office. Please send photos to javabrain@msn.com. The deadline for the June issue is May 8. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Jamie and Ann at topsnewsletter@gmail.com.

I like it when **Amanda Trainum** makes silly faces (while playing math games). **Harmony Baniaga**, **Grade 4**

In reading block with **Andrea Hugill**
I like when we read books about Kenya. **Ethan Kutch**, **Grade 1**

I appreciate **Beth Engel** because she helps me to understand what I need to do when I am in Ms. Eick’s Language Arts class. This helps me to be a good writer and this is important to me because I love to write. I also appreciate Beth a lot because she understands my voice really well. **Madison Williams**, **Grade 7**

**Carla Fetterley** enthusiastically volunteers to help CSJ with the Taste of TOPS every year. The TOT rocks because of Carla! **Lynne Goodrich**, **Parent**

I learn how to sign ASL and read good in **Cindy Beck** and **Seth Ziegler’s** class. **Uma Strempler**, **Grade 5** And I like playing addition and multiplication games on the computer. **Madina Abdikadir**, **Grade 4**

Photos by Ann Simonson and Don Zemke
I like that **Eric Herndon** is a good dancer. **Cora Patz, Grade 2**

Enthusiastic, enthusiastic, enthusiastic! **Dan Bloedel** truly has the love of learning and teaching. Watch out!  
*Gabe Barrett-Jackson, Grade 7 & Annie Barrett-Fragale, Parent*

We like **Cynthia Livak**’s sense of style. We appreciate the crafts we get to do and how she helps us think of creative ideas. We like that **Glory Busic and Cora Patz, Grade 2**

I just wanted to say how much I appreciated the fact that **Debbie Bermet**, TOPS math specialist, volunteered to help out with the “Planting the Seeds” project. She is new to TOPS and didn’t know the eighth grade class that well, but spent two nights away from her family to help out. Thanks **Debbie**.  
*Carolyn Hughes, Parent*

Thanks, **Don Zemke**, for holding the video program year after year. I really like it. **John Carter, Grade 7**

**I like that** **Eric Herndon** **is a good dancer. Cora Patz, Grade 2**

You know, I’m really getting an excellent education in 5th grade this year. **Ms. Reiter** is a really great teacher. **Maggie Malone, Grade 5**

*Photos by Ann Simonson, Michael Drew, and Don Zemke*  
Continued on page 6
TOPS to the Top

By Jamie Flaxman

69 Flights of Stairs – 1,311 Steps –
788 Vertical Feet of Elevation –
One Common Cause

More than 50 TOPS teachers, students, and parents, as well as family members of Mikael Perla, came together on March 22, to climb the Columbia Tower to raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Mikael is a former TOPS student, now a 9th grader at Ballard High School, who was recently diagnosed with leukemia.

Together, this group was amazing – as of this writing they have raised $11,629.00, and the team, TOPS to the TOP, is among the top 10 fundraising teams of all teams at this year’s event.

Top Student Fundraiser:
Spencer Cook, Grade 5 ................................................ $1,010

Top Teacher Fundraiser:
Guy Lawrence, 6th Grade Teacher ............................. $1,070

Top Parent Fundraiser:
Janet Morrison .............................................................. $835

Climbers had the options of running or walking. Only the runners were timed. Many of the walkers (who often ran) finished in approximately 15 minutes, but do not have official results to post here.

Fastest Team Member:
Willie Spurr, Age 15 ..................................................... 11:14:30

Fastest TOPS Student:
John Carter, Grade 7 .................................................... 13:16:10

Fastest Teacher:
James Burger, M.S. Resource Rm. ............................. 11:43:00

Fastest Woman:
Nina Binder, 5th Grade Teacher .................................. 12:54:65

Youngest Climber:
Spencer Cook, Grade 5, Age 10 .................................. 13:57:75

Special thanks to Team Captain Nina Binder for coordinating this activity. The TOPS to the Top team:

- Nina Binder
- Rachel Blazevic
- James Burger
- Riley Calzagno
- John Carter
- Robert Carter
- Marianne Clarke
- Spencer Cook
- Yohji Curry
- Allison Dworkin
- Rebecca Ehlers
- Sydneys Eli
- Mark Ellis
- Kaden Erickson-Wayman
- Sam Flaxman
- Noah Forslund
- Diasuke Fukagawa
- Jenny Gamache
- Nicole Godbout
- Rebecca Hardie
- Teddy Howard
- Madeleine Imbert
- Alan Kahn
- Nate Kahn
- Karen Keeley
- Bill LaPatra
- Clara LaPatra
- Molly LaPatra

- Tessa LaPatra
- Guy Lawrence
- Bay Loovis
- Margot Maraghe
- Peggy Maraghe
- Ellen Markman
- Jane Markman
- Jon Markman
- Sarah Melberg
- Lena Mentyka
- James Meyer
- Alex Morrison
- Janet Morrison
- Katy Morrison
- Eli Nervik
- Erik Nervik
- Suellen Neumeister
- Seth Palmer
- Maria Perla
- Sally Perla
- Cooper Phillips
- Claire Spragins
- Nancy Spragins
- Layla Spurr
- Leslie Spurr
- Willie Spurr
- Max Weinberger
- Seth Ziegler

Photos by Jamie Flaxman
for their testing days. The WASL was shorter this year, making many of the test sessions shorter and more manageable.

Our budget process is also complete for the 2009-2010 school year. Our Building Leadership Team and staff went through a process to discuss and vote for staffing outcomes. We are confident that the best decisions were made given the reductions we faced in staffing and funding. We hope that you all saw the letter we sent home to every family that explained the process in more detail. We do have some staff changes for next year. Joe Drummond has chosen to transfer to another Seattle Public School and will not be returning to TOPS. Kristina Stoneberg will move into the fourth grade position. Kristina has previous fourth grade experience so we are thrilled that she will take this position. Sadly, our staffing and funding reductions include saying good bye to Jacque Ensign, our Writing Specialist. Jacque has done a superb job of guiding first through fifth grade teachers with Writers Workshop implementation. Her skill and support will be greatly missed. We wish these teachers the very best in their new roles, and we know they will be successful.

May is auction month for TOPS. The auction is scheduled for May 2. It’s always a special treat to experience Art Fest which will be held on May 15. Seventh graders will be enjoying camp on May 13-15 and 5th graders May 20-22. High School enrollment will take place in the library on May 27. It’s a busy month with something happening for everybody, which is exactly what makes TOPS a special school for everyone.

Cheers!

~ Clara
I like using sentence blocks when I work with Eva Masumoto. Saido Nor, Grade 1

Mr. Lawrence is very humorous! It is fun to be in his class. Noah Forslund, Grade 6

Jacque Ensign - We love the writing specialist and the writing curriculum. "Small moments" and "How to's" rock! Nancy Cohen, Parent

I appreciate the way that Mr. Burger encourages us to work and he doesn't give up on us until we've succeeded on what we've started. And he can be really funny at times. Sam Flaxman, Grade 5

As a relatively new parent to TOPS who truly never thought I would need to speak with a school counselor, I was surprised when I realized I was wrong. Jennifer Murray could not have made the experience more welcome and accepting. Her wisdom and candor were refreshing and her advice comforting. I have no doubt that her door is always wide open to anyone needing to walk in (child or parent). She has further "sealed the deal" that I made the right decision bringing my child to TOPS!
Angela Hamilton, Parent

What I appreciate about Jenny Gamache is her enthusiasm to give students the support they need to achieve to their best potential. My son was new to TOPS this year but from the get go developed a special bond with Jenny. If you ask him about her he will tell you "I love Jenny" and I think that he feels that way about her because she understands him and treats him with respect. He likes her prize box. When he gets to pick something out of the prize box he knows that he has earned it and bringing the prize home to show his family makes him feel proud. It really has been a blessing that we made the move to TOPS because we know that our son will continue to flourish under Jenny's care. Dianne Fukagawa, Parent

Photos by Ann Simonson and Jamie Flaxman

Continued on page 8
News from the Library and Beyond
By Steve Haines, Librarian

I keep reminding myself that we are so fortunate at TOPS to have such wonderfully diverse and supportive families. This was once again on display in Susan’s 4th grade class and Sarah’s 1st grade class when two speakers from the NVC (Nisei Veterans Committee) came and shared their experiences as a result of the Japanese Internment during World War II. It was June Hayakawa Fung (Chloe-K, Allysa-4th, Leslie-8th), who brought these speakers to us. Following is her report.

Tom Kometani spoke to Susan’s 4th grade class. The students had been studying the events of WWII so Mr. Kometani’s presentation was very relevant. (Note: before the students were visited they viewed a government made movie describing the internment.) Using a collection of photographs he first described how the Japanese immigrated to the U.S. He then presented his family’s life leading up to the war and the “War Hysteria” surrounding Pearl Harbor. He described Executive Order 9066 and gave an extensive description in words and pictures of the camps, where they were located, the conditions, and all about the internment experience. He also shared information about the 100th Battalion/442nd RCT and left a documentary and reading material for the students about this military unit. He concluded with why it is important to learn about this part of our nation’s history. The 4th graders had many questions which Tom answered easily with his extensive knowledge base.

Mary Hirata spoke to Sarah’s 1st grade class about her Internment experience. She also had pictures and great hands-on visuals including a miniature guard tower and pot belly stove that were a part of camp life. Mary shared her family’s history from their early times in eastern Washington to their move to Seattle and the events leading up to and including the Internment. Although the 1st graders did not have the same context for the events of WWII, they seemed to understand the injustice and hardships of the Internment. They too had many questions that Mary could easily answer in her warm and engaging manner. We were all honored to have these speakers share their first hand experiences with our students.

The Taste of TOPS is always an exciting event and this year was no exception. What with the Book Fair in the library and the Lion Dance wending its way through the school it was an evening to enjoy the TOPS environment. Thanks to this event the library has a new Chinese Zodiac calendar hanging from the loft railing. This was the brainchild of Carla Fetterley, our extraordinary Reading teacher and former TOPS 1st/2nd grade teacher. For TOPICS she had 12 students each pick one of the 12 animals representing one of the years in the zodiac cycle. Then the students painted their animal on a large piece of precut paper, with the help of several middle school students and adult volunteers. Well when all the pieces of the pie were put together we had a 12’ diameter zodiac. Now what? It was too big to hang in the hallway or the lunch room. Boy, those parents again. Up stepped Missy Chow and Ty Graham (Cyrus-3rd). Together we worked to plot a way to hang this work of art. I wished students were there to see the cooperation involved in thinking this through. It is always gratifying when something works.

This is a “heads-up” for all of you Rick Riordan fans. His newest book in the Percy Jackson and the Olympians series entitled The Last Olympian is coming out soon. Not only that but he will be in town on Friday, May 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Third Place Books in Lake Forest Park to talk about his new book and to sign copies. This is an immensely popular series and the event will be well attended.

ROWING CAMP!

at Lake Union Crew

Three 3 week camps offered throughout the summer. Sign up for one, all three - or mix and match weeks from each to fit your summer schedule!

Ages 8 to 17 years old

Lake Union Crew
(206) 860 4199
www.lakeunioncrew.com

Mornings Only
ALL DAY!

Camps for experienced rowers and those BRAND NEW to the sport!
I like Joan O’Connor because she is nice to everybody. Naomi DeGasperi, Kindergarten

We have all learned so much from Joby Moore— not just August — we love her energy, her wisdom and thoughtful approach to teaching. August always says he loves the way she reads. She must really get into her characters. Robin Freedman & Howard Choder, Parents

I like that there are 2 teachers in Brittany’s class. Between Judy Holben and Beth Engel they are able to give their students the 1 on 1 time that these kids need. Carrie Boyd, Parent

Julie Gillett is smart, nice, and dresses pretty. She is just all things good. Stella Jarvis, Grade 2

I appreciate Katie Waters because she is strict, but she doesn’t yell. Also because she buys good books and lets us silent read. Stone Harmann, Grade 3

Jessica Morrissey is always nice to me and checks-in with me to see if I need help. Joshua Dejneka, Grade 3

I like it when Jackie Edwards explains things to me that I do not understand. Jin Ning Huang, Grade 5

We ♥ Our Teachers
News Flash!
TOPS Kids Love to Read!
By Susan Welch

The second annual TOPS Book Fair was a resounding success. Kids came prepared with favorite titles in mind, and pennies, quarters, nickels, and dollars in hand. For a few days in March, the library hosted thousands of books – and kids waited eagerly, and impatiently, for Steve to open the doors so they could take a look. One of the best parts of a traditional school book fair is the opportunity kids and parents have to browse through stacks of books, looking for the one that “speaks” to him or her – “Buy me! Read ME!” The enthusiasm was contagious and palpable…and volunteers had a fantastic time helping kids pick out a new favorite.

Book fair sales topped $6000 – we earned a credit from Secret Garden Books of over $1400 – which has already been used by teachers for the purchase of nearly 200 books for our classrooms! Secret Garden took special care to provide us with a large selection of books from our Taste of TOPS country – China. These books, which are often more difficult to find, were especially popular with both families and teachers.

Special thanks to all the kids who helped out with the Book Recommendation Project. 75 kids participated – and everyone who did earned a dollar coupon to use at the fair. We randomly selected names from those who participated (by grade level), to win a book of their choosing. These prizes also came from the credit we earned from Secret Garden.

The TOPS Book Fair is a new addition to the many unique offerings of TOPS that enrich our children’s school experience. Teachers (and librarians!), administrative staff, and custodial services all give more than a little bit extra to make it happen with such panache – and parents are so grateful to you all! To all of the volunteers that worked to organize, administer, and clean up after the book fair – thanks a million!!

Top 10 Reasons to Attend the TOPS Auction on May 2!

1. You've already returned your RSVP, hired the sitter, and reserved a great seat. (You haven't? There may still be time. Contact Jamie Flaxman at 206.286.1295. She won't baby sit, but she might have extra tickets.)

2. Enter the Golden Raffle for only $25. Win and you can take your pick of the live auction items before everyone else!

3. And the number one reason to attend the TOPS Spring Auction…

4. Thank our fabulous underwriters (as of April 8) in person –
   - Apartment Sales Corporation
   - John & Gail Chase
   - Lisa Fitzhugh & John Hoyt
   - Jorge Garcia & Barbara Schinzinger
   - Olga Klezovitch & Valeri Vasioukhin
   - Liesl & Troy Langley
   - William Morrison
   - Laurie Stusser-McNeil & KC McNeil
   - Hasegawa & Family Cosmetic Dentistry

5. Be the one to steal away with your child’s priceless class project.


7. Outbid the competition at the next table for the Dessert Dash and revel in delectable delights.

8. Be the first to know if you’re cooler than your kids by winning a new iTouch in the raffle. Raffle tickets will be on sale the night of the auction for a mere $5.

9. Socialize with other TOPS parents without being interrupted by your kids!

10. Bid on one of several unique lazy-susan center pieces. Each is decorated with original art work by local artists and TOPS parents.

Remember! The Asian Resource Center at 5 p.m. We’re on our way to $110K!

Summer Camp at TOPS!
Come to Kids Co. here at TOPS over the summer. We have a really exciting summer lined up with themed weeks such as: Inventions, Magic, Cooking, and Superheroes! Our scheduling is very flexible: you can register for one week at a time or even reserve a couple of days per week! Our amazing staff will almost all return from the year, so don’t miss out! Contact Aaron Norikane at Kids Co. at 709-8487 for more info!!
TOPS at Seward School
2500 Franklin Ave. East
Join us anytime Friday
May 15, 5:30 to 9:00 p.m.
ARTFEST
6125
2009
TOPS at Seward School
2500 Franklin Ave. East
Join us anytime Friday
May 15, 5:30 to 9:00 p.m.
We ♥ Our Teachers

What I appreciate for Mrs. Stoneberg is her kindness and enthusiasm to teaching. She understands each student’s needs so well and treats all kids as important individuals. She knows when to be soft spoken and when to be a little bit firm, and she manages to teach our kids without blaming, shaming, or raising her voice. My son, Souma, will not want to miss school any day just to see her. I feel so lucky to have Mrs. Stoneberg in Souma and our family’s life now.

Akiko Yabuki, Parent

I like Ms. Spurr because she is so kind.
John Danielsson, Grade 4

I like Leslie Nilan because she is a really nice teacher. She is a good teacher because she can always answer questions and encourages us to ask about things we don’t understand. She is good at explaining things and if the kids are having trouble understanding, she will find a different way to explain it. She will try new things in the class if the old way is not working, like the seating assignments. She gives good mini lessons in writing which have helped me a lot. She has taught me cursive and helped me with my handwriting. She has taught me about geometry which I really like because Math is my best subject. Finally, she lets the class earn points and have fun parties.
Ally Sorenson, Grade 3

TOPS News
Looking for a New Co-Editor

Like to write and edit? Enjoy this newsletter? Then we have the volunteer job for you. The TOPS News is looking to bring on a 3rd Co-Editor for the next school year. One of the current co-editors, Jamie Flaxman, is becoming Auction Co-Chair, which means that we will need another newsletter co-editor to help during the spring months. You’ll have plenty of support and time to learn the job, you get an early peek at every going on at TOPS, it’s a job you can do from home at night and on the weekends, and it’s a great way to put in your volunteer hours. For more information, contact Jamie or Ann at topsnewsletter@gmail.com.

Ms. Eick you were my teacher back in the day at South Shore, you pushed me to do more than I thought I could, certainly more than I wanted to and here you are doing the same thing with my children. Good job, they all need a kick in the pants from time to time! You stand out as a favorite to my children.
Robyn Israel Cox, Parent

I like doing math time tests with Liz Hayden.
Jonathan Chapman, Grade 3

Photos by Ann Simonson

Continued on page 15
Thank You To Those Who Helped Make The 2009 Taste Of Tops 
A Very Special Event

Planning Committee

- Coalition for Social Justice Parent Members
  Susan Oelke, Karen Stuhldreher, Lynne Goodrich

- TOPS Staff Carla Fetterley, Cynthia Livak, Nina Binder,
  Leslie Nilan, Julie Gillett, Eva Masumoto, Andrew Wong

Special Thanks to:

- TOPS families who helped with planning and cooked
  Chinese food: Noven Chiu, Xiao Jackson, Xiao Ling Huang,
  Man Ai Huang, Hui Juan Liu, Li Chang Liu, Qu Yen Luong,
  Meng Lian Lei, Qiao Song Xie

- KC Kitchen for providing the special Chinese sample foods

- Sandy Shettler and student helpers who managed composting,
  recycling, water service, and clean up

- Nancy Bacon who arranged visits of Chinese students from
  the UW to every classroom with assistance from Leslie Nilan

- Sheri Toussaint who coordinated the Talent Showcase and
  Chinese art/artifact displays

- Keith Toussaint who coordinated sound for performances
  and emceed the Talent Showcase

- Susan Welch and Steve Haines who coordinated the
  Book Fair

- Lorie Lockwood who provided expert advice and consultation
  for the potluck and special food table

- Keeping order and sanity in the lunchroom: Lorie Lockwood,
  Galen Goff, Sheri Toussaint, Nancy Hom, Annie Meyer

- Annie Meyer, lunchroom manager who assisted with all
  aspects of the potluck and clean up

- Noven Chiu who got many families involved in the event

- Assistance with decorations: Cynthia Livak, Carla Fetterley,
  and Julie Gillett for helping students to create fabulous art,
  and hours of assistance with decorations. Additional help
  from Nina Binder and her 5th grade students

- Saream Dy and Kieu Bui who provided set up and clean up

- Clara Scott and Jeanne Kuban for ongoing support of the
  Coalition for Social Justice and the Taste of TOPS

- Many parents who assisted with crafts, decorations,
  displays, greeting, serving food, transporting food to the
  event, arranging for the Half the Sky display, ordering
  custom fortune cookies, and clean up

- All of the students who participated in the Talent Showcase

(We apologize for any omissions or spelling errors in the thank yous
– we appreciated the help of everyone and could not have pulled off a
successful Taste of TOPS without your help.)

Photos by Don Zemke
May Math Puzzle
Submitted by Debbie Bermet, Math Specialist

THE DANCE OF THE PERFECT SQUARES.

Sally invited 17 guests to a dance party and gave them each a number from 2-18. Sally was #1. At one point all 18 people were dancing a couple (2 person) dance and the sum of each couple's numbers was a perfect square (1, 4, 9, 16, 25...). What number was Sally's dance partner?

Hint: Make a list of all the dancers and their possible partners.

For families with younger children:

How many squares can you find in this picture?

Hint: squares can be different sizes—use scratch paper and cut out squares of different sizes and then slide them around the picture to make counting easier.

Solution to the April puzzle:
Submitted by Debbie Bermet, Math Specialist

Step 1. Pour from A into B until B is full.
Step 2. Pour from B into C until C is full.
Step 3. Empty pitcher C into A.
Step 4. Empty pitcher B into C.
Step 5. Pour from A into B until B is full.
Step 6. Pour from B into C until C is full.
Step 7. Empty C into A.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Pitcher</th>
<th>B Pitcher</th>
<th>C Pitcher</th>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
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My seven year old nephew has another solution: if the areas of the containers are the same, then just pour water into the 5 oz until the two containers are the same size!

Math Puzzle Whizzes

2nd graders in Julie’s class have been learning math by playing math games and doing puzzles once a week. Math Specialist Debbie Bermet brought in Mind Madness (a puzzle where you have to construct a soccer ball out of pentagonal and hexagonal shapes and not let like colors touch) knowing that it’s an incredibly challenging puzzle for adults to solve.

Jobi Lo and Jacob Allmon solved the puzzle!

Baby Giraffe

By Anna Duncan, Grade 8

P.E. has always been a favorite part of my day. Not just because you don't get any homework, and get to socialize with your friends, but I have learned so much in the dusty-floored, music filled TOPS gym. Some of my favorite TOPS memories have been in the gym, trying new sports, getting skittles from Eric, racing to the unicycle closest to get the best one. I have loved growing up here and I will miss it when I leave.

Unicycling, pogosticking, Double Dutch, the list goes on of things I've learned in P.E. I remember the first time I stood on the stage and Don helped pull me onto the Baby Giraffe. He held my hand as I wobbled unsteadily around the gym the first time and let me go as I gained confidence and rode around, two three, four times in a row. TOPS P.E. has given me confidence to do the things that I love. Because of this, I shocked many neighbors that summer riding the Baby Giraffe up and down my block.

Another thing I will always remember about P.E. at TOPS is when one day I walked over to say hi to Eric and to give him a hug. In response, he lifted me up and spun me around in the air. I was laughing along with the class as he put me down. I have always felt supported in P.E., even when I stopped the ropes in Double Dutch or didn't win the race at the track meet. It has helped me become a better athlete, and a stronger person.

Overall, P.E. is the best. With supportive, kind, funny, amazing teachers, and fun activities to do, what more could you ask for? I love P.E. and I am so glad I have gotten the opportunity to learn so many sports. It has been one of my favorite parts of my experience at TOPS, and I will miss riding a five foot high unicycle on a daily basis.
Recently Luzita Roll just put together a great All Day TOPICS field trip. The group had a chance to visit a real artist studio in Pioneer Square. We had an opportunity to ask him what he did besides paint and how he got his inspiration. The kids had an awesome time viewing all the different art available inside the local galleries. She spent time researching the events of the day and put a lot of care into making it interesting and fun for the middle schoolers.

Nancy Horn, Parent

We like it when Manuel Bermudez helps us with our homework problems and gives us advice about how we can do better in math.

Salma Serrano Amaya and Michell Barojas, Grade 5

Marianne Clarke is a gift to our school. She is a gem. The way in which she teaches language arts allows each child to be creative and no one can teach social studies better than Marianne.

Ellen Levi, Parent

Mr. Ellis is always happy, always in a good mood – unless we do something bad. He makes class fun for us, and makes learning math fun.

Johnny Tamura, Grade 8

I like Michael Adam’s songs so much! Violet Angell, Kindergarten

When we were doing a science experiment, Nina Binder started dancing so that we could all see her on the projector. It was crazy that a teacher would do that, and really funny.

Albert Lorenzana, Grade 5

We love Sarah Marks because she is always so kind and patient with every child. She is so positive about everyone’s progress and encourages everyone in her class in just the right way! Sarah is the single biggest reason our child never wants to miss even one day of school.

Lisa FitzHugh, Parent

Photos by Ann Simonson and Sheila Gilligan
I like working on math with **Mr. Wong**, he is a good teacher. *Hui Min Huang, Grade 5*

We ♥ Our Teachers

**Sheri Touissaint** is great about helping me when I'm sick or hurt. **Sheri** is a good reading block teacher. *Glory Busic, Grade 2*

I like **Steve Haines**' silly words like kpencil, ding the dong, and kpaper. He is a really good and nice librarian. He is also a very good reading block teacher. *Jonah Silverstein, Grade 2*

**Susan Mamlock** has been with TOPS since the beginning. She encourages students, is nice, and is helpful. Her son has a hearing loss and she has brought sign language to TOPS. She was the creator of TOPICS at TOPS. *June Hayakawa-Fung, Parent*

When I hear the name “**Mr. O’Connor,**” I think of a sympathetic man, who if you forgot to do something, he accepts it. He is a man who knows what's going on in the world... a person who can relate to you, even in the most bizarre times... an understanding person and a great teacher, at that. *Gabe Fabens, Grade 7*

**Tracy Seefeld** is my teacher. I like her because she helps us learn new things every day and learning is great. She reads nice stories to me and the rest of the kids in her class. *Jonah Silverstein, Grade 2*

I like it when **Xiao Yu Jackson** comes to class on Fridays and we play math games. *Jin Yang Xia, Grade 2*

**Photos by Ann Simonson**

Continued on page 18
A letter went home April 7 explaining next year’s budget. It suggests that kindergarten will be fully funded through Pay-for-K. I hope to clarify and consider the ramifications of that decision.

The state legislature only funds one and a half kindergarten teacher positions, leaving the remaining half of one position unfunded. For 15 years, the unfunded part has been covered by the school, most recently using I-728 funds. Along with that, TOPS kindergarten families have paid a modest monthly fee to support the parent-administered PEAK program, which hires a part-time third teacher to lower class-size.

The new TOPS budget eliminates any support for kindergarten beyond what is legislated by the state. Instead it levies a $2500/year joining fee upon any family that chooses TOPS. This joining fee will not support the PEAK program, which helps to reduce class-size in kindergarten. It will go to paying for the unfunded basic teacher position previously provided by the school. This fee is 300% more than this year and the benefit is eliminated.

The TOPS website promises a full-day kindergarten with an additional teacher paid for by tuition. It also states that this community values diversity, social justice, and shared decision making. Our kindergarten program has evolved into an exemplary model of teacher-parent collaboration and creativity. It is successful academically, but even more to the purpose, it serves as the foundation of our community. It melds children and families from diverse backgrounds into one community with a shared ethos. This is the promise we gave to those visiting incoming kindergarten families. Now, after they have made their choices, they will be shocked with 300% more in fees and no third teacher.

Many “north of the canal” neighborhood schools require kindergarten parents to pay for the unfunded kindergarten teacher position. But TOPS is not a “north of the canal” neighborhood school; we are an “all-city” alternative school that provides a unique and rigorous educational experience to a diverse population. Look at the statistics. We have greater diversity, both socio-economically and ethnically, than almost any north-end school AND we have as good or better test scores.

Is this in keeping with our mission statement: to include students historically underserved by the public school system? With a $2500 joining fee there is a danger that the diversity we have will disappear. We will lose current TOPS families with incoming kindergartners because they can’t afford this increase.

Philosophically I do not believe students should be required to pay for a basic education. Full-day kindergarten must be seen as basic because the current curriculums required by this school district cannot be achieved in a half-day of school. Traditionally TOPS parents have raised funds to provide amenities that serve the community and its mission. The PEAK teacher is an example of parent-funded amenities that serve community goals, as are the Reading Specialist and Reading Block teachers, and the Math and Writing Specialists. None of these positions are required or funded by state legislature.

We have a responsibility to the incoming kindergarten families to provide them with the program they were promised at a reasonable cost. I would like to see the entire TOPS community support a tuition that is no more than a 75% increase over current fees and pays for a part-time PEAK teacher.

If every student in grades 1-5 paid $12/month or $120/year the budget gap would be eliminated. I know that is unattainable, but I must ask this community to consider what is fair? A $2500 joining fee or $120 to pay for extra services?

(Editors’ Note: It is not the general policy of the editors to comment on the articles submitted to the TOPS News. However, there is a factual omission in this article that we feel needs to be included which is that the Pay-for-K fee is waived for families who qualify for free/reduced cost lunch.

For more information relevant to this article please look at the Seattle Times report on “resegregation of Seattle Schools” located at this link: http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/flatpages/local/schoolresegregation.html)

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We ♥ Our Teachers

I like Beth Engel because she is funny and she gives us awards when we do something good. She greets us in the morning. She talks about Barack Obama with me. Brittany Boyd, Grade 6  ☺ Carla Fetterley was very kind when I was in her class. She helped me a lot in school. Noah Forslund, Grade 6  ☺ I like Cynthia Livak because she gives us pretty challenging art projects, but I really like them! John Danielsson, Grade 4  ☺ Cynthia Livak is a really good artist and she is also very nice. I always look forward to going to art. This last week was fun because she taught us how to make self-portraits. Freya Wiedemann, Grade 2  ☺ Dan Bloedel makes science fun for the children...my eldest son Jordan wants to be a scientist. That is due to the way you made science seem exciting and come to life...your enthusiasm rubs off on your students...thank you! Robyn Israel Cox, Parent ☺ Mr. Bloedel teaches in such a way that even the worst students want to excel in his class. Leslie Fung, Grade 8  ☺ I really like Don Zemke because he helps me at Circus Arts riding my unicycle. He is also a very, very good P.E. teacher. It is fun. Jonah Silverstein, Grade 2  ☺ I appreciate all the time and attention Don Zemke puts into Circus Arts. Glory had so much fun and learned that sometimes you have to work hard to learn something new. Sarah Busic, Parent ☺ I appreciate Don Zemke’s patience with helping me on the unicycle. Glory Busic, Grade 2  ☺ Don and Eric Herndon have treated my children as if they were their own. You have always been so understanding and supportive of our family. Even as my son Jordan has graduated he still asks about Don and Eric. You always greet me with a warm smile, ask about the other children, and go the extra mile for the kids at TOPS. You are an amazing team! Robyn Israel Cox, Parent ☺ We LOVE Don Zemke and Eric Herndon and how they make physical activity fun and an enjoyable part of Daniel’s daily life. Nancy Cohen, Parent ☺ I appreciate how Don Zemke and Eric Herndon are easy going and P.E. is a good place for me to go at the end of the day to move my body. Madison Williams, Grade 7 ☺ I like P.E. because Don Zemke and Eric Herndon usually let us have free time. They make us work hard while having fun at the same time. Freya Wiedemann, Grade 2  ☺ Ms. Reiter looks over my shoulder to check my math. I appreciate that she helps by telling me how to fix something I did wrong. Albert Lorenzana, Grade 5  ☺ I appreciate how Eric Herndon helps when I get hurt. Glory Busic, Grade 2  ☺ Joan O’Connor is nice, but she can be strict if she needs to. She makes good poems. She is an amazing teacher! I love how her focus is always the children! June Hayakawa-Fung, Parent ☺ There is no better introduction to TOPS than there is with the Joan O’Connor and Joby Moore kindergarten team. My children and I were welcomed with culturally relevant practices, sharing our family history, learning about the salmon, and all of the wonderful sign language that the children learned. My youngest two will be coming through soon and I can’t wait to have both of you back in our daily lives. Robyn Israel Cox, Parent ☺ I like Joby Moore because she is a very nice teacher and she works hard with kids. And I am happy I got her as teacher. Violet Angel, Kindergarten ☺ Joby Moore is funny. She has wonderful positive energy. She is an amazing teacher! June Hayakawa-Fung, Parent ☺ I love Joby Moore because she is the greatest teacher in the universe! Naomi DeGasperi, Kindergarten ☺ What strikes me about our kindergarten teachers is how unbelievably positive they are, even in stressful situations. I’m constantly learning from Joby Moore. When I volunteer in the classroom, I’m always impressed by how she handles difficult situations so beautifully. She addresses the child’s behavior without demeaning or belittling the child and gets a good result. When you send your baby to someone else for the day, it helps immensely to know that your child will be respected by the adults you entrust her to. Justin Guarda, Parent ☺ I love teachers Joan O’Connor, Joby Moore, and Michael Adams! You are the best and I am learning so much. Thank you and Big Hugs, Anne Ruhlman, Kindergarten ☺ I really appreciate Judy Holben because she is always kind to me and helpful to me. She likes to teach us about what is going on in the news – I loved this when Obama became the president. And Judy wears pretty things every day. Madison Williams, Grade 7 ☺ I like Judy Holben because she plays sports with us and she is good at it. She is a good teacher to my classmates and me. Judy also greets us in the morning. Brittany Boyd, Grade 6 ☺ We think Julie Gillett is a really fun teacher. We appreciate her fairness in reading block. Glory Busic and Cora Patz, Grade 2  ☺ Katie Waters had lots of fun projects. Her homework was fun instead of boring. Noah Forslund, Grade 6  ☺ I like Ms. Stoneberg because she’s a good teacher and she teaches us and she’s smart. And I love seeing her every day. And she has a good smile. And JJ. is cool. Dane Harmann, Grade 1  ☺ I think Mrs. Stoneberg is a good teacher. She makes me do good work and is teaching me to do homework. She wants us to be respectful in class. I have to raise my hand, I just can’t shout out “Hey, Mrs. Stoneberg!” Mrs. Stoneberg makes learning fun and when I do well she says “good job Kiyu.” Every day she talks to me before class starts and that makes me feel happy. Every day she tells me goodbye when it is time to go home and that makes me feel happy too. Kiyu Fukagawa, Grade 1  ☺ I like Ms. Spurr because she teaches me things that I need to know and she’s funny. Yin Deng, Grade 4  ☺ I like Mrs. Spurr because she teaches in a way that is funny. Julia Shettler, Grade 4  ☺ I love Ms. Spurr because she teaches me a ton of things and walks me through each thing I don’t understand. Delaney Toepel, Grade 4  ☺ I love Ms. Spurr because she explains things well. Erin English, Grade 4  ☺ I like Ms. Spurr because she makes learning fun. Mei Lee, Grade 4  ☺ Ms. Spurr, thank you for all you taught us! Love, Juliette Clem, Grade 4  ☺ Ms. Spurr, you are my favorite teacher so far at TOPS! Love, Coco McNeil, Grade 4  ☺ I think Leslie Nilan is a good teacher because she encourages parents to come in and share their talents. She truly appreciates the people who volunteer in her classroom. I feel that she really listens and cares about the children in her class. She has an open line of communication with the families and works with them to help their children. Val Muller, Parent ☺ I appreciate Ms. Eick because she knows a lot about writing and she is teaching me to be a good writer and that is something, I want to be. Madison Williams, Grade 7  ☺ Ms. Eick’s cool and has a good sense of humor. Leslie Fung, Grade 8  ☺ I love seeing the art that Luzita Roll has inspired the children to do. It’s so incredible how you can teach them different techniques and then see what they actually make of it. Robyn Israel Cox, Parent ☺ I like Michael Adams because he’s nice. He helps kids on math and science. His music is GRRRREAT! Naomi DeGasperi, Kindergarten ☺ Marianne, you should be in the military, your kids do more before three p.m. than most kids do all day! I love the Greek festival and how you find ways of involving all of the parents. You keep those kids on their toes and still manage to look like
you just walked out of the gym!! Thanks for all you do! Robyn Israel Cox, Parent  
Mr. Ellis gives us a chance to figure things out for ourselves, but when we are struggling, he never fails to sit down with us to explain the mysterious concept until we understand. Rebecca Ehlers, Grade 8  
I enjoy that Mr. Ellis bothers students about their homework so they don’t have an “E” on The Source. John Carter, Grade 7  
Mr. Ellis is like a living encyclopedia. Leslie Fung, Grade 8  
Michael Adams has been a great addition to the dynamic kindergarten team. He is creative, kind, and funny. He helps kids play chess. And he plays the ukulele. June Hayakawa-Fung, Parent  
I like Nina Binder because she is great and has an awesome sense of humor. Simon Angell, Grade 5  
Instead of just telling us things, Nina Binder shows us and acts it so we understand it. And, she re-tells us it until we get it (and she doesn’t get mad!). Nicole Godbout, Grade 5  
Our dinner table conversations are filled with Nina Binder stories – thank you! I don’t know how she does it – fun classes, great jokes, field trips, experiments, poems. I want to be in Nina’s class! Karen Keeley, Parent  
I am thoroughly impressed by Nina Binder’s willingness to help ME help my child. I have reached out on many occasions now with a variety of concerns. While I know the demands of 30 children must be overwhelming, Nina always seems to respond to me graciously and with genuine care to what extra help my child may need. She is a jewell! Angela Hamilton, Parent  
What we treasure about Sarah Marks is that she has always provided an emotionally safe classroom to all her students. Sarah pays us the greatest respect a parent can ask from a teacher – she sees our child the way we see our child: developing, growing, striving. It’s a pleasure working with her. Annie Barrett-Fragle & Ralph Fragle, Parents  
It’d be an incredibly hard act to follow Joan and Joby, but Sarah Marks and Kristina Stoneberg in their short time at TOPS, have made the transition from Kindergarten to 1st grade a joy for kids and families. Their teamwork, patience, creativity and genuine caring for all the children is a gift. Lynn Härnman, Parent  
Sarah Marks teaches us new things, like fact triangles and volcanoes. I am glad that she is my teacher. Aria Kischner, Grade 1  
We like that Sari Breznau picks fun songs and we appreciate her music style. Glory Basic and Cora Patz, Grade 2  
We love the nick names Steve Haines gives everyone. Glory Basic and Cora Patz, Grade 2  
Steve Haines is so warm and you have such a quiet strength. Thank you for always being open to the children (and myself) coming to you with questions. You are a wealth of information and I’ve always appreciated that you take the time to share stories about my children when I run into you at TOPS. Robyn Israel Cox, Parent  
All the kids wanted it, but Steve Haines let me know when Diary of a Wimpy Kid the Last Straw, came back into the library and actually brought it to me in class. He’s really funny when he says, “poople,” instead of “purple.” Albert Lorenzana, Grade 5  
I love my reading block because I get to see Steve Haines who is very funny and nice. He makes us special names, mine is Fred, because I have red hair and my name starts with Fr. Freya Wiedemann, Grade 2  
Susan Mamlock was easily my favorite substitute teacher. She was kind and funny. Noah Forslund, Grade 6  
Mr. O’Conner is like a child underneath his adult exterior. Leslie Fung, Grade 8  
I appreciate Tracy Seefeld’s sense of structure and clear expectations in the classroom. That is a really great environment for Glory. I appreciate her patience with Glory’s math questions after school. Sarah Busic, Parent  
We appreciate Tracy Seefeld’s sense of humor. Glory Busic and Cora Patz, Grade 2  
We love that Tracy Seefeld marks every page of homework and includes stickers! The feedback is great and nice to know that she appreciates the kids’ work. Nancy Cohen, Parent  
We appreciate Tracy Seefeld being really good about being in touch via e-mail about what is going on with Daniel! Nancy Cohen, Parent  
I appreciate how clearly Tracy Seefeld explains our work, and also how patiently she listens to us. She explains our math stations very well. Freya Wiedemann, Grade 2  
I know that I have left out many of you… and many from the past….thank you all for all of your hard work: we appreciate you! Robyn Israel Cox, Parent, and all of us at TOPS!
This year’s Artfest will take place on May 15 from 5:30 to 9:00 in the school library. Stop by before attending the TOPS Elementary Play, *The Moral of the Story is... Four Classic Aesop's Fables*.

Here is a chance to see a school wide presentation of wonderful art created by TOPS students with the help of art teachers Cynthia Livak and Luzita Roll.

**Volunteers Needed!** This monumental task needs lots of volunteers and if you are interested in helping, please contact Nancy Hom at skallywag@comcast.net.

**Join us anytime Friday**
**May 15, 5:30 to 9:00 p.m.**

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

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Art by Zev Magasis