Dear TOPS Families,

I want to extend a big thank you to Cam Sata, June Fung, and other parents who helped to make the Meet and Greet Reception for new staff on November 12 a great success! I enjoyed meeting new parents and visiting with those I already know. The food was fabulous and the conversation was most enjoyable. It was nice to see the other new staff members being recognized and taking the time to relax after a long day of working with students.

On November 13, middle school students attended the first dance of the year. The ASB did a great job with the help of Ms. Hubbard to make the event most entertaining with lovely decorations, good food, and popular music. Don Zemke was on hand to take photographs all evening. Many thanks to all of the parents who prepared food and helped supervise the dance.

Earlier in November, our 8th graders went to camp at Coronet Bay at Deception Pass for three days. Mr. Bloedel reported a great time was had by all. There was a lot of learning and camaraderie for everyone who participated. Again, this could not happen without the help of many parents who were aplanners, packers, chaperones, and drivers.

Parent-Teacher Conferences enjoyed an impressive turnout. I hope that all were able to attend a conference and hear about your child(ren)'s academic and social progress.

During this busy month of December, there will be much to enjoy at TOPS. On December 8, grades 3-8 will perform their music concert in the gym from 2-3 p.m. The middle school play will be performed on December 11 and 12. Katie's room will perform their play on December 16. Stay tuned for more information regarding the times as the dates get closer.

On December 18 there is a one hour early dismissal. Winter Break is from December 21 through January 1. The first day back to school is January 4. I hope you have a wonderful holiday season. Enjoy your family and friends!

Sincerely,
Jo Lute-Ervin

Donate to the No-Bake Campaign Today!

By Louise Bush

The TOPS No-Bake campaign is in full swing. The No-Bake board is up in the front hall, the posters are up in the windows, and donations are coming in.

When you are considering how much to donate to the No-Bake, or whether to donate at all, please remember how lucky we are that our children have the privilege of receiving a TOPS education. Where else do teachers and parents work together the way they do at TOPS? From Steve Haines and Susan Welch taking a group of third and fourth graders to the University District Food Bank, to Ms. Eick and involved parents creating and instituting the incredible “Planting the Seeds” program, where TOPS 8th graders spent three days and nights living with the neediest in our city. From Libby Sinclair and Nina Binder taking their fifth graders, with
CSJ CORNER
Welcome to the CSJ Corner where you can look to find out what the Coalition for Social Justice has planned. Please mark your calendars for meetings and events! The Coalition for Social Justice will meet each month in the TOPS Library from 5:30-7:30 p.m.; until we have a consistent day of the month, check the CSJ Corner for meeting announcements. Our goal this year is to build a larger group that is committed to discussing and working on issues of diversity, social justice, and inclusion at TOPS.

CAN YOU, A FRIEND, OR CO-WORKER TEACH A TOPIC?
Our human rights themed TOPICS take place on December 11 from 1-3 followed by a sharing time until 3:20. If you or someone you know would like to teach a TOPIC, fill out a TOPICS form located on the rack outside the TOPS office or e-mail Tracy Seefeld tseefeld@seattleschools.org.

To plan this TOPIC, the Coalition for Social Justice will host a TOPICS planning and dinner party at the home of Bonnie Cech on Friday, Dec. 4 at 6 p.m. Pizza and wine will be provided, salads and desserts welcome. Contact Karen Stuhldreher at kstuhldr@sccd.ctc.edu to RSVP. Can’t make the meeting? No problem. If you need TOPIC ideas and resources, contact Karen Stuhldreher at kstuhldr@sccd.ctc.edu or Suzanne Oelke at zebner@comcast.net.

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY COMES TO TOPS
By Suzanne Oelke
“Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home - so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighborhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

~ Eleanor Roosevelt

In an effort to further the TOPS mission and vision, this year’s December TOPICS for grades 1-5 will focus on human rights, in honor of Human Rights Day (December 10) which marks its 61st anniversary this year.

HISTORY
On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Following this historic act, the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and “to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions...” The UDHR is the founding document for the modern human rights system and is the most translated document in the world. Since its inception, it has been referred to by human rights activists the world over, most famously Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. Although not legally binding, the declaration is an attempt to fully institutionalize human rights as a world legal order.

The atrocities of WWII spurred U.N. leaders to create a strong impediment to events like the Holocaust from ever happening again. The leaders, chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, also had in mind other world events such as the nuclear annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in India, and the beginning of apartheid in South Africa. Ironically, at the time Jim Crow laws in the U.S. were still in full force.
The preamble recognises a universal entitlement to rights for all humans, and sets the aim of contributing towards freedom, justice, and peace in the world. Human rights are defined in the subsequent 30 articles.

**SUMMARY OF PREAMBLE**
The General Assembly recognizes that the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world; human rights should be protected by the rule of law; and friendly relations between nations must be fostered. The peoples of the UN have affirmed their faith in human rights, the dignity and the worth of the human person, the equal rights of men and women, and are determined to promote social progress, better standards of life and larger freedom, and have promised to promote human rights and a common understanding of these rights.

**A SUMMARY OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

1. Everyone is free and we should all be treated in the same way.
2. Everyone is equal despite differences in skin color, sex, religion, language, for example.
3. Everyone has the right to life and to live in freedom and safety.
4. No one has the right to treat you as a slave nor should you make anyone your slave.
5. No one has the right to hurt you or to torture you.
6. Everyone has the right to be treated equally by the law.
7. The law is the same for everyone, it should be applied in the same way to all.
8. Everyone has the right to ask for legal help when their rights are not respected.
9. No one has the right to imprison you unjustly or expel you from your own country.
10. Everyone has the right to a fair and public trial.
11. Everyone should be considered innocent until guilt is proved.
12. Everyone has the right to ask for help if someone tries to harm you, but no one can enter your home, open your letters, or bother you or your family without a good reason.
13. Everyone has the right to travel as they wish.
14. Everyone has the right to go to another country and ask for protection if they are being persecuted or are in danger of being persecuted.
15. Everyone has the right to belong to a country. No one has the right to prevent you from belonging to another country if you wish to.
16. Everyone has the right to marry and have a family.
17. Everyone has the right to own property and possessions.
18. Everyone has the right to practice and observe all aspects of their own religion and change their religion if they want to.
19. Everyone has the right to say what they think and to give and receive information.
20. Everyone has the right to take part in meetings and to join associations in a peaceful way.
21. Everyone has the right to help choose and take part in the government of their country.
22. Everyone has the right to social security and to opportunities to develop their skills.
23. Everyone has the right to work for a fair wage in a safe environment and to join a trade union.
24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.
25. Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living and medical help if they are ill.
26. Everyone has the right to go to school.
27. Everyone has the right to share in their community’s cultural life.
28. Everyone must respect the ‘social order’ that is necessary for all these rights to be available.
29. Everyone must respect the rights of others, the community and public property.
30. No one has the right to take away any of the rights in this declaration.

**Source:** Resource Centre: First Steps: A manual for starting human rights education (www.hrea.org)
TOPS 3rd graders were recently treated to a talk by acclaimed space journalist and author, Andrew Chaikin. This event was made even more exciting with the connection of scientists finding the evidence of water on the moon. This could mean future colonization or a low-gravity launch pad, “to infinity and beyond.” But I digress. Andrew came to us as the guest of long time (since kindergarten) friend, Janis White (Jonah, 3rd). He was in Seattle to give a talk at the Pacific Science Center, and was able to come and chat with us. It turns out Andrew has always been interested in space, and as Janis told us, when they were in elementary school together, space and the thought of exploration was all he could think about. He followed his passion into college where he studied planetary geology, with the hopes of becoming a scientist-astronaut. His path took a different direction when he started to write about science. He discovered that a great way to learn about a subject is to write about it. That has led to several books, commentaries on NPR’s Morning Edition, and consultation on a TV documentary about the moon. He has a new book out for young people titled, Mission Control, This is Apollo: the Story of the First Voyages to the Moon (the library doesn’t have a copy of this book, hint, hint). The students listened intently as Andrew told them about the moon being like a “cosmic museum,” and how we can learn much about our universe from studying its 3.5 billion year history.

**Social Justice in Action**
The eighth grade has “Planting the Seeds,” the seventh grade students go to the Union Gospel Mission, and Libby Sinclair’s (former teacher at AEII, now Thornton Creek) fifth grade students will be going to the University District Food Bank once a month. Thanks to Susan Welch (Kevin 4th), the 3rd and 4th graders are lending a helping hand during TOPICS. It started last year when we went to the Roots Kitchen to help prepare the Friday Feast dinner. Last month we took seven students to the University District Food Bank. Joe, the floor manager, put us right to work in a very cramped but manageable space. Third grader Ada Rosen thought it was cool that she was able to help all the people who came to get food. The best part for her was packaging raw salmon, especially the one with the heart that fell out. This TOPIC is just one example of all the “helping hand” activities that are going on at TOPS. Hopefully this will continue the social justice tradition that we have embraced for years to come.

**Global Reading Challenge**
The Global Reading Challenge is off and running for our first year. The 4th and 5th graders were given the books and four groups will be forming. The first round of competition starts in February. One team from TOPS will advance to the city round. Check it out at www.spl.org -- Children – Global Reading Challenge.

*Books are the quietest and most constant of friends: they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.*

~ Charles W. Eliot

*Andrew Chaikin - Photo by Steve Haines*
The TOPS Penny Harvest is underway and hopefully your child has come home and turned over a few sofa cushions in search of spare change. It’s hard to believe that so many pennies can add up to significant dollars to put back into our community, but THEY DO! If your child hasn’t asked you about it... please inquire. All pennies will be counted on December 1, and the class that collects the most pennies will earn an ice cream/popsicle party. But that is just the beginning...

Many programs teach children to collect money for a good cause and there are programs that engage young people in community service. The Penny Harvest is the only one that puts the most significant and what agency, non-profit, or cause, the pennies should go to. Teachers will nominate students to participate in a “philanthropy roundtable” whereby they will interview TOPS students and the community at-large to identify and prioritize community needs, do research on those issues, and finally come to a consensus about who should be the recipient of all the pennies. TOPS participation in the Penny Harvest is just another way for our children to have increased self-confidence, self-awareness, a healthier sense of caring and social justice, and hopefully develop superior leadership, communication, and team building skills.

Please send in your spare change and ask your child about where he/she would like to see the pennies go...what a great conversation you could have!

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<th>2009 - 2010 TOPS CALENDAR</th>
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Send your events and dates to our webmaster, Michael Drew, at webmaster@topsk8.org. Please check Go-Homes and the web site for updates.

**DECEMBER**

- 2 (W).............DHH to SCT
- 4 (F).............Grades 1st - 4th, S.E. to SCT
- 8 (T).............TOPS Music Concert, 2 p.m.
- 9 (W).............Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 10 (Th)............Human Rights Day
- 11 (F).............TOPICS, elementary school
- 11 (F).............Middle school play, 7 p.m.
- 12 (S).............Middle school play, 7 p.m.
- 16 (W).............Katie’s 3rd grade Shakespeare play, 1 and 7 p.m.
- 18 (F).............Early dismissal, 2:20 p.m.
- 21-31.............Winter Break; no school

**JANUARY**

- 1 (F).............Winter Break; no school
- 4 (M).............School resumes
- 13 (W).............Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 18 (M).............Martin Luther King Day holiday; no school
- 19 (T).............Martin Luther King Assembly, grades K-5, 1 p.m.; grades 6-8, 2 p.m.
- 21 (Th).............CSJ meeting, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- 22 (F).............TOPICS, elementary school
- 28 (Th).............Last day of semester
- 29 (F).............Day between semesters; no school

**FEBRUARY**

- 3 (W).............Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal
- 5 (F).............Middle school dance, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 10 (W).............Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 10 (W).............DHH to SCT
- 12 (F).............Grades 2nd, 3rd, S.E. to SCT
- 12 (F).............Kindergarten 100 Day Celebration
- 15 (M).............Presidents Day; no school
- 16-19 (T-F)........Mid-winter break; no school
- 26 (F).............Grades 2nd – 6th, S.E., to SCT

**MARCH**

- 3 (W).............Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal
- 10 (W).............Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 10-12 (W-F).......6th grade Camp
- 12 (F).............TOPICS, elementary school
- 18 (Th).............Taste of TOPS
- 19 (F).............Professional development day; no school
- 26 (F).............TOPICS, elementary school
- 26 (F).............Kindergarten ABC Celebration
- 29-31 (M-W).......Spring Break; no school

**APRIL**

- 1-2 (Th-F)........Spring Break; no school
- 9 (F).............TOPICS, elementary school
- 14 (W).............Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 14 (W).............Poetry Festival
- 15 (Th).............Poetry Festival
- 16 (F).............Grade 3, S.E. to SCT
- 16 (F).............End of third quarter
- 23 (F).............Middle school dance, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- 30 (F).............TOPICS, middle school

**MAY**

- 1 (S).............TOPS Auction, 5 p.m.
- 5 (W).............DHH to SCT
- 7 (F).............Grades K, 1st, and 5th, S.E. to SCT
- 12 (W).............Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 14 (F).............TOPICS, elementary school
- 14 (F).............ArtFest
- 19 (W).............Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal
- 26 (W).............Spring TOPS Music Concert, 2 p.m.

**JUNE**

- 2-4 (W-F)........7th grade Camp
- 9 (W).............Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 10 (Th).............Kindergarten Puppet show
- 10-11 (Th-F).......3rd – 4th grade Camp Arnold
- 16 (W).............State Museum, Library
- 18 (F).............8th Grade Passage
- 18 (F).............Awards Assembly
- 21 (M).............Field Day
- 21 (M).............Wild Waves
- 22 (T).............Last student day, 2:20 p.m. dismissal
6th Grade Ultimate Champions!

By Don Zemke, P.E. Teacher

On a cold, windy, wet November morning the TOPS 6th grade Ultimate team finished their season by winning the championship in their division.

In the first round they defeated the Madison Middle School team. Madison scored some points but were no match for the highly skilled, well prepared TOPS team.

The wind blew harder and the rain really started to pour during the semi-final game versus Orca. The conditions made it tough to score points but the TOPS players were prepared with raingear under their jerseys, layers of clothes, hats, gloves, and many umbrellas on the sideline – wonderful Frisbee weather! The final score was 5-0 putting us in the championship game versus Salmon Bay.

The timing was perfect. We had an hour and a half break which allowed our kids to go get warm and dry and eat some warm food. Meanwhile, Salmon Bay was battling out a tough win over Washington which allowed us to scout their talent. When the TOPS players returned, the sun broke out and the wind let up making for great playing conditions. And play great TOPS did by beating Salmon Bay 11-1.

There were so many highlights in this game. Amazing diving and leaping catches, great throws, incredible execution of our zone defense, and an outstanding job of working the disc around to every player. It really felt like a team win with everybody involved. Our team represented TOPS well by following the Ultimate Frisbee golden rule: “The Spirit of the Game” which is all about working problems out themselves and having good sportsmanship.

You can check out photos from the season for all three teams on the TOPS website.

No-Bake continued from page 1

parental support, to a local food bank once a month, to the parents and fifth graders who work together every week on TOPS’ ground breaking composting program. This is what sets TOPS apart from the rest.

But the programs that make TOPS special cannot survive without our donations to the No-Bake campaign. Please pull out your checkbooks and write a check to Friends of TOPS today. We have two excellent reasons to donate to the campaign by the end of the year. First, if you write your check by December 31, 2009, it will be a tax deduction for the year, and second, you will qualify for a drawing to receive a wonderful package of fun stuff for the whole family from our good friends at Izilla Toys. Clearly the time is now to donate!

The No-Bake campaign goal this year is $90,000. We are a community where every single family matters. This is why it is so important that we have 100% participation in the campaign. Although the average family donates $200 to the No-Bake every year, we look forward to receiving your donation, no matter the size.

You should have received a donation form in our October mailing or via the flyer we sent home with your children in November. If you cannot locate your donation form, there are extras in the office, or look for us at the TOPS Swaps event Friday, December 4 and Saturday, December 5, in the TOPS cafeteria.

Thank you, as always, from your entire No-Bake Committee.
Here at TOPS K-8, students in middle school might not realize how lucky we are to have Don and Eric and TOPS P.E. Since we have seen them everyday for nine years now, we might make the mistake of taking them for granted. But when we think about it, they have been one of the most important classes at TOPS. In TOPS P.E., it’s not just about athletics and physical fitness. Don and Eric give every student the opportunity to succeed at any level of life. Whether it is a social situation or academics, they do everything they can to lift us into success.

During my nine years at TOPS, P.E. has not only been one of my favorite classes, but it is where I learned how to be compassionate, respectful, and courageous. I love sports and Don and Eric have always encouraged all my athletics. And, through their examples and during our weekly CARE meetings, I learned what it means to be a good friend and good sport.

Most of all, the best part about P.E. is seeing the whole class together, meeting up with friends who aren’t in my class, and getting to release some energy. And, we get to go every day (for a quarter at a time in 7th and 8th grade)!

Other subjects and teachers at TOPS are incredibly important to me, but in P.E. I know I can just go in there and be myself and learn an important lesson: work hard, treat people well, and success will come.
The Fall Fling
By Simone Framson, Grade 8

It’s 6:25 PM and the line is getting longer. Don’s camera is set up, the lights are off, and our DJ is starting the music. We’re all ready for a night filled with songs, dancing, mugging for the camera and friends as the Fall Fling kicks off.

Kids from 6th-8th grade show up a few times a year for the TOPS dances. Students invite friends from other schools to join the fun. The dance floor fills up and the night begins. The sixth graders are excited and ready for their first dance. Eighth graders make the most of it as they only have a few dances left at this school.

As a member of the ASB, I know first hand the amount of effort that goes into every detail of planning these events. We all owe a huge thank you to Ms. Hubbard for all of her hard work, and also to Ms. Kuban and Ms. Lute Ervin for the privilege of even having a dance. So make sure to behave, and our next dance will be just as much of a success!
An important part of TOPS’ history is its connection to the Seward School, now dating back to TOPS’ move there from Stevens Elementary School in 1989. The Seward School has had a proud history dating back to the late 1800s. Its history can be characterized in several periods.

The school’s first prominence can be traced back to the summer and fall of 1909 when streetcars passed down Eastlake on their way to the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition on the University of Washington campus. The streetcars passed by the Seward School, named in 1905 for Secretary of State William Seward. As Abraham Lincoln’s Secretary of State, he had been the prime mover behind the United States’ purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867.

The centennial of this international gathering, often known as the A-Y-P Exposition, has been celebrated in Seattle this year with various conferences and exhibitions. At this point, almost two-thirds of TOPS’ thirty-three year history has been in connection with the Seward School building.

Its history is now an important part of TOPS’ history as well.

**EARLY HISTORY**

As the city of Seattle grew in the late 1800s, population growth required expansion into new, nearby neighborhoods. This happened in the Eastlake neighborhood, leading to a clear need for a school in the area. In 1893 the original two-room, wood building was opened at the corner of Franklin and Louisa Streets, according to Nile Thompson and Carolyn J. Marr’s *Building for Learning: Seattle School Histories, 1862-2000*. The land for the school had been donated to the school district by David T. Denny and Henry Fuhrman, two of the founders of the Eastlake area, and the building was designed by the architectural firm of Chamberlin & Siebrand, according to the Thompson and Marr volume. This original building was named the Denny-Fuhrman School, and it was listed on the Washington Heritage Register in 1973 (see photo of plaque). This building is currently used for the lunchroom, kindergarten, and first-grade classrooms.
As new houses were constructed and the area grew, there were more children to educate. Additional space was needed. A second building, designed by architect James Stephen and named after Secretary of State William Henry Seward, was opened in 1905. (Nearby Latona and Stevens Schools opened in 1906.) The statue in honor of Secretary of State Seward was unveiled at the A-Y-P exposition in 1909 and, following the conclusion of the World's Fair, later moved to Volunteer Park on Capitol Hill. It still resides there today in front of the Volunteer Park Conservatory. Seattle's Seward Park was also named for him around this time.

On September 6, 1909 the A-Y-P held Seattle Day, expected to be the largest single-day attendance at the fair that ran from June 1 through October 16, 1909. The recently published volume, Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition: Washington's First World’s Fair, A Timeline History by Alan J. Stein, Paula Becker, and The HistoryLink.org Staff, describes the events of the exposition. On Seattle Day there were athletic contests and a children's choir with over a thousand singers. It may have been on this day that the Seward School baseball team won the Second Division Baseball Championship (see photo of trophy).

With so many thousands of visitors traveling to the A-Y-P, houses were being built and sold in neighborhoods reaching to and around the University of Washington campus. Rogers Playfield was developed, starting in 1912, according to the Building for Learning volume, across Franklin Avenue from the school buildings. By 1914 the Seward School had an enrollment of more than 400 students, according to Priscilla Long's article on Seward Elementary School on HistoryLink.org. It was time to build again. This time a brick building was constructed, designed by prominent school architect Edgar Blair, and opened in 1917. (He also designed Franklin High School, among many other district schools and building additions.)

As shown in the accompanying photos, the school used playfields on the site of the present gym for physical education.

The unique combination of these three school buildings was recognized in 1981 by their being designated a historic landmark in the City of Seattle. The nomination for historic status stated the following: “The Seward School is a collection of three separate buildings each of which is individually significant historically and/or architecturally...The greatest significance...Continued next page

Classroom scene from Seward School, thought to be from the 1940s. ~ Photo courtesy of Seattle Public Schools Archives, 271-9; photo by Chet Ullin

Second Division Baseball Championship trophy, awarded to Seward School in 1909 ~ Photo by Wayne Duncan

Plaque on front of base: "WILLIAM HENRY SEWARD PATRIOT AND STATESMAN AS GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK UNITED STATES SENATOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE GAVE TO THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY A LONG AND USEFUL LIFE CULMINATING IN HIS PURCHASE FOR THEM OF THE TERRITORY OF ALASKA ON MARCH 30 1867. ERECTED BY CITIZENS OF SEATTLE 1909." Sculptor: Richard Edwin Brooks 1865-1919 ~ Photo by Wayne Duncan
of the Seward School site however, lies in the fact that the three campus buildings have been grouped on the same site to form a small campus which illustrates the development of public school architecture from the end of the 19th century through the first two decades of the 20th."

**The Seward Demonstration School**

In 1926 the Seattle School Board approved the establishment of demonstration classes to allow teachers from other parts of the state and country to see how Seattle's teachers were educating children, according to Doris Hinson Pieroth's *Seattle Women Teachers: Shapers of a Livable City*. This was a sort of "best practices" approach long before such a term was around! Seattle had been known as a center for the Progressive Education methods of John Dewey, and teachers came from as far away as New Jersey and as close by as California to observe some of Seattle's best teachers in action, utilizing "The Seattle Way."

Originally located in the Summit School on First Hill, the demonstration school was moved to the Seward Building in 1931, Pieroth reports. Probably typical of the attendance pattern, 171 visitors observed the Demonstration School in the 1928-29 school year, Pieroth noted.

Pieroth indicates in her book that the Seward School was partially chosen for its excellent location, allowing students and teachers to observe and benefit from the natural beauty of Lake Union and the Olympic Mountains. Seward Principal Ida Vetting was quoted by Pieroth from a 1931 magazine interview as saying the following:

"On the lake boats ply, while along the shore rise the smokestacks of industrial plants. These glimpses of activity are objects of curiosity and question, which lead to investigation. The settling and lifting of the fog over the lake, the picturesque craft seen through the trees,...and the changing mountains inspire poetic and artistic expression." (p. 99)

Although not all teachers enjoyed having observers in their classrooms, many did and reportedly found the experience stimulating, according to Pieroth. Teachers would demonstrate specific aspects of the curriculum and teaching methods approved by the district curriculum staff, and following a morning's demonstration there would be a discussion by the visitors with the principal and district staff, Pieroth noted. Due to the extra work involved, teachers received an additional stipend. The program continued at Seward until the district discontinued having a designated demonstration school in the mid-1950s.

*Continued next page*
In the late 1950s, Interstate 5 was built through Seattle (Seattle Freeway), resulting in the demolition of many homes and negatively affecting enrollment at Seward and at Latona Schools, according to the Building for Learning volume. In the 1964-65 school year enrollment had fallen to 395 at Seward, Marr and Thompson report, from as many as 600 students during the previous decades. The program continued to evolve, however, and many dedicated parents and teachers worked to maintain a vital and engaging program for students (see TOPS Newsletter article on Seward School Reunion in May 2008: http://www.topsk8.org/news/newsletter/07-08/Jan08-web.pdf). Parents developed a Choice program of enrichment classes for students where they participated in a range of engaging activities led by parents, teachers, and volunteers, according to the Building for Learning volume.

But district enrollment had fallen, and school programs were being targeted for closure. “Super Seward” parents succeeded in keeping the school off of the closure list in 1973 and 1974, but this was not the case in 1988 when the School Board voted to close Seward along with the Cooper, Genesee Hill, Hughes, Sand Point, and University Heights school buildings.

It was at this time that the TOPS’ parents and teachers located at Stevens Elementary School lobbied for the program’s permanent placement at Seward. This proposal, supported by the Seward community, was approved in December 1989, and the TOPS community moved from Stevens to Seward in 1991. At that point TOPS became the next chapter in Seward’s proud history.

ESustainability at TOPS: Let Us Count the Ways

By Sandy Shettler, Volunteer Coordinator

The close of the year is a good time to reflect on the many ways our TOPS community has demonstrated our commitment to protecting the environment. We talk about the importance of protecting the Earth, but more importantly, we are putting action to those words with activities that span students, faculty, staff, and parents. Our whole community has pulled together and engaged in activities large and small which reduce our environmental impact.

Here are some of our accomplishments. Notice a thread throughout all of these. While we are doing something good for our environment, we are also saving money and stewarding our educational resources.

Composting
Our trash output is WAY down! Led by Nina Binder, we started our lunchroom compost/recycling program in 2007. Since then, we’ve reduced our garbage by 35%, and the practice of sorting out compostables and recyclables has spread to most classrooms. Some of our classes even bring biobags on field trips!

Our 5th graders continue to lead by monitoring the lunchroom waste bins. They also educate and inspire the rest of the school about the importance of reducing the amount of organic matter in landfills. The 5th grade skit at the CARE assembly was developed entirely by students and clued the audience into fascinating trash facts: did you know our garbage goes to Oregon, but our compost stays local? That methane in landfills is the worst greenhouse gas—23 times more potent than carbon dioxide? Through this program, the school district saves money, and local jobs are created in the compost field.

Reduced Building Energy Use
TOPS has received a Shared Savings Award from the school district for the third year in a row! This award was given to TOPS partly for waste reduction but mostly for the dramatic reduction in our energy consumption. Each year’s results are based on improvements over the previous year, so making continual improvements after the “low hanging fruit” is gone is a HUGE accomplishment.

Our building’s energy needs are supplied by a combination of electricity, oil, and natural gas. Saream Dy, our custodial engineer, carefully programs the multiple boilers and complex equipment to ensure they operate at maximum efficiency.

Saream has accomplished significant energy savings while meeting his goal of keeping students, teachers, and staff comfortable. He maintains at least 68 degrees in each classroom during the heating season. As Saream states, “Classroom work often means that teachers and students have to sit still and concentrate, so they need to have the temperature a bit warmer.”

Teachers have also gotten behind the energy saving effort, by turning off classroom lights when not in use. We even got rid of the faculty lounge soda machine this year—the occasional treat of a cold soda was not worth a refrigerator machine running 24/7.

The financial savings from this program are partially returned to the school budget by the district.

Electronic Communication
We have now made the switch to mostly electronic communication for our bi-weekly Go-Home! This important communication previously used at least six reams of paper each month—that’s 3,000 sheets of virgin-tree paper not to mention the electricity and toner. Our class Room Representatives have promoted this change by diligently forwarding this as well as other news and updates to student families. We have been careful to include students who may not have access to email by ensuring that they still receive hard copies.

Besides saving paper and energy, this change will save our Friends of TOPS quite a bit of money, which we paid to the school district each year for the use of the machine and supplies.

Shade Trees
Last year TOPS parent Wayne Duncan led the effort to plant two new trees at TOPS. One is an American Elm—a valuable large tree species that could eventually exceed 100 feet in height and provide significant cooling shade to the west side of our school. (Wayne also provided weekly watering for two years until the trees were established.) This tree could have significant future impact on our air conditioning costs.

Saving Natives at TOPS
The Stewardship Committee, led by Amy Paige, will continue our annual landscape work-party tradition this spring. Students, parents, and staff work together on one long day to weed and mulch the TOPS landscape plants. This critical work ensures the survival of many of our trees and native plantings by removing invasive species and mulching/enriching the soil.

Continued next page
Cedar River Trip

By Grace Cotter, Grade 5

The 5th grade and kindergarten buddy field trip to the Cedar River was a blast! Lots of salmon and lots of fun! The kindergarteners loved watching the salmon and finding everything from the clipboard. The salmon were bright red and green. They were pairing, digging, jumping and fighting and dying. It was so cool to see the salmon up close. After our long walk along the river we had a nice lunch and we got to play at the park. The fifth graders were exhausted afterwards. That kindergarten class is a giant ball of energy!
TOPS Middle School presents

Two short plays written and performed by TOPS Middle School students

Friday, Dec. 11 and Saturday, Dec. 12 at 7:00 p.m.
Todd Jamieson Stage

Adults: $4; Students and Seniors: $2

All are welcome.
The two plays will both be performed each night.
Please come and enjoy this wonderful MS Production!