**BRING IT ON HOME**

Mark your calendars now for the TOPS 18th annual spring auction –

*Saturday, May 1, 2010, at the Asian Resource Center!*

By Jamie Flaxman

It may be the middle of winter but it’s never too early to start thinking about this year’s TOPS Auction to be held on May 1. Start thinking now about how you’d like to pitch in:

- **Procure items** – We hope that each TOPS family will procure items with a total value of at least $150. Individual items will hopefully have a value of $50 or more each. Talk to local businesses or inventory your own talents or resources.
- **Organize the Class Project** – Help the kids create their own unique and priceless work of art.
- **Organize the Class Basket** – Pick a theme and encourage class families to contribute items to go along with the theme.
- **Underwrite** – Pitch in to help with the costs of the event by providing products (like beverages), by volunteering, or by offsetting the costs through a cash donation.
- **Volunteer** – Choose a committee position or step into the frenzy of activity on auction night.

Here are some open committee positions – ask a

Continued on page 11

**THE NO-BAKE 2009 CAMPAIGN**

By Louise Bush

This month’s No-Bake campaign update is a “good news/bad news” update. The good news is that 47% of our community has reached into its pockets and given generously to the No-Bake. A big huge thank you to the many, many of you who have donated; as of the early January writing of this article, we have raised $42,000 toward our goal of $90,000.

This brings us to the bad news part of the update: $42,000 is less than halfway towards our goal of $90,000, and unfortunately the No-Bake campaign is winding down. But we are ever hopeful that the TOPS community will help us wind down this 2009 No-Bake campaign in style. We are consistently buoyed by the generosity and hard work of the TOPS community, and we know you will come through and help us all towards our goal.

If we fail to get considerably closer to our goal than we currently are, our children will suffer in real and tangible ways next year. Our teachers and staff, in whom we’ve placed the trust of shaping and educating our children, will suffer in real and tangible ways. For our children and our teachers, and by extension for our entire community, if you have not yet donated to the No-Bake 2009 campaign, please pull out your checkbook and do it today.

Thank you, from all of us on your No-Bake committee.

**March TOPSNews Deadline**

Monday, February 8 • Submissions to topsnewsletter@gmail.com
About the Outrageous Publishing Service

Welcome to the fifth newsletter of the 2009-10 school year. Ann Simonson, Dori Cahn, and Doriane Nieburgs edit, and Paul Loovis handles photos, design, and layout. 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 March issue is February 8. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome. Please contact Ann, Dori, or Doriane at topsnewsletter@gmail.com.

Thank you to No-Bake Donors as of January 11, 2010

Man Ai Huang & Can Zheng Zhao
Rabha Al-Harazi
Alfredo Alvarado
Bonita Alvarado
Kari Anderson & Jory Oppenheimer
Sheila & Kevin Anderson
Brad & Wilma Angell
Mickey & Bob Angell
Tasha & Shane Atchison
Annie Barrett & Ralph Fragale
Eric & Lynn Bazarnic
Tom Beierle & Didi Burpee
Delidil Belay
Elissa Benson & Mark Brannan
Heidi & Craig Berrysmith
Scott Bishop
Dana & Eric Blazevic
Lincoln & Edith Boyden
Louise Bush & Kermit Rosen
Johnny Calcagno & Karen Stuhldreher
Boyd & Susan Carter
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Angela Hamilton
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Lynn & Mark Harmann
Dr. Paul Hasegawa & Pam Stokes
Shelly Havercamp
June Hayakawa-Fung & Larry Fung
Carroll Haymon
Leslie Hazlewood-Spurr & William Spurr
Mark & Kimberly Hobbs

Continued next page
The Kids Co. program at TOPS has openings in our before school program (7:00-9:00 a.m.) and our after school program (3:30-6:00 p.m.). We run a high quality program with fun and enriching activities. Our curriculum includes sports, arts & crafts, cooking, drama, and social skills building, and it’s a safe place to grow and make new friends. Please call Aaron at 709-8487 to register your child!
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.

TASTE OF TOPS 2010 is right around the corner on Thursday, March 18!

Our focus "culture" will be "Sustainability." We are still working out the theme and how to present fun and useful information to the TOPS community while enjoying a great potluck meal. The middle school staff and the Coalition for Social Justice have begun collaborating.

Some possible themes for our sustainability theme could include: urban farming, eating locally, organics, cooking demos, agriculture, economics and politics affecting food quality and good nutrition, homelessness and nutrition, class and food access, or a raffle to raise money for a social justice cause/community group. The possibilities are exciting and endless.

Any and all TOPS families are invited to participate in planning and in the actual event. There will also be education activities in classrooms leading up to TOT. If you'd like to participate and/or have great ideas or contacts for us, please contact Lynne Goodrich at 206-412-2399 or goodrich_yas@msn.com.

Planting the Seeds volunteers needed! We need food preparers, drivers, and resource people to help with this amazing eighth grade social justice project. Contact Elizabeth Dickinson at dickinson-merrill@earthlink.net or Karen Stuhldreher at kstuhldr@sccd.ctc.edu.

Look for an e-mail announcement about the next CSJ meeting.

CSJ is a group of parents, staff, and administrators who work together in support of the stated mission and vision of TOPS. The purpose of our work is to 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.

CSJ is seeking more participation from members of the TOPS community to help with planning and ideas. Please consider spending your volunteer hours at TOPS with CSJ. Contact Karen Stuhldreher at kstuhldr@sccd.ctc.edu for more information.

GRATEFUL

By Kamry Adams, Grade 7

One October Friday, I learned that I should be grateful for what I have, and even if I don't have much, I should make the most of life. On the day of my trip to the Union Gospel Mission, I was really energized to be feeding the less fortunate people that live in this city. Five of my classmates, Sherri, and I walked out of the double doors eager for what was awaiting us downtown. The whole bus trip, I was comparing their lives to mine and thinking about how I am very blessed, and maybe even a little spoiled.

I felt proud of myself, noting the fact that I was actually happy and excited to be doing this, when some of my classmates didn't want to go in the first place.

Kaiya, Abby, and I were in the kitchen serving food when a guy walked up and said, “Hi, how are you?” “I’m fine, thank you,” I said back. When he got to my station, “Bologna or ham?” was the first thing that popped out of my mouth. He gave me an answer and started to walk off. Then, he suddenly turned back around and said, “Thank you for doing this.” “You’re very welcome,” I said in return. I felt good to know that someone appreciated the effort that my friends and I put into doing this.

After serving for another hour, we sat down to eat lunch. We all started to talk about our day, and we pretty much agreed that we had fun. While I was sitting down at the table, I really started to realize how fortunate I am to have the finer things in life.

On the bus ride back to school was when reality really hit home. Any person who experienced what I did that day would become conscious of reality. I found out that a main priority is having a place to call home, a meal to eat three times a day, and to live life to the fullest extent, no matter how much you have or where you came from.

The lesson that I took away from this field trip was the key phrase, “Judging a book by its cover.” When you are around people who society thinks of as being lower class, you learn to not judge them by the way that they look, talk, dress, or even smell. The amount of money that someone has does not describe their personality, or potential to be something. Homeless or less fortunate people are not just looking for money, food, or pity. They want to be seen as being like you and me, like everybody else. Probably because they are.
Thank you to all donors and shoppers who participated in the first annual TOPS Swaps, held over two days just before Winter Break.

The cafeteria was filled with thousands of like-new items, allowing TOPS families and staff to put “Reduce, Reuse, Recycle” to work at a time of year that is often financially challenging. Shared treasures included ski boots and coats, girls’ party dresses, soccer shorts, jeans and khakis, Hawaiian men’s shirts, women’s silk scarves, and sweet baby clothes. As everything was FREE to shoppers, with no item limits, some smart families took home a replenished wardrobe for the whole household for 2010.

A special thank you to parents Merrily Wolf, Margo Robb, and Katrina Stensland, as well as Aaron Norikane from KidsCo. and custodian Saream Dy, who sorted, folded, and transferred all items in and out of the cafeteria.

Children’s items remaining after the event were happily received by Baby Boutique (now Wellspring Family Services), which works with families throughout King County. Men’s and women’s clothing went to a homeless adult and street youth outreach service on the Ave. in the University District. Out of all donations, only one bag of clothes proved unusable due to stains or rips...and those items were turned into rags via Goodwill Industries. Not one item from TOPS Swaps failed to find a new home!

We look forward to repeating this event for the 2010-2011 school year, and encourage all TOPS families to participate as shoppers as well as donors at that time. This event is an investment in building community at TOPS and building awareness of our consumer consumption practices. One mom at TOPS Swaps commented that her family refers to used clothes as “upgrades.” What a thoughtful example for the TOPS community.

Got TOPICS?

Making Holiday Cards for Food Bank Home Delivery Bags
# 2009 - 2010 TOPS Calendar

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

## February
- **3 (W)**: Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal
- **9-12 (T-F)**: Planting the Seeds
- **10 (W)**: DHH to SCT
- **12 (F)**: TOPICS, elementary school
- **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
- **24 (W)**: Kindergarten tour, 9:30 - 11 a.m.
- **24 (W)**: Global Reading Challenge, 2 - 2:30, 4th & 5th grades
- **24 (W)**: Site Council meeting, 5 - 7 p.m.
- **26 (F)**: Grades 2nd – 6th, S.E., to SCT
- **26 (F)**: Middle school dance, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

## March
- **2 (T)**: Elementary school tour, 9:30 - 11 a.m.
- **3 (W)**: Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal
- **4 (Th)**: Middle school tour, 9:30 - 11 a.m.
- **9 (T)**: Kindergarten tour, 9:30 - 11 a.m.
- **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 (W)**: Spring TOPS Music Concert, 2 p.m.

## 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.
- **24 (W)**: 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)**: Elementary school play
- **15 (S)**: Elementary school play

## June
- **2-4 (Th-F)**: 7th grade Camp
- **9 (W)**: Site Council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- **9 (W)**: ASB Elections
- **10 (Th)**: Kindergarten Puppet show
- **10-11 (Th-F)**: 3rd – 4th grade Camp Arnold
- **16 (W)**: State Museum, Library
- **18 (F)**: 8th Grade Passage
- **21 (M)**: Field Day
- **22 (T)**: Last student day, 2:20 p.m. dismissal

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**Team TOPS at the Seattle Kids Marathon**

Photos by Paul Gruen
From Nina’s 5th Grade Class

THE POWER OF WORDS  by Zoe Lepard
Let your imagination sing with the voice of many,
Let your hands be the creators of poetry, history, art, science,
Let your inspiration flow through your body, through your heart, and mind, combining them.
Your pencil is your tool like a hammer is the craft of a blacksmith.
Don’t think, become!
Write stories, music, novels.
Let your inspiration come from the smile of children who read the stories you write, which makes them laugh and cry and sing.
Let your stories teach the children.
Let them believe words are like magic.

WORDS  by Olivia Liu
Words can fill your mind, overflowing, sizzling, bubbling.
Words can run away and come back again, they will not be forced.
Words have the power to swim onto your paper, and take their place between the bright blue lines.
Words spill themselves everywhere, shattering like broken glass.
Nobody can tell words what to do, They will do what they please.
Your paper is a playground to the words.

POETRY  by Coco McNeil
Let your eyes take in everything around you then package it, and send it off to the paper.
Let your imagination pounce on its inspiration like a lion hunting.
Let your words spill onto the paper, fresh, new, original.
Let your pencil twist, turn, spring, morph into a plane to take you where you want to go.
Let your mind run free, open to new ideas, and jump and leap through a forest of dreams.

From Libby’s 5th Grade Class

WHY DON’T YOU PAINT ME LIKE I AM?  by Sammy Lew
Paint me happy,
Playing in a playground,
Paint me laughing.
Paint me with short black hair and round brown eyes.
Paint me in a meadow with grass and flowers and bees,
Paint me daydreaming.
Paint me without my sadness.
Paint me without my madness.
Paint me with my happiness.
Paint my dream of a world of peace.
Paint my dream that all people will have shelter.
Most of all paint all people happy.

MY IMAGINATION  by Xhelan Sylve
Let my imagination come true in the real world and run free.
Let words in my mind happen when I say them out loud.
Let my mind do what it wants and be free.
Let me fly against northern skies like a hawk.
Let the seas of words run by my legs like salmon swimming through the river.

POETRY!  by Lucas Trent
Let your mind flash like lightning high up in the hazy night sky.
Let your words stick to the paper like a starfish stuck to rocks under water.
Let your pencil explode with ideas shooting out from the tip of the lead.
Let your ideas mix and churn around in your head then race through your mind, stopping at each brainlight.
Poetry will always be alive!

LET!  by Sam Obermeyer
Let your mind fly through the depths of imagination, fighting dragons there, floating in space here.
Let it all flow through you, onto paper with an explosion of creativity.
Let your poem transform, fly, bounce and lay down on your paper.
Let it dig deep into your mind and open doors into worlds of imagination.
Poems are alive with fun, dark shadows, happiness and pride, so, let them live out loud!

Enjoy these poems about the power of words and the colorful images they create, written by TOPS fifth graders with their WITS poet, Merna Ann Hecht. Next month will feature writers from Lori Eickelberg’s 7th grade classes.
TOPS Middle School Drama Presents

Rosa in New York AND Magic on Main Street

by Marianna White
by Rebecca Ehlers

Photos by Michael Drew and Paul Looveis
Written and performed by TOPS Middle School Students

Directed by M.J. Sieber

Friday, Dec. 11 and Saturday, Dec. 12, 2009
7:00 p.m., Todd Jamieson Stage
**Magic on Mainstreet:** A Play by Becca Ehlers

Review by Maria Perla, Grade 7

Magic on Mainstreet, written by Becca Ehlers, is a short but captivating play about how a Grandfather brings awareness to his grandson that magic happens every day even while sitting on a city bench. As acquaintances of Grandpa stroll by, he quietly tells his grandson, Bobby, how each of these people’s lives were changed by circumstances thrust upon them.

Henry Eliot, who performs Grandpa, is a confident actor with plenty of presence and was enchanting throughout this short play. His funny antics proved to be the highlight of the performance. The comical interactions between the actors created memorable moments which otherwise would have been overlooked. Bobby, played by Brian Tamura, quietly showed how a young boy could believe in magic again. Kate (Lucy Corbit), Joan (Morgan Galloway), and Meredith (Nora Germani) were clever supporting characters who added much needed flair to Mainstreet.

The simple set of a brick wall and a park bench didn’t take away from the significant theme drawn from this play. Miracles happen every day if you only take the time to hear or see them. Even though the play ended too quickly, TOPS students brought wishful magic to the stage. I can only hope to see what Becca Ehlers enlightens us with next!

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**Rosa in New York:** A Play by Marianna White

Review by Connor Cech, Grade 8

Rosa in New York is a short play written and performed by my fellow classmates. It is about a lonely 14 year old girl, Rosa (Marianna White), no older than me, who is struggling with life in general. Her mother is dying in a coma and her father is moving on without her. Rejecting the thought of Dad (Kwame Salami-Adubofour) with new women, young Rosa has grown fond of the only thing she has left: singing. Although Mom (Sophie Segel) is in a coma, she knows this and uses her last bit of life “magic” to get her talented daughter to New York City, where she can get a gig and start strong in a musical career. More importantly, the trip is an amazing life lesson in self reliance and self growth. Rosa weaves in and out of trouble, dodging everything thrown at her, no matter how weird and different it may be.

One of my favorite scenes in the play is when Rosa is swarmed by a strange group of kids stuck in an eerie lifeless trance. When they try to snatch her up, one of them (Ryan Flood) bursts into reality, grabs Rosa, and runs her to safety. I like this scene because it means more than a kind deed. On a more abstract level it symbolizes friendship and sanity in a huge, scary unknown world. That little act of kindness gives Rosa that last bit of hope and reason, the last push on the road to belonging. I think everyone needs that comforting push in life. It would make the world a more successful, joyful place and it’s the easiest thing to do: just be kind.

Overall I thought the play turned out very well. It dealt with everyday stuff in such a way where most, if not all of us, could relate. It had many morals but the two that out shined them all were that the messages of determination lead to success, and that there is always hope. Even in the direst of situations, just remain positive. I think those are important things to take away from this performance and to use in life, as guidelines. With determination and positive thinking, Rosa found belonging and success, and so can anyone else.

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**Big Climb: “TOPS to the Top”**

By Nina Binder, 5th Grade Teacher

Hello TOPS community,

Many of you remember that last year we had a fabulous team of TOPS students, teachers, and friends to climb the Columbia Tower. We raised over $12,000 for leukemia in Mikael Perla’s name! Well, we are at it again. This year we have registered again as “TOPS to the Top.” The climb is on Sunday, March 21. We encourage you to support our fight against leukemia by joining our team of climbers or by donating. Please register and donate online at www.bigclimb.org for our team, TOPS to the Top. Our discount code for the registration fee is TOPs (case sensitive.) We look forward to seeing you there!
If you haven't tried this TOPS tradition before, try it in February! 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! This ski adventure is open to all TOPS families, K through 8th grade.

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.

A block of (25) rooms at The Cedars Inn has been set aside for TOPS families at the rate of $71.00 + tax (per night) for a room with two (2) queen beds (discounted off of their published rates of $89.95 per night). 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, cereal, an indoor pool, and an outdoor hot tub. Reservations are available toll free: 800-358-2074 or via 509-886-8000. Just be sure to mention that you are with the TOPS Ski Group. The deadline for reservations is February 10th, 2010. This is a first come/first serve reservation for this block of rooms. The group rate will be held through this date, as will the allocation of rooms available for the TOPS Ski Group. After this date, if all of the rooms have not been reserved, they will be released to the general public, and this rate will no longer be available. The rate will move to $89.95 per night. The reserved block of rooms, and this rate for the TOPS Ski Group, covers (2) adults and (2) children for each room. Each additional adult beyond this number will be an extra $10 per night.

Traditionally we have the family potluck event on Friday night (6:00 p.m.) or Saturday night in a banquet room at the Cedars Inn. Plan to bring a dish for 6 – 8 people and a beverage to share. There is a small $50 fee that is required to reserve this room through 10 p.m. All families will share in helping to cover this fee (cash collected on site).

There are several ways to keep the cost down:

- 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 past years, gas stations have offered a 2 for 1 coupon that was 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 over 20 years!

Auction continued from page 1

- Here are some open committee positions – ask a friend to join you and make it a team effort:
  - Topics for Grownups
  - Dessert Dash
  - Silent Auction Team
  - Sponsorships
  - Team Food

Keep an eye out for your auction packet in the next few weeks. In the meantime, you can check out last year’s auction site at http://www.topsk8.org/helping/auction/ for a preview of the fun to come or contact members of the Auction Committee:

Co-Chairs
Pam Copeland............jimpamandsophia@comcast.net ..264-1850
Jamie Flaxman............jamie.flaxman@gmail.com.........286-1295

Volunteer Coordinator
Beth Eagen..................b_eagen@hotmail.com ........723-5149

Procurement
Pam Copeland............jimpamandsophia@comcast.net ..264-1850
Akiko Yabuki.............akikoyab@aol.com ....................547-9935

Silent Auction
Ellen Levi ..................elevi@comcast.net ...................282-5596
Romany Surla..........rsurla@metalmetrics.com

Live Auction & Class Project
Cam Sata..................clsata@hotmail.com ...............525-0938
Barb Lui ..................bflui@aol.com ........725-3204

Class Basket
Jamie Flaxman............jamie.flaxman@gmail.com .........286-1295
Jen Wise-MacColl ......jenwmac@comcast.com
TOPS SnowSports!!

By Molly LaPatra

The snow has fallen and we are off to a great season for the TOPS Middle School Ski and Snowboard Program. On the afternoons of January 8, 15, 22, February 5, and the morning of January 29, the ski bus departs from TOPS and heads to Snoqualmie Pass, where middle schoolers from around the city meet to ski, snowboard, take lessons and play in the snow. The hour short bus ride certainly adds to the fun and hanging out in the lodge eating and getting warm is a rite of passage a middle schooler doesn’t want to miss!

After a kick-off meeting in early November, families sign-up online for lessons, rental equipment, and season passes which are all offered at a special group rate. Skiing and snowboard lessons taught by The Summit are with other TOPS students only and are grouped by ability. Parent chaperones ride with each grade on the buses and remain available on the mountain and in the lodge to help with gear, cold fingers, food, and lessons. Several parent drivers provide transportation in case of an emergency. Thanks to the generosity of the participating families, scholarships are available to those in need.

The program is parent organized and funded and allows for access to winter sports for many students. As with any successful undertaking, there are many willing parents that help to make our program work. Each class has two parent coordinators who are critical to the running of our program. They collect forms and checks via the office, create their class roster and then line up chaperones and do a bus seating chart each week. Joe Germani and Michael Drew in 6th grade, Juan Perla and Mark Brannon in 7th grade and Frank Cech and Sheila Gilligan in 8th grade all deserve a shout out! Each Friday morning Jim McDonald and Melissa Leonard, helped by a few willing and able 8th grade students, oversee the loading of all the equipment into the three rooms off the lunchroom. Maggie McDonald for years has been faithfully depositing the checks we collect. Ron White blocks out and negotiates our room rate for the All School Ski Trip at Mission Ridge in February (see article with trip details in this issue). Patty and Colette and everyone in the office help funnel forms and checks to the right places. Don Zemke is our staff liaison, wardrobe malfunction safety net, official video documenter and photographer and the most beloved person on the mountain! Please let him know how much you appreciate him when you see him!! A huge thank you to each of them for their generosity of time and spirit.

I have been coordinating the program for six years. My youngest daughter will graduate next year and I, alas, will move on. I’m looking to mentor a new coordinator my last year. I would also like to mentor a parent for the scholarship coordination. Several people sharing these jobs would be ideal. If you are willing to take on either, please contact me. A parent with longevity (i.e. more than one child or an incoming 6th grade parent) is preferred as there is a learning curve to putting the program together but I’ll be thrilled to work with anyone!

An overview of the TOPS Middle School SnowSports Program can be found on the TOPS website under ‘After School’ thanks to our Webmaster Michael Drew. Three cheers to parents, teachers, administrators, and students for all working together to create a wonderful experience for our middle school students.
Ski Bus!
By Helen and Clare Maclay, Grade 6

Everyone in class is bouncing in their seats, waiting until 2:30. At lunch all we can talk about is the Ski Bus. Now it’s 2:30, so we race back down to the lunchroom to get our stuff. We get on the bus, FINALLY. I’ve been waiting since first grade for this day to arrive. Now I am on my skis, floating down the hill. I am SKIING! - Clare Maclay

The excitement is building up for me as the end of the day comes closer. I board the bus. Everyone is shouting and talking, eager to get to the mountain. We finally get there. I am nearly jumping up and down. Walking up to the Summit gives me time to cool down and get ready to ski. Afterwards I am really tired, but still, I CAN’T WAIT until next week when we get to do it all over again. - Helen Maclay

Photos by Don Zenke
This year’s girls basketball team is the best team that I have played for so far. We are having fun and it’s my last year playing for TOPS. My first year playing basketball wasn’t the best but I still had fun. The year I first started playing I didn’t get a lot of playing time because I was a beginner and didn’t know the fundamentals, so the older girls got more playing time. After watching the older girls play for a long period of time and practicing with them I developed more skills and started to get in shape. This year my other team finished the season off with ten wins and one loss!

After my first year playing when all of the good eighth graders were gone I got more playing time, but that season was the most embarrassing season of basketball because we didn’t do well. Last season was better since I got to start and my other friends played a lot also. I learned a lot from my second year of playing: to work hard and not to just play to win the game but also have fun.

This year’s basketball season is going great for the girls. So far we are undefeated. If we want to keep our record we’re going to have to push harder and harder each week. This season my point average has improved from last year and I think that I have improved my game a lot. I also practice hard each time we have practice. I hope we can keep our record of being undefeated; if we don’t I’m still proud of the progress that we have made out of this basketball season. I also hope we can make it to the playoffs and win the championship; we will if we work hard enough and put our minds to it.

Photos by Don Zemke
The 2010 boys basketball team has really been strong this season, beating teams by more than 20 points a game. Some say that we are now the powerhouse of the league starting off with a 4-0 record. The team is strong and we should go all the way with the leaders of the starting five and heart from the rest of this team. Thank you to coaches Quan, Eric, and Kent. As long as we play together and play defense we can win every game.
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