BRING IT ON HOME – TOPS AUCTION IS FOR THE KIDS

By Jamie Flaxman

The annual TOPS auction is just a month away – Saturday, May 1 – and it’s time for every TOPS family to step up and do their share. Remember, while the party is a blast for the parents, the event and hard work is to raise money to benefit all of our children.

Every dollar raised at the auction, just like through the No-Bake, supports those services that the school district budget doesn't cover:

- tutoring
- art teachers and art supplies
- music
- drama
- science equipment
- computers
- library books
- Taste of TOPS
- Planting the Seeds
- and so much more

We ask TOPS families to help in many ways:

1. **Procure or donate new, unused auction items with a total value of at least $150.** Each item should have a minimum value of $50. Be creative, what would you want to buy? See the kickoff packet that was mailed to you in early February for ideas. You can check out what has been donated already or donate online at http://tops.maestrossoft.com Additional forms are available in the TOPS office. Please submit your donations by April 5.

2. **Attend the auction.** You should have received your invitation in late March, but if you didn’t, you can download an invitation and response card at http://www.topsk8.org/helping/auction/index.shtml or pick up an extra in the TOPS office. RSVP by April 9 for the discount rate of $35/person; after April 9 the rate goes up to $40.

3. **Bring friends and family to the event.** Grandparents, godparents, uncles, aunts, neighbors, and friends, they love to support your children. The more the merrier, we’d love to have them attend.

4. **Buy raffle tickets.** This year we’ve got two raffle items, a Kindle, the hottest electronic gadget on the market (the e-book reader put out by Amazon.com) and another iTouch. We’ll be

Continued on page 4

Painting and photo by local artist Ethan Jack Harrington

As long as you keep a person down, some part of you has to be down there to hold the person down, so it means you cannot soar as you otherwise might.

~ Marion Anderson

TOPS at Seward
2500 Franklin Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98102
Phone: (206) 252-3510
Fax: (206) 252-3511
Principal: Jo Lute-Ervin
Assistant Principal: Jeanne Kuban
Site Council Chair: Susan Welch

**NEWSLETTER ONLINE**
The TOPS newsletters are available online in PDF format before the printed copy arrives in your mailbox! From the TOPS home page, http://www.topsk8.org, click on Latest Newsletter in the Quick Links section.

**MAY TOPSNEWS DEADLINE**
Friday, April 9 • Submissions to topsnewsletter@gmail.com
About the Outrageous Publishing Service


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 May issue is April 9. Would you like to edit or otherwise help with our newsletter? Newcomers welcome.

Please contact Ann, Dori, or Doriane at topsnewsletter@gmail.com.

THE CURRENT WORK OF SITE COUNCIL
By Susan Welch, Site Council Co-Chair

TOPS Site Council first saw the light of day in the mid 1990’s – part of a nationwide wave of support for the concept of site-based governance of public schools. This model was particularly comfortable for the TOPS community since parents, teachers, administrators, and the surrounding communities had worked together since the 1970’s to: 1) initiate the TOPS program at Stevens, 2) make the move to Seward, and 3) grow the program into one of Seattle’s most successful Alternative K-8 Schools.

Now, as I re-read the two articles on TOPS’ evolution that Wayne Duncan submitted in recent newsletters, it occurs to me that the essence of TOPS may be this underlying concept of a ‘community school’ – both in shared governance and in terms of the social justice values that we try to impart to our kids through a variety of programs, events, and learning opportunities.

From my perspective, it is Site Council’s primary task to sustain and invigorate that essence.

Currently, Site Council is re-examining the nuts and bolts of our Shared Governance Model. The timing for such reflection is good – both as a means to establish a strong, forward-thinking working relationship with our new principal, Jo Lute-Ervin, and as a means to strengthen our position as an Alternative School within the District.

In late February, Site Council put aside its regular format and dedicated the entire meeting to defining Shared Governance. We worked with a facilitator (provided by the District) who helped us create a matrix to examine how we approach various decisions within our community.

‘Who has input?’ ‘When is information v. input enough?’ ‘Who has the final decision in each case?’ ‘What are the processes we have in place or need to create to make it functional?’ We plan to dedicate half of our next meeting on April 14 to revisit the drafted matrix, build consensus, and agree upon process. As always, everyone is invited to Site Council meetings.

In mid February, Jo reached out to Site Council to help her organize a Principal’s Midyear Review. A seven question survey was posted online and nearly 100 people responded in the two days prior to the Review on March 4. Based on the survey results, we created a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ document, that Jo used as a guide when she addressed the parents in attendance.

Site Council will work with Jo and Jeanne to prepare a follow up memo which will summarize the responses and dialogue that night. Topics of greatest interest were peer to peer relations (and our associated programs such as CARE and Olweus), student assessment, and overall communication at TOPS. We will distribute that memo to all TOPS families.

While it was clear that we have many areas to improve upon as a school community, the gathering for the Midyear Review reinforced all that is positive and forward-looking about TOPS – the willingness to gather, listen, dialogue, and move forward together on improving our school.

In our effort to sustain and invigorate Alternative Education as an ongoing option for all families in Seattle, TOPS Site Council has taken on a leadership role in the Alternative Schools Coalition (ASC). This group’s membership includes many alternative schools (such as Salmon Bay, NOVA, Pathfinder, Thornton Creek, Orca) and considers SPS Board Policy for Alternative Education, C54.00 (http://www.seattleschools.org/area/policies/c/ C54.00.pdf) as its legal underpinning vis-a-vis the District.

ASC is committed to getting the School Board and District (and each other!) to be champions of alternative schools in Seattle, and to see alternative schools as a vital part of their “Excellence for All” success model.

In January, the ASC established a detailed strategic plan, an executive committee, and various working groups. We recently met with Dr. Susan Enfield (Chief Academic Officer) and launched the first ever Options Fair at John Stanford Center for the public to browse and visit with all of the participating Alternative Schools at one time. Please contact Susan Welch or Michelle Buetow if you would like to become involved with this Coalition.

The success of our mission to secure a future for Alternative Schools in Seattle will truly rely on the collective efforts of many people, with many skills. We particularly need people with public relations, marketing, data collection and assessment, and baking skills (every meeting needs cookies!).

Site Council is also working diligently on a few other matters, such as: Continued next page
Nominations for Site Council and ‘succession planning’ for other key volunteer positions: Many positions need ongoing succession plans such as Site Council Chair, Treasurer, Volunteer Coordinator, Coalition for Social Justice, Webmaster, No-Bake, and Auction, etc. Please take a moment to consider whether you can work in one of these areas with an eye on taking a leadership position in the future. Please contact Staci Delgardo or Dan Hurley if you’d like to work on Nominations and Succession Planning.

Communications: Site Council has established a Task Force to improve Communications protocol among the various stakeholder groups in our community. Please contact Alex Korahais or Justine Guarda if you’d like to work on improving our Communications Protocol.

PEAK and Kindergarten: We have established a Task Force to consider options for the sustainability of the much valued PEAK program for kindergarten. Due to the abrupt change to Pay For K last year, Friends of TOPS is funding the PEAK instructor for 2009/10. Given the limitations of our funding, it is unlikely that full funding is sustainable. Please contact Kelly Griffin if you’d like to take part in these discussions.

**Making Time for Music**

*By Johnny Calcagno*

All of us are well aware of how overscheduled our children’s lives have become, especially compared to when we were in school. Most TOPS kids have far more sports practices, games, homework, screen diversions, and other demands than their parents did at a comparable age. It’s overwhelming!

Even with so much going on, many parents see the benefits of making sure there is music in their children’s lives, and try hard to squeeze some kind of instrumental or vocal opportunity into the packed family calendar. The benefits are both experiential – music well sung and played is a joyful thing – and actual. Recent studies have once again shown the crucial link between participation in music education and enhanced performance in other subject areas, such as Math and English.

Unfortunately, even if the benefits seem clear, the obstacles are at times even more compelling. Beyond the schedule stress, the cost of private lessons and instrument rental is often outside the reach of many families.

But perhaps the biggest impediment to participation in music is how to motivate kids to add an activity that at times can seem like work and, at least at first, can sound pretty bad. Clearly, it is a lot easier to download the latest hip tune into your iPod and experience music passively. Doing so provides social currency, is fun, and quite honestly, better than no music at all.

How then to squeeze in time for learning and playing music? There seem to be two intriguing possibilities, one that adds a small amount of responsibility to parents, and one that requires a change in how we offer music in our school.

As parents, we have to become far more actively involved in our kids’ musical lives. Everyone knows that the key to musical improvement is practice, and kids won’t usually practice unless they are nagged. But many kids will practice once they are provided with a stable structure, non-distracting atmosphere, and if necessary, a reward system. For young players, even 10-15 minutes a day is beneficial. Sit down with your child and help them! If you are a musician, accompany them on your instrument; if you are not a musician, learn with them! Keep a chart of daily practice, and set up rewards for achieving practice goals.

Parents and kids should only have to shoulder part of the burden of music education. Our school and District need to step up. Scheduling at TOPS has always been difficult: with a high percentage of bussed children, before and after school programs can serve only a small number of children. In fact, that problem is going to be far worse next year because of the earlier start time.

If before and after school practices are problematic, parents need to request (demand?) that a few common weekly blocks of time for multi-age music groups get established. At the moment there are few of these blocks, so the only school day music that occurs is within a grade level. For Choir, Band, and Orchestra to have enough members, there needs to be a time when 5th graders can rehearse with 6th, 7th and 8th graders. At the moment that time is simply not available.

Scheduling decisions for next year are being made now, so if you care about music, contact a staff member! If you have questions or need more information, contact Johnny Calcagno at johnny@stickerville.org.
You’ve probably noticed the new faces in the TOPS office this year. In the fall we welcomed Tammie Boodell and Elizabeth Ward. Hopefully you’ve already met both of them and have welcomed them to TOPS. Tammie handles attendance, incident reports, and monitors the lunchtime recess. She’s in the office Monday through Friday, 8:30 – 2:30. Elizabeth is an office assistant and fiscal clerk. She works with the budget and orders supplies, and also monitors lunchtime recess. She works Monday through Friday, 8:00 – 1:00.

Tammie grew up in Portland and has lived in Seattle just three years now. In Portland she worked in the office of an alternative high school which had a vocational program for kids aged 16 to 21. She has two grown children, and two step-children who attend Schmitz Park Elementary. Her 21 year old daughter trains horses in Puyallup.

Tammie is happy to be at TOPS; she enjoys the families and the kids, and especially likes spending time with the kids at recess. When she’s not working she enjoys walking, working in her yard, and playing with her kids and her dog.

Elizabeth worked at McClure Middle School before she came to TOPS, doing the same sorts of things she now does at TOPS. Before that she worked in human resources. She is a WA native and has lived in Seattle her whole life. Elizabeth spends a good amount of time caring for three children when she’s not working at TOPS. You might want to check out her shoes the next time you see her, because she really enjoys shoe shopping!

Tammie and Elizabeth both said they enjoy the people they work with in the office, which I believed based on the amount of laughter I heard! Introduce yourself to Tammie and Elizabeth the next time you’re in the office.

Auction continued from page 1

selling raffle tickets around school for the Kindle and iTouch so keep your eyes out. And of course, night of, we’ll have the Golden Raffle, where the winner gets their choice of live auction items.

5. Underwrite the event or buy catalog advertising. Putting on a big party isn’t cheap, even though the auction team does a great job of keeping expenses down. Help out by underwriting expenses, buying advertising in the catalog, or donating so that a teacher can attend at no cost.

6. Volunteer. Volunteer for the day of the event. Help with registration, banking, silent auction, catering, set-up, clean-up, and much more. We can’t do it without you.

Watch for the Go-Home and emails from your room reps for regular updates on the auction. But really want to be in the know? The auction has a Facebook page for updates on hot auction items and exciting happenings. Become a friend on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/pages/TOPS-K-8-Auction/248992184915?ref=ts.

For More Information:

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 .......... akiyab@aol.com ............... 547-9935

SILENT AUCTION
Ellen Levi .......... elevi@comcast.net ............... 282-5596
Romany Surla .......... rsurla@metalmetrics.com

LIVE AUCTION
Cam Sata ........... cisata@hotmail.com ............... 525-0938
Barb Lui .......... bjlu@aol.com ............ 725-3204

SPONSORS
Pam Copeland ..........jimpamandsophia@comcast.net .......... 264-1850

CATALOG ADS
Robin Freedman .......... freedman@hotmail.com ............... 322-6664

REGISTRATION
Tim Forslund .......... tmjf@prodigy.net ............... 706-1690
Uncertain Times Change Perceptions
By Lori Eickelberg, 8th grade teacher

For the second year in a row, TOPS eighth grade students walked, rode buses, slept in churches, served food, sorted clothes, and stood in the rain as part of Planting the Seeds. The project allowed students to “walk in someone else’s shoes” for just a little while. We experienced the uncertain, not knowing where we were going, what we would eat, or where we would sleep, and we are changed.

Six to eight students formed each of the eight groups which were led by Marianne Clarke, Libby Sinclair, Leslie Nilan, Lori Eickelberg, Don Zemke, Mark Ellis, Mike Adams, and James Burger. Each group did service at four or five agencies that serve the homeless and the urban poor. A typical day included breakfast, walk or bus to the agency, and service at an agency or two. At agencies we scrubbed mats, made sack lunches, baked cookies, sliced tomatoes for salads, played games with homeless guests, sorted clothes, stacked and sorted food at food banks, talked to clients, and made paper chains that celebrated the 29,000 clients who had used the facilities at the Urban Rest Stop. At the end of the day, groups walked or were driven to their sleeping venue. Before they settled down for a night’s sleep, each group reflected on their day and wrote about the experience in their journals.

On Friday after our return to TOPS, we spent the day debriefing and reflecting on the experience. The student comments on that Friday were patently different from the comments that these same students made prior to the experience.

In early December, the eighth graders were introduced to the Planting the Seeds project. One activity that they responded to was this: When you hear the word homeless, what is one word that comes to mind? Students responded with the following: filth, unlucky, drugs, hopeless, smell of urine, sad, too lazy to get a job. During the debriefing on the Friday after the experience, students were asked the same question. They responded with the following: determined, hopeful, normal, courageous, hungry, mistreated, human being. The experience changed their perception of the homeless and the urban poor.

One student wrote in her reflection essay: “When I came home from the Planting the Seeds trip, I came home a changed young adult. I learned that homeless people aren’t just a lazy breed of humans who don’t have a home and can’t get a job because they don’t feel like it. …What I want to do “with my one wild and precious life” is become a doctor when I grow up. When I become a doctor, I will open a clinic for homeless people to come to on Sundays to get free medicine. My goal in life is to help all of the homeless people that I can.” Students were touched by the people that they met, and they are changed.

This project would not be possible without the help and support of the TOPS community. Friends of TOPS generously funded this project, and fifty-nine parents from the K-8 community gave their time and expertise to the project [see thank you letter for a listing]. Mrs. Lute-Ervin gave her support and provided the substitute time for the teachers who lead the groups. She also visited sites and worked with students at the agencies. Fourteen staff and faculty gave time and support to the project. Finally, Elizabeth Dickinson, once again, put in countless hours to make sure the project proceeded seamlessly. She worked at least two twenty-four hour shifts to ensure that the experience was the best for the students. We are so grateful for all the help and support.

On behalf of the TOPS Eighth Grade Class of 2010, thank you all. You are AWESOME!

Planting The Seeds
by Gabriel Barrett-Jackson, Grade 8

From February 9 through 11, we were out in Seattle seeing the world through different eyes. In this case the eyes were that of homeless people who, for unfortunate events, are not as lucky as the rest of us and do not have a roof over their heads that they can call home.

The Planting the Seeds experience has illustrated to me many things about being homeless. For example, something as simple as one missed paycheck can put you on the street for the rest of your life. Another example is that many homeless children on the street choose to put themselves there. The reason that they choose to be on the street is because they were abused verbally or physically. It is safer for them to live on the street than live at their own homes. Unfortunately, our government does not strive to help many of these people. The most important thing that I have learned is that homeless people are just like me. They may be dirty and smell
like their clothes haven’t been washed but it doesn’t mean that they are any different. They are just less fortunate than the rest of us. The goals that I have set for myself is to not judge someone just because they are different but aim to find what kind of person they are on the inside.

Before going on this trip I had a wide array of adjectives that could explain a homeless person such as “dirty,” “cardboard,” “bearded,” and “grumpy.” Now my description is totally different, and as my words have changed so has my outlook on the homeless in the world. I will not have “dirty” come up while walking past a homeless person, but maybe an “unfortunate human being.” Planting the Seeds made me more empathetic towards homelessness. I have more of an understanding and seeing it close up makes it more realistic.

My thinking about homeless people changed when my group was in a shelter for women and children called Mary’s Place. We had been there for about twenty minutes and we were sitting in a circle with the women. We had asked for any volunteers to share their life stories and one woman did volunteer. She said that she was formerly a crack cocaine addict for about two years. She ended up on the street. She put herself into an institution that helped her get clean and sober. After she was released, she went back to smoking crack. She then went into a system that helped her, but she did not live there. She is now totally clean and sober, and the morning that we were there she had finished her twelve steps. She said that when she was younger she played volleyball and was a cheerleader. When she said she was into sports and cheerleading, my thinking changed because there are many women who went to high school and played sports and turned out fine, but this woman was unlucky and chose to do something bad and turned out homeless. This could have happened to anyone. She made her homeless life more real to me.

Another feeling I felt during this project was depression. Before I experienced this project, I thought that homeless people were just a bunch of stupid people who slacked off in school, and who are now just too lazy to get a job. Boy, was I wrong. There are people who are like my stereotype, but in most cases, their parents were not supportive of them and did not care for them. These experiences affected them and their future. This is just one of many reasons why there are homeless people on the streets today. Too callow to know these facts, when I saw all the homeless people during Planting the Seeds, I was hit hard by what I did not know. It hit me the hardest on our last day when we went to a shelter where they serve homeless people. We were lucky enough to serve them. What I saw made my heart drop. I saw drug addicts, young women who were sexually abused, mentally challenged people, and just exhausted people who had a hard day. Seeing all these people made me realize what a loser I was. Here I am complaining about all the homework I get when there are people out on the streets who are jobless, with tens of job applications, complaining about how these minimum wage jobs aren’t hiring them because of their past. I felt as if I should just suck it up and try to help these people by doing my best so that I can become a successful person who can help other people.

I didn’t feel one hint of humiliation during this whole trip. When my group and I were walking the streets, I know people were looking at us thinking why are these smelly kids not in school? I’m a very self conscious person, but during this project I felt totally confident. I think it is because I was doing a good deed. I

Continued next page
felt more proud than embarrassed. I was proud every day. When someone said “thank you” to me, I felt very joyful and proud. To know that I helped an unfortunate person made me so proud.

I felt the proudest when I ate my lunch with the homeless people in the shelter after I served them. There were no adults; it was just me and my partner. We had to go into this crowd and just sit down like it was the TOPS cafeteria. As I walked down the aisle with Fasil, looking for a seat, my heart was beating twice as fast and my armpits were sweating like crazy. I’m pretty sure Fasil felt the same as me. I decided to sit with this big dude who was friendly to me. I asked if I could sit with him; he answered sure. I was too scared to talk to anyone but Fasil, but we got a small conversation going with him. After a while, we went to go sit with Habeeb and Oscar, who were too scared to sit with anyone. We met a few people who were very friendly, and who talked to us as if they were our friends. After we left that place, I felt like that no one was more courageous than I was.

Planting the Seeds is definitely my favorite thing about TOPS. When I told my friends about Planting the Seeds, at first they sounded surprised, and then they went on to say that I was lying. I responded that I was for real, and then I told them some of the things I did. Seeing the look of admiration on the faces of my friends is a thing I can look at every day.

I want everyone to go on Planting the Seeds and experience the things that I experienced so that they will have knowledge about homeless people. I want them to feel like helping them instead of wanting to despise them. Whenever I see someone insult a homeless person, I get really mad. My mom was very surprised when I yelled at her for calling a homeless person lazy. I explained to her what homeless people went through, and after I finished, she looked as if she could not believe what kind of a person I became after this trip. My goal in life is to help all of the homeless people that I can.

After this trip, the goals I have set up for myself for now are to volunteer anywhere that I can. The day I turn sixteen, a bunch of my sixteen year old friends and I are going to volunteer at Childhaven to help with the babies and other young children. Another place where I might volunteer is at the University Food Bank. While I was at the University Food Bank with my group, Oscar and I helped bag food for the people in line. After about thirty people had been helped, a homeless woman came up to me for me to bag her food. After I had put the food in the bag, she gave me a big warm smile, which indicated that she was grateful that I had helped her. Before that time, I used to think homeless people were mean and no good, but from that moment on, I thought differently about homeless people.

I had many experiences while I was participating in Planting the Seeds. My most memorable experience of this trip was going to Childhaven and seeing the babies. One of the babies loved me so much, that when the lady who was going to take the baby home told me to give the baby to her, the baby hung onto my neck. I thought that it was so sweet that an innocent baby trusted me so much after knowing me for so little time. I will definitely remember that experience for the rest of my life.

This trip has taught me so many things. It has taught me to open my heart to people I wouldn't normally talk to and to give a nice smile to a homeless person instead of a rude glare. It has also taught me to be thoughtful about what I can do to help them. I now know that there are many things that I can do to help. This trip really did plant seeds of compassion and understanding in my heart; I’m really glad I went.

---

*Planting the Seeds*

*By Karly Oberg, Grade 8*

When I came home from the Planting the Seeds trip, I came home a changed young adult. I learned that homeless people aren't just a lazy breed of humans who don't have a home and can't get a job because they don't feel like it. They may not have jobs perhaps due to a mental disability or to substance abuse. However, the biggest reason they can't get a job is because you have to have an address and phone number to get a job. They do not have an address. There are many reasons why someone becomes homeless. Maybe they are homeless because of foreclosure, or maybe their house burned down in the middle of the night. We really don't know. All we know is that they are homeless and need help with the situation in which they find themselves.
Many Thanks!!

A heartfelt thank you to all in the TOPS community who nurtured Planting the Seeds and brought it to life this year!!

Fourteen staff, thirty-six 8th grade parents, ten 7th grade parents, nine 6th grade parents, one 4th grade parent, one 2nd/K parent, two friends, and at least thirteen non-8th grade students:

- planned, made, and delivered 300 meals to students and staff
- spent the night with student groups, offering some respite, support, and caffeine to our amazing staff leaders
- planned meals and purchased food for students to make at agencies serving those who are homeless or formerly homeless
- transported sleeping bags and student groups
- baked sweet treats to share with our homeless neighbors
- joined student groups in sorting clothes, making meals, preparing sack lunches
- decorated shoebox “school supplies boxes” to take to First Place School

and much more!

And thanks to all of you who brought in kitchenware to share with folks just settling into homes sponsored by the Plymouth Housing Group!

**Staff:**
- Michael Adams
- James Burger
- Marianne Clarke
- Lori Eickelberg
- Mark Ellis
- Eric Herndon
- Collette Hubbard
- Jo Lute-Ervin
- Annie Meyer
- Jennifer Murray
- Leslie Nilan
- Tom O’Connor
- Luzita Roll
- Libby Sinclair
- Don Zemke

**Parents & Friends:**
- Andrea Akita
- Gloria Albetta
- Julie Alexander
- Sharon Andrews
- Michael Aycock
- Annie Barrett
- Elissa Benson
- Marlies van Bergeijk
- Heidi Berrysmith
- Dana Blazevic
- Dori Cahn
- Johnny Calcagno
- Bonnie Cech
- Frank Cech
- Madalyn Corbit
- Bruce Curry
- Melinda Deane
- Staci Delgado
- Elizabeth Dickinson
- Wayne Duncan
- Catherine Duva/
  Leo Shannon
- Frank Fabens
- Greg Flood
- Sheila Gilligan
- Lynne Goodrich
- Nancy Hom
- Donna Jorgensen
- Gerald Kennedy
- Linda Korbus
- Molly LaPatra
- Melissa Leonard
- Ellen Levi
- Susie McDonald
- Claire/Helen/Cory Maclay
- Naoko Magasis
- Peggy Maraghe
- Mollie Martin
- Bob Morrison
- Janet Morrison
- Ti Nguyen
- Jim Niemer
- Randi Niemer
- Suzanne Oelke
- Christine O’Leary
- Tom Parrish
- Roxanne Robinson
- Tanya Salmi
- Kathy Schmid
- Betsy Scott
- Bruce Scott
- Lis Soldano
- Karen Stuhldreher
- John/Wendy Trieger
- Susan Welch
- Cecilia Whisman
- Jim Whisman
- Ron White
- Suzanne Wolf
- Seraina

Photo by Don Zemke
Don’t miss our annual school wide presentation of original art created by TOPS students with the help of art teachers Cynthia Livak and Luzita Roll.

Volunteers Needed to help put this amazing show together. Contact Nancy Hom at skallywag@comcast.net if you would like to help.

### 2009 - 2010 TOPS Calendar

**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 2 p.m.
- 15 (Th) Poetry Festival 2 p.m.
- 16 (F) Grade 3, S.E. to SCT
- 16 (F) End of third quarter
- 20 (T) CSJ meeting, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
- 23 (F) Middle school dance, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**May**
- 1 (S) TOPICS Auction, 5 p.m.
- 5 (W) DHH to SCT
- 6 (Th) 5th grade Science Fair 7 p.m.
- 7 (F) Grades K, 1st, and 5th, SE to SCT
- 7 (F) TOPS Talent Showcase, 7 p.m.
- 12 (W) Site Council meeting, 5 - 7 p.m.
- 14 (F) TOPICS, elementary school
- 14 (F) Elementary school play
- 15 (S) TOPICS, middle school
- 19 (W) Professional development block time; 2-hour early dismissal
- 26-28 (W-F) 5th grade Camp
- 31 (M) 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) 3rd grade 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
With a new coach, a new league, and a new season, Falcons volleyball has a completely new start. After eleven years at Whitman Middle School, Coach Diane Taniguchi is now the head coach at TOPS. She has a lot of experience with middle school volleyball. This is a great benefit to the team and I'm grateful to her. Volleyball requires such a tremendous amount of teamwork, and I think Coach T does a good job of making sure every player feel like a part of the team.

As a third year member, I've seen a lot of aspects of the team. I've watched the whole team improve together by the end of each season, and I've watched each eighth grader leave knowing so much more than they did. It's hard to believe this will be my last year playing Falcons volleyball. I can personally say that this has been one of my greatest experiences in my nine years at TOPS. Thanks to everyone who has made it possible.
The TOPS boys soccer team is a great way to learn how to play soccer. Not only do we have a great coach, but we have great players who can teach as well. In the first game of the season last Saturday, TOPS had their first win after not winning a game ALL last season. With sixteen players, and now winning our first game 5-1, we all have great hopes for our team this year!

A beautiful day was not the only thing that made this game perfect; the fact that Blaine middle school players were so confident that they were going to beat us made this a sweet victory! Our newest players were the highlight of the match. Our two eighth graders, Artan and Fasil, scored three goals all together. Toby, a returning TOPS player, scored another goal by chipping the ball over the keeper. Then another new player, John, who is in sixth grade, smashed the ball into the goal for our fifth and final goal.

We owe this win to all of them, good teamwork, and our coach Daniel Humes. During our practices, he keeps the team interested by adding interesting games, but still manages to help us all improve our soccer skills. He’s not overly stern, which makes him a joy to be around and to play for. Overall, if you want to learn soccer, he’s the guy to do it with. His skill will make you learn fast and he’ll also make it fun.

The TOPS soccer team is a very high-spirited team. The players are all friendly, and they all have a great team spirit. Since most of us know each other, or at least have seen each other around, there is a really good chemistry; but of course, any new players who we don’t already know would be more than welcome and easily accepted onto the team. We are always looking for new players; any skill level is welcome, so come on out and join us!
TOPS Shoe Drive for Haiti

By Carla Fetterley

Last February, after I heard the news of the earthquake in Haiti, I felt like I should do something to help. The question was what? Then I heard about Molly Hightower, a local Port Orchard girl who was working in an orphanage in Haiti and lost her life. She was the same age as my son, James, and I was heartbroken for her family. Soon after that, I heard her family was collecting shoes for the people in Haiti. All one had to do was collect shoes and bring them to Tacoma. Her father would ship the shoes to Haiti. This seemed like a way I could help.

I made a few posters with “TOPS SHOE DRIVE FOR HAITI”, labeled some boxes to put around the school, and encouraged people to clean out their closets. Sandy Shettler, Volunteer Coordinator, helped me get the word out to the TOPS families through e-mails and Go-Homes.

The TOPS community support was amazing! As soon as people heard about it, shoes came in. Some people brought in a pair. Others brought in a bag. I kept the shoes in my small classroom; after a week there were about 200 pairs, and I was thrilled. One family contacted their friends and family members, and one day, to my surprise, over 200 pairs of shoes were delivered to TOPS! I had piles of shoes everywhere.

The shoes needed to be sorted, cleaned, and tied together so they wouldn’t lose their mates. Thankfully several 5th grade students volunteered to help.

Each day there were more and more shoes. The TOPS community had done a truly wonderful job of supporting this cause. I realized that there was no way these shoes would fit in my car, so I called CSJ and asked for help to get the shoes delivered. Several parents volunteered to take them. It took two trips to get all of the shoes to Tacoma. The final count was 1,000 pairs of shoes. Thank you TOPS for helping the people of Haiti!

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.

CSJ Meeting:
Tuesday, April 20
6:30-8:30 p.m. in the library

We will discuss Planting the Seeds and Taste of TOPS, look towards next year for both activities, and make plans for the remainder of the school year.

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@scsd.ctc.edu for more information.
THANK YOU to No-Bake Donors as of March 12, 2010

V. Kraig Abrams
Michael & Linda Adams
Man Ai Huang
Gloria Albetta
Rabha Al-Harazi
Alfredo Alvord
Bonita Alvord
Kari Anderson & Jory Oppenheimer
Sheila & Kevin Anderson
Brad & Wilma Angell
Mickey & Bob Angell
Tasha & Shane Atchison
Annie Barrett & Ralph Fraggale
Eric & Lynn Bazarnic
Tom Beierle & Didi Barpee
Delilid Belay
Elissa Benson & Mark Bramman
Heidi & Craig Berry smith
Scott Bishop
Dana & Eric Blazevic
Lincoln & Edith Boyden
Louise Bush & Kermit Rosen
Sarah Busic
Johnny Calcagno & Karen Stuhldreher
Boyd & Susan Carter
Peter Carter & Sharon Andrews
Renee Ceriale
Doug Chapman & Karol King
John & Gail Chase
Ron Chew
Howard Choder & Robin Freedman
Missy Chow & Ty Graham
Ken & Tiffany Clark
Kierstin & James Clawson
John Clem
Brennan & Kari Connor
Pamela & James Copeland
Jeff Corvin
David & Susan Cotter
Conor Courtney
Melinda Deane-Wheetman
Elizabeth Dickinson & Joe Merrill
John Dickson
Wayne Duncan
Cheryl Dunkel
Catherine Duna
Ted & Allison Dworkin
Lester Eastlick & Sigurn Denny
Lorelei Eckelberg
Lisa Emlen & Robert Takahashi
Arthur & Charlene Emlen
Eric & Annette English
Eric Fairley & Bill Patz
John & Mona Fandel
Simon Farr
Lisa Fitzhugh & John Hoyt
Jamie Flaxman
Tim & Charlene Forslund
Adam Ganz & Cynthia Steiner
Maureen & Joe Germani
Connie & Bruce Gray
Kelly & Duncan Griffin
Paul & Karen Grien
Enzo & Janet Guarda
Justine Guarda & Fernando Vazquez
Angela Hamilton
Robert Hardy & Susan McDonald
Lynn & Mark Harnann
Dr. Paul Hasegawa & Pam Stokes
Shelly Haskamp
June Hayakawa-Fung & Larry Fung
Carroll Haymon
Leslie Hazelwood-Spurr & William Spurr
Mark & Kimberly Hobbs
Lee & Ted Howard
Dan Harley & Michelle Pennymilhon
Xiao-Yu L Jackson
Kira Jackson
Toby Jarman
Heather & Jason Jarvis
Howard Jensen
Kevin & Megan Johnson
Kris & Alex Johnston
Donna Jorgensen
Yuan Ju Li
Elizabeth Kavanaugh
Joanna Keeley
Karen Keeley
Michael J. Keeley Jr.
Gerrit Kischner & Nancy Bacon
Olga Klezvehich & Valeri Vasilevich
Alex Korahais & Kathleen Pape
Linda Korbis & Greg Flood
Merran & John Kubalak
Jean Kuban
Renee Kutch
Troy & Lise Langley
Molly D. LaPatra
Judith Leckrone Lee
Xing E Lei
Melissa & Bruce Leonard
Wilson Lew and Anita Mei
Hui Fang Liang & Sigi Huang
Rachel Ligtenberg & Leanne Corcoran
Michael & Kelly Lipman
Eric Liu
Katherine Logan
Sally & Jim Lord
Pamela Lewell
Jo Lute-Ervin
Sharon Lynch Grey & Aaron Grey
Bill & Cory Maclay
Henry Mah & Grace Palisoc
Daniel & Beth Malone
Eva & Jeff Masumoto
Heather Mathews & Matt Allen
Bill & Carol McDonald
Maggie McDonald
Susie McGee-Loovdnik
Chris & Andrea Miller
Qiu Ming Wu
Yo Min Li
Bob & Janet Morrison
Valerie A. Muller
Rahinha Namo
Chun Ng
Nam-Phuong Nguyen
Doriane Neeburgs & Michael Drew
Michael O’Brien
Karen & David Obermeyer
Davis Oldham & Julie Alexander
Chris O’Leary & Mike Courtney
Peter Olive
Yvonne & Barry Onouye
Dena Owens
Stephen Page & Nancy Cohen
Amy Paige & Tim Callahan
Sarah Parent
Cyndy & Essex Porter
David Quasha & Jennie Grove
Mark & Julie Rathbun
Kevin & Lisa Reynolds
Paul Robaidek
Margot Robb & James Carrot
Rad Roberts
David & Roxanne Robinson
Kalika Robinson
Barbara & Brian Rockey
Rachelle Rose
Mark F. Rossow & Eun Gyong Rossow
Tracy Rowland & Larry Reid
Martha Sandevel & Robert Kristjanson
Camille Sata
Kathy Schmid & Warren Clemans
Leah Schoonover & Cameron Curtis
Ginger Segel & Robert Kalbente
Patrick Sexton & Christopher Draymen
Xia Sheng Li
Cliff & Sandy Shettler
Richard Silverstein & Janis White
Ann & Peter Simonson
Harold & Carolyn Simonson
Jennifer Smith
Lisabeth Soldano & Kent Hamilton
Tele Solomon
Nancy & Alan Spragins
Edward & Barb St. Onge
Jay Stansell & Dori Cahn
Catherine Staunton & Jairam Lingappa
Peter Stevens
Helen Stussner
Laurie Stussner-McNeil & KC McNeil
Daniel Sullivan & John Stuntebeck
Romany Surla
Daniel & Miriam Swedlow
Jana Swett
Agnes Tangata
Zebene Techan & Abebeh Mulugeta
Tim Tran & Kiet To
Clifford & Kate Trent
Hannah Tully
Pam Van Dalfsen
Alison & Tom Walsh
Sara Waterman & Curtis Degasperi
Marcia Weaver & Michael Chapko
Susan Welch
Curtiss & Laurie Williams
Jennifer Wise Maccoll
Tracy Wrey
Julie Wroble & Richard R. Kolpa
Munehisa Yabuki
Chi Yeung Herbert Lee
Angela Ying & John Ruiland
Yang Ying
Can Zheng Zhao
The excitement was at a fever pitch on a cold rainy afternoon in late February as over one hundred 4th and 5th grade students, and their illustrious teachers, filed into the library to participate in the school Global Reading Challenge. This event is put on by the Seattle Public Library, through a generous gift from Target. It has been around for a number of years in the public schools, and was finally made available to TOPS due to openings brought on by several recent school closures. I had put TOPS on the waiting list many years ago, and was elated when Librarian Mary Palmer from SPL asked if we wanted to join for this year, part of the 350 teams from 45 area elementary schools.

The books arrived soon after I affirmed our interest; one set of 10 books for each of the four class teams was soon on our doorstep. It was open to everyone regardless of reading skill, and interested students soon started reading the fiction books, making sure at least two students read each title. As the weeks went on, the teams were whittled down to seven members each. The teams practiced giving each other trivia questions from the books.

So at last, there we sat at rapt attention in the library, listening as Mary told us the rules. There would be three rounds of ten questions. After each question was stated by Carol Edlefsen, SPL librarian, the teams would confer and have 30 seconds to write the answer and have it delivered by the alternate to the judges table. She would then give the correct answer, which elicited both cheers and moans from the teams and spectators. Each correct answer garnered 5 points for the team. I was the timer and I didn’t have any close calls as the teams speedily relayed their answers to Mary. After the dust had cleared it was the “Nina Lima Beanas” team that had the TOP point count. When the cheering concluded, all of the participants received a packet of goodies for their efforts.

Meanwhile the winners were not done. It was on to more practice to prepare for the trip downtown to SPL for the semi-final round, which has teams from eight other schools. Stay tuned for the next issue to find out how our students did.

There are many ways to get people to read books but this has to be one of the best motivators for the intermediate grade students. I even heard that another class was going to have their own class wide reading challenge. That’s powerful.

“Never read a book through merely because you have begun it.”

~ John Witherspoon
WITS News at TOPS

By Merna Ann Hecht, WITS writer at TOPS

In honor of National Poetry Month, which is observed nation-wide throughout April, the TOPS hallways and display cases will boast original poetry created by TOPS fifth through eighth grade students in collaboration with the WITS (Writers in the Schools) Program. Also for National Poetry Month, Nina Binder’s and Libby Sinclair’s fifth grade classes will hold an evening poetry reading, celebrating the poetry written by students in both classes.

Excitement is on the horizon for Marianne Clarke’s sixth grade classes. On May 4, acclaimed Newbery Award winner Karen Cushman will hold a National Podcast in the TOPS library as part of the book launch for her new book, Alchemy and Meggy Swann. Marianne’s 6th graders will have read the new book as well as another of hers, Matilda Bone. They will have studied Elizabethan times and written poems connected to themes in each of Cushman’s two books, and they will participate in the podcast!

Their study of Elizabethan (and Shakespeare’s) times has begun with creating Odes.

Enjoy these examples from TOPS poets!

A poem from the Freedom Quilt created by Libby Sinclair’s students:

I HAVE A HOPE
By Abbey Miller, Grade 5
I have a hope that someday no person will ever feel hunger again.
I have a hope that for once war will be silent.
I have a hope that everyone will have shelter and be warm and cozy.
I have a hope that every child will have a strong education and will have many chances in life.
I have a hope.

On the Power of Words:

THE POWER OF WORDS
By Zoe Lepard, Grade 5
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 cry and sing.
Let your stories teach the children.
Let them believe words are like magic.

A student from Lori Eickelberg’s 7th grade class writes of her love for New York:

New York
By Zaelin Johnson, Grade 7

The flashing lights, the rude people the tall buildings the pushing and shoving the subway, THE SHOPPING, the homeless the pasty floors in stores, shoes snow and trench coats high in Nordstrom expensive trashy underground apartments Most of all ME, running down to catch the subway in my 3 INCH HEELS! as I throw a few bucks to a homeless woman beating on cans, “Excuse me, excuse me” I yell trying to rush through the everyday herd of people on the sidewalk as my coat gets stuck on the reeking trash can, the lights flicker the train takes off “Wait, wait!” “Dang it I’m going to be late to work” I shout too, as the hopeless drugged out lady gives me a look and simply shakes her head You got to love New York

An Ode from 6th grade:

ODE TO STATUES
by Riley Calcagno, Grade 6

Standing still, watching just watching, days go by like a watchful mother or father who wants to keep an eye. Such mystery around them, who were they, what did they do, explained by a metal plaque that shines in sun and shines in the rain. Maybe the metal plaque is more than metal it is their memories.

The memories of a person standing standing watching us standing day and night, the same.
Annual TOPS Talent Showcase

Who: Interested TOPS students who wish to share their unique talents and skills in a performance setting.

What: Some examples of performances from the past are circus acts and acrobatics, individual and group musical performances, stand up comedy, magic tricks, dance...the possibilities are many.

Where & When: Please note the new date: **Friday, May 7, 2010** at 7p.m. in the TOPS gym.

Why: This is an opportunity to share your unique skills and abilities in front of a supportive and enthusiastic audience.

Questions? Call or email Chris O’Leary (caoleary1@gmail.com or 206-633-1075) or Johnny Calcagno (johnny@stickerville.org or 206-300-8225).

If you are interested in performing at the Talent Showcase, please complete and return the bottom portion of this form to the main office by **Friday, April 30**.

---

**Annual TOPS Talent Showcase Sign-Up Form**

Name(s) of performer(s):

________________________________________________________________________

Grade: __________ Teacher: __________________________________________________

What type of performance are you planning? (ex: singing, dance, etc) ________________

________________________________________________________________________

Specifically, what will you be performing? (ex: name of song, etc) ________________

________________________________________________________________________

What equipment will you be bringing to use in the performance? ______________________

________________________________________________________________________

What equipment do you need that you cannot bring? ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*Please plan your performance to fit the following lengths of times*

(individuals: 3 min., groups: 5 min.)

Student Signature(s)

________________________________________________________________________

Parent/guardian Signature

________________________________________________________________________
**It’s Show Time!**

**Elementary Play: May 14-15, 2010**

By Laurie Stusser-McNeil

TOPS toes are tapping and voices are soaring—must be rehearsal time for the elementary school play! This year’s production is sure to be a crowd pleaser. Directed by our own Music and Choir Director Sari Breznau, *Songs and Tales of Naughty Children* will blend poetry, song, and dance into a humorous and upbeat showcase for the budding talent at TOPS. Kindergarten through 5th grade gets into the action so you won’t want to miss it.

Want to help make the show even more of a success? Of course you do. Join the fun and volunteer for rehearsal support, ticket sales, concessions, costumes & make-up, set construction and more. We know we can find just the right job for you!

Save the date for a creative evening with the play and the all-school ArtFest and please email your friendly producer today to get involved:

Laurie Stusser-McNeil: ljstusser@comcast.net

---

**Kids Co. Summer Camp**

By Aaron Norikane, Director of TOPS Kids Co.

Come to our amazing Summer Camp! Kids Co. is open all summer long for fun-filled week after week. Kids participate in activities, go swimming, take field trips, ride bikes, and meet other kids for lasting friendships! Check out some of our weekly themes including: magic, construction, heroes, art-rageous, American Idol, Lions, Tigers and Bears, and much more… Kids Co. at TOPS has just earned national accreditation through the Council of Accreditation, indicating implementation of the highest quality standards nationwide for school-age programming. It’s truly a fun and amazing program, and we’re sure your child will have a blast!

To sign your child up for a few days or all summer long, please contact Aaron at Kids Co. at tops@kidscompany.org or visit our website at www.kidscompany.org.
Bring It On Home!

2010 TOPS Auction

May 1st, 5:00 p.m.,
Asian Resource Center
Save the date!

Painting and photo by local artist Ethan Jack Harrington

THANKS TO G & H PRINTING, 2370 EASTLAKE E. 329-9888

The Seattle School District is an Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action employer and employs individuals without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, age, sex, marital status, handicap/disability or sexual orientation. The Seattle School District provides Equal Education Opportunity without regard to race, creed color, nation origin, sex, mental status, handicap/disability or sexual orientation. The District complies with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to Titles VI, VII, and IX of the Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), RCW 49-90, Law Against Discrimination, and RCW 28A.640 “Sex Equality,” and covers, but is not limited to, all District programs, courses activities (including) extracurricular activities, service, access to facilities, etc. The Title IX officer and 504 coordinator with overall responsibility for monitoring and ensuring compliance is: Rick Takeuchi, Manager, Affirmative Action Office, W/MBE, 815 4th Ave. N., Seattle 98109. Phone (206)298-7175.

Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against in any of the District’s employment or educational activities can file an internal discrimination complaint with the District’s Affirmative Action Office.