

# TOPS NEWS

## PLAYGROUND INSTALLATION DELAYED

The playground equipment delivery date has been delayed, because the contractor's facility burned down. The new installation date has been set for October 24. Call *Craig Dawson*, 322-4414, for dates to help prepare the site for installation.

## SPANISH CLASSES TO START IN OCTOBER

Spanish classes will begin during the second week in October, thanks to our own World Languages Committee and Lupe Gwen Zankemseke, director of One World Language Program (formerly Bridge Across the World).

The twice-weekly 45-minute sessions will be offered at a cost of \$260 for 20 weeks of instruction. Scholarships are available. The schedule is as follows:

### Monday & Wednesday classes (begin Oct. 12):

8:10-8:55 a.m.: grades K-1, 4-5

3:30-4:15 p.m.: grades K-1

### Tuesday & Thursday classes (begin Oct. 13):

8:10-8:55 a.m.: grades 2-3, 6-8

3:30-4:15 p.m.: grades 2-3, 4-5

An additional Monday and Wednesday afternoon class (for grades 6-8, 4-5, or 2-3) may be scheduled if we receive enough applications.

Thanks to David, Julie, Dan, Jennifer, Katie, and Kathy for lending their rooms for this program. Fill out your registration form (in the Wednesday, Sept. 23, take-home packet) and return it to the office. Call *Lupe Gwen Zankemseke* at 975-7126 or *Sandra Welsh* at 285-6254.

## SITE COUNCIL ELECTS OFFICERS

The TOPS site council unanimously elected the following officers at its September meeting: Penny Bolton, chair; Heather Worthley, assistant chair; Dana Carey-Twight, treasurer; Cheryl Pappy, secretary. The term of each office is a year, and officers—along with the principal and a faculty member—serve as the site council executive committee. Job descriptions are in the

## GOOD-BYE, CHRIS, WE'LL MISS YOU!

Chris Nielsen has been charmed away by Karen Kodama to serve as secretary for Seattle's new International School. She will leave TOPS as soon as a replacement is found, probably by October 1. Chris has been a secretary with TOPS since 1990, and will be sorely missed. She told the newsletter, "Leaving TOPS was a very hard decision to make. Being here has been my most favorite job." She says that working with Karen should be fun and challenging, especially since "we'll probably be working out of the trunk of Karen's car for a while." Be sure to drop by the office by the end of September for your good-bye hug.



Chris Nelson on Halloween 1997.

OUTSIDE OF A DOG, A BOOK  
IS A MAN'S BEST FRIEND. INSIDE  
A DOG, IT'S TOO DARK TO READ.  
-GROUCHO MARX-

McDonald School  
144 NE 54th Street,  
Seattle, WA 98105

729-3360

[http://sea-  
css.ssd.k12.wa.us/TOPS/  
index.html](http://sea-css.ssd.k12.wa.us/TOPS/index.html)

**Principal:**  
Gary Tubbs

**Site Council Chair:**  
Penny Bolton



This is the second monthly newsletter of the 1998-99 school year, edited by Amy Hagopian and Jim Wells. Robyn Ricks does the layout and design. Bruce Pulmano maintains the mailing list and gets this to you. We welcome help with writing and soliciting news from contributors. We're always looking for kids' art, photographs, committee news, faculty news, classroom news, opinions, compliments, profiles, questions, education politics, calendar items, announcements, and wholesome gossip.

Articles for upcoming issues may be submitted to Amy at 4203 5th Ave. NW, 98107. Articles are preferred on computer disk, accompanied by a paper copy. Both IBM and Macintosh are accepted. Email submissions may be sent to Amy\_Hagopian@fammed.washington.edu. Or fax to 616-4990. Deadlines for the year's issues are at 3:30 on each of these dates: October 22, November 19, December 17, January 21, February 25, March 18, April 22, May 20, and June 10. Remember: a deadline missed is forever gone.

## COMMITTEE NEWS

**Communications Committee** (formerly parent steering committee) was responsible for stuffing all those packets that came home on opening day. Committee members worked on Labor Day to get it all done. Room representatives have now gathered the information needed for the TOPS telephone directory, which you should get in the mail in the next month. Every grade now is staffed with a room representative (see list elsewhere). Room reps will meet twice as a group this year. Call *Susan Spieker* at 543-8453 (w) or 324-7261 (h).

**Finance Committee** reports the site council starting balance for the year is \$104,885, up \$14,168 over last year's starting amount. The finance committee is a congenial, competent, cooperative group and membership is stable. The chair is *Dana Carey-Twight*, newly elected TOPS treasurer. The emphasis this year will be on soliciting matching grants from employers, contributing stock, and tapping non-parents. There is \$1,898 in the Karen Kodama fund for benches in the outside atrium reading area at the "new" Seward school. The site council has budgeted \$3,725 to distribute to teachers for supplies, and those payments will go out in early October. Call Dana at 325-5185.

**Facility Committee** chair *Debra Walker* has met with the Seward School architects and reports they say the construction is on time. They are working through cost issues, which are challenging. The gym floor and stage seem to have survived the budget juggling, but there will be no bleachers, curtains, or stage lighting. The construction team is reported to be working effectively together. The 1893 building had terrible structural deficits when it was opened, but it is now on track and the basement is in. All the demolition is done, so all the unknowns are now known. Debra reported the architects to say, "This is going to be a great building." The cafeteria views will be spectacular.

The Eastlake Community Council is raising \$100,000 to fund the plants and lamps in the Franklin Avenue landscaping project, and is submitting a Neighborhood Matching Fund grant proposal. Their contribution will also include benches, kiosks, a chess table, and corner stones. The district is paying for a handicapped ramp, the western-facing overlook, paving, and the lone basketball hoop. A proposed play structure in the hillside has been nixed because of "risk management." Call Debra at 329-0625.

*Phil Converse* (323-8123) will put together some work parties in the spring for parents. Field trips to the building may be organized. The project manager is Gabriel Hajjani, who can be reached at 634-2853.

**Fundraising Committee** reports that when the directory is complete, TOPS families should expect their annual "No Bake Sale" requests in the mail. This is your opportunity to support the school with NO HASSLE. See the budget in the September 1998 issue of this newsletter to see how the money is spent. Call *Craig Dawson* at 322-4414.

**Immediate Assistance** committee is sponsoring a clothing bank for TOPS kids—sweats are especially wanted. Call *Lynette Tate* at school or *Lisa Brown* at 324-0474.

**Middle School Committee** is busy planning numerous activities this year. In addition to working closely with the middle school grant facilitators, the committee is involved in carrying out the Middle School Student Recognition Program, Teen Speak\*, and High School Choices Night. Co-chaired by Melanie Pepin and Linda Secord, the Middle School Committee also includes: principal Gary Tubbs; assistant principal Jo Shapiro; middle school room representatives Lynne Oliphant, Kate Day, Keelin Curran, Maggie Lubov\*\*, Kim Dammann, Carolyn Law\*\*, Karen D'luhosh, Rhian Lombard; middle school site council representative Vivian Queija; all middle school staff; middle school grant facilitators Andrea Leary, Joni Marts, and Cheryl Pappy; and Gwen Demombynes, Belinda Butler-Bell, and other middle school parents.

\* Teen Speak, sponsored by Planned Parenthood, is funded this year by the Middle School Support Grant

\*\* Maggie Lubov and Carolyn Law are also middle school grant facilitators

**Middle School Drama Committee** will be coordinated by *Tony Pasqualini* (323-2533) and *Tracy Seefeld*, second grade teacher. Last year's play director, Shana Bestock, will be welcomed back again this year. Auditions begin October 12, and rehearsals begin October 19.

**PEAK** enrollment is about 95 percent for the start of the year, and program leaders are still hopeful we'll get to 100 percent after parents have seen the program working. Assuming everyone stays enrolled, we should be able to keep tuition at a relatively low \$100 a month. PEAK this year pays for *Joby Moore*, the half-day kindergarten teacher, in the afternoons. It also pays for all of *Kathy O'Laughlin's* time, and extras like snacks and special programming. Having Kathy makes it possible to break the kindergarten into three groups of 16 in the mornings for core learning time, which allows for a lot more individual interaction with the kids at a really critical time in their lives.

TOPS parents are very fortunate to have PEAK set up the way it has been over the years. Other, newer extended day programs around the district cost a LOT more and don't offer nearly as much.

## ASK GARY TUBBS:

*I noticed on the school calendar that there are a couple of days called "Waiver Day." What does this mean?*

There are five days that the State Board of Education has waived for Seattle Public Schools to allow staff to work together on site-based management issues as well as provide staff development opportunities. Two of these days were before the first day of school. The remaining three days are at strategic times during the school year: The first for developing the Academic Achievement Plan, the second for School-based Budget planning, and the third focused on staffing issues. (The latter two are advanced planning for the following school year.) Instead of 180 days of instruction, the state has approved 175 days again this year. This waiver must be applied for each year.

## BILINGUAL ORIENTATION CENTER REPORT

The TOPS Bilingual Orientation Center (BOC) is one of three in the Seattle school district. Students spend a semester or two at TOPS, then transfer to other schools when their English skills are stronger. The south end BOC is full, so TOPS may be picking up new students.

Currently, 40 BOC students are enrolled. Transportation is still a problem for some of students. For the first time, we have students from the north end. Some students this year have parents who are diplomats, consuls, exchange scholars, and university researchers—which is a new trend.

The program is more international than ever, with students from Taiwan, China, Bosnia, Chile, Indonesia, Philippines, Algeria, Jordan, Russia, Mexico, Central African Republic, Somalia, India, Vietnam, Japan, Afghanistan, and Bulgaria.



*Luzita Roll, art teacher*

## A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

As I work at my home-office desk this sunny second day of school, I can hear a child crying on the playground across the street. Is he missing mom and dad? Perhaps he's just feeling cranky. No matter; one of the many loving adults nearby will wipe his nose and help him find his way to class.

"Cranky" is an apt word to describe the mood in the surrounding neighborhood these days, too, and I wish the school district would help out by wiping a few noses. It's not that any neighbor I've met harbors ill will toward TOPS kids. Indeed, although I and others who work from home find the considerable noise of something like 600 staff and students often distracting, we also acknowledge it as a joyful noise: the sound of good citizens in the making.

Still, I'm feeling cranky about what went on here this summer and especially the school district's unwillingness to soften the impacts in reasonable ways. Driven to distraction by the still-ongoing construction that has filled our lives with constant noise and dust for three months, seven days a week, 15 hours a day and more, often outside of the hours allowed by law, neighbors are wondering just where the district gets off. Yes, kids and their education are important. Yes, neighbors don't want the building to tumble down around young ears anymore than parents do. Yes, the building must be accessible to the handicapped, because it's the law and because it's right. And yet, when the district threw up its hands ("We're unable to control our contractor" was the routine non-response to neighborhood reports of abuses), it failed in its duty to create an atmosphere of reciprocity in which TOPS could be cheerfully welcomed by the surrounding community.

Simple steps, such as setting up baffles and observing decibel limits after 5 p.m., might well have mitigated some of the noise pollution resulting from back-end loaders, front-end loaders, sky arms, bobcats, cement-mixing trucks, mortar mixers, jackhammers, power saws, concrete corers, generators, a rash of false fire alarms, and bricks that were tossed from the roof with abandon. When the district and the contractor failed to take such steps, neighbors felt forced to pursue enforcement through the DCLU instead. Meanwhile, the district's failure to act threatens to convert entire city blocks of future "yes" votes into "no" votes. That's a shame, and it was unnecessary.

The children are back now, and we shouldn't hold them to blame for the failings of the grown-ups. I suspect everyone in the neighborhood hopes all the TOPS kids have a productive, fun-filled year of learning and exploration. Still, when it comes to building trust in the surrounding community, the school district let us all down—neighbors, parents, students, and TOPS alike—this summer vacation.

—Barbara Azzato, McDonald School neighbor

# AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

## MONDAYS

**Chess Club** will start Monday, October 5, and meet after school from 3:30 to 4:30 through May. Look for permission slips to go out in the next couple weeks. The cost this year will be \$30 per student. You can phone Mark Morales at 325-4079 or email him at [memoral@ibm.net](mailto:memoral@ibm.net).

## MONDAYS AND TUESDAYS

**After-school sports** will begin on Monday, October 12. Activities such as unicycling, juggling, games, and team sports will be available every Monday and Tuesday. The after-school sports program runs from 3:30 to 4:30. Be sure to arrange for transportation home.

## TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS

**Keyboarding** (typing, not piano) class starts October 6, and will continue for 24 one-hour sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays through January 19, from 3:30 to 4:30. There will also be a second semester class. The instructor is Kristi York, currently a language arts teacher at Whitman middle school. The cost will be \$20, with some scholarships available. Registration forms were sent home on Friday, September 18; more forms are available on the counter in the main hall. At presstime, the class was half-filled. See *Jo Shapiro* in the office.

**After-School Study Club** meets in *Lori Eickelberg's* room on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:20. Please let Ms. Eickelberg know if you want your child to attend. Faculty will also be recommending students who could benefit from the club.

**Math Club** will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:20 in *Mark Ellis's* room. Please let Mr. Ellis know if you want your child to attend.

## FRIDAY

**Double Dutch** will begin after school on Friday, October 2. Practice is from 3:30 to 4:30 in preparation for the District's Double Dutch Challenge, which takes place on Thursday, May 6.

## COMING SOON

**Middle School Band** will begin soon—it just may start a bit later than we had originally planned. *Belinda Butler-Bell* is currently working on it. We may have a new instructor and the days the band meets may be changed, but there will be music.

**Homework program** for grades 1-5 is being organized this year by AmeriCorps volunteer *Josh Leggett*. He will be scheduling this after-school activity for two days a week, and middle school tutors will be hired by site council to provide homework assistance to their younger counterparts (under Josh's supervision).

**Spanish classes** will start October 12 and 13. Sessions are scheduled both before school (8:10 to 8:55 a.m.) and after school (3:30 to 4:15 p.m.), on Monday & Wednesday or Tuesday & Thursday. For additional details, see the Spanish classes article elsewhere in this newsletter.

## TOPS ENROLLMENT FOR 1998-99

We now have 553 kids at TOPS. The wait list was moved Tuesday, September 15, and no more children are expected except in the Bilingual Orientation Center.

---

## PLEASE RECORD AND PHONE IN YOUR VOLUNTEER HOURS

You're keeping track of all your volunteer hours, right? You should—and here's why.

The City of Seattle and Seattle School District ask the individual school Volunteer Coordinators to submit a report of volunteer hours several times a year. This is an awesome task that involves a lot of time to prepare. But consider this:

TOPS is known as a school with high volunteer involvement, in part due to this reporting. Our recorded volunteer hours can constitute an integral argument for grant funding—as well as for other TOPS-related requests to the City and the School District.

**So, please keep track of your volunteer hours and submit them to us regularly—preferably on a weekly basis. It's easy to do. Just call the following number and give your name, your child's name and grade, and the number of hours you've worked. Here's the number: (206) 298-7444, ext. 4673. By making this call, you'll help us cut down on our numerous "follow-up" phone calls as well as on your own paperwork.**

If you have any questions, please feel free to leave a message with *Joni Marts*, Volunteer Coordinator, or *Cheryl Pappy*, Cultural Outreach Coordinator, at the number above. Or, if you want to contact them directly, please phone Joni at 632-9741 or Cheryl at 725-0577.

Thanks so much for your support!

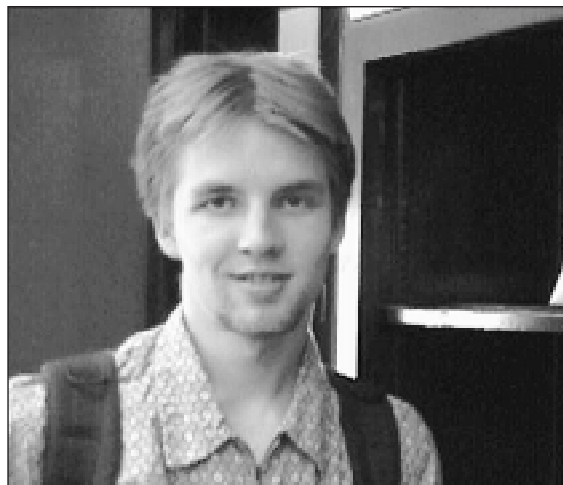
# LET'S WELCOME AMERICORPS VOLUNTEERS ANGELO REYES AND JOSH LEGGETT

We have a pair of new high-energy AmeriCorps volunteers at TOPS this year. Angelo Reyes and Josh Leggett are young men from seemingly diverse backgrounds, yet they share a common passion: Both are ready to roll up their sleeves and make the K-8 years a rich and joyful experience for young TOPS children.

Boston native *Angelo Reyes* credits his teachers, parents, and guidance counselors for putting him in a position to help other students find their way in life. According to Angelo, "Looking back, I wonder where I would be if it weren't for these people. They were always available if you needed to talk to someone with a good ear. I hope I can do the same for the students here at TOPS." Angelo sees the school years as "a compass that will guide and help you determine what to do in your life." As an AmeriCorps volunteer, he wants to bring parent and community volunteers together to make TOPICS an effective teaching tool. Angelo expects also to lend a hand in the TOPS drama program. Parents should feel free to contact Angelo in his office.

Seattle-born UW senior *Josh Leggett* has a triple major in History, Scandinavian Area Studies, and Comparative Religion. He decided to apply for the AmeriCorps

position "to see if I really wanted to be a teacher." And after three weeks with TOPS kids, he says, "I am sure this is what I want to do." At TOPS, Josh will coordinate the after-school tutoring program as well as coach the girls' soccer team with Nancy Knox, Louise's intern. Josh would like to hear from all parents who have ideas about and interest in the tutoring program. Says Josh, "I am looking forward to a wonderful and busy year at TOPS." Josh has been married for about a year to his wife, Eileen.



*Josh Leggett*

Both Angelo and Josh will also be working in the Resource Room with BOC kids and other teachers. Please join us in welcoming and supporting these two super volunteers.

## SITE COUNCIL FUNDS MORE POSITIONS AT TOPS

Site council had approved funding for five AmeriCorps positions, but only two of them were approved by the funding intermediary organization, Washington Service Corps. They cost the site council a total of \$6,000.

Site council has agreed to spend at least half of the remaining \$9,000 line item on "classroom support," including work-study students. TOPS teachers, who ordinarily would have to supervise the work-study students, have told site council they are fully supportive and enthusiastic about it.

TOPS has also applied for work-study students through the federal America Reads program, which would make them available to us at no cost. The only federal restriction is that participants are restricted to supporting reading improvement for students in K-6.

Site council has now two years in a row supported these low-cost staff positions to increase the adult to student ratio in the building.

A team of parents working to strengthen these programs needs more volunteers. Call *Heather Worthley* at 789-6092 or *Lianne Sheppard* at 633-2184.

---

## PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIP CLASS

Pacific Oaks College Northwest is sponsoring a one-credit class on how parents and teachers can form better partnerships. Invited to enroll are parents, teachers, service providers, community members, and care providers. The six-session class meets Mondays (October 5 through November 9) from 4:30 to 7 p.m., and is instructed by Debra Sullivan, Ed.D. and TOPS' own Tilman Smith, M.A. Cultural and socio-economic factors and the realities of working and single-parent families will be considered as students prepare personal action plans. To register, call Pacific Oaks at 325-7669, extension 10.

# NEWS FROM TOPS CLASSROOMS

- ◆ Kindergarten students, 24 in each class, are learning to navigate the building and have started learning to write.
- ◆ Students in grades 1-5 will attend the Seattle Children's Theater plays again this year.
- ◆ Each of the two 1st grade classes grew by two students this year, so now there are 28 students per



2nd grade teacher Tracy Seefeld and student teacher Sarah Wakefield

class. Moving to separate portables allowed the growth, and the school budget was enhanced accordingly.

- ◆ All four 1st and 2nd grade teachers are beginning the year with student teachers—two from Washington State University, two from Antioch University.
- ◆ Faculty in grades 1 through 5 are working to align the social studies and science curricula.
- ◆ Julie's 4th grade class

has started its Green Lake service learning project in partnership with Youth Environmental Services and the Seattle Parks Department. This is "hands-on science."

- ◆ The site council-supported elementary artist in residence program will start in October.
- ◆ The two new middle school staff members, Michel Mercer and Joe Drummond, are both working really hard and are off to a good start. Neither came on board until August—so they've had a lot of catching up to do.
- ◆ 6th grade room reps are planning evening events, so stay tuned.
- ◆ Eighth graders are structuring the student council and writing a charter document.
- ◆ Middle schoolers will be visiting the Henry Art Gallery's Jacob Lawrence exhibit.
- ◆ This is the second year of the new TOPS math program, which hopes to offer every student an opportunity to prepare for honors level math in high school. It is reported to be working very well with the 7th graders, who started the program in 6th grade, while 8th graders are also catching up.

# KID TIPS

We'd like to provide an opportunity throughout the year in this newsletter for parents to share "tips for success" in managing the incredibly busy schedules all of us and our children are juggling. If you have a tip, please contribute it to the newsletter (email: amy\_hagopian@fammed.washington.edu or call 616-4989).

## HERE'S ONE, FOR STARTERS:

My kids go to various places after school—soccer practice, dance class, grandparents, music lessons, Kids Co. It's so hard to keep track! We pin a small plastic envelope to the backpack every day with a note about where to go today. I put the information on the back of a business card, so that way the phone numbers are handy too. The envelopes are the kind you'd keep a fishing license in—they have a zip-lock top—and they're available at Big Five sporting goods store.

## STARBUCKS LITERACY GRANT BUYS BOOKS FOR BOC KIDS

Last spring TOPS, with the help of Starbucks employee Ann McRill (Jesse Rodriguez, 7th grade), applied for and received a \$1,000 literacy grant from the Starbucks Foundation. The funds will be used to purchase reading books for the children in the Bilingual Orientation Center (BOC) classes. After reading the books with tutors, the children will then borrow the books and take them home to share with their families.

—Steve Haines  
TOPS librarian



Michel Mercer, new TOPS 6th grade teacher

# TOPS 1998-99 CALENDAR

## OCTOBER

- 8-10 NW Math Conference
- 9 State inservice day (no school)
- 12 Middle school play auditions begin
- 14 Site council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
Parent involvement fair & state of the school meeting, 7-9 p.m.
- 19 Middle school play rehearsals begin
- 19-20 Middle school NCEE training  
State 2nd grade reading tests
- 20 Middle school parent forum, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
- 24 Playground work party

## NOVEMBER

- 6 End of first quarter
- 10 Site council meeting
- 11 Veterans' Day
- 16-24 Parent conferences  
Food drive (Louise)
- 26-27 Thanksgiving

## DECEMBER

- 4 End of first trimester
- 9 Site council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 11 Report cards
- 11-12 Middle school play
- 17 Young Authors Conference, K-8  
Adopt-A-Family
- 21-1/1 Winter break

## JANUARY

- 13 Site council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 18 Martin Luther King Day (no school)
- 22 Martin Luther King Celebration  
K-8 TOPS / BOC Event
- 29 Last day of semester

## FEBRUARY

- 10 Site council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 15 Presidents' Day
- 16-19 Midwinter break  
Jump Rope for Heart  
Black History event  
Debate (7th grade)  
Direct writing assessment (grades 3, 5, and 8)

## MARCH

- 5 Waiver Day (no school)
- 10 Site council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 12 Responses to budget request for proposals due
- 12, 13 Elementary school play
- 19 End of second trimester  
State ITBS test (grades 3 and 8)  
District ITBS test (grades 5 and 6)
- 29 TOPS public budget consideration meeting

## APRIL

- 7 Site council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 9 End of 3rd quarter
- 12-16 Spring break  
Speech tournament  
Primary Speech Festival  
State WASL tests (grades 4 and 7)  
State 2nd grade reading tests

## MAY

- 12 Site council meeting, 5-7 p.m.
- 13 Cultural Fair / Achievement Fair / Art Walk
- 14 Waiver Day
- 15? 2nd TOPS budget consideration meeting
- 31 Memorial Day  
Camps (grades 6, 7, and 8)

## JUNE

- ?? Camp Long  
K-8 TOPS / BOC Event  
Awards assembly  
8th grade passage  
Wild Waves
- 9 Site council meeting, 5-7 p.m.  
1999-2000 Budget approved by Friends of TOPS  
State of the school meeting
- 12 Annual site council retreat
- 18 Last student day
- 21 Last teacher day
- 30 Site council fiscal year ends

## WASL SCORES TO BE RELEASED

Scores from the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) have been received, and should be in the mail to current 5th and 8th graders. A review of the overall results leads faculty to believe that the older students need to focus on writing conventions, such as spelling and punctuation, while the younger kids need to organize their ideas more effectively. A parent workshop will be scheduled to answer questions about testing.

*Seward School September 1998. Photo by Anna Ludwig.*



## \$30,000 TOPS MIDDLE SCHOOL SUPPORT GRANT GETS UNDERWAY

On Tuesday evening, October 20, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., a Middle School Parent Forum will be held to discuss the middle school support grant awarded to TOPS. The forum will be facilitated by Pamela Hilliard of the Seattle School District Health Education Division. Parents will learn about the middle school grant and programs that will be implemented. In addition, they will have the opportunity to create a list of issues that parents would like to address in subsequent forums. The Parent Forum is an exciting opportunity to build on our successes, as well as to address areas of concern.

Other grant-funded opportunities are also being scheduled:

- ◆ The middle school teaching staff will participate in a child development forum (also facilitated by Pamela Hilliard). The staff plans to focus its efforts on formulating an effective strategy for teaching and building trusting relationships with middle school students. Staff members will review the “40 Developmental Assets Among Seattle Youth,” which provides a guideline for thriving through the middle school years. The staff will work with these assets and integrate ideas from TOPS parents and students as the grant moves forward.
- ◆ “Pizza Topics” (a lunchtime activity) will begin the week of October 14. Before the first meetings, students will select topics of interest to discuss in small groups facilitated by teachers. Pizza and soft drinks will be provided through funds from the middle school grant. By talking with each other outside of the standard academic arena, students and teachers will have an opportunity to get acquainted in a more relaxed atmosphere. Over the course of three weeks, all middle school students will have an opportunity to participate in one of these Pizza Topic lunches.

More middle school grant funded activities are forthcoming. The grant committee will keep you updated through the newsletter and take-home information as news become available. If you have questions about middle school grant-funded activities, please contact assistant principal *Jo Shapiro* or principal *Gary Tubbs*.

## SITE COUNCIL-LEADERSHIP TEAM INTEGRATION NIXED

In the last newsletter (on page 8), we reported a proposal made by site council to the TOPS faculty to better integrate the functions of the site council and the faculty “leadership team.” Specifically, at its June retreat, the site council proposed that faculty members of the leadership team be the same individuals as those on the site council, and that the strategic plans of the two groups be merged.

Faculty considered this idea at their September 16 faculty meeting, and decided against the proposal, 18 to 8.

The reasons included: (1) the overwhelming time commitment for those taking on both roles; (2) the question of whether the site council would encroach on faculty turf—like the school budget; (3) a desire to maintain a separation and balance of powers; and (4) a lack of clarity about what the differences would be.

Site council members, at their September 16 meeting, decided not to abandon the idea, but to learn more about the faculty’s concerns and learn more about how leadership teams and site councils work together in other buildings. To that end, the council decided to invite the District’s labor relations director, John Humphrie, to meet with them to help everyone learn what was intended when the leadership teams were formed in the last teachers’ union contract.

In the meantime, more communication will be fostered between the leadership team and the site council, and specific site council bylaw changes may be proposed.

*Jeanne Spurlock* and *Melora Batisti* were elected by site council to serve as parent representatives to the leadership team.



*Charlie Burleigh, 6th grade teacher*

## CLOTHING BANK

The Immediate Assistance committee is starting a clothing bank for TOPS students. Please contribute only good, clean clothes—sweat pants are especially welcome. All sizes are needed. Talk to *Lynette Tate* at school.

## MCDONALD CONSTRUCTION UPDATES

Elevator construction on the east playground continues after hours, and should be done by the end of September. Construction equipment is fenced off during the school day. The sandpit on the east playground was removed this summer and a drainage system installed under the area where our new playscape will be installed.

# LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE HELPS KIDS THINK

Imagine if you could learn your childhood language after you already knew all the real-world things that you know today. In a sense, that's the opportunity you get when you learn a second language in school. You still have to learn all the basics of the language—how to pronounce the sounds, spell the words, put sentences together, and understand what you hear or read—but you've got a big toolbox (i.e., your brain and your memories) there to help you.

Learning a second language is different from learning other subjects like science or social studies. It encompasses the basics of literacy and communication—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—but also requires you to learn a complete, new system. Systems thinking is considered by some to be the new frontier in education. For years, we've taught kids the parts—the isolated pieces of knowledge—but we haven't always helped them integrate or connect those pieces into a coherent whole. Learning a second language can help develop that kind of thinking in the student.

We're learning more about the brain every day. One thing we do know is that the brain needs to be exercised to stay strong and healthy. Learning a second language helps build connections and helps many students understand the grammar (i.e., linguistic system) of their native language for the first time. Even if students don't become fluent speakers of the second language, their brains will benefit.

—Michele Anciaux  
TOPS Parent

BA (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)  
MA and Ph.D. (Slavic Linguistics)

## Resources:

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages  
(<http://www.actfl.org>)  
ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics  
(<http://www.cal.org/ericcII>)

# KIDS COMPANY NEWS

The space at Kids Company has been re-arranged following the construction during the summer. The center is now more open, and, it's hoped, more harmonious. The design is intended to encourage interaction between the two age groups, yet will allow for the privacy that the older group desires.

Returning staff members are Tanya Wenborg and Ancel Johnson with the older kids and Shannon Murphy and Matt Hayashi with the younger group. Lisa Stokell has returned from a medical leave earlier than expected. There may be one or two new people in the next few weeks.

Younger kids are engaged in drawing and doing homework after school. The older kids do homework, but there are also "special days" for things like cooking, science workshop, or even a Friday trip to 7-11.



*Joann Spark, new secretary*

## HIGH SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT MEETINGS

Seattle School District will be hosting five community forums to discuss the proposed secondary student assignment plan. These meetings will be held from 7 to 9:00 p.m. at the following sites:

September 28	Meany Middle School	Auditorium
September 29	McClure Middle School	Library
October 5	Eckstein Middle School	Auditorium
October 6	Mercer Middle School	Auditorium
October 8	Madison Middle School	Lunchroom

## SEXUAL MINORITY PARENT SURVEY

The Seattle Teen Health Survey has led school district officials to learn that gay and lesbian students are disproportionately homeless, dropping out of school, involved in drugs and alcohol, and committing suicide. In response, the District formed the Sexual Minority Advisory Council to address these issues. This year, the Council has decided to distribute a parent survey to gay and lesbian families to learn more about how we're doing on this issue.

The purpose of the survey is to assess school climate, safety, and inclusion for sexual minority families, grades K-12 in Washington, with a focused outreach in the Puget Sound region. To complete the survey, you can be a biological, foster, adoptive, or step parent, or the partner of such a parent. Any sexual minority adult involved in the raising of children is encouraged to solicit a survey form and respond.

The survey is sponsored by the Safe Schools Coalition of Washington, a broad-based coalition made up of public agencies, private organizations and individuals from around Washington state working to make schools safe for families, educators, and children of all gender identities.

To get a survey, please call *Tracy Flynn* at 206-298-7982.

## COMMUNITY TRUANCY BOARD NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Community volunteers are needed to help families find solutions to student attendance problems. Community Truancy Boards meet once every two weeks at neighborhood sites in the evenings. Call *Wiley Carter* at 760-4724 by October 31.



*Julie Trout, 4th grade*

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION REPORT

The TOPS physical education classes are off to a good start. It's great seeing all of our energetic and talented TOPS students again!

Our first unit of study has been "American Football." (Be sure to ask your child to demonstrate the three-point stance technique—and that big TOPS growl when coming up to block.) On October 21 we will begin soccer while introducing records day events and the President's Physical Fitness test battery.

DOUBLE DUTCH, open to all TOPS students, will be held on Fridays this year beginning Friday, October 2. Students will need an after-school sports permission slip to participate. We will again have demonstration teams competing in the Seattle School District's Double Dutch Challenge next spring.

AFTER-SCHOOL SPORTS will begin on Monday, October 12. Activities such as unicycling, juggling, games, and team sports will be available every Monday and Tuesday. Double Dutch will be the after-school sports activity on Fridays this year. The after-school sports program will end at 4:30. Be sure to arrange for your own transportation home.

The Middle School Aquatics program will be available to TOPS middle school students again next spring, thanks to funding acquired by the Greenlake Aquatics Center. This is a wonderful opportunity for TOPS students to learn about and experience crew, kayaks, and canoeing as part of their PE experience. Students in the program also receive priority for the hard-to-get-into summer rowing programs.

## SANITY CIRCUS COMING TO TOWN

Sanity Circus is a six-week parenting class appropriate for parents of children and young people of all ages, with a focus on elementary and preschool years. Classes will be held Monday nights from 7:15 to 8:45 p.m. On October 5, 12, and 19, they'll meet at Schmitz Park School, and on October 26, November 2, and 9, they'll meet at Gatewood School (both in West Seattle). Call the Puget Sound Adlerian Society at 527-2566 for more information.

## CUB SCOUTS

Boys in grades 1 through 5 and their parents are invited to join a Cub Scout troop. Call *Barbara Brzoska* at 505-2568 days or 632-8520 evenings.

# HERE IS THE CORRECTED ROOM REP LIST:

---

**Teacher                      Room Representative ..... Phone number**

<b>K-Joan O'Connor</b>	Joni Marts .....	632-9741
	Terry Sperling .....	632-0796
	Sherry Chen .....	527-8926
<b>K-Joby Moore</b>	Molly Lapatra .....	789-7169
	Wendy Hirshberg .....	784-5247
<b>1st-Susan Mamlock</b>	Marlies Van-Bergeijk .....	328-3064
	Barbara Bengtsson .....	781-5512
	Naoko Magasis .....	783-6980
<b>1st-Carla Fetterley</b>	Gretchen Chambers .....	632-0651
	Signe Gilson .....	632-3882
<b>2nd-Tracy Seefeld</b>	Theresa Leahy .....	322-8468
	Ronimae Porras-Foye .....	723-5449
<b>2nd-Louise Chacartegui</b>	Joan Dawson .....	322-4414
	Janice Lovell .....	721-0790
<b>3rd-David Wilhelm</b>	Susan Spieker .....	324-7261
	Joni Marts .....	632-9741
	Barbara Weinstein .....	325-7085
<b>3rd-Katie Waters</b>	Kathleen Kettner .....	328-5803
	Peg Maas .....	364-2409
<b>4th-Julie Trout</b>	Lee Ann Clark .....	526-5823
	Sherrie Boyer .....	706-7544
<b>4th-Mary Chao</b>	Pam Haruta .....	323-3165
	Sue Wardle .....	547-6097
<b>5th-Tal Troy</b>	Laurie Black .....	285-7079
	Virginia Powers .....	285-1691
<b>5th-Nani Castor-Peck</b>	Sherry Hamilton .....	328-5379
<b>6th-Charlie Burleigh</b>	Karen D'Luhosh .....	323-8123 or 325-5395
	Rhian Lombard .....	325-5395
<b>6th-Michel Mercer</b>	Janet Moore .....	283-7284
<b>7th-grade room reps</b>	Carolyn Law .....	782-1294
	Kim Dammann .....	367-1024
<b>8th-grade room reps</b>	Kate Day .....	526-7056
	Keelan Curran .....	784-8393
	Maggie Lubov .....	323-4965
	Lynne Oliphant .....	725-4425

## PARKING COURTESY—AND SOLUTIONS—WANTED

Parking on 55th and 54th Streets continues to be a challenge in the McDonald neighborhood. We still need to be considerate of our neighbors. As a brief reminder, please use 54th St. westbound as the drop-off and pick-up location for your children at all times. 55th St. is for bus loading and unloading only. Last year, as a partial solution to the ongoing traffic problem, we decided to do some curb painting near neighbors' driveways. To volunteer for this project, call *Phil Converse* at 329-0041.

## POET IN RESIDENCE

Shelly Tucker, TOPS poet in residence, started on Monday, September 14. She is working to give each grade 1-5 class a total of six hours with her (spaced over several weeks). Site council provided the funding for this project.

## STUDENT INTERNET AGREEMENTS

The Seattle School District now requires parents to sign an agreement to allow students Internet access at schools, so expect to get a form to sign. All computers at TOPS are subject to the district's censorship software, so access to many undesirable sites is blocked.



*Lori Eickelberg, grade 7/8*

CG 599  
815 Fourth Avenue North  
P.O. Box 19116  
Seattle, WA 98109-1116



Nonprofit

Organization

U.S. Postage

PAID

Seattle, WA

Permit No. 3904

## THANKS

*Thanks to Phil Converse for coordinating and all the parents who helped get the school ready on Labor Day...Liane Shepard for leading the effort to recruit AmeriCorps volunteers.*



**THANKS TO G&H**

**PRINTING**

**2370 EASTLAKE**

**EAST 329-9888**



*Seward School September 1998. Photo by Kolya Ludwig.*

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 national origin, sex, mental states, 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 49.60, 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: John Yasutake, Manager, Affirmative Action Office, 815 4th Av. 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.