GROWING AT TOPS
By Sharon Mentyka

It’s almost spring, and the kindergarten students are growing in leaps and bounds right in time with the season. Early in the year, there was no shortage of tasks that we new kindergarten parents could help with, but it was Joan and Joby’s vision of a garden just outside the kindergarten classes that appealed to me. A garden has endless potential as a grown magic environment. Sunflowers can grow three times as tall as a five-year old!

The word kindergarten itself “the garden of children” seemed prescient. Friedrich Froebel, the German educator credited with creating the kindergarten program, included gardening as one of the primary “play-work” activities for young children as a way of sensitizing them to the underlying logic and symmetries in nature, so that they might recognize and value their own uniqueness and learn to appreciate the interdependence of all living things. Our garden could become a place where the children would learn the skills and joys of nurturing and making something grow, while we could, over time, contribute something lasting to the TOPS community.

Mr. Tubbs gave his permission, and we began. Swanson’s Nursery agreed to donate seeds, plants, and watering cans. Gretchen Chambers generously delivered a yard of fresh compost; then led the kindergartners in a bucket brigade from curbside to garden, amidst delighted cries of “Yuck!” The rudimentary need to provide access to the mechanical equipment at the rear of the space led to a multi-week project where the children worked in teams of two to create mosaic concrete stepping stones using recycled bits of glass, hardware, stones, and trinkets to grace the garden path.

The children wanted plants that were easy to eat, fun to grow, or that looked unusual or impressive. Now, although it still looks a bit mucky, over 50 daffodil bulbs are starting to poke their heads up, sweet peas and snap peas are in, along with four varieties of lettuce and “Easter Egg” radishes, a rainbow blend of red, white, purple, and violet. Sunflower seeds are getting their start inside the classrooms. For structure, we’ve planted lavender, rosemary, and lined the path with thyme because there was a special request for an area that “smells good.”

As a new kindergarten parent, the project has been a model experience for me of almost effortless cooperation; it has never seemed hard to find a helping hand. Most importantly, the kindergarten garden is a place that has “room to grow.” After all, future kindergartners may decide that they want to grow beets and create animal topiaries!

We need your contributions—news from the classrooms, faculty, committees, and the larger community, opinions, profiles, compliments, congratulations, kids’ art, photographs, additions to the calendar, and anything else that needs to “get out there.”

Submit your contributions to the newsletter box in the Main Office or to Julie Pickering (by e-mail at jpick@halcyon.com or by snail mail at 2624 East Olive Street, Seattle 98122-3144). We prefer electronic contributions by e-mail or on disk (IBM or Macintosh, accompanied by a paper copy when possible). Shorter contributions can be faxed to 720-0916.

Newsletter deadlines for 2000
April 6, May 11, and June 8.

Anyone interested in working on the newsletter should contact Julie at 720-4552.

All members of the TOPS community are invited to attend Site Council meetings: second Wednesdays in the Library, 5-7p.m. Next meeting April 5 (First Wednesday because of Spring Break).

By Gretchen Chambers

CAPITOL RESERVE EXPENDITURE PROPOSALS

Where do we start in fine-tuning the new building?

Finance Committee Co-Chair Phil Converse presented the proposal of an ad hoc committee of the Finance and Facilities committees to spend 50 percent of the Capital Reserve on a set of items not completed or addressed in contracted work on the building (See page 3). Site Council members agreed to discuss the idea of a formal contingency fund at the April 5 meeting.

Making the Gym Work for Theater and Other Presentations

Fund Development Committee Chair Penny Bolton is doing extensive work to define the presentation needs of the gym and find ways to pay for them. She presented a summary of her application for a Neighborhood Matching Grant to fund a variety of items, including bleachers, curtains, sound system, and acoustical improvements. If approved, the grant would provide $18,200 to be matched by funding with TOPS cash and in-kind (labor) contributions.

After Penny’s presentation, a motion was passed to express Site Council support for the grant request. Individually, Site Council members signed pledges of volunteer hours for work on the proposed improvements to be submitted with the grant.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Mr. Tubbs reported that the 8th graders were working hard to prepare for the Middle School Science Exam, which they were taking at the University of Washington that week. He also noted that the most recent Middle School dance was very successful. Approximately 150 students and guests attended. Lori Eickelberg served as bouncer and successfully turned away, without resorting to bouncing, would-be dancers who did not have photo ID, were not on the guest list, or did not have money.

The Middle School Staff had a successful six-hour retreat facilitated by Pamela Hillard.

Edd Key to returns to TOPS

Beloved former music teacher Edd Key will be returning to TOPS for a limited engagement to write and perform music for the Elementary School Play, James and the Giant Peach.

Requests for Proposals (RFPs)

Mr. Tubbs described several curriculum-related RFPs, including his own proposal for Music and Dance around the World; Instrumental Music and Band; and Middle School Spanish.

WORLD LANGUAGES

The World Language Committee has abandoned the idea of having 7th grade Spanish classes during the school day next year, and is instead proposing a tuition-free, zero hour (8 to 9 am) class. Penny Bolton suggested that a Spanish class could be structured like the kindergarten PEAK program to fund the teacher and scholarships for anyone who couldn’t pay. Andrew Schmechel said he will be teaching Japanese in a five-week TOPS this spring.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Dana Careyt-Twight reported that she is keeping current on all payments (e.g., reserving the Asian Resource Center for the Auction and drama expenditures). At this point, the Site Council money market account totals $94, 419.10; the checking account has $25,000 plus; and the savings account $2,000.

The Site Council briefly discussed involvement with ShopforSchools.com, an Internet shopping portal from which a percentage of each purchase is given to the school of the buyer’s choice. Research suggests that optimally, being registered with the store would produce $90/month. Points made in the discussion included that TOPS has made a long-standing, concerted effort to limit its fundraising to the auction and No Bake Bake Sale, and that the consumption-pushing message was objectionable. (See page 4 re: Fund development.)

DIVERSITY ISSUES COALITION

Coalition co-facilitator Garry Owens reported that the Coalition is currently working to improve the school’s cultural information resources and provide a forum for discussing difficult issues of race and diversity. In the ensuing Site Council discussion, it was suggested that cultural calendar events, such as Hanukkah, be used as opportunities for teaching tolerance. Carla Fetterly suggested funding a tutoring program aimed specifically at the problem of disproportionality, a key concern of the Coalition and the school at large in its goal of academic achievement for all children.

At the Coalition’s meeting later that evening, TOPS parent Susan Davis offered a Reflection on Cultural Identity, discussing Judaism and her own personal perspective. Coalition members also brainstormed about diversity-related RFPs, agreeing to pursue proposals to invite relevant speakers, for curriculum enhancement, and for small-group and assembly diversity events. Assistant Principal Clara Scott is pursuing a Middle School leadership project in concert with Garfield High School’s Cultural Relations Forum under the Middle School Grant.
Site Council, continued from page 2

Mr. Tubbs also asked Coalition members to help staff identify key issues and resources and offer support and encouragement as they address the diversity issues.

DRAMA COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Linda Downing reported that the Middle School’s anti-harassment play is progressing well and will be performed off-campus and to small groups on campus. She also announced that auditions for the elementary school play, James and the Giant Peach will take place the week before Spring Break. The grant for set design instruction for next year has been submitted.

EASTLAKE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Eastlake Representative Jules James reported that a neighbor has made their driveway available for TOPS’ staff parking for $20/month as proposed in a previous Site Council meeting. Staff may have to draw straws.

BE CAREFUL ON ROANOKE!

A plea from the Eastlake Community to all of us! Please do not zip out of the staff parking lot up across Roanoke into the alley in the middle of the block. The alley starts with a blind rise, and children often play there. Remember: Roanoke is a one-way street—downhill—and that alley is not a freeway! Thanks!

CAPITAL RESERVE EXPENDITURE PROPOSALS

From Phil Converse

In February and March, an Ad Hoc Committee of the Finance and Facilities Committees sifted through the records and memories of the Design Review Committee, examined the ideas from Staff brainstorming and input from parents, and then investigated the feasibility and affordability of using some portion of the Friends of TOPS cash reserve for improvements and/or enhancements of our new building.

Our criteria for selection of projects to be funded included the following:

* We favored projects that are “architectural” in nature, rather than “equipment-related.” We feel that capital improvements should focus on finishing the building, rather than funding annual operational needs and small projects (which should be funded through the annual budget process).
* We favored projects that are “program-driven,” meeting a core value of TOPS’ Strategic Plan and having broad support within the TOPS community.
* We assumed that some proportion of the Friends of TOPS cash reserves would remain as a permanent cash reserve, to insure against catastrophic fund-raising difficulties in the future. Also, we assumed that some projects need to be funded right now. These reserves were collected through the years with the expectation that they would be spent on the new building.
* Several much-needed projects (e.g., scoreboard for gym, cork strips, larger classroom projection screens) are already being implemented from other funding sources (e.g., the District, TOPS building funds, “make-goods” from the contractor, earlier Site Council decisions). We didn’t want to rush in and fund projects that might fund themselves.
* Some very good ideas have been left for future years, future Site Councils, and future parent communities to implement, mostly due to cost and design concerns.

The Ad Hoc Committee unanimously recommends that the following six Capital Projects be funded through use of present cash reserves of Friends of TOPS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Est. Cost</th>
<th>Project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Finish Middle School “Commons” and “music room” spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,500</td>
<td>Drama Grant matching to fund Gym improvements. (includes $3,000 raised at 1999 Auction for sound system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>Upgrade server and computer capability. (See Technology article on page ??)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>Upgrade lighting in two basement and two 3rd floor classrooms (K-5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>Lunchroom performance/presentation needs (much overlap with Drama).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>Expert architectural advice re: bleacher seating decisions and adding an Gymnasium Foyer and interior wall with control booth, storage and projection capability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Recommended Expenditure of cash reserves = $53,000.

Leaving Cash Reserves of approximately $64,000 (as of July 1, 1999).

Jules also noted that soon the RTA will be begin construction of a vent hole next to the I-520 ramps. Trucks will be driving loads of dirt from the excavation site along Boylston to Eastlake. He thought that the school may want to consider talking to the RTA about noise abatement options.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Kevin Crozier presented a proposal from the Technical Committee asking the Site Council to purchase 70-inch classroom projection screens to replace the 4-foot screens, which have proven quite useless. The new boards will cost $2,065.09, would be installed without extra charge, and are much needed by teachers and students. Because it was not immediately apparent where in the budget the money should come from, the idea was tabled for now.
**FUNDRAISING AT TOPS**

*By Penny Bolton*

Over the years, TOPS has needed funds to augment our program. Because many of our students are not poor or special education students, the District’s “weighted student formula” doesn’t drive extra money to TOPS. For “extras” like Spanish, TOPICs specialists, AmeriCorps Volunteers, art for elementary students, Drama, the newsletter, and technology support, we need cash. And now, we also need money to complete our wonderful new building and make sure we have everything it needs to work for our program.

TOPS’ two major fundraisers are the No Bake Bake Sale in the fall and the Spring Auction. Together these two events bring in about $65,000 each year. We are also actively pursuing outside grants, such as the Middle School Grant ($30,000) and artist in residence grants.

As a community, we made the decision to stick to just these two fundraisers because they didn’t require our children (or us!) to constantly sell to friends and neighbors. We also were concerned about endorsing and selling commercial products in the school and community. The Site Council voted against having any commercial endorsements in the school.

At this point in the history of our school, we need to look again at fundraising as a community. Our needs outstrip the School District’s ability to fund, yet we are not a private school.

How should we go about raising money? Some folks have brought up the idea of a TOPS endowment for donors who want to donate bigger amounts of money or stock. Our local economy has lots of money floating around. Should we try to snare more? We have raised money from within; should we go outside our immediate families? What about affinity programs, such as “shoppingforschools.com”? Do we want to get involved in selling stuff? Most programs that sell products only return a small percentage to the school, whereas our “No-Bake” gives 100 percent to the school. Should we focus more energy on such “write a check” activities?

The Fund Development Committee will be meeting the middle of March to discuss all these ideas. The next Site Council meeting on April 5 will include a discussion of this issue, plus a discussion of how much should be kept in “reserve.” If you are interested in helping with Fund Development, call Penny Bolton at 325-5074 or e-mail at pennyb@halcyon.com.

---

**CHILDREN OF THE EARTH CELEBRATION CONCERT**

You may soon hear your child singing Earth Day songs. One of them, with multilingual choruses, “We Are The Children of the Earth,” the theme song of many schools around the world, was adopted first as a theme song by a tiny pre-and primary school in Ballard-Cinquegranelli Montessori—where its composer, Joey Carper, attended kindergarten. Now Joey and his classmates have gone on to other schools throughout Seattle, including TOPS, and the song has developed along with them. TOPS students and their families are invited to attend and participate in Joey’s and Cinquegranelli’s Children of the Earth Celebration Concert, a free children’s family event on Earth Day, Saturday, April 22 in Seattle Center’s Rainier Room, from 12:30 to 2:30.

**COMPUTER CONCERNS**

*By Toby Harris*

Each time I read about TOPS receiving 100 computers, I have a need to hear more. I want to ensure that we are approaching this with foresight, that there is a well thought-out, informed plan for computer use in our school for every grade.

I’ve been reading an excellent book, which has given voice to the anxiety I feel about having so many computers in our school. It’s called *Failure to Connect, How Computers Affect Our Children’s Minds - for Better and Worse*, by Jane Healy. Though it starts out quite negative, Healy does offer very specific tools for positive computer instruction, gives many scenarios of its misuse in schools, and details the importance of standards for software selection.

This book has helped me develop a long list of concerns, which I have put before Kevin Crozier and the Technology Committee. I feel confident that with all these great TOPS minds at work carefully examining these issues and developing a plan for long-term computer budget needs, I will wholeheartedly support computer curriculum at TOPS.

So here’s my long list of concerns:

What about all those extras such as printers, tables, and software, which have not been budgeted for? What about the need for ongoing and absolutely imperative teacher training and maintenance of all these computers and their accoutrements? What about ongoing and consistent software review and evaluation? Is the software really doing what we want it to do, or is it fun and distracting, not motivating learning? And how about adequate supervision of students when they’re glued to the computer? Will these computers help with the student/teacher ratio? Do we need a computer teacher? How about a techie troubleshooter? Can a teacher do it all? Will students be on the computer? Will the computers help with the student/teacher ratio? Do we need a computer teacher? How about a techie troubleshooter? Can a teacher do it all? What about health implications for vision and posture? How long will students be on the computer? Will our stations be ergonomically correct? Will the students go home and sit at their computers for an hour or two more? Is getting 100 computers without all the other stuff good?

In our zeal to incorporate technology, let’s not lose sight of our goal to teach our students how to think, communicate, imagine, and problem-solve.
TOPS & TECHNOLOGY

From the TOPS Technology Committee

TOPS and the Technology Committee have started developing a five-year technology plan that will correlate with the school’s and district’s academic achievement plans. This is a prerequisite for TOPS to acquire approximately 100 new computers from the Seattle School District.

The committee met on March 7 to create a rough draft that includes a vision statement and goals for technology use. The seven goals will address our needs in the following areas: Learners, Learning Environment, Professional Competency, System Capacity, Community Connection, Technology Capacity, and Accountability.

The next step is for the committee to meet with all staff members to revise the draft and to more accurately assess how and when each staff member would prefer to increase their access to technology use within their own classroom curriculum. Because this is a five-year plan, the computers intended for TOPS can be phased in over the next five years.

In April, the technology team will meet again and rework the draft of the technology plan. An “in progress draft” will then be available for viewing and commentary after April 23. Please come by the office at that time to share your ideas. Our goal is to have a final draft submitted to the district by May 12.

PUGET SOUND ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

By Sharon Mentyka

Teachers, students, school administrators, artists, historians, naturalists, ethnobotanists, wildlife and plant biologists, geologists, and sustainable building consultants have all been contributors thus far to the planning of the future Puget Sound Environmental Learning Center (PSELC). In the last year, over 1,000 individuals have been recruited for community meetings, focus groups, brainstorming sessions, and children’s design charrettes. The Center, which plans to open in 2001, will be located on 250 acres at the south end of Bainbridge Island and will focus on establishing a five-day residential environmental learning experience for 4th and 5th grade students in the greater Seattle area. It will also offer teacher training and summer family programs. The property includes a complete watershed and five distinct ecosystems, providing rich learning opportunities for both natural and cultural history programs.

For general information about PSELC or to receive their current newsletter, please call (206) 441-2769, fax (206)448-7222, or email to info@pselc.org.

To learn more about PSELC:
Earth Day 2000: Ivy Removal (volunteer opportunity)
Age Level: Adults, kids, families of all sizes
Date: Saturday, April 22
Time: 9:30AM - 12:00Noon

Get a sneak preview of the PSELC site and celebrate Earth Day 2000 by joining PSELC staff to help begin restoring the land by removing English Ivy, one of the most invasive non-native plants in our region. This and other invasive plants not only choke out native species, they also decrease biodiversity by reducing food sources and native animal habitats. The ivy will be removed now and replaced later with site-grown native plants.

Wear durable clothing and bring work gloves and garden pruners if you own them. Beverages and a snack will be provided for all hungry workers.
**SUMMER CAMP RECOMMENDATIONS**

by Amy Hagopian

Ah, summer. The time when working parents really have to hustle.

Here’s how I do it. Start with a matrix: each of the weeks down the side, each kid across the top. Just start plotting it out.

My formula is: two weeks home doing very little (being bored is good practice for life); two weeks of family vacation; one or two weeks of overnight camp (depending on how much you made in the stock market this year); five to six weeks of day camp.

If you can get each set of grandparents to volunteer for a week, you’re way ahead. Most of the day camps still pretend moms are home filing their nails waiting for camp to be over after lunch, but some of them offer childcare till 5 or 6 for an additional fee. Most kids prefer going with a friend, and that way you can carpool with some other parent(s), as well. But all this requires early organization and planning, so get going! Only 76 shopping days left.

**Campfire Boys and Girls Club** offers both day camps in Seattle and an overnight camp on Vashon Island. There are a wide variety of overnight camps available (horseback riding, archery, crafts, swimming, sports, rafting, sailing, etc.) for elementary through high school. Day camps are at Carkeek Park 9:30 to 3:30, July 10-14 and July 17-21. There’s also a camp at Lincoln Park, July 24-28. Call 461-8550 or go to www.campfirecpsc.org.

**YMCA** has day camps, and runs an overnight camp, Camp Orkila on Orcas Island. Call 382-5009.

**Seattle Parks and Recreation** has affordable day camps at most of its centers around the city. Call 684-4360. These can be very good, depending on the personnel. Program guides will be available at each Community Center during the week of March 13, or try checking their website at http://www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/seattle/parks/home.htm

**TOPS’ own Luzita Roll** runs the Art 4 Kids Summer Program for small groups of kids ages 6-10 and 11-17 throughout the summer. Join her to create and explore art, and develop new skills. Hours: 9-12, 9-4, 1-4 for weekly sessions. Choose from ceramics (Hand and wheel), drawing and painting, fused glass and mosaics, batik, block-painting and sculpture, mechanical and environmental sculpture, cultural and traditional arts, and soapstone carving. Call 524-7099 for a brochure. This summer five weeks will be at TOPS and four weeks at Greenlake.

**Seattle Pacific University** runs a variety of day camps for kids, from sports to art. The best organized of these is NW Soccer camp, which features an overnight program on Whidbey Island. Check out http://www.nwsofcamp.org. Or phone 281-2904. We really like the art camp, but the brochure is always late. Call 281-2205.

**The UW** has some nice, but pricey, programs primarily (but not exclusively) for Middle Schoolers. Call 543-2320. Their brochures are late, too. Check this website for the program for kids aged 6-11: www.outreach.washington.edu/k12/summerday.asp. For Middle School programs: www.outreach.washington.edu/extinfo/youth.asp#anchor209653

**UW Science Center** also has some nice day camps, if you can afford them. Call 443-2925 or go to www.pacsci.org.

**Skyhawks Sports Camps.** at 425-486-7430, ext. 1, offers a variety of summer sports day camps throughout the city.

**Discovery Park** in Magnolia has day camps. $120 for 9 am to 1 pm, with a $95 add-on option for 1 pm to 5 pm. Call 386-4236.

**Chess players** will love Orlov chess camp June 26-29 at Broadview Thompson Elementary, Seattle, or August, 4-7, at Delta Pacific Hotel in Vancouver, B.C. Grades 1-12, hours 8:45 am to 4 pm. $125 if paid by May 15. Inquiries to chessstar@foxinternet.net, or TOPS’ Mark Morales at 325-4079.

**Music Works Northwest** has summer music day camps in Bellevue for all ages. Generally $130 a week for 9 am to 4 pm.

**Four Winds** offers an overnight camp on Lopez Island for ages 7-10: $ 650 for August 23 (W)—August 29 (T). There are also two month-long options, for $3000. Contact http://www.fourwindscamp.org or 360-376-2277.

Here are some I found on the web but have no personal experience with:

**Northwest Mountain School,** at 206-634-3955 or www.seanet.com/~jrac, offers extensive training in rock climbing, backpacking, snowboarding, and mountaineering for students aged 13-18. Courses are seven to 30 days long.

**The Seattle Children’s Theatre Drama School,** at 206-443-0807, at Seattle Center and satellite locations in Seattle, has a theatre arts programs for ages 3 1/2 to 20.

**Wilderness Awareness Summer Camp,** at 425-788-1301, has a Seattle camp 7/19-7/23. They focus on “ancient skills such as aid-less navigation, bird language, plant identification and animal track interpretation.”

**W.O.L.F. Camps –Western Outdoor Learning Foundation** – offers overnight camps in Bellingham in which they teach tracking, edible and medicinal plants, bird language, matchless fire making, and adventure. Call 360-319-6892 or 604-813-6892.

**Seattle Audubon Society Nature Day Camp** in Magnuson Park on Lake Washington offers “hands-on learning for the young and curious naturalist.” Camps are programmed into three groups; ages 6-8, 9 to 11 and

---

**HARRY JAMIESON IN KING LEAR**

Sixth grade TOPS student Harry Jamieson is performing the role of King Lear in Shakespeare’s "King Lear" at Consolidated Works. (410 Terry Street), March 24 through April 9. The avant garde multi-media production features singing, dancing, waterfalls, and parade floats! Performances are Thursday - Sunday. Call 860-5245 for ticket information.

Woodland Park Zoo — Call 206-684-4800 and ask the education department about their half- and full-day programs, for kids of various ages, as well as their co-produced (with Seattle Children’s Theater) zoo and drama camp.

Experience Arts Camp, an extension of the Experience Music Project, is an “intense” summer arts program offering three separate sessions for aspiring artists ages 7-9, 10-12, and 13-15. Tuition for the two-week sessions is $580, with scholarships available. (Last year, one in three received a scholarship.) Applications due April 7. Call 262-3278 or email them at artscamp@experience.org

Good luck!

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMS OF INTEREST

From Julie Pickering

Youth in Focus

Intro to Black and White Photography classes for Middle Schoolers start June 19. Classes meet in Columbia City for three hours twice each week until August 24. Full scholarships are available. Recipients will be given a camera to use, film, paper, and access to the darkroom. They learn to take great pictures, develop their own film, and make exhibit quality prints. They are assigned to work one-on-one with a skilled photographer, and their best work will be framed and exhibited for public reception. Application deadline for scholarships is June 9. For an application, or more information, contact Youth in Focus at 206/723-1479 or visit their website at www.youthinfocus.org

Seattle Center Academy

This two-week program is designed to give Middle Schoolers hands-on experiences in the arts and sciences. It also provides specialized and integrated opportunities for students with disabilities. Elective activities include acting, singing, dancing, painting, video production, and more—all at the Seattle Center in classes presented by such professional groups as the Pacific Northwest Ballet, Cornish College for the Arts, Earshot Jazz, Seattle Children’s Theatre, and the Seattle Symphony. Application deadline: May 5. Open to students currently in the 7th and 8th grades. Program runs July 24-August 4, M-F, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Bus transportation, lunch, and snacks are included in $350 cost, and scholarships are available. For a brochure and application, call (206) 233-3959 or email academysc@ci.seattle.wa.us.

Chamber Music Camp

Middle School musicians with three years-plus experience on the piano, strings, woodwinds, or French Horn will enjoy a chamber music day camp held at Westside Presbyterian Church (West Seattle) August 22-26 from 10-3. Total cost: $125 for ensemble instruction from PLU professor and pianist Jane Harty and Alison Kramer. Call Alison at 935-6908 for a brochure.

Centrum

For incredible, but pricey, overnight music workshops for more advanced students (includes adults), check out Centrum’s Country Blues Workshop (June 26-July 2), Festival of American Fiddle Tunes Workshop (July 2-9), the Bud Shank Jazz Workshop (July 23-30), and Centrum/Seattle Youth Symphony’s Marrowstone Music Camp at http://www.centrum.org/ or write for brochures at Centrum, P.O. Box 1158, Port Townsend, WA 98368 (360) 385-3102. These workshops are pretty high-powered, but, boy, are they inspiring!

JUMP ROPE FOR HEART 2000

By Eric Herndon and Don Zemke

The month of February was Jump Rope for Heart month when TOPS students learn about the importance of exercise, healthy eating habits, and community service through a volunteer fundraiser for the American Heart Association.

In the beginning of the month, students were asked to challenge themselves and set a new jump roping goal. During the month, students were given opportunities to practice and work on their goals. Then on the last day of February, students demonstrated their accomplished goal or new skill.

Jump Rope for Heart fundraisers did a fantastic job collecting $3,309.50 in donations! Thanks to all of the students and parents for supporting this important program.

Summer Camp, continued from page 6
YOU WILL HEAR ME: ABOUT THE KIDS, BY THE KIDS, FOR THE KIDS

By Linda Downing

A group of very committed TOPS Middle School students have collaborated to write a series of monologues and skits to communicate their feelings on hate, social exclusion, and violence. Their show, entitled “You Will Hear Me,” will be performed to small groups of students and individual classrooms or grades this spring.

Since the material is student-written, 6th grader Kyle Fleck believes anyone who sees the show will find it useful because “they know what’s going on.” Seventh grader Maia Williams hopes people will learn to “think before you do something and realize something you do could have a consequence.” Sixth grader Marisa Morales summed it up by saying, “It’s about the kids, by the kids, for the kids.”

You Will Hear Me, directed by Shana Bestock, attracted 7th grader Peter Chiappinelli because he “loves acting.” Sixth grader Luz Garcia “always wanted to do drama and found this a good opportunity.” The entire cast thinks Shana is “really cool and does a really good job.”

The cast of You Will Hear Me has been invited to perform at the Rainier Valley Youth Theatre on April 2 at 7:00 p.m., in addition to their performances at TOPS. They will be joined by other school groups performing student-written material.

We thank PONCHO and the Seattle Public Schools’ Department of Visual and Performing Arts, and also the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation Middle School After School Activities Program for funding this extremely worthwhile project.

 MID-WINTER DANCE A SUCCESS

By Deva Crouch, 8th Grade

The February 18th “Mid-Winter” dance was a success! It was the first time TOPS Middle School students have had the opportunity to invite out-of-school friends as their guests.

We had a lot more fun with the bigger crowd of kids and certainly made a lot more money. Finally TOPS dances are something all the students really look forward to! The food, the photography, and the fact that the dance was at night really made it more exciting.
MIDDLE SCHOOL ARTIST SERIES CONTINUES

By Gregory Smart

The TOPS Middle School has been having a series of artist lectures. Most recently we had Djäerik Rudolf and architect Molly Lapatra come in and talk to us about their doings.

Treehouse Design

Djaerik (Jehr’rik) Rudolf is just like any other 13-year-old boy, if you consider normal having a three-story tree platform that you built in your backyard.

Built against a large white pine on a concrete base, the tree platform has features to rival the French cathedrals. Made almost entirely out of building materials scavenged from the back streets of Northeast Seattle and junkyards, it is built of pallets, corrugated plastic, old windows, and a multitude of hinges.

Two years after construction, the sanctuary is dull brown, camouflaging with the tree. This tree house encloses the space between the back fence and the tree, with the nest two levels right on top.

The tree house supports about five trap doors, a ladder nailed on the side for an escape route, a baseball bat for defensive purposes, windows 12 feet off the ground operated by pulleys, and a padlocked door.

Special thanks to Luzita for the use of her room and to Djaerik for showing us his tree house.

Fine Architecture

Tops parent architect Molly Lapatra also came in to show slides and talk to us about some of the buildings she has designed, including her own home, which is designed like a tugboat, complete with a bridge and lookout. Her house has bamboo hard wood floors and lights with counter balances.

Lapatra has also designed a longhouse for Evergreen State College, made from raw timber with collapsible walls and indirect lighting, and the third house in a beautiful waterfront series.

BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM Y2K

By Harry Jamieson

Even though the TOPS Boys B-Ball team wasn’t the best there was, we all had fun going to the different schools and having the challenge of playing teams we didn’t know anything about. Throughout the season, we learned the skills we needed to be out there and be worth it.

It was hard going to different schools and seeing the other teams with their fancy uniforms and huge players, when no one was very tall on our team. It was intimidating, but we kept our courage throughout the season, and it was definitely worth the commitment.

A GREAT SEASON FOR GIRLS B-BALL

By Kacie Tate

This basketball season was a great success for the TOPS girls team. It taught us a lot about team effort, promising relationships, and responsibility. Over the course of the season, we not only learned good basketball fundamentals but most of all, an appreciation for the game.

Our great leadership also made an excellent contribution to the team. The leadership we had was a outstanding force to our learning of basketball. The season we had as a team, portrayed great leadership abilities for not only each other but all the players in the league. Overall TOPS had a terrific year!
MEET YOUR TEACHERS

Each month during the 1999-2000 school year, the TOPS Newsletter is meeting the people most directly involved in your child’s education. In this issue, Jim Wells continues our series with Middle School Science teacher Dan Bloedel and Social Studies teacher David Wilhelm.

DAN BLOEDEL

TOPS NEWSLETTER: What drew you to TOPS or to teaching in general?

DAN BLOEDEL: When I came to TOPS, the Middle School science program was just starting. I was offered a position in which I could design a unique and challenging program and not worry about district constraints. TOPS also offered a full year of science rather than the half-year that all other district Middle School students get. One of the absolute best things about TOPS was the fact that I could continue to teach science to elementary students. You see, I was the elementary science specialist at T.T. Minor, which was a district science draw.

TN: What do you like about teaching science to kids?

DB: I like teaching kids because they are dynamic and growing intellectually, unlike many adults who have already arrived and aren’t into doing much more learning. Kids also know, as I do, that learning is a wonderful blend of playing and work. Many adults hold the opinion that learning is all work.

TN: How are you taking advantage of the new space this year?

DB: I am using the new science lab to do many more labs. I have had the kindergarten, 4th grade, topics, as well as the Middle School students all using the lab. Every space is being utilized to its maximum capacity.

TN: Can you share your ideas about promoting diversity at TOPS?

DB: I believe that diversity is best served when we (a public school) can offer the academic excellence of a private school. We serve diversity when privilege is not given to the wealthy or to certain ethnic groups, but rather given to those to whom an education is most important. I also believe that we need to make every opportunity for those less fortunate to have access to this program. I believe that many minority students do not come to TOPS because it is not well advertised. I believe that there are many minority parents who would love to see their children receiving the education we offer here.

TN: How have parents been involved in your curriculum this year?

DB: Parents have been especially valuable in all aspects of my environmental program. Without their support, the outdoor education program would be a bust. Parents are also useful in my class when they listen to their children talk about science at home and engage them in conversations about science.

TN: What are your professional or personal philosophy and goals?

DB: I believe that all students have the capacity to learn much more than we give them credit for. I believe that given emotional support, enthusiastic leadership, and academic discipline, students will go places they and their parents have never dreamed of. My goal is to give them that support, leadership, and discipline.

TN: Outside interests?

DB: I’m an active member of my church, and I especially enjoy ornamental pruning, landscaping, kayaking, SCUBA diving, camping, hiking, outdoor photography, and spelunking (exploring caves).

DAVID WILHELM

TOPS NEWSLETTER: How did you become a teacher?

DAVID WILHELM: As a single parent, I was actively involved in my son’s education. At the age of 43, I decided to make a career change. I spent six months as a full-time volunteer at his school, just to make sure teaching would be right for me. After deciding I had the necessary disposition and temperament to work with children, I enrolled in Antioch’s Masters of Education program.

TN: Why do you like teaching kids?

DW: I like the challenges. Each child is special. It’s a challenge to bring out the best of each child. Seeing a student succeed is a wonderful experience.

TN: To what extent do parents have a place in your classroom?

DW: The best way for parents to help their child be successful in my classroom is to be supportive of their child. That means not only academically, with homework and being enthusiastic about their child’s progress, but
**Girls Volleyball Come to TOPS**

By Don Zemke

For the first time in TOPS history, we are going to field a Middle School girls volleyball team.

We are really lucky to have Mandy Matzke as our head coach assisted by Don Zemke and Nani Castor-Peck. Mandy is a senior at Seattle University where she plays both basketball and volleyball.

Games are scheduled for Saturday mornings at Whitman Middle School, starting on March 25. See you there!

---

**Ski Program a Smashing, and Safe, Success**

Raucous applause, please, for the parents and students who worked together to make this year’s Middle School ski program a rousing success. Approximately 120 students glided through this year’s program without a broken bone or a serious “incident.”

This program is a wonderful opportunity to get some great ski instruction, some pretty good snow, and a chance to spend quality time with friends and parents away from the classroom.

All Middle Schoolers are encouraged to attend. Scholarships are available to all who need them. This year seven students’ lessons and tickets were covered by scholarships. Equipment is also easy to come by, so don’t hesitate!

Many, many thanks to the able parent leaders, Katie McKeon, Janet Moore, and Laurie Black, who organized the program, transportation, and parent chaperones!

---

Teachers, continued from page 10

also in helping them get through that often bumpy ride into young adulthood.

**TN:** Have you been able to utilize the new space this year?

**DW:** We are doing group project activities this year. Using the Middle School commons and the expanded library has given the groups more room to prepare their presentations.

**TN:** What are some of your interests outside of TOPS?

**DW:** My family, golf, hiking, and travel.

**TN:** How have you enjoyed your switch to Middle School?

**DW:** It has been a big change from third grade. Working with Middle School students requires a different approach to teaching. Facial expressions don’t work as well in Middle School. I’ve struggled some, but I feel more comfortable as the year has progressed. I’ve enjoyed watching children I had in third grade mature into young adults.

**TN:** Can you tell us about your professional goals?

**DW:** My main goal has been the same for the past seven years. It is based on the principle that all children can learn. I refuse to give up on any student. If they are not learning, it is my fault, and I need to change and do better.
RACIAL BIAS FOUND IN STUDY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By Emily Elliott

Since we in the Diversity Issues Coalition have recently been discussing the achievement gap between white children and children of color, both in the Seattle Public School District in general and TOPS in particular, the following study seems timely for our community.

The study, released early in March by the Applied Research Center, a non-profit public policy group in Oakland, California, found that racial bias exists in public schools. Black students are far more likely than whites to be suspended or expelled, and far less likely to be in gifted or advanced placement classes. The study focused on 12 large public school districts including Austin, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Durham, N.C., Los Angeles, Miami, Columbia, S.C., San Francisco, Missoula, and Providence.

Parents often feel that these are individual issues,” said Libero Della Piana, a senior researcher at the Center and a co-author of the report, “that it’s just their kid having a problem, that it’s about this teacher or that administrator, but when you look at the data, you see it’s a systemic issue along race lines.”

In all districts but Missoula, for which no data was available, black students were suspended or expelled at a higher rate than their white peers. In L.A., black students numbered 14 percent of the student body, but 30 percent of those suspended or expelled. In all nine districts that provided statistics on academic placement by race, the study found that white students were disproportionately placed in AP and gifted programs, and students of color were underrepresented. For instance, in San Francisco, blacks and Latinos make up 42 percent of the student body, but only 14 percent of AP and gifted programs. In Durham, blacks and Latinos account for 62 percent of the student body, but only 27 percent of academically advanced classes. While few of the districts studied had large Asian-American populations, the Asian-American students in most districts were overrepresented in advanced classes and underrepresented among those who were disciplined.

The study claims that the disparities amount to a “deep pattern of institutional racism.” Ten factors were examined in the study, including dropout rate, graduation rate, suspensions, expulsions, advanced and gifted classes, college admissions, and the racial demographics of the teachers compared to those of the students.

In all the districts, the percentage of white teachers was higher than the percentage of white students, often by a huge margin. In Denver, more than three-quarters of the teachers, but less than one-quarter of the students, were white. In L.A. and Chicago, about half the teachers, but only one-tenth of the students were white.

Federal regulations require the reporting of some statistics, including the racial makeup of the student body, but not expulsions and suspensions, numbers of students admitted to college by race. Nine of the districts did not report all the data requested. Three did not report data on the racial makeup of their AP and gifted classes.

It is my understanding, based on earlier studies, that when data are tracked and reported by race, problems are less easily covered up. The experience in Texas, where tracking and reporting data by race has led to an improvement in achievement, has provided an important model for this.

“Our lives begin to end the day we are silent about things that matter.”

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.
**How TOPS Students Benefit from Daily Physical Education**

*By Don Zenke & Eric Herndon*

**Physical Benefits**

A daily P.E. program helps children physically by:

- Reducing the risk of heart disease. Physical education can counteract the four major risk factors of coronary heart disease: obesity, inactivity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels.
- Improving physical fitness. Daily P.E. can improve children’s muscular strength, flexibility, muscular endurance, body composition (fat to muscle ratio), and cardiovascular endurance.
- Making bones stronger. Regular physical activity improves posture and increases bone density to create stronger bones and may help reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- Aiding in weight regulation. A daily program can help children regulate their weight by burning calories, toning their bodies, and improving their overall body composition.
- Promoting healthy active lifestyles. Physical education develops motor skills and sports skills to promote health and fitness throughout life.

**Mental Benefits**

A daily P.E. program helps children mentally by:

- Improving academic performance. Studies have shown that when I.Q.’s are the same, children who have daily physical education classes tend to get higher grades than children who don’t.
- Increasing interest in learning. Regular physical activity makes children more alert and more receptive to learning new things.
- Improving judgment. Physical education gives children practice in moral reasoning and problem solving. They learn to accept responsibility for their classmates’ safety, assume leadership in team decisions, accept moral responsibility for actions towards their teammates, and develop a sense of fair play.
- Promoting self-discipline. P.E. can teach children they are responsible for their own health and fitness. They learn to take control of their lives.
- Encouraging goal setting. P.E. gives children the time and encouragement they need to set and strive for personal, achievable goals.

**Psychological and Social Benefits**

A daily P.E. program helps children psychologically and socially by:

- Providing an outlet for stress. Physical activity becomes an outlet for releasing tension and anxiety instead of acting out delinquent behavior.
- Strengthening peer relationships. Physical education can be a major force in helping children socialize with others more successfully. Especially during late childhood and adolescence, being able to participate in dances, games, and sports is an important part of fitting in. Children learn the basic skills they’ll need in physical education, which makes new skills easier to learn.
- Reducing the risk of depression. A daily program makes children less prone to depression and generally more optimistic about their lives.
- Promoting healthier lifestyles. Physical education helps children make a habit of an active lifestyle. They learn a lifelong concern for their personal health that makes them more productive adults.

---

**2000 TOPS Calendar**

**April**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 (W)</td>
<td>Site Council Meeting 5-7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (W)</td>
<td>Diversity Issues Coalition Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (F)</td>
<td>End of 3rd quarter (Middle School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (F)</td>
<td>Editorial Comment Speech Tournament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 (M-F)</td>
<td>Spring break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-May 12</td>
<td>WASL testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 (M-F)</td>
<td>Spirit Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Tu)</td>
<td>Class picture day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Tu)</td>
<td>Double Dutch Challenge and Records Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Th)</td>
<td>All-School Diversity Celebration 5:30-9 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (W)</td>
<td>Site Council Meeting 5-7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (W)</td>
<td>Diversity Issues Coalition Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (W)</td>
<td><em>When I Grow Up</em>, SCT, Grades 2-6, 10:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 (W-F)</td>
<td>7th Grade Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 (F)</td>
<td>Teacher workshops. No school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 (M)</td>
<td>Memorial Day. No school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-2 (W-F)</td>
<td>8th Grade Camp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**June**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 (F)</td>
<td>Art Walk 5-6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 (F-S)</td>
<td>Elementary school play—James and the Giant Peach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (W)</td>
<td>Site Council Meeting 5-7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (W)</td>
<td>Diversity Issues Coalition Meeting, 7-8:30 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 (Su)</td>
<td>Site Council Retreat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 (W)</td>
<td>8th Grade Passage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 (Th)</td>
<td>K-2 Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 (F)</td>
<td>Last student day. 2:20 dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 (M)</td>
<td>Last teacher day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Elementary Play is Coming!**

Mark your calendars now. The elementary play, “James and the Giant Peach” will share the spotlight with the TOPS Art Walk when it opens on June 2. Back from last year are Edd Key to create the music and David Crandall to write the words. Auditions will be in early April.
WHY CHESS?

From Mark Morales

Many people ask me “Why chess? Why do you spend so much time with this chess stuff?” One reason is my sons love it. Why deny them anything that gives them so much pleasure and is such an effective teaching tool? A good friend of mine puts it this way:

Chess is the gymnasium of the mind (Goethe). Chess provides children with an opportunity to play at thinking. Playing at thinking—not playing at knowing. Imagination is more important than knowledge (Einstein). Chess is not a game of knowledge but rather a game of creation, imagination, figuring things out and making things work out. Every animal plays in such a way as to practice for their adult life and exploits: lion cubs practice stalking, antelope young play at running, dodging and escaping, baby rams practice head-butting. Human children need to and do practice thinking.

Chess allows risk taking with thinking. Children are often not given the chance to use their minds in situations that could result in ‘failure.’ As adults, we all too often require thinking to produce only certain, required, obvious, or deterministic results. And we expect this from children—often inappropriately. Chess allows children to push the envelope of their minds—push their creativity—push their imagination—and yet pushing with a chance to be wrong is the only truly hard pushing possible. As a game the consequences of such risk taking are manageable. Chess allows mental strength to be developed while managing the possible consequences of a risk well taken but ultimately resulting in loss. Chess simulates life and allows children to ‘take the gloves off’ in a mental arena that develops strong minds.

Chess is life in miniature. Chess allows students to live one life per game—seeing the beginning, middle, and end of that life. Chess is narrative: through a chess game we tell our story. In chess we can practice at living, practice at building a life, and living (despite the sting of losing a game) to tell the tale and informing our real-life decision-making. Chess playing can be accomplished by use of any of a myriad of thinking styles, learning styles, and individual student personalities and preferences. Chess can be visual, kinesthetic, ecological, natural, verbal, and emotive. Chess is a robust activity that engages the whole mind and often the whole heart. Chess means time on the task of learning and doing and then self-asking more learning and more doing.

To play chess is to link together perception, visualization, calculation, analysis, evaluation, judgment, and execution. Chess generates complete cognitive throughput with a built-in feedback device: your opponent’s replies to your moves. Playing chess is exercise of the mind in which all the various ‘mental muscle’ groups get a workout. Chess is a self-organizing and self-generating teaching machine with intrinsic rewards of beauty, satisfaction, and victory. Chess play is not a closed loop. Chess players must be open to the moves and thoughts of their opponent. And good chess only results when both players are fully involved. Chess is a form of mutual instruction in which each student becomes the teacher of the opponent. Chess is an excellent teaching tool because it is an excellent learning device. To play chess is to be learning; both at the specific level of the game at hand and learning the general meta-rules and meta-heuristics for future game (and life) strategy and tactics. One’s opponent can be seen as an information source: as the game unfolds each opponent gradually informs the other of their plans. An opponent’s move is a piece of novel data. Chess players need to be ‘informed’ by their opponent’s play and integrate that information into their own thinking.

Chess is local and it is global. Chess links the ideas of strategy with the actions of tactics. Chess requires planning ahead and integrating that planning with expected activity on the opponent’s part. Chess is a synthesis of one’s own initial ideas (thesis) and the opponent’s consequent replies (antithesis). Chess requires contingent thinking, conditional thinking, and probabilistic thinking. Chess is an art, a science, and a sport.

Chess has an extensive 1400-year recorded history. Chess has a body of recorded work and a notational system analogous to music and mathematics. Chess has contributed to worldwide culture as an international endeavor, which has deepened the understanding and aspirations of speakers in all languages and people of all nations. Children can choose to view whichever facet of chess is most agreeable and comfortable to them. Chess is a game that engages human imagination.

Chess is expressive of the very thing that makes humans unique: consciousness. Consciousness is often defined by neuropsychologists as the self-reflective ability to simulate activities and events in the future. And chess, perhaps more than any other game or sport, permits and requires precise simulation of future situations and events. Chess also teaches empathy—the most valuable of all human emotions. Chess requires players to place themselves into the position of a tacit opponent and to think their thoughts, see their options, and devise their plans.

Chess embodies the practice of detective work, forensics, economics, engineering, physics, mathematics, architecture, marketing, jurisprudence, and anthropology. Chess requires deductive thinking, examination of the evidence, resource allocation and maintenance, construction and fortification design, causal and interactive thinking, counting, calculation, and geometric thinking, structural design and infrastructural maintenance, information management and presentation, careful judgment and decision making, and the human elements of courage, self-confidence, and bold action.
**That Good Lookin’ Library Needs a Hand**

*From Steve Haines, Librarian*

Do you have a passion for putting things away? Need to keep those hands busy? Love to be in a bright, beautiful room? Well then, the library is the place for you. I am finding that this place is too big for one person to manage efficiently. Even though there are several wonderful parents volunteering on a consistent basis, I could use some drop-in help with shelving books and straightening up. We are talking minutes of your spare time, not hours. So if you are dropping off your child early or coming early for pick-up, stop by the spacious library and “lend a hand.” Thanks!

---

**The Library’s the Place to Be**

*By Steve Haines*

The TOPS Library, that bright inviting place, is usually open before and after school. General library hours are 8:45 a.m. to 4:45ish. All are welcome.

Children using the library must be supervised by an adult at all times. Occasionally I must leave early. At those rare times if there is no adult to fill in, the library will be closed to student use unless accompanied by an adult.

As a gentle reminder, the library is for reading, doing homework, doing research, working on projects, etc. For those who need childcare, TOPS has a wonderful before-and-after-school daycare facility (Kids Co.).

---

**Chess, continued from page 14**

And, of course, chess is a game. Chess is the Trojan Horse of modern education. Children know that chess is meant for them, that it is not an adults-only activity. Children see chess as continuous with their play, their games, and their fun-filled endeavors. And yet chess has decision-making and intelligence-simulating content which has challenged the likes of Alan Turing and Von Neumann along with informing Decision Theory and Computer Science for years.

The most complicated structure in the universe is the human brain. Humans are fully challenged only when they interact with something as complicated as themselves—another human mind. Through chess we get to know ourselves and another mind-at-work—that must surely be the content of a valuable education.

(This article was written by Leo Stefurak, Ph.D., Advanced Life Master U.S.C.F for the Lakeridge Chess Club, Ask Dr. Chess Column, and is reprinted with permission from Leo Stefurak.)

---

**GOT VIDEOS?**

What are you doing with your “outdated” videos? You know, the ones that the family used to LOVE and now won’t get near! Here’s your chance to do some spring video housecleaning… Please consider bringing your videos to the office and donating them to the video drive! All videos will be collected and given to Child Haven and Children’s Home Society for their family centers. The drive will end on April 25. If you have any questions, please call Alex Marts (Mary’s class) at 206-632-9741. THANKS!

---

**Read to Succeed**

*By Steve Haines*

The Seattle Supersonics are once again sponsoring the “Read to Succeed” program. Students read at least 20 minutes a night for 20 days during the month, and fill out a record sheet. The Sonics reward students with tickets to basketball games. Through a random drawing at each school, one student receives two tickets for an upcoming game.

Malik Owens was our first “Reader Leader” and enjoyed a recent Sonics’ win. Reading forms are available from the teachers or in the library for each month.

Students enjoy keeping track of what they read each month. On the 23rd of March, 50 students who have participated during the year will be venturing to the Key Arena for a “Reading Rally” where they will listen to several Sonics players describe their reading experiences. They will also be entertained by “Magic Charlie” and a host of amusing animal acts. This annual event is extremely motivational for the students.
A BIG THANKS TO ALL TOPS AUCTION VOLUNTEERS, DONORS, & PARTICIPANTS

Once again, on Saturday evening, March 18, the TOPS community enjoyed a wildly successful evening of fun and profit. We'll be able to continue to fund a variety of academic and extracurricular enhancements for our kids thanks to your generosity and spirit.

Auction night itself gave all in attendance a stirring sense of the TOPS community, as we all rubbed elbows not only with familiar friends but also with parents and teachers most of us don’t ordinarily run into during the course of the school year.

To all those who procured auction items, helped set up and clean up, worked behind the scenes, and made it all happen: Congratulations on a job well done!