

# PUP PRESS

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## THE THURSDAY NOTE:

At Thurgood Marshall Elementary, we believe that a positive school culture is very important, so we do a number of things to promote and nurture respectful interactions and behaviors.

- 1) We use the "Positive Discipline" approach to classroom management\*.** Positive Discipline emphasizes mutual respect, and a culture in which students' feelings, thoughts and solutions are valued. Instead of focusing on negative actions alone, staff, teachers and students try to understand the motivation behind behaviors, then look for ways to solve problems and encourage good choices. All of our teachers have training in techniques to facilitate class meetings that enable students to explore and practice how to be responsible citizens with courage, confidence and emotional intelligence.
- 2) We collect data on unexpected behaviors, and look at each incident as well as the bigger picture.** For every incident, a "behavior referral form" is completed, then sent to the Principal for her review. We use a database to log the incident description, location and time, and who was involved. Each month, School Counselor Meghan Kaloper facilitates a meeting with a group of teachers to review the data and brainstorm ways to decrease incidents or problem-solve issues in a preventative manner. We look for trends that indicate an unhealthy bias or problem area that needs more resources.
- 3) More than 40 of our 4th- and 5th-graders are "Conflict Mediators."** They attended five hours of training in October to learn how to assist younger students in resolving issues on the playground by following the Conflict Manager Process. Mediators position themselves in a neutral zone so as not to choose sides and listen to both perspectives before moving towards a solution. Students are encouraged to express their own solutions to the problem at hand. The Mediators are generous with their time, helpful to younger kids, and learning good communication skills in the process.

**Our approach is working! Not only have incidents gone down each month this year, but they decreased significantly each of the last four years.** What has keyed this success? We concluded that the class meetings are a powerful way to resolve issues and to promote a positive school culture. And we think it makes a difference that we have a team that reviews the types of incidents and tries to be proactive in defusing them.

I encourage you to talk with your child about their weekly class meetings, and to ask them how they help create a positive school culture. We welcome your feedback.

In closing, I wish you a happy, healthy, and rejuvenating holiday break. Thank you for your support and participation in your child's education; we couldn't do it without you. We look forward to seeing you again on Jan. 6, 2014. Happy New Year!

- Christine Helm, Assistant Principal

\* *Positive Discipline in the Classroom, Revised 3rd Edition: Developing Mutual Respect, Cooperation, and Responsibility in Your Classroom* by Jane Nelsen, Ed. D. Available at the Seattle Public Library and online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## SPS Considers New Math Programs

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) is adopting new instructional materials for the math program in grades K-5. You have a voice in this process! All program materials – textbooks, workbooks, teacher manuals, etc. – are on display at the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence at 2445 Third Ave. S. The building will be open during winter break, with the exceptions of Dec. 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1.

Public comments due by Jan. 8, 2014. To learn more, visit SPS online at: <http://bit.ly/MathAdoptionSPS14>.

**Want more?** Visit the Thurgood Marshall PTA online at [www.tmlink.org](http://www.tmlink.org) for more Pup Press, a full calendar of school events, and more.

## EVENTS CALENDAR

**Dec. 20, Friday**  
1-Hour Early Dismissal

**Dec. 23 - Jan. 5**  
NO SCHOOL - Winter Break

**Jan. 6, 2014, Monday**  
Back to school!

**Jan. 10, 2014 Friday**  
Registration closes for Winter Enrichment classes

**Jan. 15, Wednesday**  
2-Hour Early Dismissal

**Jan. 16, Thursday**  
PTA General Meeting at 6:30 pm

## Amazon.com Gives 6% to Thurgood Marshall

This holiday season earn money for our school at no cost to yourself by using our Amazon.com link at [www.tmlink.org](http://www.tmlink.org). Every purchase you make using our school link automatically earns 6% for Thurgood Marshall.

## "Birds & Bees" Guest Speaker at PTA Mtg

Join us at the PTA General Meeting on Jan. 16 at 6:30 pm to hear guest speaker Amy Lang present "Birds + Bees + Kids." Lang will discuss age-appropriate ways to approach this topic with kids. It's sure to be an interesting evening!





## UPDATE: Annual Giving Fund

**Total Raised to date:** \$84,245

*Hooray!* We met our Winter Challenge Match goal thanks to your December donations totalling \$24,000. Thank you to everyone who donated to the Thurgood Marshall Annual Giving Fund this month.

We must still raise \$45,000 to meet our \$130,000 goal for the year. So far 30% of TM families have donated, which means we are halfway to our goal of 60% participation from families!

The Annual Giving Fund supports much of what makes our school thrive:

- Community Events such as the Fall Dance and Bingo Night
- Partial salaries for Counselor Meghan Kaloper, Librarian Merilee Hudson, and Music Teacher Ken Pendergrass
- School improvements, such as emergency supply kits and overhead ceiling projectors for classrooms

Please know that **any size donation is greatly appreciated!** There are many ways to donate. Consider dividing your donation over a longer period, and donating just a small monthly amount. Corporate matches help, too. You can send cash, or a check made out to Thurgood Marshall PTA, to P.O. Box 22305, Seattle, WA 98122. Or donate online at [www.tmlink.org](http://www.tmlink.org).

Happy holidays from the PTA and thanks for supporting our school!

## Thank You and Happy Holidays From the PTA

As we break for the holidays and reflect on our first trimester of school, we want to thank you for supporting the Thurgood Marshall PTA and the events and programs held this year.

Because of **the hard work of many volunteers**, we have already hosted grade-level potlucks, the Fall Dance, and the Pancake Breakfast/Art Walk. Volunteers also worked hard behind the scenes to support Tutu's Pantry, the Annual Giving Fund, the Scholastic Book Fair, and the Hearing and Vision testing, among other day-to-day activities that keep the school running.

Your time, energy and ideas can **help us improve our efforts**. Our school is fortunate to have a large, vibrant and hard-working community, and we hope even more of you will volunteer in the New Year.

Do you have an idea for a new event or program at school? Grade-level events are especially appreciated, but require a few volunteers to succeed. In the past, **parent volunteers** have hosted a movie night, a craft night, and a pizza night. The PTA can provide funding to facilitate these kinds of community-building events. We believe the more involved you are, the more connected you will feel to the school and your own child's experience here.

In closing, **we thank our staff and families** for everything you do to keep Thurgood Marshall a positive environment for our students. Your efforts help bind us together!

We wish you and your families a safe, relaxing and enjoyable holiday season!

- Tasha Irvine and Sharmila Williams, PTA Co-Presidents

## Tutu's Pantry Has Many to Thank

A recent headline in *Pacific Magazine* read, "Making a difference for others, one task at a time." I can't think of a better way to describe how Tutu's Pantry works in our school community. It is...

- Zora Sowinska and her moms, Suzanne and Ruth, picking up 30 loaves of bread from Franz Bakery every Friday.
- Holly, Alaine, and Ginger shelving food every week. Mica, Phil, and Jenny stuffing backpacks every week.
- The many parents who remember to pick up an extra jar of peanut butter or can of tuna fish. And their students remembering to bring those jars and cans to school the next day!
- Tutu students returning their backpacks each week.
- The anonymous donor who provided grocery giftcards for the two-week Winter Break.
- The Peyree family, who during the emotional time of a loved one's death, donated \$5,000.
- Another anonymous donor who gave \$400 so every student could get a new book during Book Fair and, of course, Ms Hudson for making sure they get them!
- Nurse Molly and her volunteers measuring 78 individual feet so students can start the holidays with a brand new pair of shoes thanks to Nordstrom and New Balance.
- The Japanese Presbyterian Church faithfully bringing food every Monday, crocheting warm hats for every head, and donating mittens for all those hands.
- Ms. Patu and Ms. Dickey tracking who's moved, who needs help, and making sure backpacks get delivered.

Here's to waking up every day in the New Year and continuing to serve our community "one task at a time."

- Barbara Staley, honored to be the Tutu's Pantry Coordinator



## Pancake Breakfast Thank You

A huge shout-out to Audrey Querns and Mark Lovre for organizing the last three years of Pancake Breakfasts at Thurgood Marshall. More than 330 students, family and staff joined us for pancakes and coffee last Saturday morning.

Thank you to the parents who donated their time, helping with everything from procuring food donations to flipping pancakes and hanging art for the Art Walk. They include: Catherine Rigor-Hammond, Tina Shepard, Kyle Shepard, Greg Miller, Laurie Nakamoto, Barbara Grant, Christine Shigaki, Tatiana Gellein, Karen Pinkard, Andy Podolske, Jill Raynor Holdcroft, Matthew Bates, Sharmila Williams, Julia Janak, Katy Ransom, Suzanne Wastier, Erinn McIntyre, Doug Irvine, Jenny Ott, Wendy Eckert, Tasha Irvine, Steve Eckert, Mei Li & Mark Gaer, Catherine Hynds, Chris Barnett, Tracey Breslich, Mark Breslich, Ralina Joesph, Caryn Gold, Cambria Cox, Leigh Mercer and her mom. Also a special thanks to art teacher Becky Martin and volunteer Tina Shepard for organizing the Art Walk.

**Have an article for Pup Press?** Send it to Julia Janak at [juliajanak@gmail.com](mailto:juliajanak@gmail.com). If your e-mail submission is not acknowledged within 24 hours, please call or text to confirm receipt at 206-473-0980.