

Beacon Hill International School News

A World of Learners

Published by the Staff and PTA of

Beacon Hill International School

2025 14th Avenue South (206) 252-2700

Dr. Susie Murphy, Principal

Maythia Airhart, PTA President

November 2, 2009



From Principal Dr. Murphy

Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends of Beacon Hill International School,

Our students, our staff, and all of you work very hard to be sure that your children are successful academically. The results have been gratifying. Many students here at Beacon Hill International School learn English at the same time as they learn to read, write, problem solve in mathematics and acquire information about the natural and social world. Research shows that it can take as long as ten years to acquire the academic English language necessary to perform at standard, but many of our students defy those numbers and meet standard within just a few years.

As a School-Wide Title I School, we receive federal funds to help us in our efforts to have every child at or above their grade-level standard in reading and mathematics. The federal government monitors our efforts through the number of students who successfully pass the WASL in third, fourth and fifth grade. We have made or exceeded the expectations set by the state for the past ten years. That success is termed “making AYP.” AYP is Adequate Yearly Progress. Every school receiving federal Title I funds needs to make AYP each year.

This past spring, however, we did not make

AYP in the area of Limited English Proficiency in reading and mathematics. This means that we are in a “warning year.” If we do make AYP on the new Measurement of Student Progress (MSP) assessments this spring, we will no longer have a “warning.” If, however, we do not make AYP on the spring tests, we will have to move into School Improvement. This is a lengthy process designed to help schools who have students who are struggling.

We are putting considerable resources towards achieving Adequate Yearly Progress for all our students this year. We have after school tutoring and homework assistance four days a week, one-on-one and small group instruction for struggling students daily, instructional assistants who support children in their native language, and Washington Reading Corps AmeriCorps and Vista members who work with children on a daily basis. In addition to the incredible work that is already happening at Beacon Hill International School, we are hiring an additional bilingual teacher, tutors who will work with struggling students, and providing teachers with additional professional development opportunities to help them better meet the needs of all of their students.

Parents and guardians can help by making sure that children come to school on time, dressed in their uniforms and ready to learn. You can come to the parent/teacher

conferences later this month to learn other ways in which you can help your child be successful at school. Every child has the opportunity to be successful by coming to school. Parents, teachers and the community can ensure that this happens when we all work together.

Sincerely,
Dr. Susie Murphy
Principal

Welcome New Staff

Welcome to our new Bilingual Somali IA, **Abdi Adan** who has taken Khadar Ahmed's place and to our new Bilingual Spanish IA, **Maria Balbin**.

Welcome back to **Helen Luk** who is our new Special Education Resource teacher. Helen used to be our Bilingual Chinese IA for many years, and was at another school for the beginning of this year, but now she's back!

Parent/Teacher Conferences

This is a reminder that all elementary parent/teacher conferences will be held on:

Monday, November 23rd
Tuesday, November 24th &
Wednesday, November 25th

Elementary schools will **not** have classes those three days and will be closed the following two days (November 26th and November 27th) for the Thanksgiving Holiday.

Most conferences will be held during the scheduled conference days, but Beacon Hill International School will also have some evening conference times available on Monday, November 23rd. Our Instructional Assistants will be setting up conference times for families who need translators.

Following that, teachers will contact English-speaking parents to arrange the remaining conferences.

The November Parent/Teacher Conferences are an opportunity for you to share what you think is important for the teacher to know about your child. It is also an occasion for the teacher to help you see what your child is doing well, what your child finds challenging and what you, your child's teacher and your child can do to ensure a successful academic year.

The best way for you to prepare for your child's conference is to think about your child's strengths and areas of need. Then come to your conferences prepared with questions about your child's progress in school. It is also important to bring any information about your child that his or her teacher might need to know. Making a list of questions and relevant information to bring to the conference is always an excellent idea.

These are not report card conferences. The first report card grading period is not over until Friday, December 4th. Report Cards will be prepared and sent home on Monday, December 14th.

With over 440 students in the school this year, arranging conference times will be a significant challenge. Each conference will last 20 minutes. We are making an effort to schedule families with multiple students on the same day, with conference times close together. It is imperative that parents come on time for their conference.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you cannot make your scheduled conference time.

Pre-Conference Checklist

The questions below are suggested as ideas to think about in preparation for your parent teacher/conference. You may want to write down information that you want to share with the teacher and staff and/or bring this checklist as a reminder.

Child's Name _____
Conference (Date/Time) _____

What do I hope will happen at the Conference?

What do I need as far as support for the conference? (Communication needs: Interpreter? Advocate?) - *confirm with staff before meeting*

What do I want to share to help the teacher better understand my child?

- My child's strengths.....
- Health Information.....

During my child's free time at home he/she likes to

When it is time for homework, my child....

When my child is having problems at home, what works with us is

Some information from my child's history or present home situation that may be influencing how he/she is doing

Concerns about my child are.....

Some questions that I want to ask the teacher are

Some positive comments that I plan to share with the teacher are

How would I like my child's teacher to communicate with me? By phone? E-mail? Other? (*inform teacher during meeting*)

Some questions I have about the school and the rest of the year are....

BHIS a Title 1 School

BHIS receives significant funding from the Federal Title 1 program. With these funds, we provide in-class and after-school support for students beyond what is offered in the classroom. In addition to supplemental tutoring programs, family involvement is a strong goal of the Title 1 program. Research has shown that student achievement and parent involvement are significantly linked.

We will be revising our parent involvement plan for 2009-2010 school year this fall. I invite any parent who would like to give input into this plan to join me on Thursday night, November 12th from 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the school Library. We are always looking for ways that our BHIS community can become more inclusive of families and responsive to parent concerns.

--by Helen Finch, Title 1 Teacher

November Calendar of Events

Oct. 26 – Dec. 9: Penny Harvest

Fri., Nov. 6: Picture Retakes

Wed., Nov. 11: Veterans Day Holiday – NO SCHOOL

Fri., Nov. 20: Free Dress Day

Nov. 19, 20, 23, 24: Book Fair in Library

Nov. 23, 24, 25: Parent/Teacher Conferences – NO SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS

Nov. 26 & 27: Thanksgiving Holiday – NO SCHOOL

Mon., Nov. 30: Newsletter Deadline – bhinternationalnewsletter@gmail.com

BHIS T-Shirts

T-Shirts were delivered to students the week of November 2nd. A few orders had some substitutions made. If you are not happy with your substitution, please contact allisondelong@yahoo.com to request a change or speak with Nancy Fujimoto as soon as possible. Thank you everyone for your orders. We had over 150 t-shirts and sweat-shirts ordered!!

Family Volunteer of the Month

The Family Volunteer of the Month for October is **Guadalupe Hernandez**. Guadalupe is the Chair of the Latino Family Comité, which has monthly meetings in the Multi-Purpose Room. Guadalupe's son, Adrian Ortiz Hernandez is in A1 and A3, and she often helps in the classroom. Thank you, Guadalupe for all your help at BHIS!

Community Volunteer of the Month

The Community Volunteer of the Month for October comes to us from the UW Pipeline program. **Jaelyn Getas** attends the UW and volunteers 3 afternoons a week in E3, the Bilingual Homework Center, and the Powerful Schools After School Homework Center. Jaelyn will be volunteering at BHIS until the winter holiday break. Thanks, Jaelyn!

Box Tops for Education

Thank you to **Sung Lee**, who submitted 1,000 BoxTops for Education logos from our school, and 1,100 from the 6th graders she teaches at Seattle Academy of Arts & Sciences, for a total of **\$210** for BHIS! Thank you for the generosity of her students to our school. Sung has accepted the position of **BHIS PTA Secretary!** and has turned over the reigns of BoxTops Coordinator to **Juliet Avestruz**. Thank you!

Volunteer Opportunities

Lunchroom Helpers: Lunchroom Manager, Donna McCallister, is looking for volunteers to help serve lunch from 11:40a.m. – 12:50p.m. Volunteers receive a free school lunch! If you can help, please stop by the cafeteria at this time or contact Donna at: dlmccallister@seattleschools.org or (206) 252-2710. Thank you.

Book Fair: School Librarian, Mary Thompson, is looking for volunteers to help at the Book Fair on Nov. 19 & 20 (before school and during lunch), and Nov. 23 & 24 any time, all day during Parent/Teacher Conferences. Please contact Mary Thompson at (206) 252-2712 or mathompson@seattleschools.org. Thank you.

News from the Washington Reading Corps

Penny Harvest has officially begun! The Washington Reading Corps would like to congratulate our 2009-2010 Penny Harvest Student Leaders: Juanita Hernandez, Shakur Shire, Patrick Aquito, Kaitlyn Vo, Van Pham, Kelly Vong, Stefania Escoz, Ian McGeoy, T'Asia Holden, Dova Castañeda, Kasey Rogue, David Sy, and Mekhi Airhart.

Penny Harvest is a student-run and student-led philanthropy project. Students gather pennies from friends, family, and neighbors during the fall and winter months to meet the "25 Sack Challenge" -- that's 750 pounds of pennies! If they meet their goal, the students receive a \$1,000 grant and a "Philanthropy Roundtable" where they will discuss community issues, debate causes, and interview different non-profit organizations.

The "harvest" or "collection" period is from **October 26 to December 4**. While pennies

are preferred, loose change, cash, and personal checks are also accepted. The Penny Harvest Student Leaders will convene regularly January-March to determine how they and their peers want to distribute the grant funds to improve their community. Final awards will be announced April, 2010.

Our first **Literacy Night** will be held **December 9, 2009** from **7:30-9:00 p.m.** Our theme will be **“Stories around the Kitchen Table”** and will feature food, recipes, and folklore from around the world and the Beacon Hill community. Bring the whole family for a night of reading, tasting, and storytelling!

We love volunteers! If you're interested in working with the Washington Reading Corps by becoming a classroom literacy tutor or volunteering for our literacy night, please contact:
jmbeck1@seattleschools.org.

School Pictures

School pictures have arrived and were distributed to the students. If you have any problems with your child's pictures, please contact Nancy Fujimoto at (206) 252-2735 or nkfujimoto@seattleschools.org.

Picture Retake Day is **Friday, Nov. 6th**. Students retaking their picture must return their original packet to give to the photographer on this day. This is the time for new students and those who were absent on Picture Day in September to take their picture. Students not ordering pictures still need to take their picture for their library card and for the yearbook. Students having their picture taken on Retake Day do not have to wear their uniform.

Lost and Found

Please check the Lost and Found table in front of the main showcase by the office. There are many coats, jackets, sweaters, and sweatshirts that have been lost since the beginning of the school year. It is also helpful if you write your child's name on the tag of his/her jacket! Thank you.

Outstanding Teacher Award



On Tuesday, October 6th, a representative from Office Max came to Beacon Hill to surprise and present **Sue Fluegel (C3)** with an **Outstanding Teacher Award**. Her class, and teammate Andy Pickard, were in on the surprise. She received a new chair, a digital camera and printer, and a box filled with goodies from Office Max. Office Max also presented our school with 200 binders. Congratulations Ms. Fluegel!

2009 MOHAI Educator of the Year



Shannon Foster had been working with children in social service positions for several years when she decided to pursue a Masters in Social Work. On the first day of orientation for the program in Washington, DC, she realized this was not what she really wanted to be doing. She packed up and came home to the Pacific Northwest, where she carefully examined each of the previous jobs she'd held, analyzing what it was about them that she found fulfilling. This process eventually led to her decision to become a teacher.

After getting a degree from Antioch University and student teaching at Lawton Elementary, Shannon took a position at Beacon Hill Elementary School (now Beacon Hill International School) in Seattle, where she's been for the past five years, and teaching fourth grade for the past three years.

As a young person, Shannon thought of history as concerned with dates, people and facts to memorize. When she first started teaching, she was consumed with focusing on mandatory requirements and didn't have the time to think about much else. But her studies in Cultural Anthropology had ignited an interest in the many powerful ways various societies met their needs. She also studied languages and attended school in France, and was thrilled when she began to have time to incorporate some of that passion and perspective into her teaching.

Beacon Hill's designation as an "International School" last year supplied the focus and energy needed to integrate global perspectives into the curriculum. As Shannon and her colleagues pursued the selected theme of Chinese migration, they found there were few resources and realized they would have to write their own curriculum. That project and Shannon's teaching partner's familiarity with MOHAI educators brought her to the museum. Shannon remarked that it was a wonderful experience previewing the museum, exploring the artifacts in trunks, and being offered help with image searches. They followed up with a field trip, where the students participated in MOHAI's Cracking the Code program, which they loved. It's both role-playing and decision-making, Shannon points out, that assure the learning will last. Students are able to take those experiences back to the classroom where the influence continues.

Ninety percent of Shannon's students are either immigrants or come from immigrant families.

The particular impact an ethnic group may have had on this region is very powerful for them, she says. Shannon illustrates this with the story of a student who had not been connected to his country of origin or to this country—who was disconnected from school in general. He participated in Shannon's Country of Origin program, and only when she met with his mother at the end of the year did she hear how much he loved the program, feeling for the first time an affinity with his family's country.

In the nomination for Shannon, her principal Dr. Susie Murphy wrote, "One particular strength is her ability to create a positive classroom climate in which students take responsibility for their own choices, are supported as they learn constructive ways to define and solve problems and develop compassion and empathy for their classmates."

Jim Rupp, Vice President of the MOHAI Board of Trustees, who led the selection committee for MOHAI Educator of the Year, said, "Thousands of students visit MOHAI each year, and most often they are brought by teachers who recognize the value of exposing their students to our history. There are many who take their limited resources and create innovative programs to get the kids excited about where we've been and where we're going in this region. Shannon Foster was one of those exceptional teachers who deserves special recognition."

This is the third year MOHAI will be honoring an educator. Shannon will be presented with her award, which includes a check for \$1000, at the annual History Makers Gala on November 6.

--Taken from the MOHAI newsletter

Walk-a-Thon Goal Exceeded!

\$10,785 and Still Counting!

Thanks to everyone who participated in the First Annual Beacon Hill International School (BHIS) Walk-a-Thon on Friday, October 23. For a first-time event at BHIS, the Walk-a-Thon was a huge success. We exceeded our goal of \$10,000 and we are still counting!

A very special thank you goes out to PTA Fundraising Co-chair and Walk-a-Thon Coordinator **Erin Musser**. Erin's talent and enthusiasm were the driving force behind the success of this fundraiser. She kept spirits high and event costs low. Way to go Erin!

The proceeds from the Walk-a-Thon benefit the BHIS Parent Teacher Association and are used to supplement the cost of school programs. If your participation included a monetary donation and you need a tax donation receipt for your records, please contact PTA Treasure Leslie Stewart at noahles@q.com or (206) 329-1305.

Walk-a-Thon Pt. 2: In the Trenches



It was a typical Fall Seattle Day, cool, damp and dark as I made my way up McClellan and turned right onto Beacon Ave South.

My Co-Chair and I had made it VERY clear to all that this Walk-a-Thon would happen on the Upper Field RAIN or SHINE, but my mind was playing tricks on me, telling me that the kids (not to mention the adults) would certainly catch their death of cold. Or it may have been that *I* didn't want to feel damp for the next two weeks.

Nevertheless, I rolled into the school's front lobby ready to meet my morning set up volunteers. I didn't know a lot of them and I was worried that they would make the "rational" decision and stay home. But, at 8am I had 8 parents (and 1 grandparent) ready to set up the track. I showed them the drawing of how we wanted the track to look, gave everyone their instructions and by 9:05 we had a race track at the Upper Field, complete with cups of water, water jugs, orange slices and thumping music.

The Fourth Grade class was the first group to arrive. They reported to their positions, ready to move. I had a megaphone in the center of the track, and when I counted down and yelled "GO!" they were off—running, laughing and HAVING FUN! Teachers jogged along with the kids, cheering or helping the occasional slipping-victim to their feet.

Everything ran like clockwork until the K-Pod arrived after lunch. During the first lap, a single K-Pod member swerved off toward the far side fences, leading the entire pack with him! But swift guidance by the K-Pod teachers and volunteers avoided disaster.

As of today, we have raised more than \$10,785 and still have more envelopes coming in!

The only reason this event went off without a hitch was because of the AMAZING

volunteers who moved tables, sliced oranges, encouraged uncertain kids, and checked off each lap on a soggy piece of paper protected only by a Ziploc bag. An unidentified first-grader said this: "I LOVED the Walk-a-Thon! It went super good and we got lots of exercise. You should have been there." I don't know if anything else needs to be said.

By Erin Musser - Co-Chair of Fundraising Committee for BHIS PTA

Students Learn Empathy from a Baby

I am writing to share some exciting news. For the second year, Beacon Hill International School continues to participate in the social skills program called **Roots of Empathy** (ROE). This program teaches children about feelings – recognizing their own feelings and understanding the feelings of others. Once every three weeks, a baby and his/her parent(s) will visit the classroom.

This year, in October, we once again started using this social skills curriculum in two 5th grades (C-1, Ms. Chavez, & C-2, Mr. Okada). Also, for the first time, we are using ROE in two 3rd grade classes, (B-2, Ms. Alexakos, & B-3, Ms. Kim). A trained ROE Instructor gathers the children in the classroom around a green blanket and together they watch the baby grow. There will be 27 (ROE) classes and 9 family visits during the school year.

During the family visits, ROE hopes for the mom/dad and baby to feel as comfortable as possible doing whatever the baby needs. As a natural part of growing and developing, the baby's needs and actions may be unpredictable. The children predict and cheer when their ROE baby reaches the "developmental milestones" of the first year. "She can roll over!" "He got his first tooth!" "He can sit up!" "She can crawl!"

The ROE Instructor coaches the children in observing the baby and reading the cues the baby gives as to how the baby is feeling. "Is the baby happy or sad?" "How can you tell?" We use this discussion as a lever for the children to talk about their own emotions and to understand how their classmates feel: "Do you smile when you're happy?" "How can you tell if your friend is happy?" Being able to understand how other people are feeling is called **empathy**. The ROE Instructor also, visits the classroom before and after each "Family Visit" to prepare and reinforce teachings using a specialized lesson plans for each visit. Some themes covered include: Crying, Caring and Planning, Emotions, Sleep, Safety, Communication, and Who Am I.

For more than ten years across Canada and internationally, thousands of children have been learning respect and care for one another with the lessons started through their Roots of Empathy baby. We are the first U.S state to participate.

The ROE pilot project has high potential to be utilized in many other classes in the future. We're excited to have continued to be chosen to participate in Roots of Empathy and we hope you are too. If you have questions or want more information, please contact me at (206) 252-2702 or E-mail, (mmweiss@seattleschools.org).

Onward, Markos Weiss, Counselor

Join the PTA!

We want YOU to join the PTA!

We have 92 members and room for more!
Contact Jill Davies at (206) 328-3976 or
jillcurtisdavies@gmail.com.

See www.beaconhillinternationalschool.org
for committee vacancies including
Nominating Chair, Language Representatives
and Assistant Grant Writer. Membership
forms are on the PTA bulletin board!

School-Banking at BHIS

Last spring, Washington Mutual discontinued their school-banking program. **Washington Federal Savings Bank** is now offering a school-banking program. Your student can now open a school savings account through Washington Federal and make deposits at school, starting on **Wednesday, December 2nd**, at 9:00 a.m. by the school cafeteria. Thank you **Doris Fuentes**, who has again agreed to be our School Banking Coordinator. Please see the attached flyer for more information and fill out the application on the back to open a new school savings account. Please have your student bring the application on banking day. Minimum deposit to open an account is \$5, and Washington Federal will match another \$5 into the account. A representative from Washington Federal will be at school on Dec. 2nd to assist and answer questions. School-banking will be on **Wednesdays**. The nearest Washington Federal Savings Bank is located at Beacon Ave. S. and S. McClellan St. Please contact Nancy Fujimoto @ (206) 252-2735 or nkfujimoto@seattleschools.org if you have questions.

Nancy Fujimoto's Email List

Did you know that Nancy Fujimoto has an email list that she uses to send weekly reminders to families about school and community related events? If you are not on this list and would like to be, please email nkfujimoto@seattleschools.org to be added to her email group. It's a great way to stay up to date on what's going on!

Future Newsletter Article Ideas

There will be no January newsletter due to the December holiday break, so if you want to get something out the BHIS community before 2010, **Monday, November 30 is the deadline** for the December newsletter.

Check the next newsletter for an article about our visiting teacher from China, Ms. Xu Juan who is teaching Mandarin to our 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders.

We are interested to know what you want to learn about in future newsletters. Are there specific staff members, school programs, or volunteers that you're curious about? Please email newsletter volunteer **Curtis Bonney** with your story ideas or questions at bhinternationalnewsletter@gmail.com.

Mr. Campbell's Progress Report

Physical Education Teacher Otis Campbell is recovering from surgery on his Achilles Tendon. He had his second surgery on the day of the Walk-a-Thon, so didn't get to attend. But we're sure all he has taught our children about the benefits and fun of moving and exercising were great contributors to the fun they had on that day. We look forward to his return to school sometime very soon!

PTA Welcomes...

A big welcome and thank you to **Sung Lee** (mom of Jason Zinschlag, 1st grade), who was voted in as PTA Secretary at the October PTA Family Involvement Meeting, and to **Angela Johnson** (mom of Bowie Neuwirth, kindergarten) who has stepped up to be PTA Events Coordinator! The PTA appreciates your participation!