



# ORCA

## WEEKLY BULLETIN

### January 21, 2009

**Phone:** 252-6900

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**Website:** [www.orcapta.org](http://www.orcapta.org)

#### January

21 – PTSA General Meeting  
26 – Day between semesters  
29 – Middle School Open House

Topic: What is Alternative Education?

**NO SCHOOL**

7-8PM Orca Middle School

#### February

04 – Professional Development  
12 – Kindergarten Open House  
13 – All School Skate Party  
13 – Mosaic/Art Auction  
16-20 – Mid Winter Break

1:15PM, Early Dismissal

9:30-2PM – Skate King  
GATHER, Columbia City

**NO SCHOOL**

#### *THOUGHTS FROM Ben...*



Wow! First came the Festival of Children, followed by a weekend garden work party, nipping at the heels of the annual MLK assembly and march. The New Year didn't catch us napping at Orca. The celebrations were well-timed as our country experiences the real occasion of the century: the inauguration of Barack Obama. The hope for equity, justice, and social change he embodies resonates strongly with Orca's vision. In fact, I first encountered Obama in-depth as the subject of an Orca 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class' MLK unit ("Agents of Change" was our theme that year). Obama speaks often of our collective responsibility to create the communities we want. At Orca parents and staff live that commitment to service daily. Our school would not function without untold daily efforts to create a more equitable, sustainable world for our children. What an amazing thing to see our students so excited about leadership and government!

Our next general PTSA meeting is Wednesday, January 21 from 7-8:30. The main topic is exploring Orca's vision and alternative education. Please join us as we further develop our common vision, understandings of alternative education, and discuss both successes and shortcomings.

Thanks so much to all of the volunteers who contributed to the Festival of Children and MLK day march and assembly. A special appreciation goes out for those who led the efforts: Pam Jones, Leda Westberg, Melanie Moor, and Patrick Scott for the Festival of Children, Julie Wiediger, Becca Aue, Jenessa Wight, Donte Felder, and Laura Grow for MLK Day. An extra appreciation also goes out to Michael Miller, John Unangst, and Lily Hotchkiss for their efforts to mount the whales and fish decorating our north end this past weekend. Orca thrives because of an extraordinary commitment to children and community.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### **PTSA General Meeting: Alternative Education at Orca**

Wednesday, January 21st, 7 pm, Orca Lunchroom

This month's PTSA discussion focuses on that perennial question: "What makes Orca an alternative school?" Using the Orca Vision as a starting place, we'll explore our own connections to that Vision, look at how it fits into the larger context of progressive education, and share the experiences that embody it for us. With the help of a panel of Teachers & Parents, we'll also discuss some of the tensions that exist between the Orca Vision and the Orca reality, and the challenges facing alternative schools today. Childcare and refreshments provided as always. See you there!

## **Orca Space Team Meeting**

Monday, January 26th, 9:30 am, Orca Library

As we wrap up a number of projects -- murals, cut-out orcas, fence flowers, BEX levy nomination -- the Space Team is ready to sit down and lay out our next steps. We've got Spring art projects in the pipeline, East garden bed improvements to work on, and we're looking at developing a Master Site Plan for the school & grounds. We'll be meeting at school on Monday, January 26th at 10 am in the Library to brainstorm, prioritize, and plan. Note: there is no school that day -- we plan to have a movie and snacks for kids -- if you'd like to bring yours, please let Mikala know: [jojoma3@aol.com](mailto:jojoma3@aol.com) / 722-5177.

Space Team Co-Chairs: Phyllis Daniels, Lily Hotchkiss, Mikala Woodward

## **Powerful Writers Writing Workshop**

Powerful Writers, a program of the award-winning nonprofit Powerful Schools, brings **writing workshops** to six Southeast Seattle elementary schools. Teachers and Powerful Writers' staff developers work together to develop students' writing skills, habits and confidence, uniting in the belief that writing well is an essential life skill and a valuable tool for continued learning and creative expression.

If you are wondering how to help your children at home with writing, or are interested in volunteering during writing workshop in your child's classroom, or if you're just curious to find out more about this exciting program, please join us at the parent education and training session.

### **Next training:**

At Orca, Wednesday, January 29  
9:30a.m. to 11:30a.m.

## **Diversity Speaker Series**

The Diversity Speaker Series is focused on exploring issues related to diversity, privilege, and oppression. Each year we invite experts in these areas to speak and engage with members of The Bush School and the greater Seattle community. These events are free and open to the public. For more information about The Bush School's Diversity Speaker Series, please visit [www.bush.edu/diversity](http://www.bush.edu/diversity). For seating reservations and if you have any questions, please call Dr. Eddie Moore Jr., Director of Diversity, at 206-326-7731 or [eddie.moorejr@bush.edu](mailto:eddie.moorejr@bush.edu).

### **Jessica Pettitt**

#### **Social Justice Core Competencies**

Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: The Bush School Community Room

### **Hip Hop Summit 2009**

Date: Saturday, Feb 28, 2009

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: TBD

### **Winona Laduke**

#### **Women, Politics, and Environmental Justice from a Native Perspective**

Date: Thursday, March 19, 2009

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: The Bush School New Gym

### **Yong Zhao**

#### **Rethinking Education in The Age of Globalization**

Date: Monday, April 27, 2009

Time: 7 p.m.

Location: The Bush School Community Room



## GARDEN MOSAIC FUNDRAISER SEEKS ART!

Please join us as we seek art from our community for a one day only silent art auction to raise money to mosaic the front garden beds at Orca. Do you have a piece of handmade art or know of an artist who would like to donate an original work of art?

The event will take place at GATHER ([www.gatherseattle.com](http://www.gatherseattle.com)) in Columbia City on Friday, February 13th. The show will be open during the day and culminate in an evening event. This will be an amazing event which will truly showcase what a creative community we have. Please drop off all artwork to Lily in Room 207A or Emily in the third floor art room

Lily Hotchkiss: [lihotchkiss@seattleschools.org](mailto:lihotchkiss@seattleschools.org)

Emily Nagel: [eanagel@seattleschools.org](mailto:eanagel@seattleschools.org)

## From the After School Programs Coordinator

Our after school programs start this week. If you have signed up for a class with Powerful Schools you will receive confirmation via the mail. If you have signed up for a Middle School Program you will receive a confirmation call this week.

**Powerful Schools:** Monday classes start on February 2nd and Wednesday classes on January 21st. Pick-up and drop-off is in the lunchroom and unless you have made other arrangements you must sign your child in and out from there. If your student attends First Base please remind them that they will need to check in there first.

**Middle School:** Our middle school classes begin right after school, students should go right to the location of their class. Dance Workshop will meet in the lunchroom (Tuesday), Basketball in the gym (Girls on M/T and Boys on W/TH), Orca Zine in Room 308 (Wednesday), Homework Club in 304 (Tuesday/Thursday) and Hip Hop in the Science Annex (Wednesday).

**After School Activity Bus:** If you want to sign up for the activity bus you must fill out the registration form. It takes up to 5 days to be enrolled from the time you sign up. The bus runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays and leaves Orca at 4:30pm. The bus will start running on Tuesday, January 20th.

**Homework Study Group:** We still have a few spaces in this class which is for 3-5 grades. This will be the first of what we hope will be an ongoing class offered by Kerry van der Veen, an Orca parent and experienced teacher. Kerry will meet with each student to come up with a focused plan for a course of study which could include homework, math, Writers Workshop or other areas of study relevant to our 3-5 graders. This class will take place on Tuesdays from 3:15-4:30pm and will meet in Room 306. Please contact me directly if you are interested in this class.

**Volunteers Needed!** If you have time after school to help out in the lunchroom on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays we need help serving snack to our students.

**Thank you! Lily Hotchkiss, [lihotchkiss@seattleschools.org](mailto:lihotchkiss@seattleschools.org), 206-252-6885**



## IMPORTANT CORRECTIONS FOR PTSA CONTACT SHEET IN DIRECTORY!

Please make these corrections on the PTSA Contact section on page 1 in the Directory:

Koichi's correct email is: [kkitazum@starbucks.com](mailto:kkitazum@starbucks.com)

Email address for Treasurer: [orcaptatreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:orcaptatreasurer@gmail.com)

Also Kent Daniels was accidentally left off of the staff page; he is in room 203 and his email is [tkdaniels@seattleschools.org](mailto:tkdaniels@seattleschools.org)



## Fundraising News!

Just a few quick notes on current and on-going fundraisers:

**Global Goods Partners:** Orca K-8 was the #1 selling school in America!! In fact, during the 3 week promotion in December, Orca supporters purchased \$1351.75 in handmade goods to support women and their families around the world. Orca's share of those purchases is \$405.52. Well Done! Just remember, that handmade items from these artisans make excellent gifts year round. Simply visit [www.globalgoodspartners.com](http://www.globalgoodspartners.com) and be sure to select "Orca" before purchasing or at checkout.

**PCC Scrip:** We have several extra PCC Scrip cards available for any families wishing to participate in this great fundraiser for our school. Cards come pre-loaded with \$12.50 and can be refilled at any time at any PCC register. Use your cards like cash for all your purchases at PCC and 5% will be donated to Orca. It's easy, and free to you! If interested in obtaining a card, please see Deb Koon at the school or email [sabranie@hotmail.com](mailto:sabranie@hotmail.com).

**Box Tops and Labels for Education:** Please remember to continue to clip and save your Labels for Education and Box Tops for Education and return to the school. There is a collection bag near the office. Earn \$ and supplies for our school. Every little bit adds up!

**Escrip:** Over 75 contributors have registered their Safeway Club Card in support of Orca K-8. In the month of November alone, these supporters raised nearly \$150 for our school just by swiping their Safeway Club Card at checkout. Haven't registered yours? Simply visit [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and sign up. Our Group ID # is 500017744. Once registered, there are many ways you can contribute to Orca via the Escrip programs. Questions? Contact [sabranie@hotmail.com](mailto:sabranie@hotmail.com).

**\*\*Be sure to check out the new fundraising page on the Orca PTSA website and check back often for news and information regarding these and other fundraisers at Orca!\*\***



### MIDDLE SCHOOL MATTERS....

Well into our 2<sup>nd</sup> year of becoming a K – 8 school, we can report our middle school students, staff, and parents are thriving and proud of where we are today. If you stroll up to the third floor of our school, you will usually find 75% of our sixth and seventh graders engaged in Mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, Drama, or Spanish. The other 25% of our middle school students are in the new Science Annex.

Our middle school students are fortunate to have a talented and dedicated team of teachers who enjoy working this age of learner. Katherine Law, currently our lone female team member, is responsible for Science education and Language Arts. Donte' Felder is our Language Arts, Social Studies, Anti-Bullying, Cyber Safety, and Equity teacher. Jeff McKenzie joins Orca as our middle school Mathematics teacher after a number of years as a leader at Aki Kurose. Our final core teacher is Senor Patrick Scott who teaches Espanol and Drama. Patrick is a successful, experienced middle school teacher who joins us from the Highline School District. Being the team player that he is, Patrick can often be found skillfully incorporating a lot of Writing instruction (Writer's Workshop) and Equity concepts into his instruction. Like Donte, Patrick comes to Orca with an extensive background in theatre. Michelle Kaufman and Krista Keller (via New York City) are also part of the middle school program. They support select students in Reading, Writing, and/or Mathematics. Dr. Jupinder Gill and Renee Johnson are our Health and Fitness teachers. We can't forget Emily Nagel, our Art Teacher; John Brockhaus, our Library/Media Specialist; and Padma Pancheapagasan, our middle school self-contained teacher who round out the team. Together, these talented professionals provide meaningful learning experiences for our near 100 highly energetic and delightful sixth and seventh graders who are now a part of our fine community.

Looking at human development, middle school is a challenging time. Middle schoolers experience intense and often rapid physical, emotional, and intellectual changes. It takes a special team to work with individuals who can sway between childhood and adolescence (and back), in a matter of seconds. Developing, implementing, and refining a quality academic program for middle schoolers which is aligned with our program vision and mission and prepares them for high school is no easy task. In the weeks to come, you will learn more about what is happening in YOUR middle school. Ben and I can proudly say, that though nothing is perfect, YOU have a quality K – 8 being developed. We look forward to opening our doors and sharing the many great things that are happening in YOUR middle school.