

Trillium Charter School is a democratically-structured environment that fosters students' natural curiosity, creativity, and self-awareness. Students learn to take initiative and assume responsibility for their own learning, which supports constructive interaction with the local, regional, and global community.

Newsletter

February 2008



Trillium Charter School

LEARNING FOR CHANGE

From the Director By Stephanie Hinkle

Dear Trillium Families,

I keep waiting for a slower, more relaxed time to come to Trillium, but it never seems to find its way here. I think "the beginning of the year is hectic because we all have to get everything going". Then the Holidays come and they are hectic for everyone. "Well," I think, "after the Holidays it will mellow out." That hasn't really happened, and now first semester is over. Report cards are coming out. Information sessions begin. New applicants, teacher evaluations, workshops, conferences, it never really ends. So, there is never a slow time at Trillium. I bet the same can be said for most of you in your lives. When do we get to breathe a little and slow down? If you find an answer that is transferable, let me know. At least we now know that continuing to use your brain for difficult tasks reduces the risk of Alzheimer's.

I had the pleasure of hearing seniors discuss their senior projects. We have some really amazing seniors. I hope that you attend their presentations at the end of the year. Watching seniors and getting to work with them is a really exciting experience. It is like some switch gets turned on over the summer and students who were flaky, self-involved, immature, and other very normal attributes, become thoughtful, caring, introspective, self-aware, mature role models. It is only sad that we have to say goodbye at the end of the year. Luckily, many of our graduates come back to help and be involved in Trillium. I feel very fortunate that they want to be here after graduation.

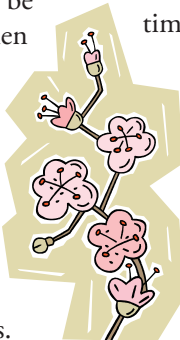
Students are often stressed this time of year, because of the work that is due. Seniors are applying to colleges, and the rest of the kids are struggling to get projects done in time for exhibitions and report cards. I wish I had great advice for helping kids deal with the stress. Over the years, with my own children, I have been less than successful.

People have stressful times in their lives, and there seems to be nothing that can be done to eliminate it. I do think that it is important to acknowledge the stress, though, and realize that the conditions that are causing it are just as valid as the stressors in adults' lives. It is also important to give students perspective. If they feel bad about their performance or ability, help them see that everyone has times when they don't do as well as they wish. There are ways to prepare for future projects if they can take the lessons they learned about themselves when they didn't do as well as they wanted, and adjust their practices for next time. Also, being perfect is highly overrated and not really possible. If they stress because they are getting a "B", then reassurance that it will not ruin their future is important.

On the flip side, if your kids are complaining about feeling bored or under-challenged, then you may need to step back and question why. Often boredom is a sign that kids are in the process of internal development and may be getting ready to shift to a developmental place. Do you remember when they were young and right before they walked, or sat up, or talked, or learned to read, they often got cranky or emotional? They still go through similar developmental shifts and it affects them emotionally. Sometimes, however, boredom is a sign of something else. Sometimes they are really not feeling challenged by their work. If that is the case, please talk to the teacher. Adjustments can be made in their work. Challenging work does not necessarily mean more work, however. Sometimes it means that students are ready for higher level discussions and concepts. It is typically not something that is solved just by giving more homework.

I would like to encourage all of you to listen to your kids. I don't mean that you should automatically try to rescue them from

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Board News: Finance Committee Sources and Uses of Funds

By James Hindes, Board finance committee

This is a summary of how Trillium Charter School manages, obtains, and spends money. If you have any questions or wish to learn more detail, please contact a member of the Trillium Board of Directors.

How does Trillium manage its funds? Trillium's **Operating Funds** are the main funds that run the school. Most of the money that comes into the school and that is spent by the school is in this category. The Director of the school, Stephanie Hinkle, plans our operating budget which consumes these funds. The budget is approved annually and reviewed quarterly by the school's board of directors. This money is used to pay for our amazing staff, the building, all our supplies, and everything else needed to keep the school running.

Trillium has some **Restricted Funds** which can only be used for specific purposes. People who donate money sometimes restrict it to a specific purpose, like funding an international student trip or the Trillium Sustaining Fund. Grants obtained from foundations are almost always restricted to a specific project; a recent example is the wood floor in the multi-purpose room.

Trillium's parent/teacher organization, Together for Trillium, raises money for the **TFT Funds**. These funds are generally used for student activity fee scholarships and for classroom supplies not otherwise covered by the Operating Funds. TFT also makes contributions to major school funding needs or programs, such as the building campaign in 2006. TFT uses a grant process to allocate the funds, and every member of TFT can vote on the grants.

Where do Trillium's funds come from? Trillium's contract with Portland Public Schools provides over 90% of our planned operating funds for the year. These funds are provided on a per-student basis, although we receive less per student than a non-charter school. For K-8 students, we receive 80% of the standard amount, for high school students, we receive 95%. This money goes into our **Operating Funds** (defined in the next section).

School Services provided by Trillium fund themselves, with any additional proceeds going into our Operating Funds. The major school services are the preschool and aftercare programs.

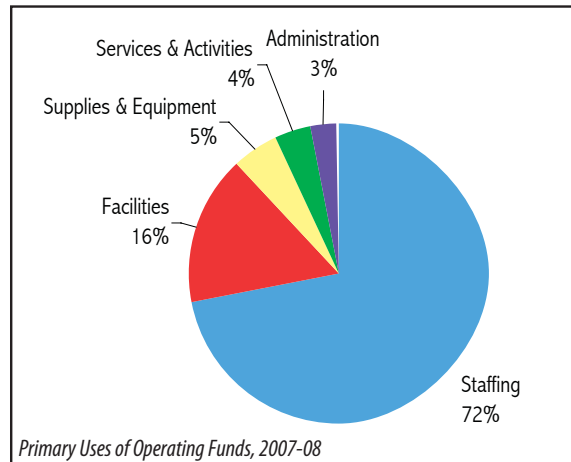
Donations and Fundraisers help us fund specific programs and close general operating budget gaps. Donations are generally made by individuals or companies (e.g., contributions to the building capital campaign, or to the Trillium Sustaining Fund), while fundraisers are activities sponsored by the school, TFT, or school programs to raise money (e.g., Scrip, Chinook Book, Trillium in Bloom auction). Depending on the source of the money, it may go into the school's Operating Funds, Restricted Funds, or TFT Funds.

Grants are funds given to Trillium by foundations, corporations, governments, small business and individuals. Most grants are made to fund a specific project and require some level of reporting. We must usually submit a written proposal to be eligible for a grant. We're currently pursuing a grant to fund an eco-roof for the building.

Student Services are goods or services provided by the students in exchange for funds. Generally, these funds are restricted for specific purposes. For example, the Garden program students sell products (herbs, soaps, etc) at a local farmer's market to help fund the Garden program.

Student Activity Fees are a standard, per-student fee that the school requests of every student at the beginning of the school year (scholarships are available from TFT). These fees are used to fund field trips.

What does Trillium spend the money on? Here are the primary uses of our operating funds, and the percentage of our 2007-2008 operating budget that they consume: Staffing (72%), Facilities (16%), Supplies and Equipment (5%), Services & Activities (4%), Administration (3%).



From the Director (Continued from Page 1)

their problems. On the contrary, I believe that you can't and shouldn't rescue them from most of their problems. Teaching them that they are capable of solving problems is your job. When you solve the problems for them, they don't learn how and they don't build confidence in their own abilities. They also don't make the connection as well that they often have a role in creating their problems and need to evaluate their own actions. This is especially true with friendship or social issues. Your children are capable and amazing. Please help them learn that about themselves.

Meet Andrea Rosselle, Art Teacher

By Andrea Rosselle

An artful introduction is a daunting task, at least that's my conclusion as I sit attempting one. Often when asked about myself I list off groups of accomplishments, favorite authors, and degrees attained. Places lived, and art shows under my belt merely lets people know the what and where, leaving out the important "why?". Taking this opportunity to introduce myself to the Trillium community I desire to let you know what's important to me, and more importantly why it should be part of my student lives.

The life of an artist is truly the life of each of us. I am convinced we each embody the knowledge and ability to create, to give expressions of self through marks, colors, images, and forms. We are born with an ability to express ourselves with our hands, to communicate with images and ideas in a visual language. That which surrounds us in our everyday; watching children play, seeing strangers hug at the supermarket, noticing a dog's tail happily wag at the sight of it's owner, these are experiences of the same visual language. We experience life in imagery. The visual arts are the reflection of this experience, a reflection I see the kindergartners aptly show in their artwork each week. Often the ability to speak through artful expression is lost as we grow into adulthood. It is my desire to preserve this ability in each student by encouraging a holistic approach, recognizing our ability as communicators in the acknowledgment that roughly 80% of our daily communication is visual. Building visual literacy enables each of us to effectively communicate.



In my classroom I emphasize process, discovery, failure, and experimentation. As an educator, I believe the artistic product less important than the process undergone in its production. The students are encouraged to create many projects, in many artistic mediums. They are exposed to art history and varied artistic disciplines in the hope that along the way their creative abilities will be sparked towards a future visual dialogue. As an artist, I place great importance on process and experimentation. Often learning through failure. My personal artistic practice has seeped into my philosophy of education, and has helped define me as an individual. Both inside and outside of the art world acknowledging the importance in my life of taking risks, learning from failure, and giving myself the freedom to do both is as sincere an introduction of self as I know how to give.

Board News: Safety and Appearance Committee Trillium Spokes

By Julie Yates

Our Trillium community is graced with a number of active cyclists and now is the time for us to build the number of healthy and conscientious commuters in our midst! In the coming months we are planning opportunities and inspiration to get more community members to put their bicycles on the road in safe and enjoyable ways.

We will be starting in March (exact date not yet set) with a bike clinic to make sure our bicycles are safe and ready for the first riding events of the season. **Any one interested in attending should send an email with the number of individuals and bikes your contact information.** We'll have professional mechanics and their tools volunteering their assistance. At that time we can also make sure helmets, which will be required for all to participate in future riding events, are adjusted and fitting well. If you are in need of a helmet let me know. There are several opportunities in Portland to get free or low cost helmets and I will be glad to help connect with those resources.



I would also like to get ideas for community rides for this spring, perhaps with a family picnic at the end or to a service project for all Trillium families to participate in. I look forward to meeting you all on wheels and to seeing your ideas for fun this spring! Contact me at julieoyates@hotmail.com

Learning in Action – Trillium Climate Summit

Zach Post

As the intermediate team gathered back in August to discuss curriculum, there was an urgent feeling that we needed to bring global warming issues alive in the classroom this year. The idea of guiding the students through a Scottish method Storyline toward hosting a Climate Summit was born out of a sense that we needed to do something as educators and our students needed to be empowered to face a mounting and unavoidable issue that directly effects all of our futures. This was source of inspiration for what eventually turned into an amazing evening of activism with over 200 participants.

As soon as we embarked on our inquiry process it became evident that our students were hungry to gain more understanding of the topic. Before diving head first into the causes of global warming and the resulting problems, we felt it was important to set the stage by developing an understanding and appreciation for what was at stake. Each of the four advising groups investigated a different biome. These investigations integrated climate, ecology, and biology studies and culminated with a painted paper collage mural of each biome.

Once the biomes were completed students did some cultural studies on the countries around the world in which those biomes can be found. Each student made a paper and cloth character of a “climate advocate” from one of the countries. They also wrote little cartoon bubble bios to let people know how their lives would be affected by climate change. Though students had fun with this activity, they were eager to cut to the chase and dig into the science and solutions of global warming. At that point, we moved into a series of science experiments and simulations to help the students build a meaningful understanding of what is causing our climate to change.

At this point the intermediate teachers met and decided that, while storyline teaching can be a great motivator, in this case the issue was so compelling that the students just needed to have a chance to use their increasing knowledge of the topic as a tool to create change. Students were given four workshop choices to do more in-depth investigations of the issues. Each advisor led one of these workshops. We decided

the issue could best be broken up into the following groups: energy and transportation issues (“Bright Ideas”), forest issues (“Hug a Tree”), construction issues (“Green Building”), and consumption issues (“Stuff”).

The workshops met for several hours each day over the course of three weeks. Each workshop had guest expert speakers visit the class and went on at least one fieldtrip to help study their topic. As understanding of the issues increased, the students set forth on their projects to share at the “Climate Summit.” These projects ranged from setting up activity stations for making

reused gifts to creating in-depth tri-fold displays explaining the current thoughts on maximum CO2 levels.

The week before the summit students prepared the final touches. We met in our advising groups and discussed the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling in the process of hosting the event. All of the large signs were made from taping together one-sided mistake paper from the schools copying machine. A wall sized transportation graph was created out of the same materials. This was used to chart how each person arrived at the event (about 98% by car, with a fair amount of car-pooling). We also created display of persuasive letters the students wrote to politicians. Students reported that the place they could start making change was at home. “Once when mom threw away junk mail I went and picked up from

the recycling and used it as drawing paper,” said Ellie, a third grader.

In addition to setting up a registration table, the main foyer was decorated with the biome murals and foreign climate advocates that the students had created. Nature-scape recordings were played to enhance the ambiance. Before entering the main project space, visitors had a chance to catch-up on their greenhouse effect basics by watching a claymation video created by two students. There were also a bunch of native Oregon Grape plants on display that were later given away in a free raffle. The plants, donated by Friends of Trees, were the first part of an onsite student-planting project. Part



two of this carbon absorption project will occur on February 16 when students gather to plant four ash trees on the east side of the school building (Maryland St.).

Finally we were ready and excited to host Trillium's first ever climate summit. This was the culminating work of over three months of inquiry by the intermediate students (ages 8-11). We had invited people from outside the Trillium community and sent press releases and announcements to local newspapers. Students had spent the afternoon before the event arranging their displays. There was a whole room dedicated to two computer based projects. These included power points, a green gift making website, and a video game in which the player destroyed carbon molecules. The students dedication to the issue and the care with which they completed their projects was displayed in the main exhibit room. "My project was a solar oven and it helped people know that instead of using a bunch of electricity they could get renewable energy from the sun," recalled Dolly, a 4th grader. One student had an interactive book that allowed visitors to explore an eco-friendly home, while another had a science experiment with diagrams to explain photosynthesis. Yet another project was a collection of hundreds of new paper bags that were decorated with pro-climate messages and were to be used by New Seasons, a local grocery chain.

Each study group had selected a student speaker to be their representative at the event. Skylar Williams, Steven Conner, Miriam Valentine, and Kieran Sage took on that job, while

Hazel Yates was the MC. These students joined our outstanding group of community speakers, which included Michael Armstrong (Portland Office of Sustainable of Development), Rex Burkholder (Metro Rep.), Josh Kardon (Senator Wyden's Chief of Staff), and Ramona Arechiga (Friends of Trees). The speakers came prepared and passionate. "I practiced in the mirror over and over again," said Skylar, a student representative of the "Stuff" group. The practice and commitment paid off, as each speaker was graciously applauded and cheered.

As the students arrived for the event on December 13, a surge of positive energy filled the building. As, one of our guest speakers noted, never before had he spoken to such a large group so informed and so passionate about the topic. It was clear that the students felt the power of their activism as they cheered on the speakers and

shared their work. Their enthusiasm has continued and a group is now working to create a series of school wide proposals to cut down on Trillium's carbon footprint—and of course they hope you will consider how you cut down on yours. **For more information contact Zach, zach@trilliumcharterschool.org**

Want to find out your carbon footprint and start making a change? Go to www.zerofootprintkids.com

Super Hot Scrip Action!!! By Anne Stark

Hold on to your polar fleece! **REI** has now joined the Scrip list of vendors. Isn't that exciting? Their gift cards are available in \$25 increments and contribute 8% to Trillium. And, that's not all. We also have a few more additions. They are:

- K-Mart (use the Sears card)
- Best Buy
- Panera Bread and Café (there's one by Hollywood Trader Joe's)
- Cinemark-Century Theater (out in the hinterlands of Tigard)
- Also, Hollywood Video increases to 16% (now that's what I call support!), AND you can use the cards at Game Crazy.

Many, many thanks to all of you that order so faithfully week in and week out and also to those of you that have just gotten your feet wet with trying Scrip out. It is a great way to show your support for Trillium – my favorite charter school.



Together for Trillium (TFT) News

The next TFT meeting will be **Tuesday, February 12, 3:30 – 4:30 pm at Trillium**. Please join us and get involved in our school. Childcare will be provided. We're now alternating monthly between the 2nd Monday of the month at 6:30 pm and the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 3:30 pm.

Come Join the TFT Coffee Klatch

Parents -- Would you like to have a chat and share some coffee and treats with other parents? Staff -- Need to grab a quick cup of courage before post time? Well, **TFT is excited to be hosting a monthly First Friday Coffee for parents and staff**. Not only will this offer you a time to socialize and refresh, but will get you caught up on TFT stuff in a fun, informal setting. (No, these aren't actual "meetings" – whew!)

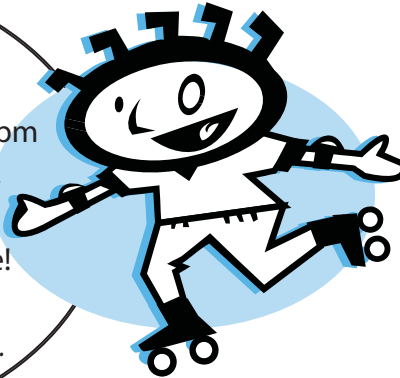


The next one scheduled is **Friday, March 7 in the garden room. The time is 8:00 am for staff and 8:30 am for parents**. Young children are welcome. There will be coffee, tea and some sort of refined sugar-laden, nutritionally deficient carbohydrate product. Yummy!!

You're Invited to the TFT Skate Party

Friday, February 29, 4:30 – 6:30 pm
Mt. Scott Community Center,
5530 SE 72nd Ave., Portland
Bring a snack to share. It's free!

*This is a TFT-sponsored family event.
Parents should attend with their children.*



New Time for School Grounds Clean Up

Wednesdays after school around pickup time is the new grounds clean up day. Join us and help keep Trillium clean.



Trillium's newsletter is produced monthly by parent volunteers Jodie Throckmorton and Susan Millhauser. Submissions to the newsletter are due by the third Monday of the month and can be directed to Jodie. Please contact Jodie at jodie@trilliumcharterschool.org. Photos or other images along with your submissions are also welcome!

Mark These Important Dates On Your Calendar...

(All events at Trillium unless otherwise noted)

Music Department Student Recital

Thursday, February 7, 6:30 pm

Admission by donation

First Monthly TFT Coffee Klatch

Friday, February 8, 8 am for staff, 8:30 am for parents. In the garden classroom.

TFT Meeting

Tuesday, February 12, 3:30 – 4:30 pm

Childcare provided

Garden Program Berry Delivery

Wednesday, February 13, 3:00 – 3:30 pm

Please pick up your berries when you pick up your student(s).

Crab Fundraiser for Kenya

Saturday, February 16, 4:30–7 pm

Trillium Board of Directors Monthly Meeting

Thursday, February 21,
6:00 - 8:30 pm, Kirk's classroom
All are welcome to attend.

NO SCHOOL - Presidents' Day

Monday, February 18

Information Session for Prospective Parents

Thursday, February 28, 6:30 – 8:00 pm
Multipurpose Room

Trillium Skate Party

Friday, February 29, 4:30 – 6:30 pm
Mt. Scott skating rink