



971.275.0848

www.gssop.com

German American Society
7901 SE Division St.
Portland, OR 97206
www.germanamerican.org

January 2010 Newsletter

Why we sing: Generous volunteers are providing music for all students before school every week from 9:30-10:00. This is a fun way to make the switch to thinking in German, so that students are ready to learn when class starts. Participation absolutely makes a difference. Please join us!

Snow Day Make-up: The School Committee has chosen March 20 as the makeup day for the one we missed in December. Put it on your calendars now (updated GSSOP calendars are available online). We'll be checking in with you later to see how many of you plan to attend that day, so we can plan staffing levels.

Hands-on learning: That snow day was also when the Christmas trees were delivered. The proceeds from that fundraiser are going to buying new, durable items to encourage hands-on learning. My favorite so far: the "city streets" carpet for the Spielgruppe, but there are puzzles and a play parachute and other goodies yet to come.

Parent Feedback: Your thoughts are important! School Committee parent liaison Klaus Heyne will be distributing an anonymous survey at school this month. He will also be available for you to talk to.

In addition, the German American Society has invited school families to participate in a workshop January 30 to discuss & plan for their non-school related activities. Details available separately. This is a great chance to help shape the future of the Society.

Testing: All of our classes have certain course goals: age appropriate subjects and skills that we try to teach. Older students also have a chance for more official measures of achievement. Over 30 of our students age 10 and up took the AATG tests this month. We'll need to wait for the official results, but students often do quite well. Please let the school office know if you are planning to use the results to petition for foreign language credit. Different school districts require different documentation, so once you know that, we can work with you to provide it.

Next up: about 20 of our most advanced students are candidates for German Language Diploma certification.

Fasching: February 13 will be a regular class day in the morning, with lunch and Kinderfasching (costumes, games, activities, goodies) in the afternoon. Please reply whether you will be attending, so we know how many people to expect. Yellow invitations are available in each classroom.

Wish list: Speaking of costumes, if you have any dress up clothes that you're not using, we've started a school dress up closet for classes to use. Donations to help transform children into a viking/lady/firefighter/puppy/peasant are welcome. We have less use for horrible, beastly "thing", however.

Also needed: preschool-safe cars/trucks, building blocks, little kid scissors, other craft items taking up space in your house. Also, a pump for our balls (needle pump). If you have any questions about whether we could use something, ask in the office.

Library reminder: All books checked out before January are due now. The library is open every week. During the 1st and last half hour of school, families may go to the library to check out books (or check to see if their children returned their books). Classes visit the library the rest of the time, with each class having this opportunity every other week for the rest of the school year.

Planning for Camp: Day camp this year is scheduled for June 21-24, June 28-July 1 and July 5-8. Overnight camp will be July 11-17. These are new dates, so please note. Camp is a fun way for students to soak up a lot of German, so we hope you'll be able to join us. More information will be available soon.

We're looking for people NOW to help with camp planning, so if you have time or specific skills to offer, contact us at the office. We can use specialists, like PR gurus, as well as people who can help get mailings out or distribute brochures. Most positions would be volunteer (hours, anyone?), but there are some paid opportunities, like cook (during camp itself) and even camp director (starting asap). Applications for paid positions are available online (Jobs button at the bottom of the web page) or in the school office.

Volunteers: This month, I have just two new volunteer requests, other than camp prep: Did you know you could earn volunteer hours by serving on either the School Committee (for policy wonks) or Building Committee (for handy types)? The school office can put you in contact with those committees. If that doesn't float your boat, contact Volunteer Coordinator Denise Crabb (denise_crabb@yahoo.com) for more opportunities.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who has volunteered with us so far! You are a flexible, talented bunch, and you are truly doing some remarkable things to make a big difference in the school. Please be sure to record your volunteer hours in the book in room 34 (front hall). Even if you've finished working off a volunteer discount, it helps us as an organization if we have an idea about how much time people are putting in.

Lynn Ries
Director