

# groundviews



REACHING SOLID GROUND

## 'I like helping the community'

See story, pp. 2 & 3

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

## Brilliance... Kindness... & Persistence...

An all-star team is leading our Capital Campaign for Sand Point Housing (see details below), including advisors Ken Alhadeff and Martha Kongsgaard, and task force members Andrea Caupain, Dee Dee Dahlen, Julie Edsforth, Ellen Ferguson, Regan Hurley, Pamela McCabe, Bryan Long, Dorothy Longbrake, Lauren McGowan, Jane Reich, Barb Smith, Cha'ron Stewart-Silvano, Judy Tobin, Martha Ward and Irene Woo... May is National Community Action Month, and Governor Chris Gregoire acknowledges the work of Solid Ground and 30 sister agencies... Our 2008 *Strike Out Hunger* Bowl-a-thon was a fabulous success (see p.4). Special thanks go to volunteers Sophia Richards and Arianna and Elisa Washington, crews from Boeing and City Year — as well as Bella Cosa, Chef N', Paige Collins, Mary Fogh, Garlic Jim's, Jillian's, The Matador, Mrs. Cooks, Not A Number and Rusty Pelican, who donated food and prizes to motivate our bowlers... Thanks to Mary Burki and Shirley Bekins of Common Ground for guidance in the Sand Point transfer (see below)... Our JustServe AmeriCorps program acknowledges Roland Akers, Laurel Allen, Cammie Carl, Lewis Hagler, Kathy Kaminski, Asmara Knighton, Lauren McGowan, John Page and Lynn Sereda for connecting the 2008–2009 Corps with meaningful community placements... now that's brilliant!

PROGRAM NEWS

## From the Ground Up

**Sand Point transfer complete.** The City of Seattle has completed transfer of ownership to Solid Ground of Magnuson Park housing facilities for formerly homeless people. Six former Navy buildings comprising 94 transitional housing units were transferred, including facilities for homeless families, single adults, and teen moms and their children.

"We look forward to Solid Ground's strong management, helping make Sand Point even more successful at moving people from crisis to stability," said Adrienne Quinn, Director, Seattle Office of Housing. In the next few years Solid Ground will build 106 additional housing units at the site, taking our community one step closer to the goals outlined in our region's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness.

**Nearly 33,000 served in 2007!** Solid Ground served nearly 33,000 families last year, up about 10% from 2006. More than 4,700 of these families received services to keep them housed or help them transition out of homelessness.

## REACHING SOLID GROUND

# 'I like helping the community'

During recess on a warm Seattle day — when they might have been outside enjoying the rare spring sunshine — a group of Maple School students sat down to serious business. As members of a Penny Harvest roundtable at their school on Beacon Hill, these kids were charged with the task of deciding which two neighborhood organizations should receive \$600 grants.

Maple's Guidance Counselor and volunteer Penny Harvest Coach, Theresa Escobar, helped the kids make their final decision: "Let me just remind you what you voted for: the International Drop-in Center. They assist the elders in the Filipino community, and they preserve the elderly person's physical, mental and emotional well-being. ...Now, you also voted on Seattle Animal Shelter, however, there are four funds to choose from." Together, they reviewed their options (Shelter Expansion, Help the Animals, Off-leash Area and Pet Population Control), voted, and ultimately chose to make a grant to their local animal shelter's Pet Population Control fund.

A thoughtful 5<sup>th</sup> grader named Sam explained why this fund was his top priority: "I chose it because they could spay and neuter the animals, and that way there won't be as many stray animals, and then they won't be euthanizing as many. It's really sad to hear they're killing animals." Classmate Kevin added, "I feel like it's better not to bring them to life instead of having to make them go through all that pain and suffering."

Penny Harvest is a program of Common Cents in New York, sponsored locally by Solid Ground. This school year-long community service and youth leadership program starts with a comprehensive coin drive in elementary, middle and high schools. Many participating schools also form Philanthropy Roundtables, student leadership teams that help collect the coins at their schools, get input on social issues that their classmates care about, and make community grants to local nonprofit groups addressing those issues.

This year, 55 public and private schools in the Seattle, Highline, Kent, Mercer Island, Snoqualmie Valley, Tukwila and Bethel school districts participated in Penny Harvest, and 45 of them formed roundtables. All told, more than 17,000 students contributed about 108,000 hours gathering coins. This translates to 625 canvas sacks holding **9 tons of coins** — for a total of **\$64,333.73** raised!



*Pictured above:* Sam explains why he's willing to give up his recess to volunteer on the Penny Harvest Roundtable.

*Cover photo:* Members of Maple School's Penny Harvest Roundtable (*l. to r.*):

*Back:* Kevin, Sam, Rodney

*Middle:* Bonny, Kelly, Jady, Tyler, Lizzy

*Front:* Marc, Maria, Kaiji, Ivan

**“Making a decision about what we wanted to do with the money was really hard, because all of these people need the money, and the money would really benefit all of them, and it was hard to choose.”**

*~Jadyn, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Maple School*

*Continued from p.2*

Because of this year’s great success, each roundtable was given \$1,200 to distribute (\$200 more each than planned). Maple School’s kids chose to split theirs into two \$600 grants. Penny Harvest Program Coordinator Maryellen Ferro said that while several roundtables are still making their decisions, “I expect there to be over 75 grants made to community organizations” in 2008.

Maple School’s roundtable is made up of a group of about 25 third, fourth and fifth graders who have met weekly over the past several months. School staff like Ms. Escobar generously donate their lunch breaks (and considerable energy) to make Penny Harvest roundtables a success. Ms. Escobar started by bringing a “Wheel of Caring” to all 18 classrooms at Maple and led class discussions about community needs. She said, “Then the Wheel came to the roundtable, and we talked about some of the issues that the whole school gave: homelessness, environment, veterans, animals.” She described how participating on a Penny Harvest roundtable helps develop kids’ leadership skills. “All the information is given to them, and then they go back to their classrooms, and they share — so the information gets to all the students through them. It’s still a learning process for this group, but this has helped them take on responsibility.”

Several of the roundtable kids are also on Maple’s Student Council — but for others, like one 5<sup>th</sup> grader named Rodney, “This is the first year that he has become involved in anything like this — volunteer service.” Ms. Escobar added, “I really am proud of them. I felt that it would be hard because I was taking them out of their recess time, and we have been meeting quite a bit. But they all showed up, and they did the work, and they were really gung-ho on it, very enthusiastic.”

Tyler, a 5<sup>th</sup> grader, described the process, “It was fun because we got to organize the pennies, collect ‘em, vote on what we’re going to give the money to — and all the classes had to raise money for what we voted on — and we kinda did it with our friends. We went to classes to collect the money.” Maple School collected 12.5 sacks of coins, a very heavy load, “So we had to use a cart to carry it.”

Are the Maple students pleased with their grant decisions? Tyler said, “Yeah, we’re happy. We wanted to give the money to the animals mostly, like most everybody voted for the Animal Shelter; then the other one was the International Drop-in Center.” 4<sup>th</sup> grader Maria said, “It’s cool. I wanted to help the elderly people get better.” Kevin added, “I feel like it’s going to help them a lot, because a lot of them, they have disabilities and stuff.”

Ms. Escobar admitted that the Drop-in Center choice “surprised me. It’s very narrow because it’s for Filipino elders.” But with the high Filipino population at Maple School, she said, “I think that they could relate to that” more than to other organizations serving the general Seattle population. Jadyn said, “Yes, making a decision about what we wanted to do with the money was really hard, because all of these people need the money, and the money would really benefit all of them, and it was hard to choose.”

Sam summed it all up when he said: “I wanted to be involved in Penny Harvest because I like helping the community, and I like to know that I’ve made a difference in other people’s lives. I feel good, and I know that it’s going to a very good cause.”

COMMUNITY NEWS

## Cool / Not Cool

**Not Cool:** The number of Americans receiving food stamps is projected to reach 28 million this year, the highest level since the program began in the 1960s.

**Cool:** The Seattle City Council passed the Food System Sustainability and Security Resolution, laying the groundwork for our community to better use local resources to increase everyone's food security. The resolution calls for increased food access for children, seniors and other vulnerable people and identifies ways to increase the amount of fresh produce that goes to hungry people through Seattle's food banks.

**Not Cool:** Over 42,000 Washingtonians are projected to lose their homes to mortgage default over the next two years (according to a Pew Center report on the States). Nationally, one in 33 homeowners will lose their homes as a result of risky sub-prime loans made in 2005–2006.

**Cool:** Over 200 bowlers raised more than \$16,500 at Solid Ground's *Strike Out Hunger* Bowl-a-thon last month, filling hungry bellies by supporting our Food Security for Children program.



The "Union Babes" show team spirit at our 2008 *Strike Out Hunger* Bowl-a-thon on April 26<sup>th</sup>.

TAKE ACTION

## Enough about Us, What about You?

**Penny Harvest seeks 2008–09 partners:** Our youth leadership development and philanthropy program, Penny Harvest, is looking for elementary and middle school partners for the next school year. Schools receive a classroom-tested curriculum, Penny Harvest campaign materials and lots of coaching and support. Help your kids grow into our next generation of young leaders! Ask your class teachers and administrators to join Penny Harvest. For more information, contact Maryellen Ferro: 206.957.4779 x118 or [maryellenf@solid-ground.org](mailto:maryellenf@solid-ground.org).



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A Community Action Agency... helping people, changing lives.

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