





## Exploring leadership, justice, courage and risk.



One cold, rainy morning, several years back, I stood outside at drop-off time greeting students and parents, when a Pre-K student approached me with a serious face.

He asked my permission to start a petition—saying he believed strongly that our Student Council should be comprised of children of all ages, and not just the older grades. Most importantly, he felt service should begin at the Pre-K level, as kids his age have much to say. Sure enough, the next day, he came to school with petition in hand. With a great smile, he traveled around campus talking to other children and with any adult he could commandeer.

He was very busy, from early morning, through every recess, and after school. He was also very successful. He asked for my signature and I offered it. Three days later, the results were in. 150 signatures in support of adding younger students to the council—with one gleaming signature against the idea, my own.

Well, thinking this was a great leadership opportunity, I called a Student Council meeting and the children had a huge conversation. As the facilitator, I left the final decision up to them. They reviewed the pros and cons, had great empathy for the petitioner, were torn over what to do, built consensus, and finally came to a compromise—council service could start in second grade.

Now, they had to decide how were they going to talk to our brave Pre-K student and then to the whole school at our all-school gathering a few days later...

Truly, I saw collective leadership at work. With great care and compassion, a few student council members went to talk with our champion, breaking the news to the Pre-K student who, though not happy, took the news with stoic grace. The tension eased, great laughter and big hugs followed, and he let us all know that it was worth the try, announcing, "I'll just have to wait until I'm in second grade."

Now, this is just one small story about taking big risks, learning about real-life leadership, and giving children a voice. This year, that Pre-K petitioner graduated from 5th grade with flying colors. When he did serve on the Student Council, his voice was respected, valued and his view well-received. This spring, I was truly thrilled to see our community come together once again to offer their voices and candor, giving invaluable input during our Head of School Search process.

I am grateful to the Co-Chairs and the Search Committee for seven months of hard work finding our visionary new Head of School. And thankful to the Board of Trustees for their leadership in unanimously agreeing to hire an inspiring, intelligent, highly knowledgeable and compassionate leader. And I am certain he will be excited to hear ALL the voices and ideas that search him out.

Warmly,  
*Brigitte Bertschi*

Brigitte Bertschi  
FOUNDER AND HEAD OF SCHOOL

## STUDENT COUNCIL: Student Leaders Bring Chickens to Bertschi

Every other Thursday, a buzz of energy (and howls of laughter) emanate from the Hooper House Conference Room. This is not your typical board meeting—it's Student Council—a group of youth leaders invested in taking action as role models for the entire Bertschi community.

Not only does our Student Council develop big ideas for Bertschi students, they also create themes for Spirit Days and MC our All-School Meetings. This year, the Student Council worked hard to bring chickens back to Bertschi School. How did they do it?

**Fall was filled with research, consultations, ideas, and partnerships with faculty and staff.**

- How big does a chicken coop need to be?
- What materials are best?
- How can we align with Bertschi values and ensure the coop is made from sustainable materials?

**Jennie, Zazzle, & Nugget receive plenty of love and kindness from the entire student body!**

Armed with research, Student Council members designed coops and integrated their creativity. There were coop designs with turrets, sliding glass doors and rooftop gardens. Working closely with Rick Stiteler in facilities, they approved a final design that included ramps, galvanized hard-wire, and a safe comfortable roosting area.



Top right: Kindergarteners meet the chickens for the first time.

Left: The final coop design, next to the Bertschi garden.

Right: Chicken socializing at recess time.



**Next, council research shifted to the newcomers themselves.**

- What type of chickens would be best?
- Should we hatch our own chickens?
- How many eggs do they lay?
- What do they eat?

After conducting on-campus interviews with chicken experts, the council decided day-old chickens would be best. Over Spring Break, two Ameraucanas and one Rhode Island Red joined the Bertschi community. The chicks lived in Brenda's Kindergarten classroom and then moved to Caitlin's 4th grade class until old enough to go outdoors. Handled daily, the chickens have become an important part of our Bertschi community and have our Bertschi Student Council to thank for their wonderful new home.

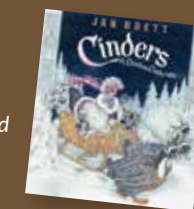


### CHICKEN FACTS: Did You Know?

- You don't need a rooster for a hen to lay eggs.
- Chickens don't like to be alone. They have a strong social structure.
- Chickens are able to remember and recognize over 100 individuals, including humans.
- Hens are extremely affectionate and caring mothers.
- The chicken is the closest living relative to the Tyrannosaurus-Rex.

### BOOKS:

- *Cinders: A Chicken Cinderella*, by Jan Brett (PK-2)
- *The Secret Chicken Society*, by Amanda Haley (PK-5)
- *Young Chicken Farmers: Tips for Kids Raising Backyard Chickens*, by Vicki Black (PK-5)



- *Chick Days: Absolute Beginner's Guide to Raising Chickens*, by Jenna Woginrich and Mars Vilaubi
- *The Small-Scale Poultry Flock: An All-natural Approach to Raising Chickens*, by Harvey Ussery

### ONLINE RESOURCES:

- Facts about City Chickens: [www.seattletilth.org](http://www.seattletilth.org)
- All about Chickens, activities for kids and teachers: [www.kiddyhouse.com/Farm/Chicken](http://www.kiddyhouse.com/Farm/Chicken)
- A Community of Chicken Enthusiasts: [\www.backyardchickens.com/](http://www.backyardchickens.com/)





# Inspiring Compassionate Learners



How do you nurture compassion in young students? By living it, modeling it, and sharing it together.

## Seattle is a small town. It may not look like it, but it often feels like it. Sometimes it can feel even smaller when you realize how far our Bertschi School connections reach.

**Service learning is woven into our curriculum.** As early as 1st Grade, students create holiday placemats for their Elder Friends at Full Life Care. Second grade's entire market curriculum culminates in a fundraising market to benefit the Pike Place Market Foundation. After visiting the market, food bank and senior center, students give back through contribution to the places where they learned so much.

While Third grade volunteers at Northwest Harvest Food Bank on multiple day trips, Fourth grade integrates service work with their study of salmon habitats and water conservation. This year, they planted 146 trees along Issaquah Creek's riparian zone to protect precious salmon environment.

Fifth grade volunteer work centered on keeping Volunteer Park beautiful. They pulled invasive species and cleaned up the park where Field Day occurs each year and their end-of-year graduation ceremony.

**Helping Hands Days.** Bertschi families have participated in annual neighborhood Helping Hands Days for more than 10 years. It's wonderful to see the support our parents offer in modeling service as an important part of life. This year, Bertschi families volunteered at eight Seattle non-profits, and donated more than 1000 pounds of food in two food drives!

Organized by the Community Service Coordinators of the Parent Council, Helping Hands Days are a chance for Bertschi kids and families to serve our community together, outside the classroom. Our students join with their friends and family to discover first-hand that volunteering is fun!

**The Bertschi Way is showing up everywhere...** Bertschi connections reach further and grow even bigger when you consider that nearly half of our faculty and staff volunteer outside of work. They share their talents on local independent school boards, raise money for causes they care about, walk for awareness, and volunteer at shelters and other programs. Gary Reed, our Creative Movement specialist, has volunteered for Men in Dance for over 21 years!

"We loved hosting Bertschi School volunteers as part of Helping Hands Day. Made our day! We serve almost 500 guests each Saturday, so your help was appreciated. Thank you Bertschi families for sharing your time and energy, and for bringing the fabulous smiles!" - RAINIER VALLEY FOOD BANK



Scott Davies of the Pike Place Market Education Program visited and shared how the money raised by Bertschi's 2nd Grade might help others - \$927.57 can provide:

- 50 visits to the Pike Market Medical Clinic for uninsured patients
- Groceries from the Pike Market Food Bank for 200 families
- Lunches for 18 days for 24 children at Pike Market Day Care and Preschool
- \$1850 in Market Fresh coupons so low-income residents can enjoy fresh fruits and veggies

"What a wonderful group of volunteers. Thanks for coming in and working with us to stop hunger." - FOOD LIFELINE

- CLASSROOM PROJECTS
- HELPING HANDS DAY LOCATIONS
- FACULTY/STAFF VOLUNTEER CONNECTIONS

"My favorite part of Helping Hands Day is shuffling up our families and getting to see everyone together in a different environment. As kids get older, and sports and other activities take over, it's nice to have the excuse to get people together while we give back to our community."

- COURTNEY STIEFEL, COMMUNITY SERVICE COORDINATOR



Top: Bertschi volunteers at Food Lifeline.

Top middle: 2nd graders present a check to Scott Davies of Pike Place Market Foundation.

Bottom middle: Bertschi volunteer at Rainier Valley Food Bank.

Bottom: Bertschi families volunteering at the Food Bank at St.Mary's.

Opposite page: 4th graders plant trees along Issaquah Creek.

# Meet Our Green Team



Bertschi is one of only four schools in Washington to have attained level 5 status with WA Green Schools, successfully tackling an issue of sustainability at each level.



Top left: The 2014-15 Bertschi student Green Team.  
 Top right: A student located their home on the carpool map.  
 Bottom left: Green team members hosting Conscious Commuter week.  
 Bottom right: Green team members testing soil temperature.

Dreamers, big-idea thinkers and passionate individuals comprise our Green Team, a group of Fourth and Fifth graders committed to making a positive environmental impact at school and in our communities.

Over the past five years, the Green Team has been an active participant in WA Green Schools; an organization that challenges students and schools “to create sustainable communities through educational experiences that transform school environments.”

Started in 2008, the Bertschi Green Team has helped our student body, teachers and staff make changes towards waste-free lunches, carpooling and other alternative transportation, and recycling obscure items, like old markers and bottle caps. They have inspired us all to improve energy usage, pay attention to EMFs in the classroom environment, and to analyze our school grounds and work to make them healthier.

“My favorite part about green team was that I got treated like an adult.” – Zoe P.

This year, Bertschi’s Green Team also piloted a new program encouraging students and families to be Conscious Commuters through quizzes, creating a giant carpool map, and getting families to pledge to make positive change. The week-long effort culminated in an Alternative Transportation Day where students carpoled, walked and biked to school.

The Green Team’s work is never done.

Fortunately there are many globally-aware and sustainability-minded students willing to jump on board and educate their peers and community members for lasting environmental change. The Green Team will be considering Bertschi’s water usage all next year; always remembering that small changes in our habits have a big impact on our world.

# Robots Invade First Grade

What happens when you bring thirty-five first graders into the tech lab, turn off the lights, and press GO? You get big ideas about how robots work and how they fit into our lives.

Say Hello to Dash, an interactive robot that enables kids to imagine new ways to interact with our world. Earlier this spring, Jill Corsi and Andrew Fox’s First grade classes built simple code with “Blockly,” a drag and drop technology, to become the makers of their own learning and creativity.



“By working with Dash, our students have realized there’s more than one way to get at solving a problem. Although most kids want it to work the first time, through perseverance, new ideas are generated. Being able to try and try again opens the curriculum to new opportunities.” - JULIE BLYSTAD, SCIENCE SPECIALIST

Though Bertschi Second and Third graders have learned about programming through Lego robotics, this is the first time First graders were introduced to coding. Joey Tanaka, Technology Integration Specialist, and Julie Blystad, Science Specialist, both wondered if younger students would have similar learning outcomes.

“We first needed to teach First graders that devices follow instructions. We started by creating exercises that got kids to follow



steps. Then applied these steps to creating simple code for Dash,” says Joey. When the robots didn’t respond properly, the questions that developed along the way caused kids to seek advice from their peers. This level of collaboration built a bridge between those who “got it” and others who were still understanding the concepts. Kids asked one another, “How did you make your robot turn around?” and “How do you tell it to go left?” They shared and worked in teams to resolve difficulties.

“When something didn’t work, they went back, read their code, and made the proper adjustments,” says Julie. “We found that the kids learned quickly and enjoyed the challenge of revision.”

## Why did we choose Dash?

- Its interface is hugely developmental—with colors and sounds that appeal to primary grades.
- Its technology is expandable, highly programmable, and not limited by hardware or software.
- It’s an educational application that’s reasonably priced and accessible to schools.
- It easily connects students to the concepts of coding, science, and technology.

## Kid-generated ideas for Dash:

- Robot Olympics
- Robots as substitute teachers
- Robots assisting in medical emergencies

## Books About Dash:

- *Lauren Ipsum: A Story about Computer Science and Other Improbable Things*, by Carlos Bueno (3rd-5th)
- *Connected Code: Why Children Need to Learn Programming*, by Yasim B. Kafai and Quinn Burke



# Board of Trustee News: Comings & Goings



## Welcome to our newest board members!

**Bernadette Bulacan Starin** Bernadette is currently Director of Market Development at Thomson Reuters, Legal Department. She is passionate about diversity initiatives and has shared her professional talent as a former trustee at several nonprofits. This year, she will take the reins as Chair of our diversity committee. Bernadette and her husband Robert are parents to Solomon '19, and Abraham '21 who will begin kindergarten this fall.

**Courtney Stiefel** Courtney is the co-founder of SiTy Foundation and manager of her home and family. She has been actively involved in fundraising and advisory councils for local nonprofits for the past four years. Courtney joined the Parent Council in her first year at Bertschi, and has contributed greatly as Community Service co-coordinator. She and her husband, Brent, have two daughters enrolled, Sienna '17, and Tyler '18. Courtney writes, "I hope to use the insight I have gained to continue to serve Bertschi in many different capacities over the coming years."

**Daniel M. Brewer** Daniel is an investment management professional and has been a member of Bertschi's finance and investment committees for several years. Daniel and his wife Marne are the parents of Cayden '18. Daniel writes, "It is my family's goal to be active participants in the Bertschi community. It is my pleasure to serve on the Board of Trustees."

**Lesli Franklin** Lesli is a teacher at the Central Branch Preschool with over 20 years of experience in education. She has served on Bertschi's diversity committee for eight years and has spent the past three as a parent volunteer at Lake Washington Girls Middle School. Lesli writes, "I am excited to explore fresh approaches and new ideas with our future head of school, while still continuing on in Brigitte's vision." Lesli is the mother of Seth '16, and Brook Rose '12.

**Welcome back Krish Srinivasan, who is re-joining the board after a six-month absence.**

It is with deep gratitude that we say goodbye to four departing board members. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to advancing the Bertschi mission. You will be missed.

**David Thyer** A trustee for 12 consecutive years (2003-15), David lead the school through times of immense growth and opportunity. During his tenure, he served as Chair of the Facilities Committee, Vice President, President, and Endowment Task Force Chair. As president, he oversaw the building of our first "green" school building, the LEED Gold Certified Bertschi Center. In the following years, the Facilities Committee completed two more building campaigns, renovating the library and drama lab and constructing the Living Building Science Wing. Even after David's youngest child graduated in 2012, he remained on the board for three more years, dedicating his energy to building Bertschi's endowment and securing Brigitte's legacy. He and his wife, Jane, are the parents of three Bertschi alumni, Estelle '02, Guy '04, and Frances '12. We cannot thank him enough for his tireless service and great sense of humor.

**Katarina Garner** Parent of Gabriella '14 and Linnea '17, Katarina served on the board for four years. She championed Bertschi's fundraising efforts as chair of both the Advancement and Endowment Committees during her tenure. Her passion for the school, and in moving the school forward, was highly appreciated. Thank you, Katarina, for all you have done for our community.

**Mari Horita** With the graduation of her daughter, Naomi '15, Mari leaves us after three great years on the board of trustees. Mari contributed her thoughtfulness and vast experience to both the Diversity and Endowment Committees during her tenure. Thank you, Mari! You will be missed.

**Latasia Lanier** After many years as a Bertschi teacher and seven as a parent to Lelan Bell '12, Latasia extended her stay at Bertschi by joining the board for a three-year term. Latasia co-chaired the Diversity Committee for all three of those years, fostering many great conversations and welcoming many new members to this most important work. Thank you for your service, Latasia. We hope you and Lelan will continue to visit often.

Top, left to right: Bernadette Bulacan Starin & family.  
Lesli Franklin with her children.  
Courtney Stiefel (left) with her community service co-coordinator, Lynn Carr.



## DID YOU KNOW? Surprising Facts about our Bertschi Community Members



**Eric Hopper**, parent of Jack '15, has volunteered his time to film each and every class drama production for the past three years. Our Drama Specialist Tina La Plant says, "I get asked by parents on a regular basis if we are planning to video tape the drama productions. So, I know how important it is to our families. As a community, we are all so grateful to have access to the video versions of the performances, and I hope we can spread the word so Eric knows how grateful we all are to have them. Even more... to have him!"

**Stacy Seibrecht**, parent of Avery '15 and Vivian '18, leads a project each year with Fourth grade to teach students about disability rights. The students create an art exhibit called "Portrait of the Whole Person", which highlights people who've overcome disabilities to do amazing things. The art show appeared in our Spring Arts Showcase and was on display at the Montlake Branch of the Seattle Public Library earlier this spring!

**Wendy Monroe**, parent of Clare '16 and Miles '18, hosts the Second grade at Full Circle Farm each year to teach our students about the life cycle of their food. When Second grade is ready to host their own public market, Full Circle Farm also donates produce for the students to sell. Thanks to Wendy & Full Circle Farm for bringing the food cycle to life for our kids!

**Midori Saito**, Front Office Manager, moved to the USA from Japan at the age of 18. This year, as Kindergarten celebrated a Japanese cultural week, they invited Midori to teach them about the practice of Japanese tea ceremonies. "The main focus, for me, is about caring for a friend," explains Midori. "You invite them for tea, dress up, and choose a special cup and a sweet to share. It's a special occasion to honor your friendship."

**Rick Stiteler**, Facilities Manager will celebrate his 20th year at Bertschi next year! Bertschi has seen a lot of growth since he first stepped on campus. Rick says, "The campus is now twice the size it was when I got here. Every single building has been remodeled, and some entirely rebuilt!"

**Peter James**, Veteran Bertschi Teacher has claimed a new Bertschi record. After teaching at Bertschi School for many years, he completely changed roles this year to become a full-time substitute teacher for the school. And this year, he subbed in every single grade at Bertschi! Peter says, "I had a great time being in different classrooms. It's been fun to share stories about how the school has changed over the years. One day, in the library, the students couldn't believe that the space had once been my 4th grade classroom."



# BERTSCHI SCHOOL

## Celebrating our Legacy Imagining the Future

### Next Year is a Special Year!

Next year, Bertschi School celebrates 40 years of educating kids to be creative, confident and compassionate learners. Over 40 years of Bertschi School, an amazing group of people have come together—we're so grateful for today's vibrant Bertschi community!

As we head into a BIG YEAR-LONG celebration, please consider getting involved. We need lots of help getting everyone together to celebrate our school's past, present and future—and Brigitte's impending retirement.



### 3 THINGS ALL ALUMNI SHOULD DO THIS SUMMER:

**SAVE THE DATE** for our special anniversary events

40th Anniversary Kick-off Picnic, **Saturday, September 12th**

Alumni Reunion Weekend, Thursday, May 5th - **Saturday, May 7th**

**Update your contact info** to receive invitations & updates this summer and next year. Email [alumni@bertschi.org](mailto:alumni@bertschi.org) to let us know how to reach you!

**Get involved!** Would you like to volunteer for events or help us get in contact with other alumni? Share your story with us – follow us on Facebook & Twitter, or share your favorite Bertschi memories through email. We want to know about YOU!



# Alumni Reunion Recap

### Welcome home, Bertschi alumni!

This spring, we had the pleasure of welcoming back three recent alumni classes for reunions on campus. We look forward to seeing even more former Bertschi Kids on campus in the coming year.

Back in March, we hosted our second 9th Grade Reunion for the Class of 2011. Seventeen former students joined us in the Bertschi Center for some tacos and time to catch up. Students had a great time checking out their old yearbooks and sharing favorite Bertschi memories. We look forward to catching up with this group again in three years!

Before heading off to college, 27 members of the Class of 2008 joined faculty and staff in the Bertschi Center for a delicious dinner and a screening of their 5th grade graduation video. They shared their plans for the fall, and will be heading everywhere from down the street to UW, to Israel, and so many places in between. Best of luck to you all in your future endeavors!

Finally, the Bertschi School Class of 2014 returned to campus after just a year of middle school to share some wisdom with their former classmates at an All School Meeting. Our 5th graders were thrilled to hear from 22 of their peers that Middle School is fun and exciting, and how prepared they felt after leaving Bertschi. After the meeting, the group spent time at Roanoke Park, playing frisbee and eating popsicles. It was a gorgeous day for reconnecting!

We also have the pleasure of welcoming seven alumni to campus this summer as staff and volunteers with Bertschi Summer Exploration camps! A huge thanks goes to Miranda Chantelois, Sophie Larsen, Gus Coluccio, Cameron Peschel, Jade Henderson, Christian MacArthur, and Jesse Cohen for their help in making summer at Bertschi so much fun!

*Photos from top to bottom:*  
 Class of 2011 in the Bertschi gym.  
 Class of 2008 gather on the turf field.  
 Class of 2014 before walking to Roanoke Park.  
 (left) Sophie plays accompaniment for a drama camp production.  
 (right) Miranda playing field games with Bertschi summer campers.



# Bertschi Summer Mad Lib—Fill in the blanks!

This is a production of the  
Bertschi School Advancement Office.

**KEISHA WILSON**  
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

**ASHLEY BOCKMAN**  
ADVANCEMENT COORDINATOR

Bertschi School does not  
discriminate on the basis of race,  
color, creed, national or ethnic origin,  
socio-economic status, gender,  
sexual orientation or disability.



**PAPER INFORMATION**  
This brochure was printed on FSC certified  
100% recycled post-consumer waste paper  
that was manufactured with 100% certified  
renewable energy and without the use of chlorine.

It was a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ (adjective) day at Bertschi. \_\_\_\_\_ 's  
(teacher's name) class had discovered the chickens; \_\_\_\_\_ (famous  
SINGER), \_\_\_\_\_ (famous ACTRESS) and \_\_\_\_\_  
(famous SPORTS STAR) had flown the coop! The class heard a(n) \_\_\_\_\_  
(adjective) "BANG" behind the \_\_\_\_\_ (noun). "Oh, there you are  
\_\_\_\_\_ (SINGER from above)!" they said. "What have you been doing  
with all the \_\_\_\_\_ (food)?" From under the \_\_\_\_\_ (noun),  
you could see \_\_\_\_\_ (number) \_\_\_\_\_ (color) feathers.  
Here was \_\_\_\_\_ ! (ACTRESS from above) But the third chicken was  
nowhere to be found... Meanwhile, \_\_\_\_\_ 's (another teacher's name)  
class heard a \_\_\_\_\_ (animal sound) from Brigitte's office.  
\_\_\_\_\_ (SPORTS STAR from above) was \_\_\_\_\_ (verb ending  
in -ing) on the \_\_\_\_\_ (noun), laying a \_\_\_\_\_ (color) egg!