



Philosophers In The Schools

This school year our [Philosophers in the Schools](#) program has involved over 30 Seattle classrooms in ten different schools, the majority of these weekly or every-other-week philosophy sessions throughout the year, including three philosophy classes (for students in grades 2-3, 4-5, and 6-8) in the [UW's Robinson Center Saturday Program](#). The philosophy classes are led by faculty, graduate students, and volunteers involved in this effort, as well as a number of undergraduate students enrolled in our UW philosophy for children classes. We are also grateful for the continued support for this program from the [UW's Pipeline Project](#).

For the second year in a row, we hosted students at Colegio Newland Campus Juriquilla in Queretaro, Mexico – fourteen 6th and 7th grade students and three of their teachers visited the Center and participated in many of our K-12 classes in April. Philosophy is part of these school's regular curriculum, and the teachers and students are eager to learn about the ways we are doing philosophy in Seattle schools.

We are completing the fourth year of our philosopher-in-residence program at [John Muir Elementary School](#). We greatly appreciate the support of the [Squire Family Foundation](#),

which has funded this position for the past four years, and are very fortunate to have Karen Emmerman (Ph.D. philosophy, 2012) continuing to serve in this role. Karen writes the following about one of her sessions at the school:

Wants and Needs

Every year, fourth grader students at John Muir Elementary address some central questions that guide their studies for the year. This year, those questions are: How do people get their needs met? How can one person make a difference? Both questions lend themselves well to philosophical discussions with children.

The fourth graders and I spent four weeks working through some questions about needs. We started by thinking about the differences between wants and needs. I put together some questions for the students to think about together in groups. These included:

(Continued on Page 2)

In the Newsletter

Philosophers in the Schools	1
For Parents	3
In the News	3
From the Director	4
High School Ethics Bowl	5
June Workshop	5
Graduate Fellows	6
Focus on the Classroom	7
Supporting the Center	8
Board and Staff	8



- * What are some things you want?
- * What are some things you need?
- * What is the difference between what you want and what you need?
- * Do all people have the same wants?
- * Do all people have the same needs?
- * What should we do if what one person wants conflicts with what another person needs?



The result was a robust discussion about what, exactly, makes a want different from a need, and whether someone's wants should have to yield to others' needs. In one classroom, the students worked to put together a middle option that includes things/interests that are both wants and needs. One student, Muhammed, felt very strongly that soccer balls were a need for him. His life would lack meaning and value for him if he couldn't play soccer. This middle option was meant to capture that kind of interest that all humans have. This interest may not count as a need for others, but for us it constitutes a central part of our identity.

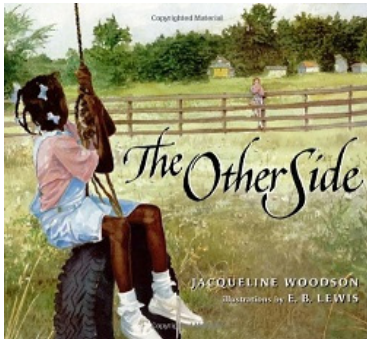
After thinking carefully about the difference between wants and needs, we thought together about whether needs have to be the sort of things that are required for survival or whether a need can be something without which you could technically survive. Is having an imagination a need? What about an education?

From here, we moved to ranking needs. I provided them with a list of ten needs and had them work in groups to order them from most important to least important. When they completed that work, we compared the rankings. We noted some interesting places of agreement and disagreement. For example, most everyone agreed that food is a centrally important need because it is a necessary condition for meeting all one's other needs. However, there was significant disagreement about whether having a family is an important need. Beyond a certain age, one can survive without a family, but perhaps one's life is worse off for not having had one. Some students noted you do not really need a family, but you do need people who love and care for you in times of crisis. One group of students was particularly interested in discussing whether existing is a need and wondered if any particular person really needs to exist.

I especially enjoy having discussions with children that link up to the other subjects and questions they are studying in school. It is a pleasure to work with them to explore the depths of these subjects in ways that enable them to come even more alive for the students.

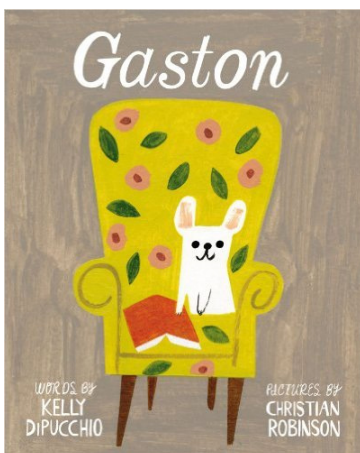
For Parents

We held two events for parents this school year – one in October and one in April – about ways to engage in philosophical conversations with children. Both events were held at [Post Alley Café](#) in the U-District, and a big thank you to owner (and Philosophy Department Advisory Board member) Marcia Evans, for contributing the space as well as the coffee and delicious appetizers.



In the first event, Director Jana Mohr Lone gave an introductory talk about philosophical inquiry with children, and then Program Director Sara Goering read to

the group Jacqueline Woodson's picture book [The Other Side](#), involving the story of the friendship that develops between two girls who live on opposite sides of a fence that separates the black townspeople from the whites in the town. Parents and children engaged in small group conversations about various philosophical questions raised by the story.



In the second event, John Muir Elementary School Philosopher-in-Residence and Center board member Karen Emmerman introduced the Center's work and then read the story *Gaston*

by Kelly DiPucchio, about a bulldog who is raised by a family of poodles, and learns to act like a poodle. Gaston soon meets a family of bulldogs with an extra poodle, and the parents of each family surmise that the puppies must have been accidentally

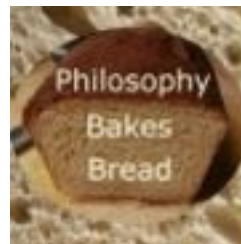
switched, so Gaston goes back to live with the bulldogs and Antoinette (the poodle) goes to live with the other poodles. They soon learn, however, that Gaston is too gentle for the bulldogs, and Antoinette is too rough for the poodles. The puppies switch back and are happy to be with their original families once more. The story ends with an epilogue where Gaston and Antoinette raise a family of their own, teaching their puppies to be "whatever they wanted to be."

Participants discussed questions such as: How much of your personality/beliefs come from your parents? Do you feel like you "belong" in your family? Does "belonging" in a family have to do with how you look or how you think and behave?

We hope to host more of these events next year!

In The News

The Center has received quite a bit of media attention this year. Two recent pieces of note:



Philosophy Bakes Bread radio show – <https://www.philosophersinamerica.com/2017/04/12/017-ep13-philosophy-for-children/>

Seattle's Child

Seattle's Child – <http://www.seattleschild.com/How-Do-We-Talk-to-Kids-about-Political-Issues-Stressing-Us-Out/>

From The Director



The Center has had another great year, with growing interest in our work and deepening relationships with several schools. I feel

particularly fortunate to have as colleagues such a dedicated and talented group of staff, students, and volunteers — and the children and youth with whom we work constantly inspire us. A moment that stands out for me this year is a conversation I had recently with a group of fifth grade students at John Muir Elementary School about the nature of home. The question we were exploring was: What makes something a home?

The students began by talking about home as a place, where you “feel comfortable and warm,” where you “are cared for,” where you “can be yourself.” The latter comment led to a suggestion that home is a place of greater freedom than many other places, like school, where, as one student put it, “You can only be yourself there if the person you are fits within all the rules and the structure.”

“Everyone has a different view of home,” another student offered, “It really depends on how you see it.”

“Everyone does understand the word ‘home’ differently,” responded a student. “So I am not sure what the point is of talking about home. I mean, you could look up the word ‘home’ in the dictionary and it would give you a certain definition. But that definition doesn’t cover everything people think of when they think of home. We can never decide one thing that makes a home a

home, because everyone thinks of home in their own way. So what’s the point?”

“If home is important to us,” I responded, “doesn’t it seem worthwhile to think more carefully about what we mean when we talk about it? Even if we won’t end up agreeing on exactly what makes something a home?”

We then reflected about the nature of homelessness — what does it mean not to have a home? – and whether “home” is about having a place to live. One student commented, “It’s really internal. Home is about your feelings. It could be how you feel about the people you live with, or you could live alone but surround yourself with things that make you feel comfortable and protected.”

Then the student who had earlier questioned the value of the discussion raised his hand and said, “You know, I’ve changed my mind. I wondered why we were talking about this when we weren’t going to end up ever being able to define home. But now I think that talking about what home is and how different people see it makes you think more about what a home should be. That’s why it’s important.”

One of the joys of philosophical inquiry with children is that they are readily open to changing their minds, at ease with examining what they think and remaining flexible about the possibilities for learning something new. In philosophy, we sometimes talk about the importance of “epistemological modesty,” the acknowledgment that we are all fallible and therefore hold views that could end up being mistaken. My own observation is that this is much more challenging for adults than it is for children, and I learn so much from children’s willingness to be open and vulnerable when thinking about difficult and sometimes personal subjects. I wish we could all say, “I’ve changed my mind,” as easily as that fifth grade student!

High School Ethics Bowl

The [2017 Washington State High School Ethics Bowl](#) was held on February 4, 2017, at the University of Washington School of Law. The Ethics Bowl is a collaborative yet competitive event in which teams analyze a series of wide-ranging ethical dilemmas. Over 100 high school students and teachers and 40 judges, lawyers, UW faculty and other educators participated.

Unlike debate, Ethics Bowls do not involve teams forced to take adversarial positions or hold fast to assigned perspectives. Instead, students have a forum in which to engage in dialogue, and they are judged on the quality of their analysis – how well they reason through the issues, organize and present arguments, analyze a case's morally relevant features, and respond to commentary and questions – and the degree to which they engage in a thoughtful, civil exchange.

Awards went to the following schools:

First place: Seattle Academy

Second place: Chief Sealth High School Team 1

Third place: Chief Sealth High School Team 2

Award for Civil Dialogue: Rainier Beach High School Teams 1 and 2

Seattle Academy went to the [National High School Ethics Bowl](#) in April at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, where the team made it to the quarter finals round.

The four trophy-winning teams also participated in a "Day in Olympia" in March, which included a private tour of the Washington State Supreme Court (and attendance at an oral argument session), a meeting with the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor, a tour of the Capitol Building, and a lunch reception with the Supreme Court justices. It was a wonderful and inspiring day!



June Philosophy in the Schools Workshop

We will be holding our annual two-day workshop on philosophical inquiry in classrooms on Wednesday June 28 and Thursday June 29, in Savery Hall at the University of Washington, from 9:30 am - 3:30 pm both days. The workshop is open to teachers and others interested in exploring how introducing philosophy can enrich student learning. Participants will learn about the history and methods of pre-college philosophy, and will engage in philosophical discussions on topics such as: "What can we know? What makes something right or wrong? Are we free? What is a mind? How do we define happiness?" We will have sessions specifically for elementary school teachers and for middle/high school teachers, as well as sessions for the entire group. The sessions for middle and high school teachers will include at least one session on the High School Ethics Bowl. (continued on page 6)

Sponsored by the UW Center for Philosophy for Children and the Department of Philosophy, the workshop is free, including clock hours, materials, refreshments and lunches, and parking.

Space is limited and filling up fast. To register, please send a brief statement of interest, including school and grades taught if you are a teacher, and contact information (phone/email) mohrlone@uw.edu by **May 31, 2017**.

Graduate Fellows

This year the Center has had three graduate fellows – two from the College of Education and one from the Department of Philosophy. We are very grateful to alum Dan Gerler (BA, Philosophy and Psychology, 1983) for his generous gift supporting our fellowship program!



Bridget DuRuz (Ph.D. Candidate, UW College of Education) is in her second year as one of the Center's fellows. Bridget reports the following about her experience:

I am sincerely honored to have participated in

the University of Washington Philosophy for Children Graduate Fellowship Program. As a two-time recipient of the award, I found the responsibilities of being a Fellow deeply enriching. The Center's mission aligns with my own philosophy of education, and I see Philosophy for Children and the Center's 'Philosophers in Schools' program as inspirational and revolutionary ways to bridge

philosophy and education.

As a Fellow, the Center supported my own graduate work and my dedication to developing interdepartmental and interdisciplinary connections with P4C and education. I feel fortunate to have participated in a vast array of experiences that have enhanced this work. Those opportunities include involvement with the Center's 'Philosophers in the Schools' program as a researcher, teacher and mentor; the Washington State High School Ethics Bowl; the 'Philosophy in the Schools' teachers' workshop; the 'Philosophical Inquiry in Schools' graduate seminar; and attending Center sponsored Parent events and the PLATO conference.

The evolution and current stage of my work is directly linked to my fellowship. I developed a proposal that investigates how experiences with philosophy for children might lead to embedding philosophical thinking into teaching and learning throughout the curriculum, and am ready to begin data collection for that project. I am also thinking about how to connect philosophy for children further in education, as a teaching endorsement and as an expanded 'Philosophers in the Schools' program.

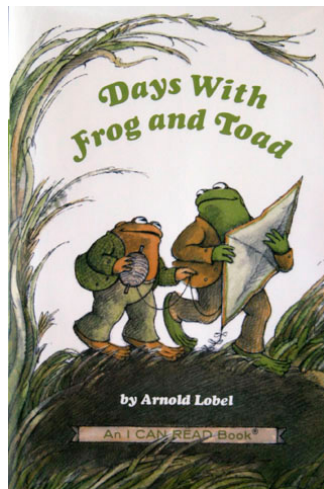
My fortuitous connection with the Center for Philosophy for Children has really helped me develop purpose for my own work, and I plan to continue my involvement with the Center moving forward. My fellowship has been both rewarding and meaningful, and I am dedicated to bringing all aspects of what I have experienced through the fellowship, and all that I continue to learn, to bridging philosophy and education.

Focus on the Classroom

Being Alone and Being Lonely

Debi Talukdar, UW College of Ed Ph.D.
Candidate and Center Instructor

Last week at John Muir Elementary, I read my 3rd grade class the story "Alone" (from Arnold Lobel's *Days with Frog and Toad*), which is a story about Frog wanting to be alone. Frog leaves a note on his door for his good friend Toad that he is out and would like to be left alone. Toad fears that Frog doesn't want to be his friend anymore, and he goes looking for Frog and finds him on an island, by himself.



Toad makes his way over to the island, with help from a turtle who advises Toad to leave Frog alone if that's what he wants. Not heeding that advice, Toad goes to the island and apologizes to Frog for all that he may have done to upset Frog. Frog explains that he wanted to be alone because he wanted to appreciate all the wonderful things in his life, including Toad. Toad understands now and joins Frog on the island where they continue to be alone, together.

The first question we dug into was "Why didn't Toad let Frog be alone if that's what he wanted?" The whole class thought that Toad should have respected Frog's wishes, but when asked how they would react if their friend told them that they'd like to be left alone, many said that like Toad they'd worry something was wrong or that they'd upset them in some way. A few said they'd understand, but it would not be easy to do. We thought about why that is. "Friends like to play together and be with each other"

so asking to be left alone might indicate something bad.

Then one of the students asked, "How can you be alone together?" We navigated the difference between being alone and being lonely, and whether it is possible to be alone or lonely while having people around us.

"You can be alone with people. Maybe you have your headphones on," one student offered.

"You can also feel lonely when you're with people too. But that's different because you didn't choose it," offered another student.

After some discussion, the students concluded that being alone is a conscious choice, while loneliness was sad and circumstantial. Being alone is an action and loneliness an emotion, and it is quite possible to feel either even in the presence of other people. It is also possible to feel both at the same time.

We wondered if the company of family and loved ones is qualitatively different from being around other people, and if the people close to us help us feel less lonely. Many agreed that they did, but one student said, "When you grow up, sometimes your family doesn't feel like they did two or three years ago." This idea seemed to resonate with the group.

"Sometimes being with them can make you lonely. You feel bad about something and they don't understand."

I am often amazed at how much of themselves my students are willing to share. Doing philosophy involves openness and respect, of course, but many discussions also call for a degree of trust and vulnerability. This is something they teach me each session – to bring my most authentic self to our circle, or anywhere else really.

Supporting the Center

Philosophy in schools makes space for children and youth to explore together some of the foundational questions in life that matter most to them. Students often observe that this is one of the few places in school that they feel empowered to ask their own questions and seek their own answers, building their confidence in their own perspectives and ideas.

We need your help!

The Center's work is largely made possible through individual donations.

Gifts from donors help fund our Philosophers in the Schools program, the Philosophy for Children graduate fellowships, the High School Ethics Bowl, our parent programs, and our annual workshop for teachers.

We are working to build our capacity to keep philosophy in the schools continuing and growing!

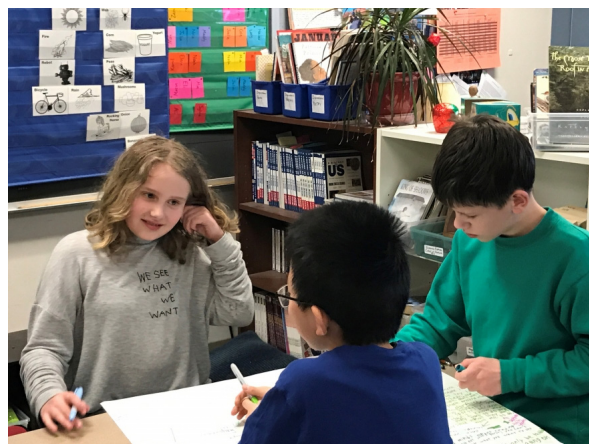
Resources are needed to provide more support and education for teachers and reach more young people eager for engagement with philosophy.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Center!

You can donate online [here](#).

You can also send a check to:
Center for Philosophy for Children
University of Washington Box 353350
Seattle, WA 98195-3350

Your gifts make all the difference - thank you!



Board of Directors

Thank you to our board of directors for their steadfast support and enthusiasm!

Kenneth Clatterbaugh, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at University of Washington

Karen Emmerman, Lecturer, Department of Philosophy & Comparative History of Ideas Program at University of Washington and Philosopher-in-Residence, John Muir Elementary School, Seattle

Sara Goering, Associate Professor of Philosophy at University of Washington and Center Program Director

Jean Hanson, Community Volunteer and Former Seattle Middle School Teacher

Judith Howard, Divisional Dean of Social Sciences in the College of Arts & Sciences at University of Washington

Polly Hunter, Director of Development at Children's Hospital at University of Virginia

Terrance McKittrick, Teacher at Nova High School, Seattle

Jana Mohr Lone, Center Director

Janice Moskalik, Instructor in Philosophy at Seattle University

David Shapiro, Faculty in Philosophy at Cascadia Community College and Center Education Director

Christine Stickler, Director of the Pipeline Project at University of Washington

Julie Trout, Teacher at John Muir Elementary School, Seattle

Staff

Jana Mohr Lone, Director

Sara Goering, Program Director

David Shapiro, Education Director

Kate Goldyn, Outreach Coordinator