



For Parents and Families

The Center runs parent events twice yearly, at which we briefly introduce the Center's work and then immerse families in the experience of philosophy for children by doing a philosophy session with them. We typically center the event around a prompt we enjoy using in our work with children, take questions from the group, and facilitate a philosophical discussion. At past events, we have read *Gaston* (DiPuchio), *Why?* (Camp), *The Other Side* (Woodson), and *The Big Orange Splot* (Pinkwater)), as well as led a group activity probing the nature and role of happiness in human life.

These events enable parents to experience the community of inquiry model firsthand. Moreover, since parents are encouraged to bring their children, the adults in the group witness children's philosophical capacities in action. The multi-generational nature of the gathering results in stimulating philosophical questions and discussion, with children's voices given the same respect as those of the adults. Through these events, we aim not only to provide parents a window into the work we undertake in classrooms throughout Seattle, but also to develop their skills of thinking philosophically at home with their children. A wonderful additional benefit of these sessions is that parents have an opportunity to think and talk together about deep questions – something many adults enjoy but often do not have the time to do pursue.

To maximize inclusivity and accessibility, we have hosted the parent events in a variety of different venues including a café, a public elementary school, and the community meeting rooms at various Seattle public libraries. Recognizing that families have busy schedules, we have experimented with different scheduling options with an eye towards making the events as accessible as possible for a broad range of families. We provide snacks and drinks to further encourage discussion and community-building. Like our philosophers-in-the-schools program, these parent events are an excellent example of the outreach public universities can do to bring our work beyond the boundaries of the campus and out into the community.

Please join us for our next event on Sunday, June 9th from 1:30-3:00 in the meeting room at the Douglass Truth Library. RSVP to info@philosophyforchildren.org

— Karen Emmerman, *Philosopher-in-Residence, John Muir Elementary School; Center Board Member; and Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Comparative History of Ideas Program*

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Certificate of Mastery

A great deal of interest is being expressed in our new [Certificate of Mastery](#), which is intended primarily for University of Washington graduate students interested in developing the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully lead philosophy sessions in K-12 classrooms, but also open to teachers and interested others. Completion of the certificate involves coursework, 40 hours of experience facilitating philosophy sessions in classrooms, and a Capstone Experience.



[Daily Nous](#), a news website for the philosophy profession, wrote about this new program in April.

Monthly Professional Learning Community

For the second year this year the Center has hosted, at the University of Washington, a monthly seminar for teachers about philosophical inquiry in classrooms. The seminar is approved for up to 13.5 clock hours and explores how introducing philosophy can enrich student learning. About 25 participants have been considering a wide range of philosophical issues, with a different participant leading the session each month.



Sponsored by the UW Center for Philosophy for Children and the Department of Philosophy, the seminar is free, including materials and refreshments.

Want to join the monthly professional learning community in 2019-2020?
Email info@philosophyforchildren.org for more information and schedule.

In The Press

Some Recent Press Featuring the Center:

[How to Win at Civil Debate](#) - Experience Magazine

[Philosophy for Children: Reclaiming the Discipline Outside of Higher Education](#) - The Catalyst, The Independent Student Newspaper of Colorado College

[Life Lessons About Solitude, From a Frog and a Toad](#) - Sound Effect, KNKX NPR

[What Students Gain From Learning Ethics in School](#) - Mindshift, KQED

From the Director



The breadth of the Center's work – philosophers in schools, teacher and parent education, the High School Ethics Bowl, courses for graduate and undergraduate students, graduate fellowships, and our role as a national and international hub for philosophy for children – is helping to create a more philosophical culture in the Northwest and around the world. As we continue to work with teachers through our monthly seminar and other programs, we are reminded of the number of teachers who for years have been regularly engaging in philosophical inquiry with their students as a result of training with the Center.

This year we have been involved in several international programs around the world. In November I delivered a [keynote address](#) for the Annual Saigon International School Professional Development Conference in Vietnam, and earlier this month I gave an online talk to students at the University of the Azores (Portugal). In March Sara Goering and I traveled to Colorado College, where I gave a talk and we held several workshops for faculty, local teachers, and Colorado College students. This spring we hosted visitors from India and from Denmark, and we are expecting this fall a group from Turkey.

Earlier this month Debi Talukdar, our Philosopher-in-Residence at Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, former Philosophy for Children Graduate Fellow, and member of our Advisory Board, gave a TEDxUofW talk entitled "Philosophy is for Everyone." (starts at 1:24)

I am working on a new book, *Seen and Not Heard*, about the contributions that children can make to philosophy. The book will be published by Rowman and Littlefield in 2020. It considers the ways in which children, and particularly those of elementary school age (5-12), are often not believed or listened to just because of their status as children, and evaluates how children's perspectives on philosophical issues such as justice, ethics, childhood, and death have the potential to both enrich children's lives and enlarge our societal thinking about many important topics.

Washington State High School Ethics Bowl

The [2019 Washington State High School Ethics Bowl](#) was held on February 2, 2019, 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 50 judges, lawyers, UW faculty and other educators participated.



Unlike debate, Ethics Bowls do not require teams to take adversarial positions or hold fast to assigned perspectives. Instead, students engage in dialogue, and are judged on how well they organize and present arguments, analyze a case's morally relevant features, and respond to commentary and questions, and on the degree to which they engage in a genuine and civil exchange.

Awards went to the following schools:

First place: Chief Sealth High School

Second place: University Prep Team 2

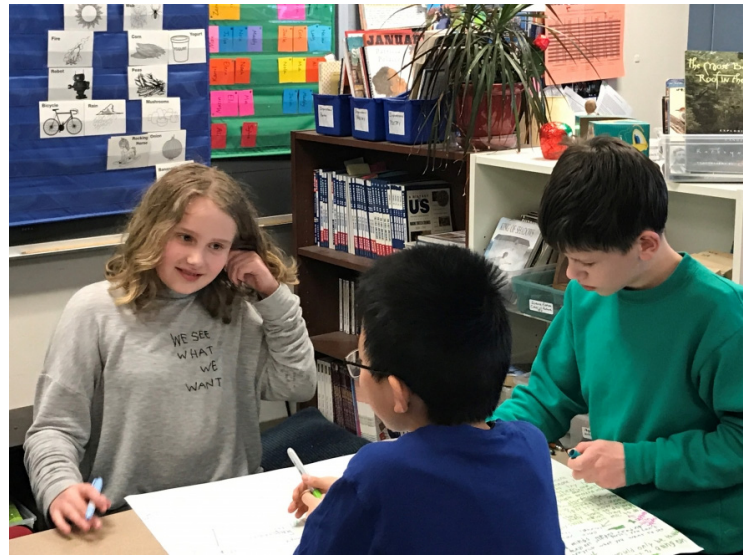
Third place: Seattle Academy Team 1

Award for Civil Dialogue: Lake Washington High School Team 1

Chief Sealth High School went to the [National High School Ethics Bowl](#) in April at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Philosophers in the Schools

This school year our Philosophers in the Schools program has involved over 40 Seattle classrooms in nine different schools, the majority of these weekly or every-other-week philosophy sessions throughout the year, as well as multiple philosophy classes (for students in grades K-1, 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](#).



We are completing the sixth 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 six years, and are very fortunate to have Karen Emmerman (Ph.D. philosophy, 2012) continuing to serve in this role. And we are thrilled at the strong start our second philosopher-in-residence program has achieved this year, with former Philosophy for Children Graduate Fellow Debi Talukdar serving in this role at [Thurgood Marshall Elementary School](#). Thanks to the support of a donor who has made a three-year commitment to this new program, we are building a philosophical culture at Thurgood Marshall, which, like John Muir, is a racially and ethnically diverse Title I school in south Seattle.

Teacher Samantha Egelhoff writes about the impact of the program in her classroom: Philosophy can be intimidating sometimes; listening to the ideas of another person can challenge your concepts of how the world works. It takes bravery to confront your beliefs and change your mind. This is the work of a good philosopher. This is work can be observed in the philosophical conversations we have in my 5th grade classroom.

Thurgood Marshall Elementary is a unique public school. We have three programs: our Scholars program which serves our neighborhood students, our PEACE Academy serves students impacted by autism, and the HCC (Highly Capable Cohort) program which serves students who qualify as "highly capable." A schoolboard policy prevents the HCC students from learning alongside their friends in the Scholars program for all academic subjects, whereas the PEACE Academy students may learn with the Scholars as much as they can. This presents a unique problem for us: How can we bring ALL our students together to create a cohesive community?

Philosophy is the enrichment class for mixing the programs at our school. Twice a month a team of philosophers from the UW come to facilitate conversations to our blended classrooms. A piece of children's literature ignites their thinking, they share their questions, and then discuss their thoughts. Most recently, while discussing Jacqueline Woodson's picture book *The Other Side*, students wondered who built the fence in the story that (continued on page 5)

separated the black family from the white family. This caused them to consider perhaps the fence is really a metaphor for another kind of division between people. Who set up these divisions and why? Are the groups afraid of each other? Will they get in trouble if they cross over to the other side?

Just like with any good philosophy class, the students leave with more questions than they have answers. I see them asking deeper and more complex questions in other areas as well. While our school is still not a blended utopia where all students can learn side by side, we are taking the first step in the right direction: asking questions and bravely confronting new ideas.

— Samantha Egelhoff, Fifth Grade Teacher, Thurgood Marshall Elementary School

From the Blog

In a fifth grade class last month, we read the story *I'm a Frog* by Mo Willems, about which I have written in the past. The story raises questions about the nature of pretending.

After reading the story, the children articulated the questions about which the story led them to wonder. They then voted to discuss the question, "Does everyone pretend?"

"Everyone pretends, but kids pretend more. Kids have more time to play pretend. Like at recess."

"I was wondering if dreaming counts as pretending. I kind of think it does, because when you dream you're imagining something."

"I disagree. Dreams aren't pretending because they are based on what happens to you in real life and turns whatever happens into a kind of jumbled mess. Actually, I think it could go either way. What you dream is not real, it's made up, but you don't get to choose, you don't make it up."

"I think that if imagining something when you're awake is a form of pretending, but you're not actually doing anything, just fantasizing about something, then dreaming could be pretending too."

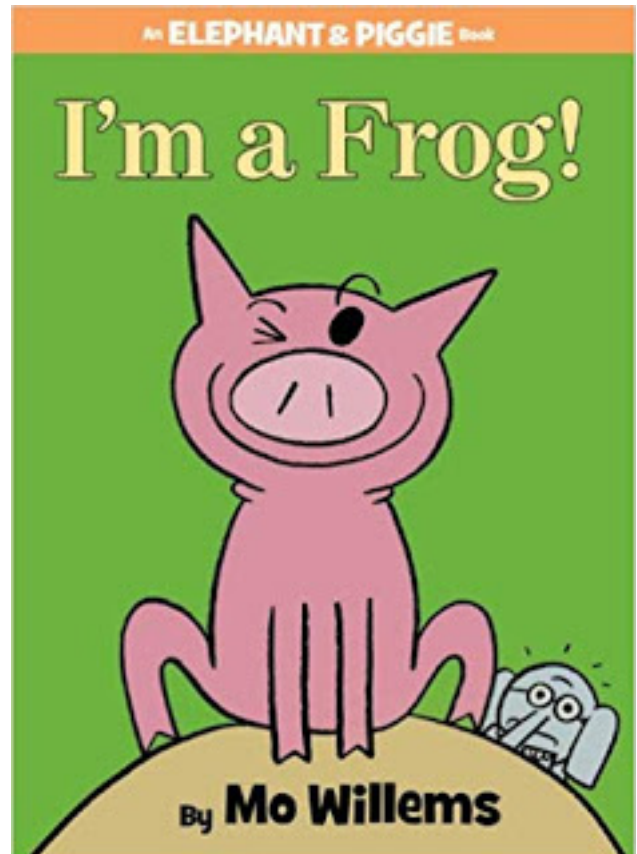
"I don't know if dreaming really counts, because you're sleeping and you might not even remember what you dream. Daydreaming, where you're making up a fantasy in your head, counts as pretending, but not dreaming while you're asleep."

"Dreaming isn't a form of pretending because you're not intending to pretend anything."

[Read more.](#)

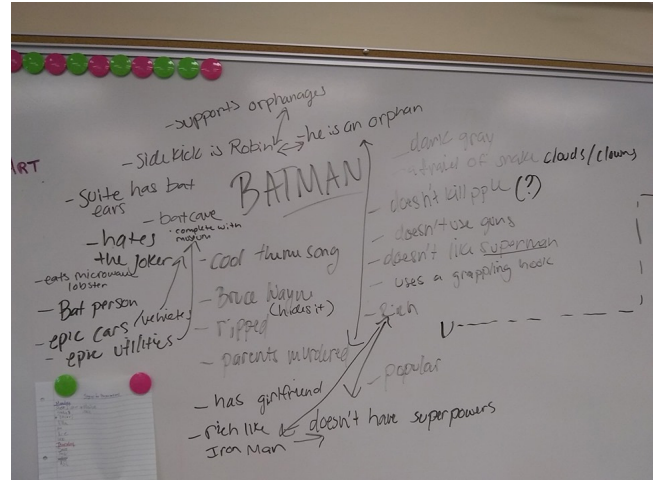
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New Programs at Whittier Elementary School

This year the Center ran two new programs at [Whittier Elementary School](#): an afterschool program, led by Center Graduate Fellow Natalie Janson, and a lunch program. The new lunch philosophy program serves students in fourth and fifth grades, all of whom were recommended for the program because they were facing various challenges, such as having a hard time making friends, a death in the family, or other emotional or social issues at home or at school. Three of the original students have remained in the group throughout the program this year, and three new students joined. Accounting for the occasional recess interruption, the sessions are structured like traditional Philosophy for Children sessions. We have a warmup, and then read a story, play a game, or do an activity, and then we talk about what comes up.



In our conversations, various interesting questions emerge. One student once asked, “What if this is all a simulation and what if the simulation is better than real life?” Sometimes the students make the discussions more personal. One student recounted the experience of a brother passing out and basically dying for a minute, and said the brother described the feeling as “really chill, but everything is black.” In an ensuing conversation about reincarnation, one student mentioned that they like seeing crows because crows remind them of someone important to them who passed away.

This group also has enjoyed playing an improv game called “Connections.” Students explain that they especially like this game because “everything can be connected.” In a conversation about perspective, students noted that while optimism means that you are excited, look at the bright side, and are nice, “pessimism is when you are better at sensing danger, play it safe, never get in fights, but may also be kind of rude.” Then another students asserted that normal people are both optimistic and pessimistic, and neither is better. The students agreed that “people just think differently.”

Many of these students are in philosophy sessions I co-lead in their regular classrooms. Since we began the lunch sessions, these students have been actively cooperative, more communicative, and more encouraging of their peers.

— Drue Miller (BA Philosophy 2016), Center Philosophy Instructor

Center Fulbright Scholar

I was awarded a Fulbright-Nehru Professional and Academic Excellence grant through the U.S-India Educational Foundation from December 2018 to April 2019 to teach and do research in Mysore, India in conjunction with the University of Mysore; the title of my grant was “Cross-Pollinating Philosophy for Children in the U.S. and India.”

I had the great good fortune of working with educators and students in the South Indian states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Pondicherry to undertake philosophical reflection and inquiry in classrooms, public and professional workshops, and numerous informal settings. It was an amazing experience—culturally, intellectually, and personally—which continued to reinforce my abiding commitment to Philosophy for Children and my deep conviction that doing philosophy with young people is one of the most powerful ways to engage students (and teachers) in meaningful learning experiences for everyone involved.



It's difficult to make generalizations about a country so diverse as India (I probably should revise my grant title to “Cross-Pollinating Philosophy for Children in the U.S. and Eight Classrooms in Four Locations in Three States in Southern India”), but I can say unequivocally that, wherever I went, I observed a great hunger among Indian educators and students for the sort of interactive student-centered approach to learning that characterizes P4C.

India received her independence from England in 1947, but the educational system is, I believe, still colonized by a traditional British model of instruction. In all the classrooms I visited, students sat at long benches while teachers presented information, often simply by reading from state-assigned textbooks; students copied the material by rote and prepared to present it back on high-stakes government-sanctioned tests that will, in no small part, determine their futures, both in education and ultimately, their careers.

That said, in all of those classrooms, with students as young as “Lower Primary” (ages about 6 and 7) to as old as “Higher Secondary” (ages about 17 or 18), students, given the opportunity to philosophize, did so eagerly, enthusiastically, and with real philosophical insight and acumen.

I led a number of philosophical exercises and activities and students dived right in. They especially, in my experience, loved any sort of competitive activities. In a 10th standard class, for example, we played the “Reasons Game,” where participants try to identify a claim from the reasons that support it and the excitement was palpable, with cheering and applause for correct answers from team members. With a group of 7th standard students, we played a charades-type game to illustrate philosophical concepts and you'd have thought it was the finals of the Cricket World Cup to see how competitive the players were.

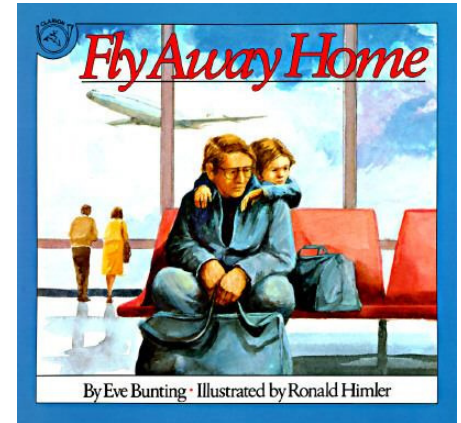
Educators embraced the theory and practice of P4C, as well; I was the keynote speaker at four different one to two-day conferences focused on philosophical reflection and inquiry, which brought together, all told, several hundred university professors, graduate students, and classroom teachers to explore the ways in which P4C can foster student engagement. Two of those are publishing the proceedings so that the papers presented can reach a wider audience, in India and elsewhere. (Continued on page 8)

I thank the UW Center for Philosophy for Children for their support in making my Fulbright grant possible, and I look forward to many more opportunities to continue the cross-pollination of P4C here in the US and in India and beyond.

— David Shapiro, Center Education Director and Board Member, and Cascadia College Faculty Member

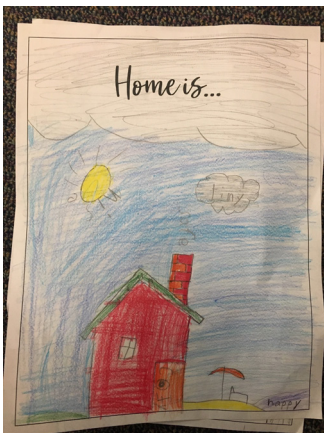
Focus on the Classroom

Eve Bunting's picture book *Fly Away Home* is about a young boy named Andrew and his father who live in an airport as they struggle with homelessness. Throughout the story, Andrew tells the audience how they survive in the airport day to day: always moving terminals, blending into the crowd, avoiding being noticed. One day, a bird flew into the airport and gets stuck. Andrew encourages the bird to fly out and escape the airport where he is trapped. Later in the story, Andrew expresses frustration that so many of the people in the airport are excited to be home when they depart their planes. Andrew asks, "Why do you have homes when we don't? What makes you so special?"



This question prompts us to think more deeply about what it means to be home. Is the airport Andrew's home? What is a home? Can you have more than one home? Is home a place? Is home a feeling?

To explore these questions with second grade students, we started with the first question: Is the airport Andrew's home? Some students thought that yes, because Andrew spends his time in the airport and sleeps in the airport, that it is his home. Others thought no, the airport isn't his home, rather the place he lived and slept before moving into the airport should be considered his home. Students were also eager to share what home meant to them. After sharing verbally for a few minutes, students worked individually to write about home in their philosophy journals.



During the next session, we revisited the topic of home. We started by brainstorming a list of adjectives that describe home: comfortable, love, being together, rainy, Mariners, safe, etc. Then, we read the story *Home* by Carson Ellis, which beautifully depicts many different types of homes, some real, some imaginary, and ends by asking students "Where is your home? Where are you?". Students drew homes, hiding some of the adjectives on the list they created in their pictures. Students were given the creative freedom to draw and color any home that they wanted. Some pictures were fantastical and were placed in space or the ocean, while some were more traditional homes that were painted fun colors. When finished, the students shared their pictures with the class.

Through this two-session lesson, students' ideas of home expanded and they explored what home meant to them and to each other. Both of these books are excellent starting places for asking and exploring questions about home, a topic that can mean many different things to different people.

— Natalie Janson (College of Ed), Center Graduate Fellow Faculty Member

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.

Resources are needed to provide more support and education for teachers and reach more young people interested in philosophy. We are working to build our capacity to keep philosophy in the schools growing! With continuing budget cuts at the University of Washington, your support is more crucial than ever.

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

You can make your donation [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

Dan Gerler, University of Washington Philosophy Alumnus

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

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