

# Currents

Thomas A. Edison High School Newsletter Spring 2012

## Grandparents Day: A New Edison Tradition

“The students at Thomas Edison High School are genuine, funny, friendly, happy, smart, and most of all, open hearted because we all understand each other. We all know what it feels like to be ignored and alone in school. At Edison, for the first time, I wanted to be in school because I was happy.” Senior Sarah Friedman shared her story with an audience of Edison students, grandparents, and other special friends attending our very first Grandparents Day on April 6, 2012.

Our guests had the pleasure of hearing performances by Gabe Reyes '12 on the bouzouki, a string instrument similar to a lute, and by Sunny Barger '14 on the piano. They also admired student artwork on display. Students' academic achievements were recognized with Student of the Month awards and announcement of the honor roll. Our guests were also treated to a showing of Jordan Britton's music video. You can see it on our website by visiting [www.taedisonhs.org](http://www.taedisonhs.org) and clicking on "Edison Students" in the menu on the left side of the screen.



*Guests and students gather to admire student artwork, enjoy performances, and honor academic achievements.*

Finally, guests were invited to visit a classroom. In Mr. Maguire's class, students and adults competed to answer questions about the government (they tied). Mr. Maguire then asked the grandparents to share stories from when they were teenagers.

Mr. Maguire says, "This might have been one of the highlights of my teaching

career. We heard stories which I will never forget! Grandparents and grandkids sometimes forget that they both have a wonderful opportunity and almost obligation to hand down these treasured stories from generation to generation."

Thank you for helping establish this new tradition at Edison. We're already looking forward to our next Grandparents Day! ✦



*Speaker Sarah Friedman '12 and musician Gabe Reyes '12. All photos courtesy Mai-Lill Mägi.*



*Sunny Barger '14 at the piano throughout the morning's program.*



*Don Engeldinger '14 with his guests, Dennis and Jeanine Rychlik.*

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# Edison's Accreditation

## A Message From Patrick J. Maguire, Director

When you visit the Thomas Edison High School website or read one of our brochures, you'll see that Edison is fully accredited. I would like to take some time to share with you how the accreditation process works and why it's so important to our school and our students.

Edison is fully accredited through the Northwest Accreditation Commission (NWAC). NWAC is one of the premier American education accrediting agencies that accredits over 1,770 public and private schools throughout the U.S. and internationally.

In order to be accredited by the NWAC, Edison meets rigorous educational quality standards. In addition, we are also committed to continual improvement (or, as I like to call it, "kaizen"). NWAC accreditation provides worldwide recognition of our school's quality, accountability, and trustworthiness.

NWAC site visits happen every six years. We had a visit here in February of 2012 in order to renew our accreditation. A response team completed an evaluation using the school's mission, as well as findings based on faculty, staff, and student interviews; classroom observations; and administrative reports.

I am proud to tell you that the evaluation team recommended full continued accreditation through our next site visit. I'd like to share with you a few of the commendations from the NWAC evaluation team:

- The school's mission statement is evident in the culture of the school, including with students. Students gave a collective "thumbs up." One student said, "Thomas Edison is a place where students come and feel like they're family." Several students relayed stories of teachers working with them into the evening hours to help them better understand their assignments.
- The Writing Across the Curriculum program is very effective. An example of this: students in Health class conduct research and then work in English class to write up their research, where they develop the mechanics of writing.
- The administration and staff have made it a priority goal to provide all staff with professional development in the area of implementing technology throughout all curricula. All freshmen are required to have iPads; sophomores,



junior, and seniors students all have laptops. Technology levels the playing field for students with learning differences.

- Edison effectively utilizes community resources: board members and community members participate by allowing students to shadow and having business members visit the school and serve as guest speakers.
- The establishment of the Satellite Campus at Valley Plaza is a major positive in terms of expanding opportunities for Edison students.

While it's wonderful to have the hard work of our staff and students recognized, these commendations don't mean that we will be sitting back and relaxing any time soon. Our renewed accreditation is a perfect opportunity to practice kaizen—the art of continual improvement. Here at Edison, we look at the NWAC evaluation report and think, "This is great. Now how can we do even better?" ♦

# Edison's Most Successful Event to Date



Bill and Toni Kiefel, event chairs, sponsors, and proud Edison parents.



Jarrett Bernhardt '15 delivers a fun Seahawks commentary before the event.

Over 300 guests gathered at the Governor Hotel on March 17 for Thomas Edison High School's 2012 Brilliance Benefit. The gala dinner and auction generated over \$200,000 in revenue to support financial aid, technology, and professional development at our school, making it our most successful event to date! Thank you to Edison parents Bill and Toni Kiefel for serving as our co-chairs, to all of our fabulous committee chairs and volunteers for making the evening brilliant, and to Kristin Krueger for coordinating the event. The biggest thanks goes to you, our guests, for joining us and bidding so generously. We hope you enjoyed St. Patrick's Day as much as we did. Please mark your calendars for next year: March 9, 2013, at the Governor Hotel. We'll see you there! ✦

Below: Students gather onstage with speaker Sarah Friedman '12 during the paddle raise for financial aid. All event photos courtesy of Andie Petkus Photography.



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From left: Jeff and Sandy Jones, winners of the 2012 Hawaii vacation raffle, visit with Anne and Mario Bisio during the silent auction.



George Hutcherson accepts the Pat Karmanos Award for Distinguished Service.



Sophie Bottom '13 and Michael Kilpatrick '13 show their St. Paddy's spirit.



# The Hunger Games a Favorite Series for Students and Teachers at Edison



“*The Hunger Games* is the first book I’ve read,” says junior Kelci Robbins. “I had never read a book before, and now I’m a reader. It’s awesome!” Kelci transferred to Thomas Edison High School this year. Before she came to Edison, she says she was reading at a sixth-grade level; teachers would hand books to her and not realize that she couldn’t get through them.

Now that Kelci is in Ms. Fellows Russell’s English class, she is not the only student with ADD or other learning differences. Using a school iPod, she listened to an audio version of *The Hunger Games* purchased with the grant given to Edison by NW Natural in 2010.

With one book under her belt, Kelci eagerly read the rest of the trilogy and then kept on reading. She follows along in the books as she listens to the audio versions. “I finished *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* five weeks early,” she says. “Now I’m reading my fifth book.”

And *The Hunger Games* lit the spark that made this happen. Everywhere you turn these days, you hear about *The Hunger Games*—the bestselling young-adult trilogy turned blockbuster movie franchise. But if you’re at Thomas Edison High School, *The Hunger Games* has been



Kelci Robbins '13 wears her custom-designed shirt to the premiere of *The Hunger Games* movie.

popular for years now. Edison students have been loyal fans since the series began in 2008. Many of our students have dyslexia and other processing disorders which make reading a laborious, time-intensive process. So how does this series transform readers from reluctant to enthusiastic?

While many students first read *The Hunger Games* because it was assigned reading for their English class, most read the sequels (*Catching Fire*, 2009, and *Mockingjay*, 2010) because they wanted to. The characters are complex, the plot is compelling, and it’s almost impossible to stop once you get started.

One Edison student says that she read *The Hunger Games* because “Ms. Fellows Russell said it was really good with a strong female protagonist. And once I read the first, I read the second immediately and then was quite upset to learn I would have to wait six months for *Mockingjay* to be released—but it was a good opportunity to reread the series in the summer.”

English teacher Ms. Fellows Russell estimates that at least half to three-quarters of her students have read the trilogy, and many students have credited these books with making them want to read more. “*The Hunger Games* can be a gateway book for students,” says Ms. Fellows Russell. “Once a student reads it, they have the confidence of having actually read a book and they are willing to try it again. It can also be the book that bridges the gap between a faster read, like *The Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan, and a more challenging read, like *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie.”

On March 23, 2012, the much-anticipated movie adaptation of *The Hunger Games* was released. Ms. Fellows Russell and Ms. Connolly arranged a field trip for the midnight viewing of the premiere. Nearly fifty Edison students, parents, and friends joined our teachers to see the sold-out showing.

The students and teachers who attended said that they liked the movie, even though it wasn’t as good as the book. Kelci Robbins went to the premiere—she even made her own t-shirt in honor of the event—and agrees with the general consensus. “The movie was pretty good, but they left so much out,” she says. “The book was better.” ♦



A group of Edison students make the most of the long wait before the premiere of *The Hunger Games* movie.




Finally in the theater! Waiting for *The Hunger Games* movie to begin.

# Transitioning to Edison: A Comic by Diana Todd '12

In Mr. Keller's Senior Transitions class, students reflected on a major life transition to date that could offer insights into how to approach future transitions. Students could produce an essay, video/audio recording, or comic strip such as Diana's.


*Diana Todd*  
**18<sup>th</sup> Grade!**

My experience with junior high school was not a good one. For starters, I was the only new person in a class that had been together since kindergarten; also, I was the shortest, very shy, and decidedly geeky, none of which earned me any points with my classmates.



It was around this time that I discovered how much I hate math.

My teachers weren't much help; they generally didn't believe in calculators, or in accommodations.



Several of my classmates seemed to think I was a great target for jokes, and loved reminding me that I was the new kid, and therefore not cool.



Before I graduated, though, I managed to make a friend. Her name was Shawna, and to this day we're still very close.



**the Next Year...**

Starting school at Edison was pretty overwhelming at first; I had no idea what to expect, and I didn't know a single person. However, on my very first day, I found myself talking to people (socializing! Oh no!), and by the end of my first month, I was starting to make friends.



...I felt like I actually fit in.



# Canned Food Drive Sets New Record

Congratulations to everyone at Edison for raising a phenomenal 5,198 cans for the Canned Food Drive last winter! A special congratulations to Ms. Robinson's advisory for bringing in 1,191 of those cans. Edison families really got into the spirit of the season. This generosity helped us collect more donations for the Oregon Food Bank and Casey's Corner than ever before.

On November 29, the Edison Student Council spent the day volunteering at the Oregon Food Bank. They sorted donations, learned about where the donations from our Canned Food Drive would be going, and gained an appreciation for the importance of every donation and every volunteer.

The annual Canned Food Drive features a variety of incentives to inspire students to bring in as many cans as possible. This year's incentives included a dual blind makeover by Mr. Beard and Mr. Keller. And, since we passed the 4,500 can mark for the first time, Mr. Maguire dyed his hair and mustache green for a day at the beginning of January! If you missed the fun in person, you can see Mr. Beard styling Mr. Maguire's hair at <http://youtu.be/Zg-BvbvqKDY> or by searching for "Mr. Maguire Goes Green" on YouTube. ✦



*Student council members prepare for a day of volunteering at the Oregon Food Bank, one of the beneficiaries of Edison's annual Canned Food Drive.*



*Hair nets for everyone! From left: Sunny Barger '14, CJ Poepppe '12, Sarah Friedman '12, Hans Weih '12, and Lane Traynor '13.*



*Student council members Sarah Friedman '12 and Sunny Barger '14 measure and pack beans at the Oregon Food Bank.*



*Above: Mr. Beard and Mr. Keller, looking fabulous after giving each other blindfolded makeovers—just one of many fun incentives that inspired our students to bring in more cans.*

*Left: As promised, Mr. Maguire dyed his hair and mustache green when we raised over 4,500 cans. He kept the green for the rest of the day, through classes and meetings. Good thing it's his favorite color!*



# Edison Alumni Update: Jensen Clarke '05



Jensen Clarke, Edison Class of 2005, with his girlfriend.

“I’m in my third year of coaching Varsity Tennis at Jefferson High School. This is also my tenth or eleventh year as a Certified Tennis Instructor at the Portland Athletic Club. I still own and operate my Racquet Stringing business, which is going well. You can see my website at <https://sites.google.com/site/racquet2stringer/home>

“I graduated last year with my first degree of general sciences, and I am currently working on a second degree in organismal biology at PSU. After this, I will have completed all pre-med requirements and I’ll enter medical school, hopefully either at OHSU or Pacific University. I have not completely decided

which route I will take: Physician Assistant (PA) with a specialty in cardiac surgery; Licensed Nurse Practitioner (LNP) with a specialty in cardiac surgery; or Cardiologist. Each of these plans will keep me in school for at least another three years after completing my current degree endeavors. Needless to say, I’m in it for the long haul.

“My girlfriend and I are doing wonderfully. We just celebrated our fourth anniversary a few months ago. We plan to get married within the next couple of years, either after I get admitted to a medical program or once she graduates from PSU and OIT. Don’t worry—I’ll keep you in the loop when the big news arises!” ♦

Are you an Edison alum with news to share? We’d love to hear about your job, hobbies, family, pets, and more! Please send email and photos to [rachelt@taemail.org](mailto:rachelt@taemail.org) or contact us through the Alumni Update form on our website: [www.taedisonhs.org/index.php/alumni](http://www.taedisonhs.org/index.php/alumni) You can also connect with us on the Thomas Edison Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/ThomasEdisonHS](http://www.facebook.com/ThomasEdisonHS)

## Fond Farewells to Mr. Cady Russell, Mrs. Dunne, Mrs. Hall



Michael Cady Russell will graduate with his Master’s in School Counseling and a certificate in Couples, Marriage and Family therapy in June. He hopes to earn a position as a School Counselor at a local school and establish a private practice to help students and families with learning differences.



After eight years at Edison, Sharon Dunne is retiring. She plans to spend more time with her grandkids, continue her work with Friends of the Orphans (a non-profit for kids in orphanages worldwide), travel with her husband, and do all the projects she has never had time to finish!



Koleen Hall has been with us at Edison since September of 2001. She is returning to Ziba Design, the firm that first hired her in Portland 21 years ago. Koleen will miss the Edison community very much, but hopes to see you all at the events!

*You will be missed. Thank you for everything and please keep in touch!*



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*Ready to change the world.*



**Save the Date:  
Edison Graduation  
June 1, 2012  
6:00 pm**

Marilyn Moyer Theatre,  
Jesuit High School  
9000 SW Beaverton  
Hillsdale Hwy, Portland

Reception following at  
Thomas Edison High School