

As my daughter's fourth year in Ballard Performing Arts closes and my own involvement with the Booster Board winds down I still pinch myself that Ballard has such a program. In just these four years the program has grown significantly in the number of students participating and in the expectations of our students. Our directors are always striving for improvement and being an involved parent has only given me a deeper understanding of the effort they put forth and of the benefits to our students.

Our students are learning the satisfaction of working in teams and making a commitment to the group. For many of them this program provides the place in the school that feels like family. They build skills and take risks together. They take pride in the quality of the art they produce. Their experiences are likely to outshine other high school memories and while an "A" on an important exam is certainly a key high school moment, they will more likely recall "Damn Yankees" or performing at Lincoln Center. These experiences are life-changing and empowering while providing appropriate opportunities to take risk.

With the expansion of the program, the Booster Board was a mighty 35+ this year. They are smart and generous beyond belief. It is impossible to say how many things they do and how thankful I am for them. As we work to wrap up this year there are already plans being made for improvement in the coming year by the numerous board members who are staying on. The Boosters will be in good hands.

As a community-sponsored program Ballard Performing Arts exists because the community wants it to. Seattle Public Schools is supportive but can only contribute teacher salaries. It is important to recognize the commitment our families make in fees paid, students shuttled, private lessons, and parent volunteerism that allows trips, camps and festivals to happen. Over time this program has had consistent support from Ballard PTSA, the Ballard High School Foundation, and from corporate sponsors in our community. Our alumni students and families lend support by showing up for performances and fundraisers. This year Ballard Performing Arts was the recipient of two grants which provided the opportunity to make specific significant purchases that will serve the program for years to come.

All of this activity is really a loud statement of confidence in our directors. Brittany Newell, Shawn Riley, Courtney Rowley and Michael James have shown themselves to be talented, capable, caring, and truly remarkable. They keep our students inspired and they cultivate their talents as they push forward toward the next great experience. It will be a pleasure to watch the program as I recategorize my family as supportive alumni.

As you may have heard, Brittany Newell is leaving us for a full-time music position in the Edmonds district. We wish her the very best in her new adventure and she will be missed. Mr. James has been working hard to find the right person to follow her at Ballard.

In an attempt to keep this to one page, I have resisted naming lots of names and going into great detail about the accomplishments of the year. Both lists are long and there are not enough "Thank Yous" to do justice to our immediate and extended community and their efforts on

behalf of our students. Thanks to all who are part of our village. We know we cannot do it without you. Thank you for your belief in Ballard Performing Arts.