



## Three-Day Workshop on Philosophy in Schools

For many years, the Center has run a two-day workshop on Philosophy in Schools, open to teachers, UW graduate and undergraduate students, parents, and others interested in philosophical inquiry with children. This year, we've extended the workshop to three days, from June 26-28. A longer workshop will allow for sufficient time to give all of the workshop participants an opportunity to co-lead a philosophy session. Workshop participants will also learn about the history and methods of pre-college philosophy, and 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 are planning to have a few sessions specifically for elementary school teachers and for middle/high school teachers, as well as sessions for the entire group. The workshop is approved for 16 clock hours.

In addition to local educators, teachers from Oregon, California, Washington DC, Turkey, and Vietnam have registered for the workshop. We're looking forward to a rich and meaningful experience!

The workshop fee, which includes materials, refreshments and lunches, and parking, is \$150 for all except preschool through high school classroom teachers, for whom the fee is \$100, and graduate and undergraduate students, for whom the fee is \$60. You can register [here](http://www.philosophyforchildren.org).

Space is limited. Once we have 25 participants, registration will close.

### In the Newsletter

<a href="#">Three-Day Workshop on Philosophy in Schools</a>	1
<a href="#">From the Director</a>	2
<a href="#">For Parents</a>	3
<a href="#">Philosophers in the Schools</a>	4
<a href="#">UW Robinson Center</a>	5
<a href="#">In The News</a>	5
<a href="#">Focus on the Classroom</a>	6
<a href="#">From the Blog</a>	8
<a href="#">High School Ethics Bowl</a>	8
<a href="#">Supporting the Center</a>	9
<a href="#">Board and Staff</a>	9



## From the Director



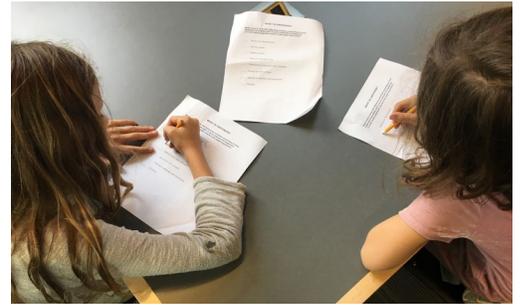
One of the most rewarding aspects of my work is the opportunity to learn from so many dedicated and talented teachers. Whether visiting classrooms through our Philosophers in the Schools program, interacting in seminars, workshops, or public programs, or collaborations related to our High School Ethics Bowl, the success of the Center depends on the involvement of classroom teachers. I am always inspired by the openness to new ideas and the unwavering commitment to students displayed by the teachers with whom we work.

This past year for the first time the Center hosted a monthly workshop on philosophical inquiry in classrooms at the University of Washington, with Washington teachers able to earn up to 13.5 clock hours for participation. Sponsored by the UW Center for Philosophy for Children and the Department of Philosophy, the workshop was free, including materials and refreshments. The workshop involved about 25 participants, and during the course of the year we've had lively discussions on such topics as the purposes of education, identity, stereotypes, cause and effect, and what makes something real. It was one of the highlights of the year for me, and we plan to do it again next year.

We also forged some important new partnerships this year. In November I went to American University in Washington DC to give the Inaugural McDowell Public Lecture on "Philosophical Children," and in the course of my time there I interacted with faculty and students in both the Department of Philosophy and Religion and the School of Education, as well as visited elementary school students at The Lab School. Some of the faculty and teachers I met will be joining us at our June workshop on philosophy in schools. Additionally, several years ago a faculty member from the University of Southern Denmark visited the Center, and that university is now starting its own center. I will be giving the opening keynote address at their inaugural conference in Odense, Denmark, later this month, and we are hoping to develop future collaborations between our two centers. Finally, we have hosted visiting scholars from Portugal and Japan this year, and are expecting next year to host scholars from Turkey and China. It's very gratifying to serve as an international hub for philosophy for children and to be able to provide support and resources to people engaged in this work around the world!

## For Parents

We held our spring event for parents on May 1, at the Seattle Public Library Capitol Hill Branch. Thanks to [Jewel Hospitality](#) for the delicious food, and a thank you to owner (and Philosophy Department alum) Marcia Evans for her steadfast support of the Center.



Our May 1 event featured Debi Talukdar, UW College of Education graduate student and past Philosophy for Children Graduate Fellow, leading an exploration of happiness. A group of about 30 adults and children participated. Debi began by asking the group: "Think about a time you were happy. What made you happy?" This warm-up question led the group to begin thinking about what happiness involves - doing something they liked, being with someone they liked, helping people, etc. Everyone then completed a worksheet that listed eight items, such as thinking, having fun with a friend, eating your favorite food, and sitting in a dentist's chair. The point was to rank the activities in order of how important they were to experiencing happiness.

A lot of people chose sitting in a dentist's chair as their least favorite activity and having fun with a friend or eating their favorite food as contributing the most to their happiness. The group had a great conversation about why that was and what happiness really means. Is happiness distinct from pleasure? How does it relate to contentment? Is happiness experienced differently by adults and children? Is happiness a transient feeling or a state of being? Can you be happy and unhappy at the same time? Is it realistic to be happy all the time?

Adults and children shared their perspectives with each other, attempting collectively to make sense of happiness. We ended the evening with no concrete answers, more questions, and an expanded understanding of what happiness could be.

### WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

Rank, from 1 to 8, the following activities according to how important you think each is as an element of happiness (1 is the most important and 8 is the least important):

- \_\_\_\_\_ Eating your favorite food.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Playing a game.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reading a book.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sitting in a dentist's chair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Talking about ideas with other students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Having fun with a friend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helping a classmate with homework.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Thinking.

## Philosophers in the Schools

This school year our [Philosophers in the Schools program](#) has involved over 30 Seattle classrooms in eight different schools, the majority of these weekly or every-other-week philosophy sessions throughout the year, and has run 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 fifth 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 five years, and are very fortunate to have Karen Emmerman (Ph.D. philosophy, 2012) continuing to serve in this role.

### Philosopher-in-Residence

by Karen Emmerman

John Muir Elementary School is located in the south Seattle Mount Baker neighborhood, John Muir is a Title I school serving a highly diverse population of students. This includes racial and cultural diversity (84% of the children are children of color) as well as economic diversity (69% of the children qualify for free and reduced meals). I have the good fortune to be the Philosopher-in-Residence at John Muir working with this extraordinary group of children and teachers.

I started in 2013 in five classrooms with many of them meeting every-other-week. This year, the program has doubled that number of classrooms and most are meeting weekly. This is evidence of the growing philosophical community at John Muir (aided by the presence of many of my philosophy for children colleagues who also lead sessions at the school). Working at the school in so many classrooms for so long means I have established strong relationships with both teachers and students. I work in partnership with the teachers to connect our philosophy sessions to the themes in their classroom and I am a familiar face to the kids, enabling us to talk philosophically with a foundation of trust and connection. When they see me in the halls, they yell "Dr. Philosophy!" and run to give me a hug. It's a tremendous honor to play a part in these kids' lives and a joy to know they experience philosophy as a positive part of their week.

Over the years, I have witnessed incredible growth on the part of the students. Two years ago, I taught a first grader who spent every philosophy session curled in a ball under a table. Now a third grader, he regularly sits in the philosophy circle and often shares his thinking with us all. I've seen English Language Learners participate in philosophy discussions

(Continued on page 4)

despite struggling to find the words in English and I've witnessed other students who share the language learner's native language translate their peer's thoughts so we can all share in their ideas. I've seen students check books out of the library that we used as prompts in philosophy so they can keep engaging with the material after our session ends. Because I've worked with the children for so long, I have seen them work through the challenges of both sharing one's own ideas and listening deeply to others' ideas as they grow and develop over the years.

It is a privilege and a pleasure to be the Philosopher-in-Residence at John Muir – to partner with the teachers, to get to know the students as individuals, to think together with them philosophically, and to learn from them week after week.

## UW Robinson Center

The University of Washington's Robinson Center for Young Scholars has for many years worked with the Center for the Philosophy for Children to provide exceptional experiences in philosophy for their students, ranging in age from kindergarten up through 9th grade. With its mission to serve motivated students through accelerated, in-depth educational experiences, the Robinson Center puts philosophy at the center of its [Saturday Program](#) and [Summer Program experience](#). The philosophy curriculum is meticulously designed to help students learn not only how to ask questions but also to struggle through answers in a community of inquiry.



Courses such as "I Wonder: Philosophy and Critical Thought" (for 2nd and 3rd grader students) and "Philosophy of Friendship" (for 4th-5th grader students), all the way up to "For the Love of Wisdom" (7th-9th grader students) have introduced students to the richness and relevance of philosophy. Over time, the Robinson Center's philosophy courses have become increasingly popular and it is not uncommon to find wait-lists for the Summer Challenge and Summer Stretch philosophy courses.

## In The News

[In These Polarized Times, The Ethics Bowl Embraces the Gray Areas](#) - KNKX

[Playdough to Plato: Teaching Third-Graders To Think Like Philosophers](#) - Columns Magazine

[Philosophy for Children with Jana Mohr Lone](#) - No Narrow Thing Podcast

[Playdoh's Republic: Children as natural philosophers](#) - CBC Radio

## Focus on The Classroom

### First Grade Philosophy: How are we like Ruby Bridges?

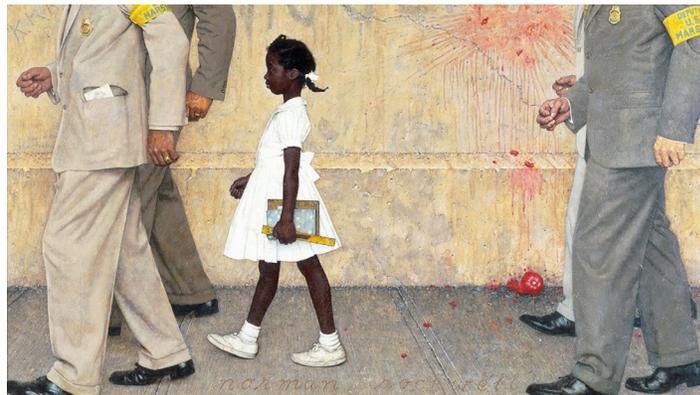
by Bridget DuRuz

Since 1976, the United States has celebrated the achievements of African-Americans during February, Black History Month. Most students in most public schools also study issues related to civil rights, segregation, and racism. For first grade philosophers, the story of Ruby Bridges enhances opportunities for engaging with these important concepts.

This year at Bryant Elementary School, Bridget DuRuz, a Center philosophy instructor, and a first grade classroom teacher collaborated on a lesson plan about Ruby Bridges' life and her historic walk to a newly integrated school in New Orleans in 1960. During their literacy period, the children read *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Cole, 2010), and, on the same day, during a regular weekly philosophy session, the students viewed the Norman Rockwell painting *The Problem We All Live With* (Rockwell, 1964).

In the read-aloud, students learned that Ruby Bridges was just a first grader when she became an historic figure. Ruby had to make her way through an angry crowd of people who did not want her attending a white school. But this extraordinary 6-year-old helped shape history and demonstrated tremendous courage standing alone, staying strong in the face of racism.

After the students viewed the Rockwell painting, Bridget asked them what they noticed in the painting. Students' initial comments focused on the painting's artistic elements: "The whole painting looks like it is black and white;" "Ruby's white dress is so bright;" "Why are the tiny pieces in color? Like the sheriffs' armbands." The students noticed that Ruby stood out as the most interesting part of the painting, and one student noted, "The artist really makes a



point of black versus white for people." Additionally, while there is intense symbolism in the painting that clearly provides context (racist words as graffiti on the walls), the conversation focused mainly on following the students' awareness of Ruby walking to school with guards. Students wondered if the "guards" were protecting her or "getting her in trouble."

The class discussed how Ruby and her family received a lot of support from many people, both black and white, and that one of her U.S. Marshal escorts said that Ruby "showed a lot of courage. She never cried. She didn't whimper. She just marched along like a little soldier, and we're all very very proud of her." But students wondered how Ruby must have felt, walking through angry crowds, and "how scary it was to go to a new school when you are the only different person." Many students recognized how "super brave" Ruby had to have been, but acknowledged that "she could also be scared at the same time." Several students shared ideas of what it means to be brave – that you have to have courage to try something new, and "you just can't care if someone doesn't like it, if you like it."

Bridget asked if there were ways they felt they were similar to Ruby, and the students suggested that Ruby Bridges was a lot like them: she was a big sister to a younger sister and two brothers and they all had to share a bedroom, she liked to jump rope, play softball, and climb trees, and she really liked her teacher. (continued on page 6)

The students were primarily focused on Ruby's life-changing experience as a way to help change the world. They were eager to share their admiration of Ruby and also posed other questions, such as, "How can a little kid help make a difference?" Several students thought that "Ruby had a lot of power because she stood up for what is right."

There was collective agreement that it was right and important that a good education should be available to all students, and the students said that they "want to share our own school with other students. They asked, "Why didn't and why doesn't everyone get to go to any school they want?"

We closed the session with a challenge – to think of how much effort and determination is needed to make an important change, and what part we can have in making sure all students have equal opportunities. Some ideas popped up as we dispersed: "Be brave!" "Make friends!" "Help all kids!"

Our first grade philosophers have some great ideas, and the class hopes to continue this dialogue at a subsequent philosophy session.

### **Additional Questions for Reflection and Discussion in Elementary School Classrooms**

1. What did you know about school segregation and desegregation/integration before we started learning about Ruby Bridges? What did you learn about these ideas through the Ruby Bridges story?

2. What are your reactions to the Ruby Bridges experience?

3. If you could talk to Ruby Bridges, what would you say to her?

4. After hearing the Ruby Bridges story, do you think that integration was a good way provide the solutions for everyone to access educational opportunities? Why or why not? What other factors might help support equal access to educational opportunities?

5. How do you think fear and misunderstanding lead to hurtful attitudes and ideas? How can this be addressed or changed within a community?

6. Do you think the state and local officials need to make rules for integrating schools? Why or why not?

7. Ruby wanted to forgive people who said bad things to her. Why do you think that was important to Ruby? Is there a time when you had to forgive someone for doing something mean or bad?

8. Have you had a similar experience to Ruby Bridges? How does your experience inform your understanding of this issue? How does it shape what you see as possible solutions and remedies?

## From the Blog

### Children's Perspectives On Childhood

Last month I had a conversation with a group of fifth grade students about the differences between children and adults, including whether they would prefer to be children or adults. We began with the students discussing what they saw as the main differences between being a child and being an adult.



The children contended that children, on the one hand, have less worries, more free time, fewer responsibilities, and less choice about how to spend their time. Adults, on the other hand, have greater responsibilities and obligations to take care of other people, but more freedom and choice. The conversation then led to an examination of the differences between adults and children in making decisions.

One student noted that “parents protect you from bad decisions.”

“Some parents,” responded another student. “Some adults make bad decisions, like drinking and smoking, and don’t treat their kids well.”

“But many adults do make good decisions. They have more knowledge in some things and so are better able to make good decisions.” [Read more](#)

### High School Ethics Bowl

The 2018 Washington State High School Ethics Bowl was held on February 3, 2018, 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 45 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: Lakeside School Team 2

Second place: Seattle Academy Team 1

Third place: Lakeside School Team 1

Award for Civil Dialogue: Thomas Jefferson High School

Seattle Academy went to the National High School Ethics Bowl in April at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, after Lakeside was unable to participate.

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

## 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

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