

MEDIA ALERT

On the Eve of Building Closure, Van Asselt Celebrates 100 Years

“The end of an era, the beginning of a new era”

WHAT: Van Asselt Elementary opened as a 4-room schoolhouse in 1909. Since then, thousands of children have grown and learned within these walls. World War II brought an influx of new students, and with them came portables and the "new building," but nothing matches the character of our original wooden structure. The original high ceilings, wood floors, creaky radiators and rattling windows house a vibrant, modern learning community where children from many cultures learn together.

Van Asselt students have dispersed across the state, country, and globe, but they often return to visit. When they do, they wander into Room 23 or 24, smile at the sameness and wonder at the differences, and tell their stories. They may not have much in common with the current students, but they can tell: *This is a place for learning.*

Now budget shortfalls have forced the Seattle Public Schools to close buildings and move programs. This is emotional for everyone, but especially bittersweet for the families of Van Asselt Elementary, the flagship school of South Beacon Hill. Van Asselt's program is moving just as its original building reaches its centennial, so this June's planned reunion will be the last.

We are proud to open our doors to the community, former staff and students, and all our current and future families. We hope the next 100 years in our new building will be just as fulfilling.

WHO: South Seattle community leaders and Van Asselt families and alumni, School Board and City Council

WHEN: Friday, June 12th, 2009

4:30 pm – Doors open

4:30- 6:00 - Open House and tours by students and staff in historical costumes

6:00-6:45 - Ceremony: musical performances, speeches from community leaders and students

6:45-7:30 - Reception: cake, snacks, mingling

Media & Photo Opportunities include:

- Ceremony (6:00-6:45): dignitary speeches, student performances
- Open House activities (4:30-6:00pm)
- Student performances in the "Old Building" as when it was originally built
- Tours in early 20th-century costumes
- Displays of Van Asselt's history

WHERE: Van Asselt Elementary
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Seattle WA 98108

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About Van Asselt Elementary

Van Asselt Elementary is a K-5 public school on South Beacon Hill. With 500 students speaking nearly 20 languages, we are one of the most diverse schools in the district. Our caring, multilingual staff works hard to meet the students' academic, social and physical needs, including translations for families, an after-school program, and free breakfast for all. We are proud of our achievements on the WASL as well as the strength of our community. For more information, visit

<http://www.seattleschools.org/schools/vanasselt/>