

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Mission Hill

2012 MHS Science and Engineering Fair

Dear Families, Staff, Friends and Students,

This week our traditional middle school science and engineering fair was expanded to include the whole school. The lobby, part of the first floor, and library were full of student work displays. Students and family members of all ages mixed and mingled as they asked questions about projects, looked at observational drawings, and read reports. I'd say including the whole school was a success.

A second and third grade class had work displayed on a table in the lobby. Plants grown in labeled plastic cups were on a table for observation. On another table to the right there was a laptop, display board and folders. Each folder had data collected by students about how they observed the plants grow. They collected the data in different ways, using numbers, pictures and words. They also displayed data about how they preferred to collect data! Most of them preferred numerical.

Displayed on the wall and on a few tables outside of the library were inventions created by grades four and five. An automatic plant waterer, a cooling vest, and a walk-and-wash are a few examples of the innovative ideas students thought of to make our lives easier. Prototypes of the inventions and written descriptions were on display too. The shoes with sponges attached the bottom, the walk-and-wash, sparked conversation about how useful those shoes could be. A person could clean the floor and get some exercise.

On the right side of the library doors, tables were draped in shimmery blue sheer fabric. The fabric gave the illusion of water. In the "water" were boats constructed of random pieces of wood by kindergarten and first graders. The boats were painted different colors—green, blue, pink and white. Several boats had statements about whether the boat floated or not and why. The display of handmade boats, each one unique, was beautiful.

Rianna, a seventh grader, made a bubble machine. A wand was attached to a wooden rod, and then a motor. Under the wand was a dish of soap with a small fan beside it. "The fan works, but a bigger and faster one is needed. I guess I need more power to make the fan go fast enough to really make the bubbles," she explained. I asked her how she created the machine. She said, "First, I did a drawing then I got advice from my teacher. I asked Jacob about materials as I was sketching it. I knew what materials I would need as I was sketching. At first when I made my first drawing I didn't really plan it out. It didn't work out so I had to go back to it. The second time I took my time and did a better job. I'm upset that it doesn't make bubbles, but I guess you learn from your mistakes."

Congratulations to all students and many thanks to all staff and families for a great night of looking at and talking about science work.

~Ayla Gavins

REMINDERS

April

4/16-20: Vacation

4/23-25: Book Fair

4/30 - 5/2: Grade Six to
Farm School

May

Wed. 5/9: Spring Concert

Thu. 5/17: Family Council, 5:45

From the Classrooms

5 to 7 year-olds

Room 203

This week 203 had the great opportunity to visit one of the local pizza shops in connection to our World of Work theme. When we asked Chacho's if we could visit with the class to see how pizzas are made, they gladly agreed. Not only did they demonstrate how to make a pizza, they sat us down and gave us the pizza pie we watched being made! We ate our tummies full! Here are our reflections on the experience:

Laudys- I like the pizza so much. I wish I could go there every day until I go to the graveyard to go to the sky.

Hamdi- I ate pizza. It was good.

Saeeda- I liked the pizza because I like to sit at the pizza shop because I like to eat pizza.

Daniel- When I ate the pizza I thought it was good and I think other people liked it.

Jessica- I ate the pizza.

Ceva- It was fun. I liked it. Really I did. I am telling the truth. I loved the pizza.

Justin- That's me making pizza with the chef. The pizza had cheese and sauce. I ate it and it tasted good. It was me and the class eating the pizza at Chacho's. We swallowed it.

Kelise- I ate the pizza. It was yummy. I liked it. I made the pizza with a heart.

Ruby- I love it. I love the pizza. It was good.

Abidemi- I like pizza in the heart. I like cheese pizza.

Amishai- I liked watching the

man making the pizza. I liked the pizza.

Maya- The pizza was good. The pizza was fun. The pizza was yummy. I love it.

Yarieli- I ate the pizza. The pizza was good.

~Jada Brown,
& Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 204

This week we visited our local Stop and Shop. We investigated their bread aisle and visited their bakery. The students took time to look at all the different kinds of bread for sale. They were fascinated by the variety of breads. Many of the loaves were familiar to the children. They discovered new breads. Joliana said, "I saw bread with peanuts and raisins and bread you bake at home." Arianny shared, "They had little muffins and big muffins."



I asked the children to share what they had learned from Christina, the bakery manager. Jolie shared, "The only cakes they bake are birthday cakes, Thanksgiving

cakes, and New Year's cakes." Jovanni also remembered that they make cakes at a warehouse. Victoria said, "Someone comes at night. They put the dough in the freezer, then the next day they put it in the proofer and then in the oven." Cyrus followed with, "They freeze their dough and then unfreeze it so it will last longer."

We also met two friends stacking the shelves. Doug and Paul worked for the bread companies. Joliana asked, "Do you bake the bread?" Paul said, "No. The bread is made at a factory and I pick it up in and bring it to the store and put it on the shelf."

The children spent a great day learning about all the work associated with the bakery and the bread at the Stop and Shop.

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

Room 205

No news this week

~Melissa Tonachel
& Leia Baylor

7 to 9 Year-Olds

Room 201

Not "Extras"

Schools across the nation have wrestled with the idea of how to use time and money most effectively. Sadly for some, music and art have been removed from the school schedule. Fortunately for the MHS community, art and music are not considered "extras". We work hard to keep these as part of our regular activities. If you were to come to our class on a Tuesday morning,

you would observe how natural and essential they are to us. After morning meeting we greet Allegra, our choral instructor. We begin our warm up by singing, *Viva La Musica* and then she leads us through a series of breathing and vocal exercises. We learn to sing songs connected to theme studies and rehearse for our annual music concert. We have the privilege of singing with piano accompaniment. After our singing, Jeanne, the art teacher, comes into class and introduces the day's art lesson. She may bring artwork to share or give clues as to what we may expect when we enter the art room. Once we are settled in our spaces we practice deep breathing and warm up exercises for our hands. We become focused artists endeavoring to produce our best work, and we are proud of the results.

Our class EXPECTS the Tuesday schedule to include Singing and Art. The children are proud and eager to share their work. Come see the magnificent art hanging in the classroom and hallway, and be sure to attend our annual music concert to be held in May.

~Donna Winder
Emily Schubin & Lydia Krooss

Room 207

This week we continued to work on our World of Work theme, applying for jobs in the class. We also continued a conversation about being unkind to each other that began last week. It is not uncommon, after being together for 130-plus days,

that we have to remind seven, eight and nine year-olds that we expect them to be kind to each other as well as to us. As we sat around our meeting rug last week, I reminded the Lightening Bolts that not only is it the adults' job to help them become better readers, writers, mathematicians, scientists etc. but also to help them learn to be caring toward others. I shared with them that my daughter, Ayanna, who is a senior in college, is still close friends with the first girl she met, on her first day of second grade, the first day Mission Hill opened its doors, 15 years ago. The Lightening Bolts were shocked to know that the now 20-somethings are still close friends. As they looked around at each other I couldn't help wonder if they were thinking about who they would still be friends with in the year 2027, 15 years from now. I was brought to tears as I recounted some of the Lightening Bolts' unkindness - teasing, saying mean words, trying to get others to do unacceptable things, asking friends to do things teachers have said not to do, etc. We hope that you too will take time to talk with your Lightening Bolts about being kind. We wish everyone a happy and safe April break and look forward to everyone returning ready to make the Mission Hill Way—Be Kind, Work Hard—come to life.

~Amina Michel-Lord
Jenerra Williams
& Jesse Begelfer

9 to 11 Year-Olds

Room 202

No news this week

Room 206

We'd just finished part of our read aloud when Carlos Quintana, a former Mission Hill employee (he was also a student at Central Park East, Debbie's first school) popped in for a visit. As we stood just outside the doorway to catch up quickly I heard a bit of commotion coming from inside the room. When I left the kids, their charge was to complete the chapter we were reading and then transition into writing choice time. Since I had only been in the doorway for two minutes, and they had about 10 pages left to read, I was certain that they were not done yet. As we both leaned in we realized the noises were children reacting to things from the book.

In the Year of the Dragon and Jackie Robinson is a tale of a young Chinese girl who leaves her country in search of opportunity here in America. She settled in Brooklyn in 1947, around the time that Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball. Young Shirley Temple Wong had barriers of her own to break, and found comfort in the Brooklyn Dodgers, and identified with Robinson's struggles.

"What book is that?!" Carlos asked with amazement and curiosity. "It must be good for them to be reacting like that...they are all talking to each other about

it without you.” Indeed, the story is engaging, but I think it more than that. The teachers at our school do an incredible job having kids develop a love for literature. Even during free time kids can be overheard talking about and trading books. Even those for whom reading does not come easily willingly share stories. Sometimes I joke to myself “They don’t know that they are supposed to dislike reading if it’s hard for them.” It is a testament to the efforts of the early childhood teachers here at the school.

~Nakia Keizer

Grades 6, 7 8

Room 211

The 6th grade has been rowing on the Charles River three times. This is what students had to say about their experience:

“When we first started rowing it was hard. After a while it got easier. It was nice when we were all able to row together because we moved pretty fast.” –

Siobhan

“To be honest I was scared to row because I thought we could fall off and sink. Once I got in the boat I realized that being on the water was fun. It makes my body feel tired because of all the energy you use.” – *Gavin*

“Working together as a group is hard. When you focus on you then it is fun rowing with your crew.” – *Jah’von*

“I learned to work better as a team with people.” – *Yimara*

“I feel like I am getting good at rowing. It feels good to be on

the water. I learned that rowing isn’t just about strength you use motion and teamwork.” – *Chris*

“When I was on the water I felt relaxed and I liked the wind and the smell of the water. I can be a very good mariner if I focus on what I’m doing.” – *Maddy*

~Sarah DeCruz

Room 209

“Steam devours my sweltering face as I stand over the stove...” “We all know where the Great Barrier Reef is...” “I could crack my skull or break my neck but that won’t stop me...” “My writing tells the secrets of me, my writing is me...” “When I’m dancing, everything around me goes away...” “... a scent so powerful you could almost taste it...” “When my brother was born, I didn’t know he would be a fairy...” “I drew something like that when I was your age...” “To dance is to be free...” “My eyes lit up in excitement and I screamed...” “Have you ever wanted to fly but you couldn’t?” “The second my brush slides across the canvas...” “It was the last quarter and we were up by two...” “Boom, boom, boom – listening to the loud beat, waiting...” “Arroz, pollo, plantano...” “You get to feel the breeze of the air hitting your face as you...”

Intriguing? One of my favorite tasks is working with the 7th graders as they begin their Beyond the Classroom Portfolios. We ask students to share with their portfolio committees an out-of-school experience or passion that has helped them to grow. An

essay and a demonstration/artifact accompany their reflective oral presentations. The fragments quoted above were generated during a brainstorming process to help kids identify the focus they will choose for this portfolio. When I started by reading some student examples from other years, the kids were quickly on board. Who doesn’t enjoy sharing a special interest or passion with an appreciative audience?

~Ann Ruggiero & Elsa Head

Room 208

No news this week

Hot Topics

Courtney’s Corner

Check out Courtney’s Corner, outside Room 101, for information on various programs and resources for you and your family.

Rincón de Courtney

Mira la información que esta fuera en el “Rincón de Courtney” en salón 101 para información sobre varios programas y recursos para ti y tu familia.

CAMPS: See Courtney for applications and details about these and other camps Summer is Coming!

Boston Centers for Youth and Families Summer 2012 Guide is here. Stop by Courtney’s Corner to pick up the guide, full of the city’s summer opportunities. Don’t forget, Courtney is your

direct connection to all your camp needs – scholarships, transportation, and any other questions you might have. Stop by and see her now though, because camp registration is in full swing!

¡Ya viene el verano!

La guía de centros para la juventud y la familia de Boston 2012 ya está aquí. Pasen por la oficina de Courtney a recoger la guía que contiene grandes oportunidades para aprovechar el verano en la ciudad. No lo olviden, Courtney es su conexión directa con todo lo relacionado con campos de verano (becas, transporte, y cualquier otra pregunta que puedan tener. Pasen pronto por su oficina, pues es el momento de registrarse a los campos!

STEM @ NEU

Want to live on Northeastern's campus like a college student this summer? Do you like doing science experiments and building things? If you'll be in 6th, 7th or 8th grade next year, register for the NEU STEM summer program. It's completely FREE.

Boston Explorers

Former MHS teacher Alphonse Litz invites you to spend the summer exploring Boston with his camp Boston Explorers. There are three, one week sessions in August to choose from where you will do woodworking, cook your own food, swim, and explore Boston and the Harbor Islands. Financial aid is available but space is limited. DEADLINE

April 24th.

Spend summer on the Charles River

For as little as \$1 you can spend the summer learning to sail! Community Boating Boston is for any child 10-18 who can swim 75 yards and has parent/guardian permission to participate. Take sailing classes or just drop in to use the boats during open sailing.

Crossroads 4 Kids

Camp Wing: A safe and supportive community for children ages 7 through 7th grade to develop healthy social behaviors and have fun. Camp Wing, fosters children's development of coping skills, peer relation abilities, conflict resolution and other life skills. The Crossroads for Kids Camp Wing curriculum is specifically designed to provide youth with the proper support and opportunities needed to feel safe and successful and Crossroads for Kids staff are skillfully trained to assist every child in reaching their unique goals. Transportation provided from Boston to Duxbury. Day and overnight programs – day programs for ages 5-16. No family will be turned away because of inability to pay.

Camp Mitton: A small family-style environment teaching children ages 7 -12 healthy ways to cope with stressful situations. This is a specialized and individualized program for children experiencing difficulty with self-image, feelings of

hopelessness and understanding and communicating their feelings in healthy way. This is an overnight program with transportation from Boston to Brewster, MA. No family will be turned away because of inability to pay.

Brantwood Camp

Overnight camp in New Hampshire for children ages 11-15. The five Brantwood ideals: Honesty, Loyalty, Cooperation, Good Sportsmanship, and Unselfishness are honored by both campers and staff. Spend the summer hiking, swimming, canoeing, and having camp-outs. Transportation from Boston provided.

Mission Hill School

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