

# Mission Hill School News

## Letter from Child Street

### **Not Without You**

Dear Mission Hill School Families, Friends, Students and Staff

There's a reason families are required to come see Mission Hill before children are officially enrolled. It's important that every family really sees the school in action and is sure that our school is the right match for the child and family. But, what you can't see when you come in for a visit, are all the families behind each student who make the school a great community and place to learn. When a child is enrolled at Mission Hill School, the family is too.

#### **REMINDERS**

##### ***October***

Thu. 10/18, 5:45 - Middle School  
Healthy Choices Night\*  
Thu. 10/18, 6:00 - Friends of  
Mission Hill School meeting

##### ***November***

Tue. 11/6 - VOTE!  
Mon. 11/12 - NO SCHOOL  
- Veterans Day  
Thu. 11/15, 5:45 - Family Council  
mtg.  
Wed. 11/21 - early dismissal for  
Thanksgiving  
Mon. 11/26, School reopens

\*Required for parents of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> &  
8<sup>th</sup> graders

Teachers spent hours preparing for Curriculum Night a few weeks ago. Fewer than half of our families attended. If you were there, you had an opportunity to hear about your child's school day, meet other families, and learn about the adults in your child's school life. If you did not attend, your child's teacher and our school community really wish you had come. We all missed an opportunity to get to know you a bit better.

Family conferences have been happening for the last two weeks. Last week I watched a parent arrive early to the scheduled meeting and decide to reschedule the conference. As I watched her walk toward the classroom to reschedule, I wondered if she knew that her child's teacher had reserved that time for her and would now have to find another block of time, not an easy thing to do. The same teacher asked for my help in reaching two parents who didn't show up for the family conferences and were not responding to attempts to reach them.

I can't impress upon you (parents, caregivers) enough the importance of meeting with your child's teacher when you are called to do so. Your absence affects the quality of the school experience for your child and our school community as a whole.

Family Council elections are happening soon. If you are interested in bringing families together, supporting the school

and planning fun activities to strengthen our school community consider running for a position. Whether you are interested in a position or not, please vote for a candidate.

We can't have a great school without you. If you have not scheduled a listening conference with your child's teacher, please contact him or her. There is information about Family Council positions in the Hot Topics section of this newsletter.

Sincerely,

~Ayla Gavins

# Mission Hill School News

## Carta del Child Street

### **No sin ti**

Estimadas familias de la Escuela Mission Hill, amigos, estudiantes y personal

Hay una razón las familias tienen que venir a ver Mission Hill antes de que los niños estén inscritos oficialmente. Es importante que todas las familias ve a la escuela en acción y están seguros que nuestra escuela es una buena combinación para el niño y la familia. Pero, lo que no puedes ver cuando venga para una visita, son todas las familias detrás de cada alumno que hacen de la escuela una gran comunidad y un lugar para aprender. Cuando un niño está matriculado en Mission Hill School, la familia asista también.

Los maestros pasaron horas preparando para la Noche de Currículo de hace unas semanas. Menos de la mitad de nuestras familias asistieron. Si usted estaba allí, tenía la oportunidad de escuchar sobre el día de la escuela de su hijo, conocer a otras familias, y aprender acerca de los adultos en la vida escolar de su hijo. Si usted no asistió, el maestro de su hijo y nuestra comunidad escolar realmente desearon que había llegado. Todos perdieron la oportunidad de llegar a conocerse un poco mejor.

Conferencias familiares han estado ocurriendo durante las últimas dos semanas. La semana pasada vi a un padre llegar temprano a la reunión programada y decidir reprogramar la conferencia. Mientras la veía caminar hacia el salón para reprogramar, me pregunté si sabía que el maestro de su hijo había reservado tiempo para ella y ahora tendría que encontrar otro bloque de tiempo, eso no es una cosa. El mismo profesor me pidió ayuda para contactar a dos padres que no se presentan a las reuniones con las familias y no respondieron a los intentos de contactar a ellos.

No puedo convencer a usted (padres, cuidadores) lo suficiente la importancia de la reunión con el maestro de su hijo cuando usted está llamado a hacerlo. Su ausencia afecta a la calidad de la experiencia escolar de su hijo y la comunidad escolar entera.

Elecciones del Consejo Familiar (Family Council) están comenzando pronto. Si usted está interesado en unir a las familias, el apoyo a la escuela y la planificación de actividades divertidas para mejorar nuestra

comunidad escolar debe pensar en la posibilidad de postularse para una posición. Si usted está interesado en un posición o no, de todos modos, por favor voten por un candidato.

No podemos tener una gran escuela sin ti. Si no se ha programado una “conferencia de escuchar” con el maestro de su hijo, por favor póngase en contacto con él o ella. Hay más información sobre el Consejo Familiar y posiciones en la sección de Topics Fuertes (Hot Topics) de este boletín.

Atentamente,

~Ayla Gavins

**RECORDATORIOS**

**Octubre**  
 Jue. 10/18: 5,45 - Escuela Intermedia Noche Familia\*  
 Jue. 10/18: 6,00 - Friends of Mission Hill School meeting

**Noviembre**  
 Mar. 11/6 - VOTA!  
 Lun. 11/12 - no hay clases - Veterans Day  
 Jue. 11/15: 5,45 - Reunión del Consejo de Familia  
 Mie. 11/21 - salida temprana para Thanksgiving  
 Lun. 11/26, Regreso a clases

\*necesario para los padres de alumnos de 6 °, 7 ° y 8

## From the Classrooms

### 3 and 4 year-olds

#### Room 108

One of the wonderful things about being back at Mission Hill School is reconnecting with former students. Some of my former kindergarten/first grade students come to our classroom once a week to help with lunch. This is pretty awesome on many levels.

This weekend, as I ran errands around Jamaica Plain, I ran into one — and then another — former student who is a currently a freshman in college: Zoe, who goes to Vassar College - and Abdi, who goes to Quincy College. We hugged and smiled and laughed and caught up. It literally filled my heart with joy to run into each of them and see how happy they are in life - and in college. I asked them both to come by and visit us in our new home, and I hope they do.

On Monday, the reunions continued, as I saw another former student, Brigita, who is now a senior at Clark. Brigita's mom Jeanne is our fabulous art teacher, and Brigita came by to see our new home. I hope and trust that this year I will be running into many Mission Hill graduates and reconnect. It also makes me think about my current students – and where they will be 15 years from now – though I hope the years do not pass too quickly!

~Geraldyn McLaughlin

### Kindergarten

#### Room 106

One of the expectations in the Mission Hill School Compact that we teachers sign is, *Participate in professional development opportunities that improve teaching and learning*. It was great to discuss this with all my families at our conferences. Professional development has always been important to the staff at our school. I vividly remember my first year teaching, and how the professional development led by other teachers helped me deepen my thinking. Even though I was a new teacher, I was expected to lead professional development sessions. The idea was simple. It did not matter that I was the youngest most inexperienced teacher on staff. The idea was that I had a voice and I had information that others could learn. That expectation has pushed me to always challenge myself. It has pushed me to continue learning from others and sharing what I know as well.

Last week I was invited to give two presentations at the New Hampshire Children and Nature Conference. The first was a Pecha Kucha talk. I had 20 slides and 20 seconds per slide to talk about inquiry in the schoolyard, and how I interconnect outdoor and indoor learning. The second presentation was on urban gardening with children.

I also learned a great deal by being there. Lenore Skenazy was the keynote speaker. She wrote, *Free-Range Kids: How to Raise Safe, Self-Reliant Children (Without*

*Going Nuts with Worry*). She also has a website—

www.freerangekids.com. Check her out tell me what you think. I guarantee our conversation will be lively.

~Kathy D'Andrea  
& Brendan Thomas

#### Room 107

“There is a hole in the side of the school and bees are going in there!”

Our very first Read Aloud chapter book of the year was *Lions at Lunchtime* from the Magic Tree House series. As students sat on their mats listening intently to the vivid imagery of the story, it was as if they were right next to Jack and Annie as they interacted with giraffes, zebras, wildebeests, lions, and hyenas. Many students lay motionless on their mats, while others felt the need to pace as the story began to reach a climax. As they listened for clues to solve the riddle, Peter was soon struck with an epiphany. He looked knowingly at me and said excitedly, “Bees! That’s the answer to the riddle”. Lucas then said, “I saw a beehive here!” “What? Those are not bees,” someone retorted. In no time we were off seeking evidence of this proclaimed observance. Upon entering the small playground, they all looked up, found the hole and observed the dance of bees moving in and out.

“Where are they going?” someone asked. “It’s Ms. Jenerras room!,” answered Liam, “We should go there!” Ms. Jenerra

happily greeted us as we entered her room. We walked to her window, located our playground and saw bees flying outside. As we turned to the left, students were amazed by the hive and had many questions they wanted answered. "Is there a queen in there?" someone asked. "Where is the honey?" "Those are all hexagons!" It was clear we had come to the right place to solve our very own riddle. While we did not find honey in Ms. Jenerras hive, we did have some in our room. At the end of the day we pretended to be Jack and Annie, sitting in the Kenyan forest partaking in a peanut butter and honey sandwich with a very poised Masai warrior.

~Jada Brown  
& JoAnn Hawkesworth

### Room 109

Reading over last week's newsletter, I realized that I never let you all know that we chose a class name: The Magic Dragons.

At first it seemed we were destined to have a name inspired by our monarch friends. Our first list included: The Caterpillar Feeders, The Monarchs, The Mariposas, and The Chrysalises. Dillon pointed out that if we chose one of these names, we would have a connection to Kathy's class (The Butterflies). There were some other silly names that the children adored: The Puppet Theatre, The Chicken Theatre, Train Movie, and Chicken Lays Eggs. Later in the process someone suggested, "What about the Magic

Dragons?" I asked why that would be a good name:

*Because we listen to it every day. (Puff the Magic Dragon is our clean-up song).*

*Because it reminds us of Puff.*

*He's a good luck charm.*

*He does tricks.*

*And he's beautiful.*

*Because everyone is his friend.*

I love the name, a constant reminder of the friendship, imagination, and the magic of childhood. The Magic Dragons suits us just fine.

~Jenny Goldstein

## Grades One & Two

### Room 204

Last week, as my class was in art and I was busy about the room doing things that needed to be done, a group of eager young four and five year-old faces approached my doorway with a question. Jada's room had been reading a book from the Magic Tree House series in which bees and a beehive were mentioned. Immediately someone made a connection to seeing bees outside the school. Being the good detectives they were they deduced that the bees were flying outside my window and came up to investigate.

Once they discovered the hive, a flurry of comments and questions erupted! "Look at this!" "They are coming out right here!" "I wish I could be a bee." "Honey! Is that the honey right there?" "Miss Jada! Miss Jada! Miss Jada! I see them coming out the hole!" "Whoa! They can go right through the wall!" They left even more excited than when they

came and with more information about honeybees.

The honeybee hive (in its 10th year at MHS) is an important part of our community. It is a primary resource. A tool for learning that has become invaluable. I encourage you to take a field trip of your own to visit our wonderfully "busy bees"...and the bees in the hive as well.

~Jenerra Williams  
& Amina Michel-Lord

### Room 205

"You have mail! You have mail in your mailbox!"

"Go check your mailbox, I wrote you a message!"

"I'm writing you a message. Make sure you check your mailbox later!"

Children in Room 205 have been extremely busy immersing themselves in our newly created Message Center. Ever since their mailboxes have been put up, everyone became very interested in communicating via writing and drawing. Evidence of children's writing and drawing is everywhere in Room 205. The messages children write to each other may be short and simple, but they contain every bit of effort that the children put in to build a relationship with each other. Besides practicing their writing skills, they are also learning how to communicate in ways the recipients can understand. As I watch the children immerse themselves in the Message Center, I can see them trying to put themselves in one another's shoes to write a message that their friends would enjoy. As a teacher, not only am I

glad to see almost all children rushing over to a table to write a message or two whenever they get a chance, I am most ecstatic to see so many beautiful friendships blooming because of the mailboxes.

~Brenda Lau

### Room 217

The easel has been hanging in our classroom for a couple of weeks when it is finally ready for the children to use, and they are itching for it. At morning meeting, we talk about what we know about easel painting, and in the course of a demonstration of mixing colors on the paper (not in the paint pots) I produce an abstract image: a circle of orange with five red lines surrounding it. "It's a sun!" one child suggests. "It is?" I respond, "What else might it be?" I saw a couple other possibilities; they surprised me with many more, many of those suggesting not just images but stories: it's a fish; it's a bird flying; it's a flower with some of the petals not grown yet—no, the other ones fell off; it's a footprint—a bear footprint, a monster!

One of our habits of mind is viewpoint: recognizing that we have our own perspectives and that those of others are equally valid. So many moments in each day allow us to bring children's attention to how many different ways there are to see, do, interpret something; it's a playfulness with—not competition of—ideas. I know they will carry this to the easel this morning, as they crowd

around to offer help, opinions, feedback and encouragement. They will bring it, too, to the work that will hang on the walls and to the ways they see each other.

~Melissa Tonachel  
Amy Dolman & Ben Hallas

## Grades Three & Four

### Room 207

Wow...two weeks of listening conferences have come and gone. It was great meeting with all the families in room 207. I am happy to have met very committed family members throughout this process. I hope you enjoyed discussing your child's habits of work as a learner and assessing their fall writing prompt.

It is important that we follow through with our student & family member goals. We will revisit this topic later on in the school year. I am hopeful that this year is going to be wonderful and that many students will show growth in academic skills this year. If you have any questions regarding curriculum, homework, theme studies, reading/writing, math, or other school-related concerns please feel free to contact me or Ms. Shaina. This year has been amazing thus far!

Thanks and Gracias,  
~Robert Baez

### Room 216

I am extremely excited to be writing my first newsletter article as a new student teacher in room 216! I, Erica, a Boston native, hail from Roanoke College in Virginia. I started my journey at

the MHS staff retreat in August and continue to grow with the great community of Mission Hill. Our class, now named the Golden Rulers, has started to explore our identity and what that identity should represent within the Mission Hill community. The Golden Rulers discussed the importance of being a community, which means everyone has the responsibility to "step-up" and help one another succeed, inside and outside the classroom. Together, we explored how to respectfully debate one another and also to collaborate with other students to learn and achieve our goals. Students also found ways to act as leaders, from doing what is expected in the classroom to stepping beyond their duties as students to help a classmate do the right thing. During the morning meeting, students helped one another pay attention and increase their participation in many class topics. By participating in last week's Friday Share, other students discovered their leadership potential through facing their fears to bravely present the class name to the entire school. The Golden Rulers are continuing to create a community of leadership, respect and creativity as we learn and grow.

~Erica Switzer, Jessica Watt  
& James McGovern

## Grades Five & Six

### Room 210

Every Friday afternoon, the Cinco Seis' write a reflection on the week that has passed. They can pick from several different prompts, including Something that I wish went better is..., One great suggestion I have for the class is..., *Something I learned this week is...* etc.

Over the years I have gotten lots of important feedback and general information from children. I am hoping that this year's group is just as reflective as groups from the past.

I will dedicate one newsletter column a month to sharing the class' thoughts. Here is the first installment.

"I wish that recess went better because a younger person dropped Ice on my head"

"Something that went well this week was hanging out with different people. Most people were talking with different people than usual...this is why I feel like people have been doing a better job of hanging out with different people."

"Next week I want to try and act at Urban Improv. This because I like to act and improvise but I felt a little shy and kept to myself. But definitely next Urban Improv I want to act."

"This week we are doing fractions and had a week of lunch upstairs, and we had two days of indoor recess and we finally have a class name. The Cinco Seis is an awesome name."

"One thing I liked this week

was going to play with the preschool. I especially liked being with just the sixth grade. I don't mind the fifth graders but sometimes I just like being with my age group. But anyway, It was really fun to see the little kids playing and running around."

"Next week I am going to go to Urban Improv again and at recess I am going to practice ducking when someone throws a ball at me. I had fun doing it today. Now we have a new class name! I am happy that we have one but I am still sad that our name isn't the Little Red Mushrooms."

~Nakia Keizer & Kailah Simon

### Room 215

Fifth grade started Urban Improv this week, which gave me some extra time with our sixth graders. We used this time as an opportunity to do something special; spend time with the younger students in the K0 class! Some students read books to younger children. There was a small group making play dough pizza, others were building with blocks, and some were reading to their new friends. It was a visual reminder that even though they are approaching their teenage years, sixth graders are still kids who like to play. They were so enthusiastic about playing with their newfound companions that they were disappointed when it was time to go. They enjoyed themselves so much, that by the time we got back upstairs, they were already asking if we could

see them again tomorrow. It was so nice to see them interacting so well with the youngest students in our building.

~Sarah DeCruz

## Grades Seven & Eight

### Room 213

On Friday, we ended our first class read aloud, *Wringer* by Jerry Spinelli. Students' comments follow.

The book ended with Palmer saving Nipper's life and they lived happily ever after. And it wasn't how I expected. I thought either Nipper would die or fly away, but Palmer took him with him even though he was injured. *Andy*

It all ended so quickly. I would have thought the final part of the book would deserve more pages. After a heartbreaking moment that inspired everyone in the crowd, I would want everyone to bring the end to the festival of killing five thousand birds. *Xin*

When Palmer yelled "No!" I thought Nipper was dead. I was so relieved for Nipper. I was sure that Nipper was going to get hurt.

*Siobhan*

My prediction was right. How the book ended was how I pictured it. I felt bad for Palmer. If I were Palmer, I would have cried my eyes out as I held Nipper close. But I would have been nervous considering the fact that 1,000 pairs of eyes are staring at me. *Shantel*

The end of the book surprised me. My prediction kept changing as we read more. When Nipper landed on his head, I thought the shooter would shoot but then miss and hit Palmer. *Mikaila*

I like how *Wringer* ended with the little boy asking his father if he

could have a pet pigeon like Palmer did. *Kavon*

The end of the book surprised me because it was like a “to be continued” type of ending. The book wasn’t really predictable. It actually left me [feeling] like, make a #2 please. *Tajonna*

~Ann Ruggiero

### Room 214

*no news this week*

### Music Notes

Early mornings at Mission Hill are filled with music. From the first experimental pluckings and honkings, to the polished sound of two dozen string players spinning out a scale in unison, students are learning to play in one or more of MHS's four music groups. With 45 of our 124 age-eligible students participating, more than 36% of children take instrumental lessons. Several children take more than one instrument.

Our sparkling new music room and auditorium give us the space to expand our programs beyond the limits that restricted us in the past. Watch for more information about opportunities to help us grow! For information about the music program, please contact Betsy Caruso at 617.635.6384.

### Hot Topics

**Roxbury Community College & Jobnet One Stop Career Center** invites you to their Community Career Fair on Tuesday October 23, 12:00am–3:00pm at Roxbury

Community College. Meet with over 30 employers.

### Parent University

#### Fall Learning Session -

Saturday, November 17, 2012  
8:30-3:30 @ Northeastern University in the Curry Student Center. Parent University is an opportunity for parents and caregivers to learn about their vital responsibility in shaping children's lives. Sessions focus on child development, what children are learning in schools, advocacy, parent leadership and effective parenting skills. Parent University is FREE for all BPS parents. Register online or contact Courtney in Room 114 for more information.

### Box Tops

Turn in all those Box Tops you've been collecting! Bring them up to the office and leave them in Courtney's mailbox or with Joni.

### Family Council Elections

Check out the bios of folks running for Family Council as a supplement to the newsletter. Didn't get a copy? See Courtney down in Room 114.

### Courtney's Corner

Check out Courtney's Corner 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” para información sobre varios programas y recursos para ti y tu familia.

Scenes from Kathy's class



### Mission Hill School

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