

# Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

## Shaping Spaces

Dear Mission Hill School Families, Friends, Students and Staff,

At our last Governance Board meeting two of our student representatives commented on the absence of hallway atmosphere in our new building. They spoke fondly of the hallway in our old building. There was artwork on display and tables and chairs for individual and small group work. The hallway had a life of its own that welcomed all people and all kinds of work.

We have many open spaces now that we are getting to know. It's fun to think about what they might become and how they might change over time. What part of our new space feels most like that hallway? Where do people cross paths? Where do people gather? What spots are best for individual work or small group work? As the year progresses we'll have a better sense of how spaces are used and how to make them feel welcoming.

There are schools that would quickly put up posters or commercially produced bulletin board items to fill blank walls and empty bulletin boards. That's not our way. The gift that this new space offers us is an opportunity to create beauty that shapes and defines it.

Creating beautiful things takes time. The time and effort it takes to make something, instead of buying it pre-made adds some value, another dimension. The hand written sign, the painting, or hand-sewn pillows all highlight our character, invite curiosity about how something was made and can inspire us. Our school will become full of these things over time and regain the life described by our student Governance Board members.

Our community will also shape our outdoor space. Plans for a tulip garden, orchard clean up and a nature play space are all underway. This springtime will be a good time to look at how and what we have created from our hands indoors and from seeds (or bulbs) outdoors.

If you sew and or have an interest in making signs (as an adult artist or with children), please let me know. It would be wonderful to have you create functional art with us.

*~Ayla Gavins*

### REMINDERS

#### *October*

Mon. 10/8: Columbus Day, no school

10/9 - 12: Listening

Conferences continue

Thu. 10/18 - Middle School Family Night\*

Thu. 10/18, 6:00: Friends of Mission Hill mtg.

Sun. 11/4: Turn clocks back

Tue. 11/6: ELECTION DAY

Mon. 11/12: Veteran's Day  
- NO SCHOOL

\*parents of 6th, 7th and 8th Graders required to attend.

## From the Classrooms

### 3 and 4 year-olds

#### Room 108

Neither snow, nor rain, nor gloom of clouds can keep our busy three-year-olds from going outside! It was drizzling at recess time, but we were all enthusiastically ready to get outdoors. The children got on the trikes and rode happily for more than 30 minutes – practicing stopping and going, pedaling and pushing. The drizzle did not dampen our enthusiasm.



We are committed to going outside every day, and as the weather shifts from season to season, the only thing that will keep us inside is if it is dangerously cold. Thanks for helping to make our outdoor adventures possible by sending in rain boots and rain coats – and as the weather gets colder – snow pants, boots, mittens, etc. If you have extras of any outdoor clothing (perhaps ones that your child has outgrown) please send them in for our classroom collection that we try to keep on hand. Thanks!

~Geraldyn McLaughlin

### Kindergarten

#### Room 106

The Butterflies have been very busy this week. Wait a minute. Not everybody knows we are now called The Butterflies Class. Let me take a minute to tell you how we chose our name.

The children came up with many different names that they thought would be strong and would represent us well. They came up with names such as lions, tigers, cheetahs, orcas, and many more. As we reflected on each we realized that only two or three people liked those names.

The class and I discussed majority vote and consensus vote. We decided that we had to have a name that everyone in the class liked. The closest we got was with butterflies. Eleven out of the 12 students wanted the name butterflies. One student did not like the name. We then started the process all over again. Each student had to talk to the class about the name they liked and why they thought their name was a good choice for us. Once again we were back to butterflies. The student who had objected decided that it was okay. He compromised, and I thought that was a pretty big deal.

I am now proud to announce to you that we are The Butterflies Class.

~Kathy Chunis D'Andrea

#### Room 107

“Look at the ceiling! It’s made of squares! Look at the windows! They’re all rectangles. The chairs

are trapezoids! There is an oval on the chair! Those pancakes look like circles! Our eyes! They are circles inside of ovals!”

For the last two weeks 107 has been talking about shapes and their attributes. We found out that squares, rectangles, trapezoids and diamonds all have four sides and four corners; triangles only have three sides and three corners and while it took a little convincing, we came to the consensus that ovals and circles have no sides or corners. Once we recorded this information, we set our students loose to find as many shapes in our classroom as they could to unlock these treasures hiding in plain sight! Days later, though the thrill had died down, on our way to the playground Noah proclaimed, “Look guys, the floor! We’re walking on squares!” And so that the passion was re-ignited. By the time we got out to the playground it was, “Look, the monkey bars are circles! The railing is a rectangle! The stairs are all rectangles! Look, that looks like a hexagon!” Needless to say, shapes are everywhere and 107 are very aware! We challenge you to see the world with these new eyes. How many shapes can you find?

~Jada Brown  
& JoAnn Hawkesworth

#### Room 109

After weeks of searching, I finally found what I’d been looking for. I lugged the equipment into room 109. A relic

from the 70s, I was pretty sure that the children wouldn't know what it did. So I asked them.  
*Is it a heavy duty camera?*  
 -James.  
*I think it's a microwave.* -Emile  
*I think it's a light for rest time.*  
 -Sophia  
*I think if you put paper under it, it will stamp the paper.* -Dillon  
*I think when it turns on, something might pop out there.*- Jakob  
*Could it be a metal maker?*  
 -James  
*Or a fabric maker?* -Emile  
*It's a light thing!* -Kenneth  
*We already have a light table.*  
 -Jahlimar  
*I think it's a sewing table.* -Zora  
*I think it's a bowl maker.* -Sophia  
*Where would it make the bowls?*  
 -James  
*Inside it.* -Sophia  
*It's a speaker.* -Luki  
*I got a good guess... A radio!*  
 -Emile  
*I think when it turns on some paper comes out.* -Sophia  
*A horseshoe crab!* -Maya  
 (everyone laughs and starts to make jokes: a walnut, a brain...)  
*A machine that helps you see better.* -Dashawn  
 Upon closer inspection:



*It's a reflector. It reflects what you see from the bottom.* -Sophia  
*It's a microscope.* -James  
*What, I can see my pattern!* -Zora  
*I think something that reflects what's on the bottom to what you see through it. It's to see things that are on the floor closer.*  
 -Sophia  
*I think it's a scanner. It tells how much bucks it is... dollars pennies, coins, whatever.* -Luki  
 To Be Continued...  
 ~Jenny Goldstein

## Grades One & Two

### Room 204

We are committed to the education of each child in our classroom. An important part of this process is our school-home partnership. Family conferences are an integral part of our work together. The first conference of the year is the listening conference, which began this week.

Listening conferences are a wonderful resource. Listening to children and their families helps us to gain insights into each child as a learner. We will hear about things children are looking forward to doing this year as well as an occasional fear or concern about the school year. As we listen, we will hear about strengths, weaknesses, triumphs and trials. We will hear about how families handle specific behaviors and we will take note in case we see those same behaviors at school. When conferences are over we always feel like we have a better sense of each child as a whole.

Because ALL our students are

new to us this year, we are looking forward very much to formally connecting with ALL our families. If you have not scheduled a conference or need to reschedule, please let us know ASAP.

~Amina Michel-Lord,  
 & Jenerra Williams

### Room 205

As children looked at different optical illusion images this week, they were discussing the different things that they saw in those images and sharing their viewpoints with one another. Some children were inspired by the well-known Faces vs. Vase image and decided to take their interest to the next level. The children examined the Faces vs. Vase image very closely and thought hard about what they saw in the image and what they could turn it into with their wild and artistic imaginations.

Daniel, Ceva, Amber and Jovanni turned the vase part into a trophy, a water fountain, a fish tank and a throat respectively. Athena and Laudys saw two faces and added speech bubbles as if the two faces were engaging in a conversation. Sofia turned the vase upside down and made it an evening gown for an actress on stage. Amishai turned it sideways and it became the body and the tail of a fish! As you walk past our classroom, please stop by and take a look at how some of our children interpreted the famous ambiguous image with their creative minds!

~Brenda Lau

**Room 217**

I have a surprise for you. It was also a surprise for me, too, let me tell you about it: When I arrived at school today I said hello to Joni and Ayla in the office. There was an object there on the floor, and when I saw it, I said, How cool! Then Joni and Ayla told me, "It's yours." It's ours! Do you want to know what it is? It's round. It's something we will use to help us learn. It will let us exercise so our brains work their best. One person at a time can use it. You have to take your shoes off to use it... It's a trampoline! We can't believe our good luck. (I put it on a wish list many months ago and here it is!)

This piece of equipment will allow children to take a breath when we are asking for mental exertion and to feel their bodies and minds click together towards accomplishment. Like all the tools we offer children to help them regulate their energy and focus, this one holds great appeal and today, it's just the pure joy of jumping and counting and jumping some more.

*~Melissa Tonachel*

**Grades Three & Four****Room 207**

This week our 4<sup>th</sup> graders began attending Urban Improv, a workshop located at Vine Street Community Center. This workshop will take place every Monday from 12:45-2:15 PM until December 2012. Urban Improv provides children from the Boston Public School system

opportunities to work on the following skills; conflict resolution, impulse control, team work, decision making, problem solving, active listening, taking responsibility for actions, public speaking, and self-esteem through various acting and dancing exercises. While the 4th graders are attending the workshop the 3rd graders will come together to work on grade level reading and writing skills. This will provide each grade specialized attention. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the 3rd/4th grade teaching team!

*~Robert Baez*

**Room 216**

Our class has chosen a name; we are the Golden Rulers! As I wrote in last week's newsletter, this choice was not easily made, nor quickly arrived at. After a great deal of debate and exploration, this name had a number of things going for it. Students argued that "golden" made it special or important. It was explained that "rulers" were used in school to measure and they were also kings and queens – important leaders who make decisions. The argument that seemed to have the most impact was that the traditional "Golden Rule" of treating others as one would like to be treated was something that we all thought was a solid foundation for our class to build upon.

The Golden Rulers was not a unanimous choice. The next most popular name, The Endeavors, was also a very well-supported option, as were the Peregrine

Falcons and the American Eskimo Dogs, which were eliminated just before the final vote. This proved to be a hard lesson in democratic process for some students: sometimes, no matter how hard you try, you don't win. However, everyone agreed that participation in the process of making the decision was better than if I, as the teacher, had dictated a name. In the end, we are united in our commitment to live up to a name that measures our character while reminding us to treat each other as we would be treated.

*~James McGovern, Jessica Watt  
& Erica Switzer*

**Grades Five & Six****Room 210**

Generating classroom names is always an interesting process. It begins free and fun, kids coming up with the most ridiculous ideas they possibly can. As they began to think about their identity as a group, and what name they want to represent them, the tone changes a bit. They still offer up funny and unique options, however they are more intentional with them the second time around. This is how a child could write a compelling persuasive paragraph, and share with a straight face on why the "Purple Top Hats" is the best choice for a name. Early entries like the "Stagnate Kidney's" begin to show up less and less.

After several discussions, writing assignments, shares and votes, here is what we are left

with: Exotic Mushrooms, Cinco - Seis's, Purple Top Hats, Bookworms Linguine, Little Red Mushrooms, Pretty Flowers, Golden Wings, The Denominators, Wolfpack.

~Nakia Keizer & Kailah Simon

### Room 215

This week the Highlighters explored some local geography. We brainstormed all of the neighborhoods in Boston and looked at a map of the city. Students were able to look at the map and answer questions about the different neighborhoods. Then we looked at a street map of Jamaica Plain and found walking routes to some popular places we could visit, like the Arboretum and Jamaica Pond. We used the scale on the map to determine which T station is closest to our school so we know where to go when we go on a field trip. We ended the week with a tour of the Mapparium. This is what some students said about our first field trip:

“One thing I enjoyed at the Mapparium was looking at the world, because the countries lit up.” – James

“I learned that there is an Orange, Africa.” – Orange

“I liked to talk in the globe because the sound was echoing around.” – Alexa

“I learned that Mary Baker loved writing till she was 83 years old. I enjoyed standing inside the world.” –Asmani

~Sarah DeCruz

## Grades Seven & Eight

### Room 213

The Four 4's Challenge is on in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math classes. Care to join in the fun? Using exactly four 4's and any operations, try to write equations that have the numbers from 0 to 100 as the answer. Here's an example:  $(4 \times 4 + 4)/4$ . Applying order of operations, we do  $4 \times 4 = 16$ , plus 4 equals 20, divided by four equals 5.

That's one number from our 0 to 100 list done, only 100 to go!

The equation for each number 0 through 100 and the name of the first person to get it will be posted in Room 213. Alternate solutions and their authors will also be posted. How long do you think it will take us to find an equation for each number? Is it even possible?

As for other math news, this week we started our MathsMates assignment in both classes. Distributed on Monday and due the following Monday, MathsMates is a problem set that reviews facts, computation skills, application of concepts, and creative problem solving. This work is in addition to the nightly assignment connected to the day's work. Families should see students doing math homework every night. Please contact me with any questions.

~Ann Ruggiero

Kendal Schwarz & Laura Nixon

### Room 214

“This food looks amazing!”

“What a wonderful meal!”

“This sauce is delicious.”

The comforting smell of a “home-cooked” meal started to fill the Art Room and the hallway of our new building as dishes started to arrive from Room 214. Huge bowls of pasta still steaming, a large stockpot full of homemade tomato sauce with garlic and cilantro, bowls of meatballs (turkey and meatless ones too), a mixed-greens salad, and plate stacked with anjero (sweet Somali pancakes) for dessert.

Not only was the food delicious and healthy, but there was also enough of it to feed the 25 or so people who turned out for the first MHS Governance Board Meeting of the year, and the first one in our new space. The meal had been planned and prepared by Chef Hawolul Ibrahim, 8<sup>th</sup> grade student and governance board member, with some assistance from Assistant Chefs Jacob, Chris, Jennie, and Joel. The meal was the culmination of one of Hawolul's Workshop projects. I only hope that more of the Workshop projects this year will be this tasty!

~Jacob Wheeler & Chris Barnes

## Hot Topics

### Box Tops

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

### Stop and Shop A+ Rewards

It's time to re-register your Stop and Shop card and designate it to Mission Hill School. Then, every time you shop, your purchase total is rounded to the nearest dollar and used to calculate school earnings – free money for Mission Hill, just for

buying your groceries! Register at: <http://www.stopandshop.com/apl> us and us ID Number: 09287. We are registered under our old address in Roxbury, but if you use our id number we'll come right up. If you would rather send your stop and shop card number (13 digits) to Courtney and have her register your card for you, please email her at [courtney.bruno@bc.edu](mailto:courtney.bruno@bc.edu), with the 13-digit number and last name associated with the account. Once you are registered you will earn points from October 5, 2012 until March 28, 2013.

### **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.

### **It's Family Council Election Time!**

The Family Council is open to EVERY adult family member of a child who attends Mission Hill. The group meets once a month to share information, discuss issues, coordinate parent volunteer opportunities and organize fundraisers. Dinner and childcare are always provided unless otherwise noted. RSVP to Joni by calling 617 635 6384 at least 24 hours before a meeting to insure we have enough

childcare coverage. Our first meeting of this year is Thursday, November 15th 5:45- 7:00 in the Family Resource Room (104).

\*The following positions are open for election:

- 2 co- chairs are needed to help plan and facilitate meetings.

They also serve as liaisons between the school and the Family Council.

- 1 treasurer is needed to maintain records of the Family Council funds and to assist with fundraising ideas.

- 1 secretary is needed to take notes during the meetings.

These positions are year-long and require a monthly

commitment for about an hour and a half (on Thursdays:

November 15, January 17, March 14, and May 16). If you

would like to run for one of these positions, please let

Courtney know by calling the school. Please also send in a

description of yourself ASAP but no later than October 11th in

order to be considered. This can be put in Courtney's mailbox in

the main office or emailed to her at [courtney.bruno@bc.edu](mailto:courtney.bruno@bc.edu).

### **Llegó la hora de elegir el Consejo Familiar**

El Consejo Familiar está abierto para CUALQUIER familiar de un

estudiante de Mission Hill. El consejo se reúne una vez al mes

para compartir información, discutir temas, coordinar

oportunidades para padres voluntarios y organizar eventos

para conseguir recursos para el colegio. Se proveerá comida y

cuidado de menores siempre y

cuando no se avise lo contrario.

Favor confirmar con Joni

llamando al 617 635 6384 al menos 24 horas antes de la

reunión. Nuestra primera

reunión del año se llevará a cabo el jueves 15 de noviembre de

5:45- 7:00.\*Los siguientes cargos están abiertos para

elección:

- 2 co- presidentes que ayuden a facilitar las reuniones. Deben

servir como puente entre el colegio y el Consejo Familiar

- 1 tesorero que mantenga las cuentas del Consejo Familiar y

que ayude con eventos de para recaudar fondos.

- 1 secretario que tome notas durante las reuniones.

Dichos cargos tienen duración de un año y requieren

compromiso mensual de una hora y media (por lo general los

jueves, noviembre 15, enero 17, marzo 14, y mayo 16). Si le

gustaría postularse a uno de estos cargos, por favor póngase

en contacto con Courtney llamándola al colegio. Por favor

escriban también una breve descripción suya cuanto antes

posible, a más tardar el 11 de Octubre, y déjenla en el buzón

de Courtney en la oficina principal.

### **Mission Hill School**

*A Boston Public Pilot School*

Deborah Meier, Founder

Ayla Gavins, Principal

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