

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

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

We are so excited this year to be rejuvenating our schoolyard. A team of staff, families, community members, and The Boston Schoolyard Initiative team are working together to make the schoolyard a place for exploration and investigation.

Our vision is to create several nature playscapes that are inviting to our school children and neighborhood community. For children these spaces will have multiple entry points for imaginative and sociodramatic play. These environments will allow children to use all their senses. They will be able to feel wet mud and dry sand, taste food they have grown, hear the sounds of buzzing bees, smell flowering bushes and herbs, and observe plants and animals in their natural habitats. For older students and adults, these nature-inspired spaces also stimulate imagination. At the same time, they will be peaceful places of respite. There will be plants to observe and care for as well as a seating area in which to just soak in the beauty of the space. The combination of nature to engage with and nature to admire will be accessible to

the very young, the very old and those in between.

“There is significant evidence that social development and greater community involvement can result from engagement in school grounds projects. Students develop more positive relationships with each other, with their teachers and with the wider community through participating in school grounds improvements.” (Rickerson)

We are also excited to be creating a space that will become National Wildlife certified. The design will encourage birds to come to our schoolyard. This will provide a great opportunity for students and community members to experience nature that is closest to them.

The raised bed will allow students to build strong connections to what different foods need in order to grow. It will encourage stewardship and responsibility for the gardens as well as building scientific knowledge of what plants and animals need to thrive.

The staff, community members, and families are excited that we will come back next fall to a rejuvenated space for the

community. There has been so much hard work that has gone into this process and we so appreciate it. We have also opened up the school to local residents to see the school and see the plans. If you have not come by, please do come see the plans. They are located on the first floor to the right of the entrance. With great joy we welcome a rejuvenated and inspirational space.

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

Louv, R. (2005). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Rickinson, M., Dillon, J., Teamey, K., Morris, M., Choi M. Y., Sanders, D., & Benefield, P. (2004, March). *A review of research on outdoor learning*. Shrewsbury, UK: National Foundation for Educational Research and King's College London.

REMINDERS

March

Fri. 3/8 Portfolio Breakfast for 7th & 8th Grade students and families: 8:00 - 9:00 am

3/14-15, Family Conferences

Thu. 3/14, Famil Council 5:45

Mon. 3/18, No School

Thu. 3/28, Famly Breakfast: Ancient Greece

Fri. 3/29, No School

April

Thu. 4/11, Science Fair

4/15 - 19, Spring Break

Fri. 4/26, Mornng Walk & Talk with Ayla

From the Classrooms

3 and 4 year-olds

Room 108

Our latest Aesop Fable has been *The Tortoise and the Hare*. Angel found a version in a picture book with a beautiful oversized illustration. The children love looking at the details in the illustration and all the animals that are cheering the tortoise and the hare along as they race to the finish line.

In our version of *The Tortoise and the Hare*, the hare teases the tortoise about how slow he is. As they race, the hare decides to take a nap because he is so far ahead. The tortoise goes on to win the race. We picked this fable because it fits well with our focus on Mission Hill Way, "Be Kind and Work Hard". In the fable, the hare was not very kind and didn't work hard.

We have had fun acting out the story and encourage you to try it at home.

~*Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin*
& *Donna Winder*

Kindergarten

Room 106

"Can we get some water?" Adler asked as he and Jaiden were playing at the sand table. I gave each of them two watering cans filled with water. Jaiden and Adler had piled the sand to one side of our rectangular sand table. This left half the table completely empty.

They started to fill the empty part of the table. They looked carefully to see what would

happen. As they poured, they noticed that the water was staying on one side and the sand was staying to the other. "Kathy, you know what? I think it is going to be frozen." Adler said. "You think it will be frozen?" I asked. "If it is cold enough," Adler added.

All of a sudden they started to add sand into the water section. "Kathy look!" Jaiden exclaimed, "We are making mud!" Adler and Jaiden were taking the dry sand and mixing it with the water. "It's mud," they said over and over.

As they mixed they gathered up the wet sand and put it back on the dry side. "We need to let it dry," Adler said to Jaiden. Jaiden was far too interested in this new discovery to stop. The process of dry sand to wet mud and then wet mud piled on dry sand was intriguing to observe and record.

The very next morning Adler ran into the room. "Kathy do you remember the sand from yesterday? Can I see it?" We went over. He touched the sand with his hand. "Is it frozen . . . no, not yet," He told me. We will continue to experiment with sand and water and share our findings.

~*Kathy Clunis D'Andrea*

Room 107

It is difficult to continue exploring Greek culture through its mythological characters without discussing astronomy. So many of them are "cast into the night sky" to exist as constellations for all eternity. This week we spoke about these clusters of stars that create pictures in the sky. Characters like Orion the Hunter, Canis Major and

Canis Minor, Scorpion, Callisto/Big Dipper/Ursa Major/Big Bear, Arcas/Little Dipper/Ursa Minor/ Little Bear, Cepheus and Cassiopeia, Perseus and Andromeda, Cetus the monster. We spent some time recreating two of the constellations we spoke about. As they connected the dots, one student said, "That doesn't look like Orion!" We reassured them that with a little imagination you can see them come alive and challenged them with the question, "What constellations can you find?"

Family presentation synopsis continued:

Miles' family shared pictures of their visit to India. We met his Aji (grandmother) and learned that it takes 14 ½ hours to get to India from Boston. We saw the streets crowded with animals and people, brightly painted trucks, a large castle that was made into a train station and a motorcycle that held five people. In Boston, his family likes to go sledding, camping (where they eat s'mores) and playing at the beach. We heard about family reunions in Washington State and were treated to a yummy Indian treat made by Aji.

~*Jada Brown*
& *JoAnn Hawkesworth*

Room 109

"I have a mommy worm and a baby worm!" Zora exclaims to her friends as she gently deposits a large and a small worm on her tray. The children watch the two worms wriggle over and under

each other.

“Look they are hugging!” says Olivia

“What do worms turn into when they grow up?” asks Dashawn, referring to the caterpillars that turned into butterflies earlier in the school year.

“They stay the same way and just get bigger, I think,” offers Sophia.

Some kids let the worms walk on their hands. Xavier says it feels itchy and funny. Emile's worm tries to escape. Joy drops her worm back in the bin: “Yuck, gross, it's alive.”

“He is going to the other side of my hand,” cries Kaysha.

“They have mud all over,” remarks Kenneth.

“That's because they live under the ground,” teaches Dillon.

We discovered that worms can do many things including writing: “See, this one is making an 'S'”, Maya pointed out to her friends “Here is a 'b', no-it looks more like a six,” James responds “This is an 'O,’” observes Jahlimar.

“He is writing my name. That's the 'L' for Luki!”

For the Magic Dragons the worms in our worm bin are a constant source of wonder and admiration. The children faithfully collect small pieces of paper and leftovers from their lunches to feed to the worms on Friday. In the beginning the children were worried that the worms would starve if they ate only once a week. After a few weeks we discovered that a weekly feeding was more than sufficient. There were lots of baby worms, really long and fat

worms. The food and paper turned into beautiful compost.

The Magic Dragons believe that worms are amazing!

~*Marietje Halbertsma*

Grades One & Two

Room 204

Welcome back! I hope your vacations were wonderful. I certainly had a restful and enjoyable time off. As we get back to work, Ancient Greece is on our minds again. We spent the beginning of our time looking at Ancient Greece through the lens of everyday life and things that the Ancient Greeks are known for, like columns and pottery.

Another aspect of Ancient Greece that we have connected to is their myths. The next phase of our study will involve looking closely at several Greek myths and the heroes within them. After reading, discussing and connecting to the myths, each member of the Fantastic Crew will choose a hero or heroine to focus on. Myth writing, doll making, drawing, scene making and more will be connected to the hero or heroine they choose.

Stay tuned for updates and pictures of our work in progress!

~*Jenerra Williams*

*Lexi Delyani
& Melissa Anderson*

Room 205

no news this week

Room 217

It's the day we count as the hundredth day of the school year (with some debate considering days off). Just a little more than

halfway through the year, it's an opportunity to take stock of where we are and where we'd still like to go. This group continues to consider how to move more fluidly through the parts of our day, how to solve problems with each other and with materials, how to best spend our time. We continue to adjust and readjust to our growing skills and deepening questions and understandings.

But today we focus on celebrating a bit: we write books about the idea of one hundred (*what 100 things would you like to give a friend? what 100 things could you carry? if 100 people worked together, what could we accomplish?*); we make a paper quilt (*if 20 people each fill 5 squares...*); we make bundles of 10 to reach 100; we read books about 100; and we exercise (100 jumping jacks, toe touches, spins). What will we do with the next 80 days?

~*Melissa Tonachel*

Grades Three & Four

Room 207

“It is now open for reflections,” my high school teacher would say during homeroom; time for students to share what's on their minds, how life is going, and simply to make connections with peers in our community. Eight years later I still use this in my life. I would like to reflect on my experience in Detroit.

The weekend before vacation the MHS staff attended the North Dakota Study Group, a conference revolved around the idea of social justice, equality,

race/culture, and education. As part of the conference, we visited various churches, schools, and community centers in the city of Detroit. The amazing work these individuals and organizations are doing for the youth and underprivileged people is highly motivating and inspirational. Existing and newly established community organizations are rewriting the by-laws on how to rebuild Detroit by making sure that every aspect of their organizations' missions are centered on the people who live in the communities being served. As some may know, Detroit has had serious economic struggles with the decline of the motor vehicle industry, their public education system, and much more. This has generated a need to create change in all aspects of life in the streets of Detroit. There are so many great things that I witnessed, which are hard to explain in words.

~Robert Baez

Room 216

Before the break we discussed as a classroom about possible changes that we wanted to see in the physical environment of the room. We talked about what we could do to help us learn better and become a stronger community. Through their comments and ideas the kids really showed us their eagerness to make the best of their time in the classroom. Their enthusiasm motivated us to take the challenge of transforming a room in the middle of the year.

The kids came back to a new environment and this week we felt the transformative power of coming together to create something new. Even though winter is still in full force outside our window, it already feels like spring inside our room. There is excitement in the air about what comes next for us as a group. The new set up of the room has renewed everyone's energy and enthusiasm and it is reflected in our daily interactions and our work. We invite you to take a break from the winter and get a taste of spring with us in room 216.

~Juan Cortes & Erica Switzer

Grades Five & Six

Room 210

The class has been working on helping to improve one another's writing. This happens verbally through group shares with warm and cool feedback. It also happens on paper with Compliments, Suggestions and Corrections during peer conferencing. Here are a few examples from their conferences with each other:

"My favorite part was when you and Rily made spitballs. I liked it because you described the scene before you said what you were making."

"Maybe you could say the weather difference, Boston to Miami"

"I think you should describe your room a little more"

"I really love your topic because the reader (me) feels what you felt. I like the way say said it was not scary, it was horrifying"

"Another suggestion is talk about how your friends felt or how you felt"

"I like the way you described what the dog looked like"

"You should have put more periods"

"You could have said why John was a pain in the butt"

"I think you used a lot of good details such as when you were describing breakfast. I like the way you made it one continuing story and not in pieces"

"You should really define when you end a paragraph or start a new one"

~Nakia Keizer

Kyle Ford-Withrow
& Cady Hrasky

Room 215

This week students began a new math unit from the common core curriculum. We launched our unit, Rates and Ratios, by doing a science experiment. The question was: How many exercises can students do per second? Samsam's hypothesis was, "Students won't be able to more jumping jacks per second because they could get really tired. Peyton predicted that, "Students will be able to do more exercises per second because you have more time." We went to the gym and did jumping jacks for 30, 60 and 90 seconds and recorded our data in a table. Then we went back up to the classroom and students analyzed their data by turning into ratios.

~Sarah DeCruz

Grades Seven & Eight

Room 213

Stories are a wonderful shared human experience. From a very young age, we both listen to and tell stories. Later, we use pictures and words to record our stories so that we can share them more widely. This week in Room 213, we considered a question: How many words does it take to write a story? Then we accepted a challenge. Write a 25-word story.

First, we agreed that in order to be a story, certain literary elements would need to be present. But can character, plot (story line), and conflict be conveyed in a mere 25 words? I read the class some sample stories and they were amazed. We noticed a flow from beginning, to middle, to end. We could identify characters, and felt strong emotions. Tajonna reported being pulled in and visualizing details that weren't provided but that made sense. This observation helped us to understand the role of inference and prediction in narratives. Ahsad noted that the stories really made him think, a goal any writer would hope to elicit in a reader.

If you're wondering, 25 words is about as long as one long sentence or two shorter ones. Yimara liked the connection that 25 words is about the length of one good text message. So in the days ahead, don't be surprised if you get a story text from your child. Care to text back and start a new communication tradition?

~Ann Ruggiero

Room 214

no news this week

Hot Topics

MHS B-ball team wins!

This first game of Tuesday evening's double header saw Mission Hill playing against the BTU School. The game quickly turned into a classic. MHS dominated the first half of the game, going on a 10-2 run to end the half 27-15. BTU mounted an impressive offensive drive in the second quarter, going on a 3-7 run that quickly closed the gap. Roosevelt and Ohrenberger, which played each other in the second game and have played both MHS and BTU this season, watched most of the game on the edge of their seats. By the time the final buzzer sounded, MHS had picked up its first win of the season with a final score of 48-40. The afterschool came about halfway through the first quarter to cheer the home team on. Three cheers for team spirit!

The second game of night was Roosevelt vs. Ohrenberger. A few players from the MHS/BTU game stuck around to watch. Perhaps motivated by what they had seen in the first game this game was close from start to finish. The half ended with Roosevelt dominating, 12-6. Ohrenberger battled back in the second half, but came up one point short as the final buzzer sounded. The final score was 25-24.

A special thanks to Robert Baez for wearing two hats one Tuesday. He coached MHS in the first game and took on the role of referee in the second game. Many would have gone home after just playing a game, but he came through in a big way for the second half of the evening.

New Life for an Old Piano

On Wednesdays in February, Brian Hubbel came to repair and tune our piano. Brian is a piano technician from North Bennett Street School, and he had a big job awaiting him! Half a dozen keys didn't play at all, strings were missing, the pedals didn't work, and not a single note was in tune. Over the course of four visits and about 20 hours of work, Brian rebuilt keys, shaping and adjusting them so they fit perfectly. He replaced strings, reconnected the rods worked by the pedals, and finally, tuned the piano. Did you know that, to be "in tune", the notes of a piano don't just have to be specific intervals from one another, they also have to vibrate at exact speeds to ensure that a key played on one piano will match the pitch of the same key played on another? Our piano was very flat, meaning the strings had loosened and the notes sounded lower than they ought. Brian warned us that the piano will go flat again as the strings relax after being tightened. He also shared some discouraging news: the sound board on our piano is cracked in several places. It won't be too long before the cracks interfere with the sound of the notes. When that happens, we'll have to replace the whole piano.

It was fascinating to watch Brian work. Here's a photo of him



carefully fitting a key back among the others.

Many thanks to Brian Hubbel, and to North Bennett Street School for getting us playing again!

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.

14 and looking for a summer job?

For over 45 years ABCD has offered summer jobs to youth throughout Boston. In the past three summers, SummerWorks provided over 5,000 Boston youth with a summer job at more than 500 partner worksites throughout the city. Youth ages

14 to 21 have the opportunity to work in a range of jobs for six weeks beginning on July 8, 2013 and ending on August 16, 2013.

Apply online at

<https://www.summerworks.net/WorksClient/> **before March 15th** to be eligible. Applications are NOT considered complete until you have ALSO brought proper documentation to the nearest ABCD. See Courtney if you have questions.

Will you be 15 on/before July 7th?

The City of Boston's teen employment program, the Boston Youth Fund, provides thousands of Boston teens between the ages of 15 and 17 with job opportunities during the summer months. The Boston Youth Fund participants work in a variety of jobs within community, faith-based, and government agencies. Positions include administrative assistants, mural painters, peer leaders and many more! You need to apply with the Hopeline (<http://www.bostonyouthfund.org/g/registrationform.asp>) **before March 3rd** to become eligible! Summer Stuff 2013 is up online for middle and high school students. Check it out at http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/files/summer_stuff_sr_13_0.pdf **before the early March deadlines pass.** Stay tuned for Summer Stuff Jr. in the next few weeks.



The Family Council will be hosting a Family Movie Night on March 22nd. Watch for more information.

Join the Mission Hill School Family Forum! The Mission Hill School Family Forum is an initiative by school parents and caregivers FOR school parents and caregivers, a place to forge connections in and across classroom communities. Staff is welcome, too.

To join the group:

(1) Request to join by sending an email to Forum moderators Naama or Neathery (mizzgee@yahoo.com or neathery99@gmail.com)

Or,

(2) Visit the Mission Hill School Family Forum site, take a look at the homepage, and click the "Join This Group" link to submit a request that way:

<http://tinyurl.com/MHSconnects>
Please help to grow the forum as a community asset by bringing this invitation to the attention of your MHS friends. It's always a good time to be in touch!

Mission Hill School

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