

# Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

## The Art of a Greek Theme

Dear Friends, Families, Students and Staff,

Last Thursday morning everyone in our school was invited to celebrate our study of Ancient Greece at a special breakfast. Tables were loaded with delicious breakfast items provided by families to share with everyone. Many of us stood shoulder to shoulder, waiting to fill our plates.

I found my way through the crowd, walking toward the art room. At the end of that hallway I saw and heard something beautiful -students plucking the strings of a harp. Students had clustered around the harp as a harpist, Mason Mitchell, carefully watched them. When the students stopped, Mason began to play. The magical sounds of the harp quieted the space. More people were drawn in by the music and soon there was an audience seated around our visiting musician.

### REMINDERS

#### *April*

Sat. 4/6: BPS Steel Pan Concert,  
12:30 - 3 pm at RHSM, 55  
Malcolm X Blvd.  
Mon. 4/8: School Picture Day  
Thu. 4/11: Science Fair  
4/15 - 19 -Spring vacation week  
Fri. 4/26: Morning Walk & Talk  
with Ayla

Mason sat up straight, appearing to look straight ahead but his eyes were on his music. His pink shirt was crisp and complimented his mahogany brown skin. When he finished playing the harp for the morning, I asked him if there was anything he wanted our school community to know about the harp. Here's what he said, "The harp teaches perseverance and persistence. The harp is a great instrument because it keeps both hands busy. When you are older it keeps both feet busy too." Mason will be performing at Boston University with Ann Hobson Pilot, former principal harpist from the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

As my conversation with Mason was ending, I realized I was late for a play. The Highlighters (Sarah and Kadian's class) were starting their performances of *Vanity Fair* and *Legends of the Fall*. When I arrived at the performance area, I instantly felt connected to the Ancient Greek theatre. The performers were at ground level with an audience that circled around, amphitheatre style. The performers were wonderful; as they transformed two Ancient Greek myths into tales we could all see and hear.

The music and theatre were wonderful compliments to the mosaics; clay work, weaving and other artwork students have created during this theme.

~Ayla Gavins

## From the Classrooms

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

### 3 and 4 year-olds

#### Room 108

*No news this week*

#### Kindergarten

#### Room 106

This week marks our journey into a new theme For Physical Science the Butterflies class will be studying construction. We will be looking at balance and motion and stability and gravity.

"What do you think the word **construction** means?" I asked. This is the first time all year that every student had an answer. The words *build*, *builders*, and *buildings* came up a lot. When asked Eli said, "Building a new building." Lots of children agreed. They described construction as the assembly of something new.

There was another strong sentiment. Cyrus described it, "If things are broken you fix them." Gianna added, "If you break a building it's ok. Fix it back. If you need help ask." Shane also added, "When something falls down, you can build it again."

Amos added a new element to our conversation. He introduced the idea of an earthquake taking down a building and having to build it back. Amos also brought us into the conversation of building secure buildings. We also talked about materials such as bricks and steel that go into buildings.

We are off to a roaring start and can't wait to share our physical science adventures.

#### Room 107

At last week's Greek breakfast, after a brief slideshow of our study thus far, the Silver Star Patriots shared some of their Greek cooking and performed the 2010 FIFA World Cup song for their families. This presentation served as a trial run for today's Olympic Opening Ceremonies performance at Friday Share where we introduced the upcoming week of Olympic events planned for April 8<sup>th</sup> through 13<sup>th</sup>.

Soon after the breakfast 107 was off to the Franklin Park Zoo on another adventure to complete a scavenger hunt for animals that may have existed during ancient Greek times. Here are our reflections:

*I like...*

**Diany:** ... saying hi to the gorillas.

**Shirley:** ... the bunnies because they looked so cute.

**Michelle:** ... the zebras... the black and white ones.

**Peter:** ... Christopher the lion because he looked right at us.

**Miles:** ... Christopher because he looked straight at us. He was sleeping first.

**Braxton:** ... the horses because the mane looked like a Mohawk.

**Euan:** ... seeing the ostrich because there was a statue of one of them and you get to play on it.

**Liam:** ... the people who worked there and the statue of the ostrich because it tricked me. I thought it was real but it wasn't.

**Lucas:** ... the baby ring-tailed lemur because it was cute.

**Noah:** ... Jack Frost the ostrich. I named him that because that was

the guardian in the movie Rise of the Guardians.

**Anand:** ... when we got to stand on the thing to see the tigers.

~Jada Brown

& JoAnn Hawksworth

#### Room 109

*No news this week*

### Grades One & Two

#### Room 204

This week I looked around the art room and saw 19 needles sewing together superheroes, one stitch at a time. As I watched, I was amazed by how much they have learned and how much they taught me about Ancient Greece. As a student teacher I had just as much to learn as they did! We learned what Ancient Greek foods we like and how far we could jump if we were in the Olympics. We felt lucky to be living the present when we found out that in Ancient Greece, boys could go to school, but girls had to stay home. This last project on Ancient Greece has connected the past to our future by allowing us to think about Greek Myths and creating our own superhero myths. The students' superheroes save the world, save animals, save people, and even help people who have leukemia.

While watching the students create these stories I learned they can be just as powerful as the superheroes they have made up. All they have to do is use the knowledge and experiences they have. They have made me

hopeful that one day they will be their own superheros; I am sure that they too will change the world.

~Lexi Delyani  
Jenerra Williams  
& Missy Anderson

### Room 205

*The Wonderful Wonderers’  
“Create-Your-Own-Critters”  
continued:*

**Amishai:** This is Waffacatofa-Batrabbo-Mishchifo-Alltagetho-Fatsoso-Chesto-Eggelanto. It has the wings of a bat, the body of a waffle, and ears like a bunny, whiskers like a cat, and it has flippers to live in the ocean.

**Athena:** This is WBD, W for wings, B for bunny, and D for dog.

**Vitoria:** They are half deer and half cat. The big one is called Vale, and the small one is called Winslow. The face is all deer, the hooves are deer too, and the rest of the body is cat.

**Ceva:** This is Pega-corn, half unicorn and half Pegasus. It can fly and make a force field and it eats grass and water. Most of it looks like a unicorn with Pegasus’ wings.

**Jovanni:** This is Red-eye Fire Dinosaur, a regular dinosaur that’s made of fire. It lives in the jungle and sets the jungle on fire.

**Kelise:** This is Dot, a half cat and a half dog, and it lives in the woods.

**Abidemi:** They are John and James. They live on a farm and are herbivores. They shoot fire out of their eyes to protect themselves.

~Brenda Lau  
& Amina Michel-Lord

### Room 217

I have been a student teacher in room 217 for about three months now. I think what I am learning about most from Mission Hill is that a classroom is made up of individual students and those students all have individual needs. At first I struggled with the idea of creating lessons that would reach 17 different personalities and learning styles. I decided to try a project that would have many components so that perhaps I could interest all of them. The students chose Greek gods/goddesses to get to know better. They read and listened to stories, found character traits, drew pictures, asked questions, personified, wrote stories about, made props for, and finally, acted out these stories for friends and family. This project allowed every Friendly Monkey a chance to be successful in an area where she or he felt strongest. It was amazing to watch them get so excited and invested in the project together. For some, this was discussing favorite story parts and characters with friends. For other students, it was making props or enthusiastically acting out the stories together. Among many other things, what these children have taught me so far is that if I want my students to learn and enjoy the material, I have to go with what interests them and makes them excited.

~Chloe Carlton

### Grades Three & Four

#### Room 207

The Hawks are super excited

about beginning our new theme: Physical Science. However, before we continue to explore with our new topic we must finish our final Ancient Greece project with Ms. Jada’s class. Our final project is called the MHS Olympics. With the help of our wonderful K1/K2 students (who are pros at this event) we are having 12 events for our K0-4th grade classes. The events are: Opening Ceremonies, Javelin, Shot Put, Discus, Foot Races, Relay Races, Wrestling, Boxing, Chariot, Horse Races, Full Armor Foot Races, and the Closing Ceremonies. The Olympic events will begin with the Opening Ceremony this Friday during Friday Share and will continue with the games Monday-Friday of next week. Jada and I are excited about our event and we look forward to watching the competitions. We will take pictures of the events and share them with the MHS community in the upcoming weeks. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Robert or Ms. Jada.

~Robert Baez & Shaina Butler

#### Room 216

The Golden Rulers are wrapping up our Ancient Greece theme with our creation of character profiles. We are culminating our research from a variety of sources into our very own creations of persons that might have lived in Greece during ancient times. While we were collaborating in pairs and small groups, students became particularly interested in researching Greek names. We

discovered many new names we had never seen before and some that we found very familiar; even in our class! Students led their own research using resources available in the classroom. The gods in myths, the farmers, the slaves and even the militia inspired students through their own character creation. They researched, illustrated and wrote about the various daily lives their character would have lived. Through the excitement and creativity, students are expanding their work to include more detail, longer stories and multiple drafts. The Golden Rulers will finish our character profiles this week to be ready next week for the new theme of physical science!

~Erica Switzer & Juan Cortes

### Grades Five & Six

#### Room 210

*No news this week*

#### Room 215

Last week, the Highlighters of room 215 had two very exciting things happen. First, we said goodbye to Sarah as she left us to spend time with her newborn baby boy. Second, we presented two performances of plays based on Greek myths. The first was "Legends of the Fall: The Fall of Troy". This play retold the epic tale of the Trojan horse and how the Greeks outwitted the Trojans to victory. The second play was "Vanity Fair: The Story of Echo and Narcissus". In this play, we learned of how Echo was

silenced because of her constant chattering and was punished by only being able to repeat the last words of others (the origin of echoes). The Highlighters practiced diligently for weeks, to ensure their performances were stage-worthy and in the end they were very pleased with their final products. As a class, we greatly enjoyed the Ancient Greece theme and are now looking forward to the adventures that await us in Physical Science!

~Kadian Simmonds

### Grades Seven & Eight

#### Room 213

"I have a question for you, Ann," La'Renz stated on Monday morning. "Why do we do MCAS?" He knew the first round of spring testing had started, and that his class would test for two days this week. His tone and body language indicated that he was none too pleased. I chose my words carefully as several other students turned toward me to hear my answer.

My message to kids is simple and clear: "You are smart and capable. Use what you know and do your best work."

But the information that most guides my teaching is that gathered day-to-day as I work with students and adjust what I do based on what they do. Arriving months after testing, MCAS data is not useful in that way. I resent the hours taken from learning and teaching time every year in March and again in May to prepare for and administer the tests. As a mathematician, I feel wronged

when I hear interpretations of test score data delivered as fact when psychometricians (experts in testing) repeatedly warn about the misuse of single tests in high stakes decisions. I'm saddened when students and families believe that a single number is a fair and adequate evaluation of their ability and potential. And I'm always left feeling that there is a better way to get a sense of how large numbers of kids are faring in school.

Local assessment systems, like our Graduation Portfolios, provide a comprehensive picture of a student and his/her strengths and areas for growth. We continue to evaluate and revise our Portfolio Assessments. We collaborate with other schools to find valid and replicable ways to evaluate what kids are learning. That said, we also do MCAS as currently required of all public schools receiving federal money.

~Ann Ruggiero

Laura Nixon  
& Kendal Schwarz

#### Room 214

*No news this week*

### Hot Topics

#### Welcome Caleb!

Grades five and six teacher Sarah DeCruz and her husband Chris are the proud parents of Caleb, born March 30<sup>th</sup>. The new family are doing well. We can't wait for them to visit! Congratulations to Sarah and Chris.

#### Steel Pan Fest Saturday

The Second Annual BPS Steel Pan Festival will take place Saturday, April 6, from 12:30 - 3:00 at the Roland Hayes School of Music, 55

Malcolm X Boulevard, Roxbury. (Behind the O'Bryant School) Come hear a preview of the MHS Percussion Ensemble's spring concert selections, plus four other great bands from New England and New York. The concert is free, and there's plenty of free parking at RHSM. Come support your school and bring your dancing shoes!

### **Courtney's Corner**

Check out Courtney's Corner outside her office on the first floor or at [missionhillschool.org](http://missionhillschool.org) under Family Resources 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" fuera de su oficina y en línea para información sobre varios programas y recursos para ti y tu familia.

### **Camps!**

Summer Stuff and Summer Stuff Jr. have been delivered and are going home with your child this week! Please review the newspapers for information and contact Courtney if you have questions or don't see a camp you are interested in. Remember deadlines come up quickly, so start applying today!

### **Get your camp physical!**

Don't forget that camps all require a medical examination by a licensed physician within 12 months preceding camp. This is a state requirement for all

children attending camp, so book your child's appointment now. Remember, Georgie needs updated copies of physicals as well, so drop a copy in her mailbox after your appointment.

### **¡Obtén tu físico para campamento!**

No olvide que todos los campos requieren un examen médico por un médico autorizado dentro de 12 meses que preceden al campamento. Esto es un requisito estatal para todos los niños que asisten al campo, así que reserve la cita de su hijo ahora. Recuerde, Georgie necesita copias actualizadas de exámenes físicos, así que deje una copia en su buzón de correo después de su cita.

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 MHS Family Forum moderators Naama or Neathery ([mizzgee@yahoo.com](mailto:mizzgee@yahoo.com) or [neathery99@gmail.com](mailto: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!



Welcome to the world, Caleb.

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