

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

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

This year, I have had many opportunities to talk to others about the work we do here at Mission Hill. During our discussions I found myself saying, "Of course we're responsible for teaching our children academics like reading, writing, math and science. However, we are also charged with helping them learn how to manage in this world - now as children and young adults and into adulthood". This learning happens constantly as we use teachable moments to demonstrate Viewpoint, one of our Habits of Mind. How many times, in my 13 years at Mission Hill, have I asked a child, "What would you feel like if someone... was unkind to you, hit you, knocked down your building, said an unkind word?" etc. Most times I receive the anticipated response like, "I wouldn't like it. It would make me sad. It would make me angry," etc. Occasionally, I receive an, "I don't know" and we have to take the necessary time to

REMINDERS

Para ver este boletín en español, visite

<http://www.missionhillschool.org/resources/boletin> o comuníquese con Joel al (617) 548-7523 para una versión en papel.

Mon 6/17: Staff vs. Student

basketball game, 1:30 - 3:00

Wed. 6/19: Middle School Art

Show

5:45 - 7:00

Fri. 6/21: Ecoteer Day,

Coffee House 6:00 - 8:00

Tue. 6/26: Graduation, 10:00

Wed. 6/26: Field Day

6/27-28: half days

explore more deeply how it would feel. Most times these conversations end with the child understanding that they need to make amends to a member of our community and we set out to figure out the best way to make that happen.

Empathy is not only for children to learn and demonstrate but for adults as well. How many times have you been annoyed because someone was inconsiderate or unkind to you? I know I have more examples than I care to count. However, last week an incident occurred that made me stop and take note. The after school was outside on the playground. A family member stopped her car on Carolina to pick up her 5th grader. Delayed for not more than 20 seconds, the person in the car behind began to beep her horn repeatedly and yelled angrily out her window. Soon, she was speeding down the street on her way. Letta and I talked about the driver's irritation but soon let the conversation go. About an hour later a car drove up to the playground and the driver stopped and yelled, "I'm sorry!" out of the window. To our surprise it was the impatient driver who had been beeping her horn and yelling! She said, "I got to thinking, that the lady in front of me was just picking up her kid and I was being a jerk because I had a bad day. I just wanted to come back and apologize." I was sure to let her know that her apology had made up for all the impatient driver moments, outside of our school, all year long.

My hope is that our hard work at Mission Hill will help our children to stop and think how their actions affect others and if necessary they too might circle back and give a heartfelt apology when necessary.

~Amina Michel-Lord

From the Classrooms

3 and 4 year-olds

Room 108

Reflection is an important part of the Mission Hill School Exhibition is as well. Last Friday, 12 of The Rocks shared their own reflections in front of our families. It was a proud and exciting day!

Alex: "I like singing on the rug at the end of the day. I feel happy and proud."

Evan: "Trikes make me happy."

Giancarlo: "Johnny makes me happy."

Jariel: "I feel proud when I go to school."

James: "When I feel proud I like to be the 'Morning Manager' at school."

Johnny: "The trip to The Children's Museum makes me proud."

Julia: "I feel happy when I play with the baby dolls and I like throwing the scarves up and the bean bags up."

Kennedy: "I like school. I am happy at my school."

Madison: "I feel proud when Kennedy helps me with a building."

Nyla: "I feel proud when I made the 'Me Tower'."

Ryan: "I feel happy when I play ball."

Theodore: "Riding trikes makes me excited and happy because I can go fast and slow and all around."

Thatcher: "I get excited when I make the marble runs and build them and play them."

Two students were absent, so I share them here for everyone to

read:

Camille: Music makes Camille happy.

Yediel: "Me gusta el *Canción Gorro*"; "I like to sing the Hat Song."

~*Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin*

Kindergarten

Room 106

Last Friday the Butterflies class shared their reflections of learning from the past year. Each child thought about what they wanted to share. They wrote two drafts of work. Then came time to practice. Children practiced what they wanted to share. As it turned out they did not need their papers. The spoke about all they had learned with clarity and remembrance. It was important work that they had done. It was work that they remembered.

We practiced by standing in two rows. It was a similar formation to when we did the music show. I overheard two children talking about the fact that they had to wear black and white for the exhibitions. I hadn't told them that. They had made the connection to the formality of the music concert.

All the students also made their final self-portrait of the year. I had thought that the students would originally hold it while share their reflections. I soon came to realize that the papers they held were unfairly covering their voices. I affixed them to the wall instead.

The morning came and all the children proudly shared their

thoughts. Tafari remembered that the Ancient Greeks ate bread and fruit. Jaiden remembered that caterpillars eat food. It was a great morning.

~*Kathy Clunis D'Andrea*

Room 107

After a sing-along of patriotic songs, a play-like rendition of "Mortimer" (a favorite story), a performance of our favorite Olympic song and a demonstration of our air transporter, the Silver Star Patriots stood in front of the audience, introduced themselves and made the following speeches at last week's Kindergarten Exhibitions.

Shirley: I am 6 years old. I like everything, like playing and cooking with my friends. I learned how to write this year.

Noah: I am 6 ½ years old. I learned how to make blades* this year. I like making cool blades.

Euan: I am 5 years old. I like to play on the playground and this year I learned to read.

Lucas: I am 6 years old. I learned how to make blades this year. I like playing with them.

Anand: I am 5 ¾. I like playing soccer [at recess] and this year I learned how to read.

Miles: I am 5 ¾. I like playing with Mobilos and I learned how to make blades this year.

Braxton: I am 5 ¾. I like playing with snap cubes and I learned how to make blades this year.

Brian: I am 6 years old. I like playing with blades. This year I learned how to read.

Rui: I am 5 ½ years old. I like

playing with Thomas trains. This year I learned how to make blades.

Peter: I am 6 years old. I like playing on the playground. This year I learned to make a blade trooper.

Though the following students were unable to make it, this is what they planned to say:

Diany: I am 5 years old. I like cooking. In the beginning of the year I didn't know how to flip and now I know how.

Michelle: I like playing with my friends. This year I learned how to build a house with big blocks. *"Blades" refer to Beyblade, a brand name for a line of spinning top toys.

~Jada Brown
& JoAnn Hawksworth

Room 109

Our pegboard gravity wall is finally up! A special thanks to Luis, Aneli's dad, for helping us hang it last week! I have to admit, before the children arrived last Friday, I gave it a try for myself. I placed the wooden boards carefully, in a way that I thought would allow marbles to easily travel down, back and forth. To my surprise, the marbles gathered momentum much faster than I'd expected. They flew off the ends of my boards. I tried again and again until I finally came to a simple design that I thought would make a nice starting point.

It's only been a few days, and it's been inspiring to watch the children work. They figured out how to use the different pegs and hooks to hang boards and obstacles. They discovered how

to keep marbles from flying off the boards. They even discovered how to make music with the marble run, placing metal hooks in the marble's path in just the right places. I'm so curious to what we'll discover next. Stop by Room 109 to play!

~Jenny Goldstein



Grades One & Two

Room 204

Last week, portfolio presentations for the 8th and 7th graders began. I have been through two so far and as always, my advisees stepped up to the challenge of presenting and defending their work to their committees. They both passed and are on their way to high school for the next chapter of their lives.

I was explaining to the Fantastic Crew why I wouldn't be in the classroom that afternoon, and someone asked, "What's a portfolio?" I was a little surprised by the question, but realized that as only first and second graders they haven't had an occasion to know what portfolios are. So in true Miss Jenerra fashion, I answered a question with a question, "What are portfolios?" Only a few hands went up. Most of them gave an explanation that described our archives, the body of work that

we collect and add to each year. Only one student was able to explain what portfolios were. Once the rest heard her explanation, they were in awe of the older students and how "smart" and "brave" they were to do that. As we talked, all I could do was think of each one of them bravely and smartly presenting their portfolios in a few short years themselves.

Congratulations to all the 7th and 8th graders who have gone through the portfolio process this year. The Fantastic Crew and I are proud of your hard work!

~Jenerra Williams

Room 205

Last Friday, the Wonderful Wonderers had an awesome and heartfelt Exhibitions ceremony. Many families came to support their children and their classmates. As the children reflected on how they have grown this past year, every teacher, family member and community member in the room was feeling proud and inspired. The teachers would also like to take this opportunity to reflect on our year with the Wonderful Wonderers.

Ms. Brenda:

- I used to... feel inadequate as a teacher, but now I... have learned to acknowledge and appreciate myself for the work I do.
- I am working on... finishing things I start.
- I can help a friend... by encouraging them to try their best in whatever they do.
- In our classroom, we... take care of ourselves and look after one another.
- At Mission Hill we... respect

that everyone has something that they need to get better at and we help one another grow.

Ms. Amina:

- At Mission Hill we... are kind and work hard.
- In our classroom, we... like to read good books for read aloud.
- I used to... worry about teaching 1st grade math, but now I... feel good about all we have learned this year.
- I am working on... not using a loud voice.
- I can help a friend... by listening when they need to talk.

~Brenda Lau

Room 217

The children's work continues to take the same shape: they are writing and drawing, painting and building, putting bicycle pieces together, knitting (non-stop!), solving mathematical problems, reading. But the color and the tone are different than they were even just a few months ago. When I move through the room at work time, I hear more children asking than telling each other. They collaborate on how to do things. They solve problems. They share their ideas and materials more fluidly. If a child is upset, others rush in to help.

We are sitting together at morning meeting. I use the words "sitting" and "together" tentatively, for the group looks only loosely linked, with a child or two moving around the room, another at the writing table refusing to relinquish the pencil, and others speaking out as we attempt to proceed with a

discussion. This has been true all year long. But now, in June, the children who are most present remain so, our discussion continues, and the others are then drawn in. Our patience with one another has expanded over the months. One child bumps another, and instead of an angry outburst, there is a conversation. The importance of what we do together seems to have overridden the opportunity to be upset, so that when the story or song, the planning or experimentation begins, the children are a group who can help each other and explain things to each other and work together all through the day.

~Melissa Tonachel

Grades Three & Four

Room 207

The Hawks class has continued to enjoy our physical science explorations this past trimester. This past week we continued our investigation with an egg drop activity. Students were asked to design a shelter for their egg so that they could drop it in an indoor and outdoor setting. Students became excited! Many Hawks said, "I know exactly what to do" or "we must create a great plan to control the force and gravity". After brainstorming some ideas the students began the building process. Recyclable items were used once again as we constructed our egg shelters. Some pictures are attached below! Once the building period was over students decided that our school "downtown area"

would be a great place to conduct our indoor egg drop and our "1-8 playground" as the outside location. Three out of six groups successfully dropped their egg without breaking it inside and six out of six groups successfully dropped their egg outside without breaking it.

~Robert Baez

Room 216



Through our physical science theme studies, we have been through loops, steep drops and turns to create our marble roller coasters. We are now experiencing gravity, weight and force through another experiment; egg drops. Last week, we worked in small groups building nests out of recycled material for real eggs to drop into and hopefully not crack! Some students recommended making the nest wider while others thought having supportive sides may help. Still others pondered about how to make the nest soft enough to cushion the egg. There was a disagreement between having a soft top with a more supportive, hard bottom and making the whole nest soft. While groups worked together, they combined ideas to create their nest for the first egg

dropping. While our first trial was not a success, we are excited to find some variables to make our second drop a less messy one! Feel free to stop by and check out our progress!

~Erica Switzer & Juan Cortes

Grades Five & Six

Room 210

"Boom!" Yo you see what he did to him, he forced it!" This comment as well as laughter and hilarity ensued after watching a series of videos on Isaac Newton's laws of motion. The videos are the latest instalment in examining these concepts. The videos provide a nice visual piece to go along with our reading and discussions. They are varied and have different access points for students.

There are the ones put together by educators, scientists, and students alike. There is one that features animated lego men from medieval times. There is another that features the laws involved in circus dogs. The videos that got the biggest responses were the student-made and demonstrated through their bodies. The aforementioned "force" was a young man who ran at full speed and propelled himself into his friend who was sitting in a lawn chair reading out loud about the law of inertia...while sitting in three feet of snow. Another featured a group of kids in the back of a Wal-Mart pushing their buddies in a shopping cart with varying degrees of force and mass. They then rolled into

into a curb and, depending on their momentum, are propelled into the air and onto a patch of grass. Perfect for 5th and 6th grade.

~Nakia Keizer & June Myers

Room 215

Over the past few weeks the Highlighters have enjoyed the fresh air and salt water on the Boston Harbor. In honor of our last day, we were scheduled to go out to Hull as a final sailing goodbye but the weather was not on our side. Instead, the Highlighters were introduced to another great landmark; World's End. At World's End, we were able to explore the nature and history of the park. One group of students flew kites at the top of Planters Hill and another group hiked around the waterside cliffs capturing the view of the Hingham Harbor. After expending our energies, we all stopped for a picnic lunch. Even though the weather became a little gloomy, the students all enjoyed themselves and even became little trolls as they got to explore under the bridge. Even though we did not get to spend our last day rowing, the Highlighters were grateful to Ed, Don and Rafael who made our rowing experience wonderful. They were even invited to come back next in the fall to join a competitive rowing league! My hope is that they consider this idea and become mariners again in the Fall.

~Kadian Simmonds

Grades Seven & Eight

Room 213

Last week, our eighth graders presented their graduation portfolios. Committee after committee marveled at the composure of these young students. Picture yourself, at 12,13, 14, or 15 years old, sitting at a table with six or eight adults. Then give yourself the task of talking about your schoolwork for over two hours. During that time, you'll field questions, give explanations, and defend your thinking. You might squirm a bit when something that should have been done is incomplete. However, more than anything, you will feel the love, appreciation, and support of the people gathered to listen to you. This is why I love portfolios so much.

When Leylainy talked about her literacy and theme work, her committee noted a connection to her seventh grade portfolio. Last year, Leylainy wrote a This I Believe essay sharing her belief in the saying "don't judge a book by its cover." This year she chose to share three pieces that connect to this theme. Her peer pressure story written in response to Spinelli's Wringer, her Eugenics research paper, and her World War II book project in response to Wiesel's Night.

Leylainy said, "There are stereotypes because of what happened in the past. It's important to learn the past. I'm aware of racial jokes. People make jokes when uncomfortable, when awkward. I usually talk about that. We all have judgment in us. We can control it. It's not only words. You have to be careful of what you do or say because it affects people even if they don't show it."

~Ann Ruggiero

Room 214

No news this week

Hot Topics

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.

The Dorchester Historical Society at 195 Boston St, Dorchester, is having a series of events related to the Dorchester Descendants Celebration on Fri, June 21 and Sat, June 22. On Sat, June 22 at 1:00pm (and repeated again at 3:15pm), they are sponsoring a presentation by the National Black Doll Museum. They will present a story called "The Legend of Cecilia" using dolls. They'll also have information about the history of dolls with a focus on dolls of color and a hands-on workshop for making dolls for both boys and girls. Participants can make action figures, baby dolls or almost any type. Max attendance is 30 people (children must be accompanied by an adult). Not sure of the cost, but if interested, go to: <http://dhsdolls.eventbrite.com> or contact Earl Taylor at 617-293-3052.

Riding for a Cure

Melissa Tonachel (1/2 teacher) will be riding 190 miles in the Pan Mass Challenge this August to remember Jennifer Boyd, MHS parent who passed away last summer. You can donate to her ride at <http://www2.pmc.org/MT0169>. Thank you!

Free Dance Program!

There's still space available for students in the new collaborative BPS and Celebrity Series Summer Dance Intensive Program at the Orchard Gardens K-8 School. This new program is under the direction of Mila Thigpen, the Artistic Director of AileyCamp Boston who also teaches at the Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School and Tufts University.

This free program for students entering grades 6-8 will feature ballet, modern, jazz and tap classes, as well as a weekly personal development workshop and a literacy session. The program will be held weekdays from Monday, July 8 – Friday, August 9 from 8:30am-12:30pm (breakfast and lunch included if desired) with a final performance on Thursday, August 8. Celebrity Series will also provide dancewear. The May 31 deadline has been extended: please encourage your families to register ASAP (by June 24) if they are interested in a high quality, enriching summer dance experience. If you have any questions, I'm happy to help you. The recommendation form can be completed by a teacher

who knows your child reasonably well (it does not have to be a dance teacher.) Register today! Email info@bpsarts.org or call 617-635-9653 for an application.

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 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

A Boston Public Pilot School

Deborah Meier, Founder

Ayla Gavins, Principal

20 Child Street

Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

617.635.6384 (office)

617.635.6419 (fax)

www.missionhillschool.org