

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

Not Just for Kids

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

We're going to have a full house of adult learners over the next couple of months. Despite all our attempts to introduce new faces, there will many that you don't recognize in November and December because we have a rise in special guests.

Mission Hill School has always been a place of learning for adults. Our teaching staff has ongoing weekly professional development and all qualified teachers host a student teacher. This is someone from a college or university preparing to become a teacher. In addition to this, Dani Coleman coordinates

visits to our school for educators from all over the world. Typically these visits happen once per month on a Friday morning. Right now a young woman from South Africa is being hosted by Emma's class and will stay with us for 2 weeks.

REMINDERS

November

Mon. 11/11 - NO SCHOOL,
Veterans' Day

Thu. 11/14, 5:45 - Family Council
Meeting

Wed. 11/27, 1:30 - Early dismissal
for Thanksgiving Break

December

Thu. 12/5, 5:00 - Governing
Board Meeting

Fri. 12/6, 6:00 - Coffee House!

Tue. 12/24 - 1/3/14, Holiday Break

The following visitors are on the horizon:

Monday 11/5 (All Day) Tuesday (All Day) and Wednesday (Half Day): Netherlands Group (4)

11/13 & 11/14: Netherlands Group (16)

Friday 11/15 (All Day): Vermont Group (6)

Saturday 11/16 (9 am - 1 pm): BPS School Preview for Prospective Families

Friday 11/22 (9 am - noon): Scheduled School Visit Day for Prospective Families

Saturday 11/23 (8:30 am - 4:00 pm): Descriptive Review Conference (25)

Wednesday - Friday 12/4 -12/6: visitor/researcher (1)

Wednesday 12/11 (10 - 11:30 am): BPS School Preview for Prospective Families

Friday 12/15 (9 am - noon): Scheduled School Visit Day for

Prospective Families

Thursday 12/19 (7-8 am): BPS School Preview for Prospective Families

As always, when you see an unfamiliar face in our school, please extend a warm welcome and introduce yourself. If you'd like to meet any of our guests or assist with hosting them please contact Dani Coleman to see what help may be needed.

Sincerely,
~Ayla Gavins

From the Classrooms

Play published by the Alliance for Childhood.

~Geraldyn Bywater McLaughlin,
Donna Winder & Angel Nasseh

3 and 4 year-olds

Room 108

This column was inadvertently left out of the last issue. It is being included here above this week's Room 108 report, with apologies from the Editrix

What are reasonable risks? Reasonable risks are when we allow children to challenge themselves – to try something new and to explore a bit. Taking reasonable risks helps children to learn and grow. In our new nature play space, I watched as a three-year-old tried to walk quickly along the trail of tree stumps. The stumps are set in the dirt and are perfect for stepping along. This young child wanted to go quickly, and then tripped. She brushed herself off, and got back up and started trying again. A few minutes later, a three-year-old boy hopped from the hill of boulders and slightly lost his balance as he landed. He was just a little shaken and surprised, but he brushed himself off and then quickly climbed to the top of the boulder hill to try it again.

Managing these types of risks helps children tremendously. They learn their own strengths and challenges; they learn what they can do and what they want to get better at. They learn independence and resilience which they will carry with them as they grow.

For more information on young children and the power of reasonable risks, check out Joan Almon's new booklet, *Adventure, the Value of Risk in Children's*

Did you know, you can go apple picking right at our own school! We didn't have to hop a bus to pick some tasty fall apples – we just visited the orchard that abuts the South Play Yard. As students played last week, someone noticed



K0 KIDS ENJOYING APPLES



GERALYN & YEDIEL SHOW US APPLES

an apple hanging from the tree. It was too high to reach – even when the students tried to shimmy up the teepee structure. “I know,” said Thatcher, who was visiting from Kathy's class. “We can use Kathy's apple picking pole!” So...we asked Kathy if we could borrow it. It is very loooong and has a basket at the top. This tool allowed us to pick those very high apples. We picked apples again the next day – enough for our whole class to have for snack. It was exciting to be able to harvest our own snack – and do it locally!

~Geraldyn Bywater McLaughlin,
Donna Winder & Angel Nasseh

Kindergarten

Room 106

We are in the process of wrapping up our multi-draft progression of our butterfly drawings. The children spent weeks looking closely at monarch butterflies. They made their first drafts and used the critique process to give feedback. The children then did two more drafts of butterflies.

After all three drafts were finished I asked the children to be metacognitively aware of their work. Here are some reflections children shared about their butterfly drawings.

Lumi shared, “I worked really hard. The last draft was the best. I really concentrated. It really looks like the same one because the picture was almost the same as what I was drawing.”

Jasper shared, “I liked when I

was making that one (the first draft). When I was making the second one I put lots of colors in my wings. When I was making the third one I learned that butterflies have hind wings. I missed one of the butterfly's wings (pointing to a butterfly). I didn't miss any of the wings on the other butterfly.

Please come by and take a look at our butterflies.

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

Room 107

Last week three round, orange pumpkins appeared in our classroom. Students were immediately drawn to them and expressed many ideas about what to do with them. "We should carve them." "We can cut them open and eat the seeds." After revisiting the life cycle of the butterfly, we found that some students were still a little confused. When we asked from where caterpillars emerge, our students said the following: Chrysalis! Eggs. Pumpkins! Apples. The floor. Lemons! We decided to test their theories. We cracked an egg and found no caterpillars. We cut open an apple and found no caterpillars. After examining the outside of one pumpkin, we decided to cut it open. Before doing so we asked students what it would look like inside. "Seeds!" "Caterpillars!" "It will be slushy and squishy." "It will be Slippery!" "A chicken will come out."

As we begun cutting it in half we decided to do a survey about whether or not a caterpillar would indeed emerge. The results were 50/50. We then predicted what

the inside color would be. They guessed orange, white, black, pink, red, yellow and green. As we opened the pumpkin one student said, "I can smell it. It smells like orange juice!" After examining and confirming some of our hypotheses, we looked closer and, what do you know—no caterpillars! Afterward, one student said, "They do come from eggs. The egg we have is a chicken egg. We need a caterpillar egg". In order to verify that statement, we read the book *Chickens Aren't the Only Ones* and most of us were convinced. After some pumpkin exploration, seed extraction and cooking, we discussed what we could use our cooked pumpkin for. Muffins, pie, bread and pumpkin butter were just a few suggestions. What do you think we should make?

~Jada Brown
& JoAnn Hawkesworth

Room 109

We are so excited to finally be starting up our storytelling routine in our classroom. Our storytelling curriculum was inspired by retired Kindergarten teacher and writer, Vivienne Gussen Paley. Every day, two children tell stories and then act them out with their friends. They dictate their stories to me during project time. The stories are collected in a special notebook. After their dictation I read them back their story and ask if there is anything they'd like to add or change. Then they pick which character they would like to play when we act the story. Later that morning, we gather on the rug for our first meeting of the day. I read the stories out loud as

the children collaboratively act out the story. We go around the circle and everyone gets a turn. The stories are wonderfully creative, full of emotion, and often very funny. We can't wait to share one with you at Friday Share!

~Jenny Goldstein

Grades One & Two

Room 204

"You don't have your glasses Miss Jenerra!" someone noticed as we watched a slide show of pictures. The pictures were of me in the Puerto Rican rainforest this summer. We had just brainstormed a list of ideas about how to transform our entire room into a rainforest. The slide show was to serve as further inspiration before we began the task. "We could make rain from blue paper and hang it from the ceiling." "We could get a blue light bulb and shine it on the paper to make it look more like rain." "We could draw trees on big pieces of paper and hang them up." The ideas kept coming and coming. "This is the last one," I said over and over again, too excited myself to stop the process. When we were finished we had two pages worth of ideas! We began working on them this week. Little by little the rainforest is growing up around us. Stay tuned!

~Jenerra Williams

Room 205

~No news this week

Room 217

Step into our classroom during project time and you can see all

the workings of a community. The students work on becoming artists: painting pictures where they merge colors, and figure out the texture they want to show on their piece. They work on constructing: building towers and homes from blocks, designing motorcycles and riding them until the pieces crash to the floor. They work on reading and writing: reading books to each other, pointing out those “cool” images of sharks, asking questions about what they want to learn, and carefully sounding out words to write about things in their lives. They work on solving problems: learning to apologize when they’ve made a mistake, discovering the importance of sharing, knowing when to walk away to give themselves some space from another classmate, and finding out how adults and other peers can help them when they are hurt.

Building community is not easy. It takes time, ample opportunities for reflection, and the space for everyone to belong and feel needed. During project time students are continuing to develop skills they need to be citizens in our community.

~Emma Fialka-Feldman

Grades Three & Four

Room 207

~No news this week

Room 216

“Hello, and welcome to the Children’s Books room; part of the public library!” greeted

Maggie. We had gone to the public library to continue with our research about plants. We all sat down and listened to a read-aloud from Maggie on the value of plants. Then the students started getting excited about picking books. It was like they were at a candy factory looking for their favorite candy, ready to pounce upon anything they absolutely loved!

We helped each student to find a plant book and a book of their own choice. “Can I get more books?” they inquired. “Well, if you would like more books, then it is a good opportunity for you guys to get your own library card. Your teacher is asking for each of you to take out two to three books.” “Aaawww man! I want to come back here! Josh, can we come back here?” “Sure, I don’t see why not,” I replied. The students are certainly learning to value reading and we hope to take a couple more trips back to sign up for library cards. I hope they continue to invest in the importance of reading!

~Melanie Centeno, Selina Ruiz
Elsa Batista & Josh Kraus

Grades Five & Six

Room 210

~No news this week

Room 215

Class of White Lions

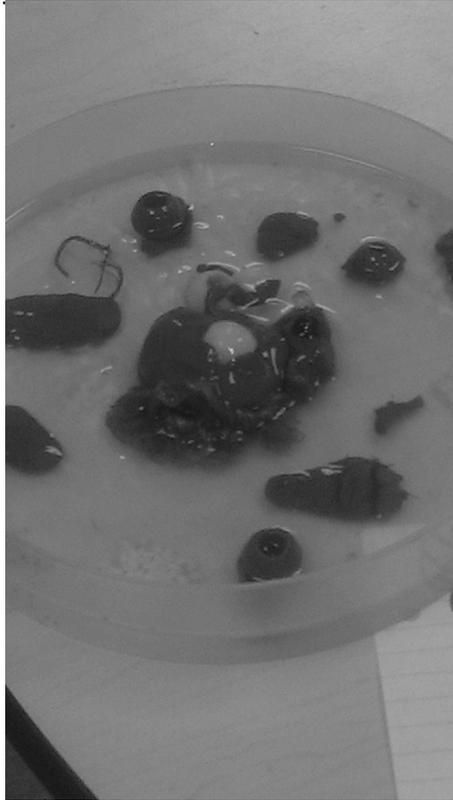
White Lions never give up. After recess and lunch we do value cards. Value cards are words that we make note cards

for that are mostly about feelings and being friendly. We write the meaning down on the back of the value card but first we have to agree on a meaning as a class. A few of our words are compassion, empathy and family. But that's not all of them; we still make more and more—one every day. “I think that the value cards are about feelings like love, friendship and family, and they remind us about the things that are really important to all of us.” -Ella Cascino

Thanks for reading our article!

~Ella Cascino, 5th grade
Edited by: Katie Shepardson
& Sarah DeCruz

For our theme studies, the White Lions are exploring THE HUMAN BODY. We began with the cell. We started out by creating three columns on the board: What do we know? What do we want to know? and What have we learned? The middle column—as you may have guessed—was overflowing with responses. At that point, we divided into groups and began our research. We’ve used the many books in our room, visited the MH library and utilized the internet. Each group found fascinating information, which they then shared with the whole class. In addition, we’ve made ourselves aware of the basic parts of the human cell and created 3-D models using clay graciously shared by Jeanne, and other supplies we found in our classrooms and homes. The results were pretty cool. We also had a blast playing Cell



RICHARDO'S CELL MODEL

Jeopardy.

What I'm learning is that The White Lions have a lot of questions and that the ability to find the answers comes easier when given encouragement, hands-on opportunities and room for imagination and fact to germinate.

~Letta Neely

Grades Seven & Eight

Room 213

Last Friday morning, I explained to the kids that progress reports were being sent home to families. This "short report" is a brief check-in about progress in meeting expectations for academics, social relationships, and behavior. When it was time for our weekly week-in-review reflection, I asked the kids to make a prediction: What will your

progress report be like? What is going well? What will your teachers want you to work on?

"My progress report will be good but I might have some concerns on it because in (one class) I zone out a lot and I get to the point where I don't like doing the work....My teacher would want me to get out of that habit and just do work." "What's going well is that I am getting better in homework and classwork. In the first week I was being silly and today I was being silly but I still did my work." "My progress report will say I don't bring in my homework." "My progress report will look great, wonderful, fantastic, amazing. I do need to work on things though...trying to just say "I can" not "I can't." "I predict my progress report will be a good one because so far I've been working hard and getting homework done...I think my teachers will want me to work on doing better as a community member. For example, trying to keep calm when I don't get called on class." "I think my progress report will be good because I try to do my work the best I can, but I know I will have some things to work on because nobody's perfect and you can always do better." "I think my teacher wants me to work on talking up in class and participating."

I was really touched by the kids' awareness and honesty. They could have written their own reports! They also have a good sense of what to focus on before the end of the term in

December. Please sign and return your child's report.

~Ann Ruggiero

Room 214

This article was inadvertently omitted from the last edition. We regret the error—Ed.

We are a Team!

Whoops! There has been no news coming from room 214 because Teresa was working very hard to start up the SCORES soccer program at the Mission Hill School and kept forgetting to send in an article. But it has been well worth the effort. As our eighth grader Imani Joseph writes: "The kids in Room 214 have been doing such wonderful things. The boys and girls who play soccer have been working hard and playing hard. Even though they practice on Monday and Thursday, and compete against other schools on Wednesday, they always try their hardest and work as a team.

Another important happening in room 214 has been the finishing of the book "Wonder." What an awesome book it was—engaging and complex--just the right read to get our year off to a great start. Because of "Wonder," students became inspired to write their own precepts. For example, Elianna Pena's precept is: "You were born an original; don't die a copy." Jah Von Williams had the great idea of making a poster of all our precepts. When you get a chance, come by and read them all.

~Teresa Strong

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.

October 9 and 16 Soccer Game Results

Two weeks ago, Mission Hill played against Gardner Parker Academy (GPA) in the field next to the school. Even though they lost, the boys' team played the game down to the last second. Like the week before, everyone left the field with their heads held high.

The girls' team picked up their first win last week and in dramatic fashion. A last-minute drive gave them the point to edge out GPA. Like the boys' team, the girls kept the pressure on from start to finish while making sure every member of the team had plenty of time on the field.

As for last week, both teams played hard and although they came up short, they took it in stride. As Manny told the boys' team after the first week, you learn how much more you need to hone your skills after you lose than if you win. There are still two more weeks of Soccer to play and as the saying goes, it's not over 'til it's over!

Looking ahead, here is the schedule for the next week (on Wednesday). The game will be played here at Mission Hill and both teams will play at the same

time, thanks to our large field!

November 6: Edison at 3:50PM If you know anyone who might be interested in enjoying two free games happening at the same time while cheering on the home team, feel free to pass this along to them. It would certainly lift the teams' spirits to see their friends and families cheering them on.

~Brendan Thomas

The Heart of Mission Hill School

On our weekly bus ride to Roxbury for percussion rehearsal, I witnessed the MHS philosophy in a most beautiful way.

A dozen kids were chatting and snacking in the back of the bus when what must have seemed to be a mountain of a man got on. Tall and heavy, with bit of food clinging to his lower lip, his mouth was stretched into an anxious half-grin, his large hands flapping and clasping each other. He approached the girls in the back row and asked, “Can I sit there?” With a few glances in my direction, but without a word, the girls made room for him. He sat. “Can I have some?” he asked as he watched the kids eating. I smiled and told him the snacks were just for the kids. As we rode, he asked me my name. I told him and asked him his. “Sly,” he replied, grinning.

Nobody snickered. Not one eye rolled, nor did any elbow nudge a seatmate. Our students composed themselves and rode

quietly, watching without staring as we bumped along.

Sly got off after few stops and bid us goodbye on his way out. “Bye,” and “Goodbye Sly,” came a few soft responses.

We reached our stop and the kids thanked the driver as they got off. A few friendly, reassuring exchanges could be heard between students who must have been a little nervous during the ride. Nobody laughed.

Rehearsal was great.

~Betsy Caruso

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