

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

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

The food we eat, including how and where we eat, has a significant impact our health and general well being. A nutritionist once said to me that he shops for groceries by focusing on what foods he wants in his body then finds recipes for those items. He said our relationship with food is our most important relationship. He also said that the only ingredients that should be in our food are real foods. When looking at ingredient labels at the market, avoid buying foods that have chemicals or unknown ingredients in them.

Here are some steps we have taken at school (and as a district) to move us closer to providing healthy snacks and meals for all students.

- Boston Public Schools offers free breakfast and lunch to all students. This means every child can have two meals a day.

- Our connection to the Boston Public Schools Farm to School program has been revived. Farm to

REMINDERS

March

Mon. 3/17: No School

Fri. 3/21, 6-8: Movie Night!

Thu. 3/27, 9:15: Curriculum
Breakfast

April

4/2-4: Grades 5 & 6 to Farm
School - NEW DATE!

School representatives came to Mission Hill this week to conduct a taste test of potential school lunch menu items with our students.

The students loved participating and had very clear opinions about the food items tested.

- Farm School Chef, Cristina Garcia, has scheduled four visits to our school with dishes prepared from the farm's garden. Carrot soup is coming! Please encourage your child(ren) to give it a try. The dates of Cristina's visits will be communicated to all.

- Teachers will ask you to follow specific guidelines for classroom snack or celebration purchases. They also may ask for a monetary donation instead so they can purchase snacks. Please do not send in or bring in sugary treats. Do send in fruits, vegetables or snacks with known whole ingredients.

- Candy and soda are not permitted at school and will be taken away if seen by an adult. These items often make it into lunch bags. If your child packs his or her own lunch, remind her/him that these items are not permitted at school.

With a focus on getting healthy foods into our children, we have not forgotten about the environment in which our students eat. The

beauty of the dining area, noise level, cleanliness, table manners and social responsibilities around food are all important items to be addressed. Our students have much to say about all of these topics and have raised specific issues with our Governance Board. I look forward to our work with them (and you) on the creation of the healthiest food and dining environment we can possibly create.

~Ayla Gavins

From the Classrooms

3 and 4 year-olds

Room 108

Imagination

Let's take a moment to peer into the imagination of a child in our classroom. Perhaps it will put a smile on your face or evoke a chuckle:

During Work Time, Jeremy is mimicking the sounds of a siren as he stands in back of a pile of cots spinning two wheels. Oftentimes Jeremy wears the yellow firefighter jacket around the classroom and pretends to be a fire fighter. This bit of knowledge compels me to ask, "Jeremy, are you driving a fire truck?"

"No," he answers. "I'm making donuts."

"Ummm, donuts. Do you have butternut crunch?"

"We don't make that here. We only make chocolate...Hold on; I have to get the phone."

He walks across the room and pretends to take out a cell phone from his pocket.

"Hello? You need a ride to the hospital? Okay."

He proceeds to drive his caller to the hospital by turning a chair backwards, sitting in it and steering the driving wheel.

When Jeremy is finished taking the caller to the hospital, he returns to me and informs me, "The donut machine is broken. I have to go buy another one."

I cannot say for certain that the 'donut machine' was ever replaced. What I do know is that I

didn't get my chocolate donut; Jeremy had moved on to another imaginary adventure.

~ Donna Winder

Kindergarten

Room 106

The Peregrine Falcon Class and I are sure many of the folks in Boston are excited about the arrival of spring. We are thinking about what we need to do to get ready. The class are dedicated to making our schoolyard a place where animals and insects want to visit. I asked them, "What can we do to help more animals come to our schoolyard?"

Milan said, "Animals eat food." This sparked a great conversation about what food animals might eat and what we might have to plant. Zyel suggested we plant sunflowers. It was a great suggestion because we had just worked with Rachel from SLUG and we made birdfeeders using sunflower seeds.

Eli reminded us that we needed the plant milkweed if we wanted Monarchs to visit. Soon our friend Andrew from The Boston Nature Center will be visiting to help us think about other flowers monarchs like. At the Boston Nature Center they have a Monarch Watch station. Creating habitats and making sure the animals have a birdbath and water were other topics that came up of importance. As we start to till our soil and plant our seedling we will share our progress.

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

Room 107

"This can be a Taíno wand..." "We can do a Taíno play!"... "My favorite book is The Golden Flower..."

These quotes are examples of how much our theme stays on our students' minds. Recently, families have commented on how much this theme is a part of their home conversations. For example, Farrah explained to her mom that icicles are a form of stalactite and Keith told his mom that we were building a Taíno house.

Last week, to further extend their interests, our two big projects centered on boat building, and surveys. For our boat building project, students were challenged to build a 3-D Puerto Rican Yola in the block area. At first they were hesitant to build upwards on the taped outline. However, with some guidance, their boat came to life and propelled their imaginative play to new heights. "Don't step there! You are in the water! Get in the boat! Quick!"... "We can use these for paddles!" More and more students left their project time areas to join in. Like Jordan, they would often proclaim, "I'm coming here!"

"Look! He said yes!"... "I want to do Trinidad."

Most of our afternoons were spent doing school-wide research. In trying to figure out what portion of our population may have possible Taíno connections, our students visited classrooms,

gathering data on whether or not people in our school have family from Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Barbados, Bahamas and Trinidad. They really owned the process and were excited to share results. In fact, they got a reputation on the 2nd floor. Students often stopped them, while others whispered, “They are the ones doing the surveys.”

~*Jada Brown*
& *JoAnn Hawksworth*

Room 109

Hello Mission Hill!
As we wind down our unit on the Taíno, The Original Stars are continuing to look at the types of houses this culture lived in. Along with our Bohio (a house slightly similar to a Native American Tipi), we also have now made a caney, which is a longer, rectangular house. The children have been decorating the outside with beautiful petroglyphs! To finish out our Taíno study, each student will also be writing and illustrating a legend, based on the Taíno myths and legends we have been reading. Have a great week!

~*Liz Borson*

Grades One & Two

Room 204

The work for our Taíno model has gained momentum. Last week we were busy and did the following: decided what should be on the model, created working groups based on similar topic interests, discussed preliminary plans for model additions, made

material lists, and outlined a blueprint of our model.

This week, with materials in hand, the exciting part of making the model began. Hands were busy with clay, felt, and other materials. Partners were discussing pertinent issues such as the size of the pieces they were making, how much of something to use and new ideas they were having. Adults were asking questions to guide students’ thinking around authenticity, cooperation and quality of work. Materials were out and seemingly everywhere. The steady hum of voices and movement was an indication that everyone was engaged and enjoying the work in front of them.

This is the picture of hands-on, inquiry based, thematic learning that we talk about. It was nice to be able to step back long enough to notice and enjoy the moment. Look for updates on the models’ progress next week!

~*Jenerra Williams*

Room 205

Letter writing week offered many wonderful opportunities. I loved how everyone in the school was involved in the same activity and that students wrote to other students of different ages and even adults in our school. Students smiled as they received a questionnaire about someone they knew, while others got to meet new members of our community. I enjoyed learning about students in the school that I don’t normally get to interact with by reading their questionnaires. The students

also worked on making connections with others and communicating their ideas clearly through writing. We sent our letters on their way, and we can’t wait to get letters back! Ask your child about who they wrote to or received a letter from. Try writing more letters at home to other friends or family members!

~*Ashleigh L'Heureux*

Room 217

During read aloud we have been working on identifying different elements of stories – characters, setting, actions, problems, and solutions – to prepare us for our collaborative 1st and 2nd grade story where we will be adding the conclusion and solution to the story. We read the European version of *Rapunzel*. Then we read the Caribbean version called *Sugar Cane*. Before reading it, we anticipated what parts might be similar and what parts might be different. Students shared how it would definitely take place near the ocean, because “the Caribbean is surrounded by water,” one student said. As we read the story, we heard references to many things we know to be true about Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands. The author referenced Cassava and other fruits found on the islands, including mangos. We were wonderfully reminded of our Taíno taste test! While we know that Rapunzel was not a story the Taíno told, students were applying what they were learning about the Taíno (where they lived) and to help

themselves understand and enjoy the Caribbean version of *Rapunzel*.

~Emma Fialka-Feldman

Grades Three & Four

Room 207

The Role Model Hawks have been reflecting on our past experiences during topic writing in the afternoons. Our eventful winter was a popular topic. Therefore, we have decided to share out how we felt about winter this past year. Listed below are our responses. Enjoy!

Dalia: Slippery

Zachary: Awesome & Cold

Giselle: Snowy & No Leaves

Luisairy: Cold & Fun

James: Kind of cold!

Zack: Whee & Broken

CJ: Icing

Athena: Wet & Fun

Tandin: Cold & Icy

Kalea: Wet & Wonderful

Andrew: Fun & Cold

AJ: Crazy

Daniel R: Spectacular

Abidemi: Cold & Good

Anais: Snowy

Daniel M: Happiness & Snowy

Chantal: Good & Cold

Bryan: Perfecto ('Perfect', in Spanish)

Laudys: Cold

Tato: A lot of snow and rain!

Sadiqah: Icy & Fun

Axel: Really really cold!

~Robert Baez

Room 216

Coming next week

Grades Five & Six

Dear Grade 6 Families (students included), Please join

Ann Ruggiero and Ayla Gavins at Mission Hill School on March 20 in room 213 from 5:45pm to 6:45pm to learn about the middle school program.

Your questions are welcome as we describe the student portfolio creation and exhibition process, apprentice learning, high school visitations and curriculum.

When you arrive, please ring the after school doorbell. If you arrive after 6, we may not hear the door so please come before then or let us know in advance that you'll be late.

Room 210

It has been a while we have shared End of the Week Reflections. Here are a few...

"This week I thought math projects went well because me and some friends played set and it was fun because it got really intense and everyone was shouting "set" and it was just really fun."

"Something I liked about this week was that we got to go to the gym. It was really fun because I got to play Knockout, and Steal the Bacon...nobody really got mad if they lost and I was happy 'cuz I made the last shot and it was a three pointer."

"This week was fun because I went to my brother's game. He goes to Fenway High School. I want to go there when im older. I love the court and basketball gym."

"This week went well for me because I was able to do gymcraftics with Laura. We also had fun playing Knockout in the gym."

"At math I had to do this math packet that was hard. It had division and multiplication and what not. But then Katy and Dylan helped me and gave me a trick. Then it was not hard."

"Something I learned this week was coordinate grids and it was fun. Something else was that I never knew I could write a poem. A lot of people liked it. Also something that went well this week was everything."

"Next week I'm going to try...to not fidget too much. This week felt very fidgety and demanding, so next week I think deserves more attention/patience. I wonder if others felt like this? Nakia, do you feel like this?"

~Nakia Keizer, June Myers
& Katie Laguzza

Room 215

This was the last week of Urban Improv for the 6th grade. Each week focused on a topic through song, discussion and group skits. This program does a great job of choosing topics that students deal with on a regular basis. Some of the topics were violence/conflict resolution, friendship, bystander issues, gangs, drugs, teen pregnancy, homophobia, and racism. The instructors connected with the students and created a safe space so students were able to have honest

conversations about each of these topics. I love this program because it is a great opportunity for students to express themselves and practice role-playing real life situations. The kids get excited about acting, using props and making music.

~Sarah DeCruz

Grades Seven & Eight

Room 213

The argument started as soon as Laneah read her speech. “My name is Columbus. Although I know I was partially wrong for having bad intentions, I blame the King and Queen as well for legitimizing my trip by sending me back to the new world with new troops and money.... My men should be held accountable because they chose to do as I say out of fear and greed. Whether I ordered them to kill if a person were to not have gold or not, THEY did the killing and it was THEM who decided, basically, why not?”

“Not only was I sent with a new crew but with weapons as well, so obviously the King and Queen had bad intentions. I only came to King Ferdinand and the Queen to ask if I could explore the new world. Little did I know that they were going to send me there with new ARMED troops and lots of money, to bring back gold. If the Taíno didn't have enough gold, it was my responsibility to order my crew to MAKE them bring more gold. I was only trying to do as the

King and Queen said, no more no less. I know what I'm saying may sound a little Unordinary, but to give more support on what I'm saying, I even wrote in my journal how I admired the Taíno.”

Javon was right there, ready to defend the King and Queen, and cite other evidence from Columbus's journal of his bad intentions towards the Taíno.

Then, Ali shared part of his speech, speaking as a member of Columbus's crew. “My name is Ali, I'm a 14 year old boy who was assigned to be one of Columbus's sailors on the Pinta. I never wanted to be a sailor and I had to leave my family. I thought this was an opportunity to help provide for my family but I was never paid for labor. My life on the ship wasn't good. Me and other kids on the ship worked in poor conditions. We worked on our bare feet, took showers in sea water, and had to drink wine with our food because we didn't have clean water....”

In the weeks ahead, we'll conduct our role-play trial in an attempt to understand the complexity of historical events. More to follow!

~Ann Ruggiero

Hot Topics

New Chorus Teacher!

Please welcome Billy Buss to MHS as our new chorus and general music teacher. Billy

joined the MHS family in September as our band director, and quickly developed an enthusiastic following among the brass and woodwind players. Billy began playing trumpet at the age of nine. He earned his undergraduate degree in professional music from Berklee College of Music in 2009 and his Master's Degree in Music at the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz in New Orleans. He has studied and played with numerous well-known musicians, in locales from China to the White House. His CD, *Scenes From a Dream*, is available at the MHS front desk.

Courtney's Corner Resources Online!

Check out different programs and activities throughout the city for your family posted online on the MHS website under Courtney's Corner. There is even a calendar with frequently updated city events. Find things to do over the weekend or during school vacations, and different resources to meet your family's needs.

Don't forget that there is a NEW Summer Programs page under Family Resources, with links to many camps both near and far. Program pages are updated as new information is available, so check back often. If you need help finding summer activities for your child, first fill out the *Summer Is Coming* Survey online and Courtney will be in touch with you.

Children's Responses to Trauma

Art, both visual and verbal, is one way children can begin to deal with

violence and trauma in their lives. Marietje is displaying a small collection, donated to the MHS library by Brenda Engel, of books of children's responses to violence. They show some of the ways children have dealt with incomprehensible events, both natural and man-made.

As Boston prepares for the 2014 Marathon, we invite you to look at these books by children who have witnessed and been affected by trauma and loss.

•**Com'era L'acqua** (What the Water Was Like). After the flooding of the River Arno in 1966, a group of children, aged seven to 10, used words and pictures to describe their terror at the effects of the rushing water in their city. (in Italian).

•**Tell It Like It Is**. First through eighth grade students living in Washington DC in 1968 recorded their experiences of the rioting and looting that commenced following the assassination of Dr. King.

•**Messages to Ground Zero**. New York City public school students describe their experiences and reactions to the September 11 bombing.

•**I Never Saw Another Butterfly**. The artwork and writings of children in the Terezin concentration camp and hidden until after the war.

•**They Still Draw Pictures**: Children's Art in Wartime from the Spanish Civil War to Kosovo. This book, is a broad representation of children's responses to the trauma of war.

•**Mexico Visto por sus Niños; Escrito e ilustrado pro los Niños de Mexico** (Mexico Seen by its children; Written and Illustrated by Mexican Children). Children tell the story of Mexico's history and national heroes in positive and admiring terms.

Extra Clothes Needed

We are seeking clean, gently used sweatpants and shirts to give kids who need a change of clothes. All sizes are needed. Do you have anything you could donate? Please bring them to Nurse Georgie—thanks!

Got Popcorn?

Friday, March 28th is MHS Movie Night. Bring your family and join us for Shaun the Sheep at 6:30 for the younger audience. The feature film starting at 7:30 will be The Muppets (2011) Raffle includes prizes from the Celtics, the Red Sox, and local businesses. \$5 for adults and \$3 for children- suggested donation. Food and Drinks available. Kids must be accompanied by and adult.

All it Takes is a Rake & a Hoe

Calling all MHS families and community members: We are looking for help of all kinds to cultivate, care for and create beauty in our outdoor spaces this spring. Have ideas? Like playing in the dirt? Looking for a fun family project? Please let us know if you are interested in

brainstorming, organizing, or working in the MHS garden this spring. Contact Brad to get on the list! (6176356384 or bkershner@missionhillschool.org).

Museum Passes

Thanks to the City-Wide Friends of the Boston Public Library and various Friends groups of our neighborhood branches, you may borrow free passes to museums and other local attractions for single-day use. With the online reservation system, you may search for available passes at any Boston Public Library location.

To reserve a pass online, visit https://www.bpl.org/general/circulation/museum_passes.php



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A Boston Public Pilot School

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