

# Mission Hill School News

## Letter from Child Street

### Learning from Our Actions

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

Last week there was an incident on the 3rd floor floor of our school building, where Margarita Muniz classrooms are, which caused the fire alarm to go off throughout the building and activated the sprinkler system on the 3rd floor. Clogged drains caused the water from the sprinkler to collect and pour through the floors and ceilings all the way down to the first floor.

Both schools evacuated the building and followed the instructions of the fire department upon re-entry. A clean up crew arrived after students had gone home and stayed through the night so the building would be ready for us the next day. Did I mention that all this happening during a snow squall? It was quite an event and I am happy to say that no one was hurt, and the overall damage was minimal relative to what could have happened.

#### **REMINDERS**

Thu. 3/13, 5:45 Family Council

Mon. 3/17, No School

Thu. 3/20, 6:00: Outside the Lines

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

As I spoke with an electrician about the replacement of our now missing ceiling tiles, I thought about how it was the action of one person that caused such a disruption for hundreds of people. The whole event held lessons for us all to consider: How might our actions impact others? How might our actions represent who we are in relation to the communities we represent?

So many times our young people neglect to think about how small actions have potentially huge impacts. As adults, we can be guilty of this too. However, I think it's our responsibility to model something different. We all make mistakes through our actions. Beyond the consideration of how we might cause harm to ourselves, I think it's important to stop and think about how other people are affected by those mistakes. Following that, we can make amends that are moments of powerful learning for all involved. Do you talk to your

children about mistakes you've made and what you learned as a result? Do you talk to your children about ways you repaired a broken relationship with a friend, colleague, employee, or family member? It's useful for children to learn about problem solving from the experience of others- even in the middle of their own struggles.

The students from Margarita Muniz felt so badly about causing us all to go outside last week and for things that were damaged, that they wrote letters of apology and bought us a gift of ice cream. In the end they wanted us to know that they were sorry and that their actions were not a reflection of who they are as a community. It seemed just right that they would share their letters with us during our letter writing week.

*~Ayla Gavins*

## From the Classrooms

### 3 and 4 year-olds

Hello Mission Hill School! For those of you who don't already know me, my name is Billie MacDonald and I am spending two days a week in GERALYN'S classroom for my Early Childhood Education practicum. I'm a senior at Simmons College, and I have been accepted to the Masters of Arts in Teaching program next year, also at Simmons. I attended Mission Hill at its previous location, beginning first grade there, the first year it was open in 1997, and continued there through sixth grade. I am really enjoying this experience, and am so glad that I am able to do this placement at such an inclusive school.

~Geraldyn Bywater McLaughlin  
& Donna Winder

### Kindergarten

#### Room 106

*No news this week*

#### Room 107

"The shaving cream was the most fun!"

This week 107 was busy creating the beginnings of a Taíno beach to offset our mountain range. After reading the books "How the Sea Began" and "The Golden Flower", we began to create our seashore. We considered whether sand was rough or soft; what creatures lived in the sand; and whether or not we had ever visited a beach. With a little food coloring, paint

and some water, we relied on our memories and our Team Taíno book titled *Rescate Playas Isabela*, to do some color mixing to find the perfect color to dye our sand. In the morning, several students took turns combing the semi-dry sand to make sure the grains were perfectly separated. This surprisingly soothing activity was the second to last step before gluing them to our seashore.

Next up was the ocean. After learning the Taíno names for several ocean creatures (Buyon-Parrotfish, Libuza- Southern Stingray, Pargo- Snapper, Baracutey-Barracuda and Manati-Manatee), we painted a large piece of paper royal blue. The following day we added depth to the work with shaving cream. As students spread and squished their fingers in the soapy cream, we spoke about the creatures that live in the ocean; whether ocean water is blue, who needed the ocean; and why the water looked white and foamy (like the shaving cream) when it came in to shore.

As we recounted the week's events, Erik and others were clear about the shaving cream being their favorite part. However, the experience stirred something different in Armani as he questioned, "Why don't we have a waterfall? We need to make a waterfall!"

~Jada Brown  
& JoAnn Hawksworth

#### Room 109

Hello Mission Hill Families!  
The Original Stars are continuing to learn more and more about the

Taíno culture. Now that we know about where they came from, we are beginning to talk about who they are. The children are posing questions about what life was like for the Taíno when they inhabited the Caribbean Islands. They are wondering what kinds of food they ate, houses they lived in, and even what they did for fun! This week we are focusing on the foods the Taíno used to eat, particularly corn and corn meal. We will be using cornstarch (corn was a crop the Taíno people grew and ate) to make a gooey project for our sensory table. Be sure to ask them all about it!

Hope everyone had a great vacation and welcome back!

~Liz Borson

### Grades One & Two

#### Room 204

"Is his favorite worm the green one?" "Where do you keep the eggs?" The Magic Learners' questions were answered patiently and thoroughly as we observed all three lizards. A veiled chameleon, bearded dragon and leopard gecko were our special guests brought to us by 7th grader Melissa and her dad.

Melissa is an animal enthusiast. She often stops by my room to look at the bees and asks lots of questions about them. She even found wax moth larvae (a hive parasite) once, that kept our hive from being ruined.

I've always appreciated her love of living things and so immediately said yes when she asked if she could share her

lizards with the Magic Learners. We were fascinated. We got to pet the bearded dragon, and see the leopard gecko up close. We learned what they liked to eat, where they come from, the best conditions for their habitat and much more. It reminded me of the days when reptiles were commonplace in my classroom and how much they brought to our community. Don't be surprised to see one in our room soon! Thank you Melissa and Steve! It was a great experience for us all.

~Jenerra Williams

### Room 205

Our class recently finished writing the first part of the collaborative first and second grade myth and passed off what we had written to Jenerra's class. Although we had read many myths and talked about the elements of a story, it was difficult for us to get started. Since our role was to write the beginning part of the story, we began by brainstorming a list of characters that might be in a Taíno myth and a list of settings that would make sense based on what we had learned about Puerto Rico. We then narrowed our list down by voting. Once we had decided on a couple characters and a setting, we started writing. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn about describing words or "adjectives," as Olivia pointed out! We tried to use a lot of describing words so that our readers could make a picture in their mind to match what was happening in the myth. After we had our first draft we went back to edit, add more details, and

include more Taíno words we had learned. One of my favorite moments was when a child said we should change the part we wrote about caves because it sounded scary. When I asked him why he thought it was scary he said, "because of the bears." Lukas then responded, "Well, we learned about the animals on Puerto Rico and we didn't hear about any bears, but there were caves!" I loved how he was able to use what he had learned to defend his ideas.

~Ashleigh L'Heureux

### Room 217

Family conferences provided me with an intentional time to reflect on the growth of each of the students I have the pleasure of working with this year. As I reviewed each child's work, assessments, and informal observational notes, I was excited to see how the Lightning Dragons are becoming more skilled first and second graders. Students are showing their thinking more clearly in math, labeling their equations to show what they are solving, becoming more confident readers, writing with more details and using periods to help their readers understand their stories.

Students are solving conflicts using their words and are finding ways to take ownership for conflicts they have initiated. While I was eager to share this information with each student and their families, it was particularly powerful to see how much ownership each child had of our classroom and the confidence they showed while reviewing their learning record. While I'd love for

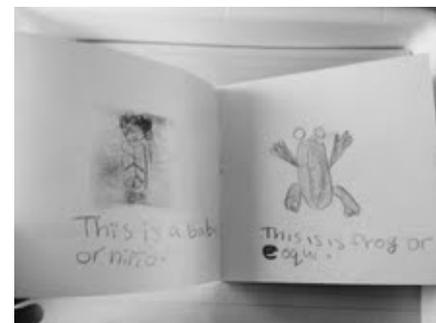
families (and myself!) to take more time to pause and reflect with their children, sometimes we need time set aside for just that to make this important part of learning happen too.

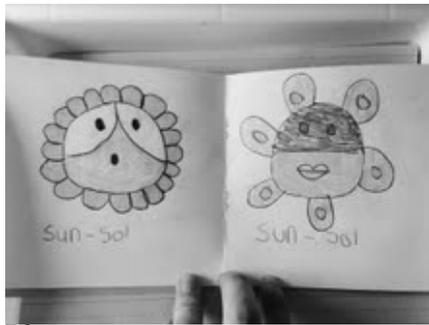
~Emma Fialka-Feldman

## Grades Three & Four

### Room 207

The Role Model Hawks would like to showcase some of their Taíno art work. This trimester the Mission Hill School is studying the Taíno way of life. Art played a big role in their daily lives. In the pictures below students created art pieces, which provide examples on how art was used as a form of communication.





Please come to our next art sharing during Friday share to see some of the other pieces.

~Robert Baez

### Room 216

Andrew from the Boston Nature Center came in this week. We now have small seeds in pots that will grow into beans! Our first experiment with plants back in October did not go so well, as most of them died. This time we plan to water them well, since they will be in our room.

The students thought of comparative questions. One wrote “Will our beans grow faster than the corn in Emma’s room?” Another student wrote “Which bean will grow faster: the green or the brown?” Lots of students answered their own questions to create predictions. Then, students analyzed and observed the beans they would plant by smelling, dropping, and even trying to taste them! Finally, they used magnifying glasses to see the details of the beans and made drawings before planting them. I look forward to seeing how the beans transform!

I have seen many creations within our room regarding the Taino: drawings of instruments and some painted drums, small dolls made of yarn, small clay pottery, food drawings,

vocabulary that Taino used, and small models of bohios. I am impressed with what I’m seeing. We will continue with our goal of creating a full replica of a Taino village.

~Josh Kraus

## Grades Five & Six

### Room 210

As part of our theme work, the Smart & Spiffy Warriors read *Encounter* by Jane Yolen. The historical fiction piece details the plight of a young Taino boy, who through his dream and a Zemis, is very leary of a group European visitors. Despite his warnings, no listened to him, in part due to his youth. At the end of the story the boy is seen as an old man, reflecting on the past harm done by who we are led to believe is Christopher Columbus and Spanish colonists.

Among other things, students wrote letters from the viewpoint of the old man to his grandchildren. Here are a few snippets from those letters:

*i told everybody not to welcome them but i was too little too small for anybody to listen to me. the welcome was approved and no pinch of a hand to see if they were humans or not could change it.*

*DEAR GRANDCHILD,*  
*Hello grandson! I have sent this letter from the shores of Europe, the home of the man who intruded our land. How old are you now? Ah, that's right. Nine. Time flies! It feels like only yesterday I was your age and history's track changed direction.*

*my dear grandchildren I bring*

*myself to tell you about Christopher Columbus, he was a deceiving man along with his following men. Human but not human. So dangerous, yet magnetic. I wish to live that dreadful experience again, I would show the sharp silver sticks they brought to my chief and show that they were dangerous.*

*Dear my loving grandchildren, How are you? I hope you are okay. Those darn people. Why did they do this to us? we gave them gifts, and they give us slavery. I know I always told you hate is a strong word, but thats how I think of them.*

*Dear children, When I was a young boy like you, I had a dream. In my dream, I saw three great birds. They weren't like any birds I had ever seen. They had great big wings and very sharp teeth. My dream was a warning, and when three great boats showed up in our bay the next day, I knew they were trouble.*

~Nakia Keizer

### Room 215

*No news this week*

## Grades Seven & Eight

### Room 213

Last Friday, the 7th and 8th grade mathematicians explored games of chance as a way to understand probability. The problem was one in a series of “Would you rather...” scenarios. The task is to make a choice and justify your reasoning with

mathematics.

Here's the problem: There are two carnival games. Game A costs \$5 to play. Flip 2 coins. If they match, you win \$8. If they don't match, you win \$0. Game B costs \$2 to play. Roll 2 dice and find their sum. If the sum is prime, you win \$0. If the sum is not prime, you win \$3. Would you rather play Game A or Game B?

After understanding the scenario, we made a choice based on intuition. Then, we collected evidence and documented our mathematical thinking. At this point, we had a chance to change our preference. Our evidence consisted of playing the games multiple times and keeping track of the results. But our data were inconclusive, even with several players playing multiple times. This experimental probability didn't provide enough information to decide which game was better.

Next we calculated the theoretical probability based on possible outcomes. We also had to consider the cost to play the game and the pay-off for winning. There is a game that is likely to lead to greater winnings. Which game would you rather play?

~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.

### Extra Clothes Needed

MHS is in need of sweatpants and tops in various sizes for use when child needs a change of clothes. Sweats are perfect, because they fit both boys and girls, and can be worn by children of more than one size. Do you have clean, gently used sweats you can donate to the school? Many thanks!

### Free Dental Care Tomorrow

Sat, 03/08/2014 - 9:00am

*Give Kids a Smile* will be held at Codman Square Health Center, 637 Washington St. in Dorchester, on **Saturday, March 8** from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Health center dental staff will be volunteering their time to provide free dental care and education for underserved children, including examinations, professional cleanings, fluoride treatments, sealants, restorations, oral surgery and x-rays. No appointment is necessary. Available to children of all ages (first tooth to 18 years old).

### Inch by inch, Row by Row...

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! (617-635-6384 or [bkershner@missionhillschool.org](mailto:bkershner@missionhillschool.org)).

### C'mon, Let Me Ride

The school is looking for a few exercise bikes to place in various wings for kids to use when the need arises for some physical activity during the day. It would be great if you could help with delivery (but we can help get them!). We are also looking for volunteers to help with pickup and delivery. Please contact Gina at 617.635.6384 or at [gstefanini@missionhillschool.org](mailto:gstefanini@missionhillschool.org) to make arrangements.

### Glass Containers Sought

The after school crew will be working on a project and we need small glass jars—jelly/jam, pickle, small juice bottles etc. All donations are greatly appreciated.

### Mission Hill School

*A Boston Public Pilot School*

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