

# Mission Hill School News

## Letter from Child Street

### Characters Come to Life

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

Next Friday is our next Mission Hill School spirit day. School spirit days are ways to have some shared fun across all ages at school. Everyone is invited to do something in common that's a little different than the norm. Pajama day, sports shirt day, and hat day are examples of school spirit days. Next Friday is Dress Up Like a Book Character Day. I'm telling you this now in solidarity with you as a parent. It's no fun when your child tells you the night before school that he or she wants to dress up in a costume that has to be made. The other reason I'm sharing this with you is because this school spirit day offers something unique, an opportunity to think about stories read and the characters in them.

#### REMINDERS

##### *April*

Fri. 4/11: Dress Like a Book  
Character Day

Fri. 4/18 - 4/26: No School

Mon. 4/28: Grades 3&4 to Farm  
School

Tue. 4/29: Grades 1&2 to Farm School

Wed. 4/30, 9:30-10:30: Apprentice  
Learning Celebration

##### *May*

Thu. 5/1, 5:45: Spring Music  
Concert

Each year this day stresses me a little, in a good way. I begin thinking about all the great characters I've met in books recently read. Who will I be? What would that character wear? What were his or her unique attributes? Thinking about the characters takes my imagination on a journey and I fondly revisit stories. I always decide who I am going to be just the night before because it's just so hard to choose.

Another fun thing about this day is learning about new books. As we guess who is dressed up as whom we learn about characters in books that we may not have encountered. Maybe one day we'll display all the books we represent to view all the titles. That would be fun to see.

Take some time this week to revisit books that your child has read. And if the reading has been slacking, there's no better time to get back on track. Remember, students are expected to read or be read to at least 30 minutes each night.

If you are coming to visit next Friday, you are welcome to join us by dressing up as character from a book. Happy costume designing!

~Ayla Gavins

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## From the Classrooms

### 3 and 4 year-olds

#### Room 108

Our new school-wide theme is The Peopling of the United States of America. The Helping Hands class will be connecting with this theme through learning about our own families. During the months of April and May, each child's family will take a turn teaching the class. During your family presentation you can show us and tell us the answer to questions such as, "Who are you?", "Where are you from?", "Why did you move to Boston?" and "What makes your family interesting?" Every family is different and every family presentation is different. That is what makes the whole thing work! Share music, stories, photos or food. The choice is up to you. Through our family presentations we will also make new connections. For example, Jonathan's grandparents are from Guatemala – and when they told us that, Simona said, "My babysitter is from Guatemala too!" Please sign up for your family presentation date/time if you haven't already. gmclaughlin@missionhillschool.org or call me at 617.850.5471. Thanks!

~Geraldyn Bywater McLaughlin  
& Donna Winder

### Kindergarten

#### Room 106

The Peregrine Falcon class is in a state of transition. We have wrapped our Taino theme with a wonderful community breakfast

and are starting to prepare for our new theme. We cleaned up our Taino village and packed pictures of fish into our school bags. We cleared the Taino books off the shelf. We also stated to talk about spring and what things we will see. Birds were a hot topic in our class. We spoke a great deal about why we will see more birds in the spring. We spoke about the birds we wanted to come and where they might be coming from.

I asked the children what ways they thought animals travel. They told me they walk, jump, swim, run climb, and fly. This then lead us into a conversation about why animals travel. The children shared that they thought animals traveled for food. Temperature came up a lot. The children also brought up that animals might travel because their homes are not safe any more. We will continue to look at how and why animals travel.

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

#### Room 107

"I didn't know a kindergarten classroom could do so much."

It was great to see our families come out last Thursday to celebrate the work we have been doing for our Taino study. The Kindergarten-quad bustled and was filled with both laughter and conversation as adults and children ate breakfast together.

As older students made their way from the second floor to our room, they looked around and made comments like the one above. One of our last projects displayed that morning came about because of Armani's statement weeks ago,

"We should make a waterfall!"...and so we did. The working waterfall constructed of rocks and built by our students mesmerized our visitors. They commented on how beautiful it was and at times sat in the chairs by the door to both watched and listen to the water trickle down the rocks. As several students stood in front of the falls, they could not help but touch it and ask if the water was in fact real.

After filling our tummies, our students took the stage to sing the Coquí Song and perform The Golden Flower for our families. After a rousing applause, families were able to take another look at the pinch pots, cemis, boat, bohio, beach, medallions, mountain range, instruments, Taíno connection surveys, taste tests and slideshow. Later in the day, Natalia asked, "When are we going to make the coconuts for the palm trees?" My inclination was to say, "Well we are finished with studying the Taíno." but that is far from the truth. Our survey results made us realize that many of our students have connections to islands inhabited by the Taíno. So, in studying the Taíno, we were beginning to study ourselves (our next school-wide theme). So, I guess those coconuts are next on our list of projects.

~Jada Brown  
& JoAnn Hawksworth

#### Room 109

The Original Stars are wrapping up our study of the Taíno people. Over the past three months we have studied the environment,

foods, housing, and culture of the Taíno. For those of you who were not able to make it to the curriculum breakfast, please stop by Room 109 and see all of the amazing work your children have done!

This week we will begin our new unit, "The Peopling of America". We will start this study by looking at the first inhabitants of the Boston area; the Wampanoag Native Americans.

In other news, The Original Stars have filled up our pom-pom jar, and are looking forward to a treasure hunt at the end of this week! If you're not sure what this means, be sure to ask! The kids will be excited to tell you all about it. Happy Spring (we hope)!β

~Liz Borson

## Grades One & Two

### Room 204

Last week after our family breakfast we finally enjoyed regular project time choices. We had been diligently working on our Taíno model for several weeks and the Magic Learners had little to no project choice time. The Lego builders were excitedly building, discussing and flying their aircraft. The block builders were constructing rooms and houses complete with props, and dramatic play was in full swing.

Some of the girls like pretending that they are having a baby and this week was no different. Maya M., Maya S., Arianny and Keysha were in full pretend mode. Maya M. put on her dress and strapped on the

hard, plastic police hat that has come to be used as the baby bump. The girls walk around and play for a while and then I finally here Maya M. say, "It's time for me to have the baby!" Maya S. responds, "I need to make the surgeon's table!" Within seconds, the low wooden table by the cubbies becomes the "surgeon's table" and Maya M. is laying down having the baby. When the delivery was over, the new baby was brought to me – a white furry polar bear wrapped in a pink-checked shirt. The proud mama was beaming.

I can't wait to see what next week brings!

~Jenerra Williams

### Room 205

The Taíno family breakfast had barely ended when several students came up to me asking, "What are we going to learn next? What is the next theme?" I knew they weren't asking because they didn't enjoy the Taíno theme – I had seen the look of excitement and pride on their faces as they showed their families all their hard work a few minutes ago. I remembered the connections they made and conversations we had that showed their interest and joy. They were asking because they are so curious and eager to learn. They wanted to know what new experiences they would get to participate in, what new adventures we would go on. They are like sponges ready to absorb everything around them, and I'm looking forward to fostering that love for learning as we begin to

explore the Struggle for Justice theme, The Peopling of America.

~Ashleigh L'Heureux

### Room 217

The final theme for the school year is the Peopling of the United States of America. This theme gives us the opportunity to learn more about our place and the various places where people move from. One way we will explore this understanding is by engaging in read-alouds that have to do with migration and immigration. The peopling of the United States of America is, as a Mission Hill teacher said at a recent professional development session, "also about the de-peopling of an area." As we read books about individuals and families who have moved to the United States or within the United States we will be thinking about how and why they may have moved. The Lightning Dragons will be "mapping these stories" – looking at where their story began and where it ended. Maybe the family traveled from Vietnam to the U.S. Maybe the family traveled from the South of the U.S. to the North. This will help us learn about geography. Many of us have a connection to migration and movement whether by choice or force. I encourage you to start talking with your child about your family's, your friend's, and community's stories of migration and movement.

~Emma Fialka-Feldman

## Grades Three & Four

### Room 207

Hello Role Model Hawk

families. As we begin our last trimester we will study the peopling of America during theme studies time. This week students will begin their study by conducting an interview project with people who have moved from another country and/or state to Boston. Each student will be given two interview forms with questions. One interview must be done with a person who moved from another country to the USA and the other interview must be done with a person who moved from another state to Boston. After conducting their interviews the students are required to bring in a photo of the people, which they interviewed. The answers to the interview questions and the photos will be used for some in class assignments and discussions. As we work through this project we will create a pictorial map, which will showcase the distance from Boston to each country and state that is represented in our pool of people who were interviewed. We will share a picture of our map once it is complete.

~Robert Baez

### Room 216

Last week Clever Cats prepared collaboratively for the Taino Curriculum Breakfast. Members of our classroom formed into groups in order to answer the question, "Who are the Taino Indians?" As you walk into room 216, you will notice displays of students' research, replicas of artifacts, stories, drawings, and maps.

Students of the "music group" learned that music was important in the Taino culture and continues to translate in the Caribbean culture today. Two Clever Cat students worked together to create a Mayohuacan Drum and rain sticks, which they enjoy playing in the classroom. Another group developed a Taino recipe book where they made arroz con habichuelas (rice and beans). One student created hunting tools such as spears, fishing nets, and Petaloid Axes. The group studying huts produced 3-D replicas and drawings of huts. The two arts and crafts groups worked hard to make yarn dolls, pots, and petroglyph pendants. Although it is bittersweet to transition away from the Taíno unit, we will continue to build the connections with our knowledge of the Taíno Indians, to the Peopling of America theme.



~Selina Ruiz  
& Melanie Centeno

## Grades Five & Six

### Room 210

*Coming next week*

### Room 215

Students have been complaining about breakfast and sometimes skipping a meal because they don't like the options. I didn't want anyone to go without a meal before MCAS because being hungry doesn't help when you are already stressed out. Jada kindly lent me her skillet and I made everyone pancakes before morning meeting. The room smelled delicious, and we had a nice community style breakfast. Some 7th and 8th graders dropped and enjoyed a pancake with us. Thank you to the students and families who brought in other breakfast options. Sometimes it just takes doing something small to shift your energy in a positive direction.

~Sarah DeCruz

## Grades Seven & Eight

### Room 213

During our Fifth Day math classes, we've worked on a series of "Would you rather..." scenarios. We are presented with a mathematical situation that features two options. The task is to make a choice based on intuition, and then justify your reasoning with mathematics. Here's why I like this kind of problem.

First, the task starts by stating the condition and asking you to record your preference. There's

no right or wrong here. Simply choose the option that your intuition senses is better.

Next, before plowing into solving, list the information that would help you figure this out. This is a great way to help kids slow down, think about what they know that may be useful, and ask questions about what's puzzling. No hasty plugging numbers into a formula here!

Now we're ready to justify with mathematical reasoning. Students record their mathematical thinking and evidence clearly so others can understand. And then a final question: Did you change your preference? Based on the evidence, do you see the solution in a different way? But that's not the end. We stop to think about what made us have a particular preference in the beginning. What were you thinking that made you make that choice? Here's where assumptions come into play. "I assumed the drawing was to scale... I mixed up area and volume... I thought the probability was the same..."

Now students are creating their own illustrated "Would you rather..." problems for their peers to solve. Please ask your child to try the problem out with you!

~Ann Ruggiero

### Room 214

*Coming next 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.

### Mission Hill School

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