

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

So Long for Now

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

It's been a full year of learning in lots of different ways and from many different sources. We studied nature, the Taino people and the journey of people to the United States of America. We read, wrote and did mathematics just about every day. We made art and music. We presented our work and sang lots of songs. We went on field trips and wrote letters to one another. We dressed up in different ways on pajama day, dress up like a book character day and on picture day. We played and solved problems together. We made music together and invited our families to see and hear us at school. Families met with each other. We got to know each other. We did all of this and survived a very very long winter.

Last night our 8th grade students had their art show, a show that is designed and put on by them with the support of Jeanne, Letta, Laura and Dani. This annual tradition made several audience members teary eyed. The care students shared for one another showed in their remarks and partner routines. The trust was there. Students performed in front of one another, some for the first time ever. It was beautiful to see, particularly in the vulnerable years of adolescence. They will be missed as they move on to high school.

We will miss other adults and students not returning too. Robert Baez and Betsy Caruso are saying good-bye. As we say, "Once a Mission Hiller, always a Mission Hiller." We look forward to visits from Robert and Betsy. Our gratitude for their contribution to our school community knows no bounds. The music program would not be what it is without Betsy.

When you return in September you'll see a few new adult faces and a few changes to our physical space. Alicia Silva will be a new teacher with us in grades three and four. New auditorium seating and additional bike racks will be installed over the summer.

This is the last newsletter of the school year. You will hear from us in August about your child's classroom assignment and necessary forms to complete. I wish you wellness, joy and a wonderful summer.

Peace,
~Ayla

REMINDERS

Tues 6/17 - School in Session

Thu. 6/19 - Graduation

Fri. 6/20 - Field Day, Staff vs. Student

basketball game

Tue. 6/24 - Early release at 1:30
(breakfast & box lunch provided)

Wed. 6/25 - Last Day of School - dismissal at 1:30 (breakfast & box lunch provided)

September

Thu. 9/4 - First Day of School

From the Classrooms

3 and 4 year-olds

Room 108

This newsletter column is all about the ways that I am thankful to our families – you have been a huge part of the success of Room 108 this year. Our partnership with you is invaluable. Thank you for sending your amazing children to us. Every day has been an adventure filled with joys, triumphs and challenges. Watching your children experience all of this has been a privilege and a pleasure. Thank you for chaperoning field trips; helping out in the classroom; reading the newsletter; attending family conferences and sending in tissues, snack, and all types of supplies. Your participation and contributions both big and small have been the “glue” that has kept it all together.

Thanks for reading to your children every day. Our classroom has been filled with children who absolutely love books and storytelling, and that is an important step toward literacy.

Finally, thank you for understanding that our motto “dress for mess” is very real. Dirt, mud, paint, glue, water, playdough and papier-mâché have all been central to our work this year and your support around inevitable messes throughout was appreciated!

I hope you enjoy playful moments with your child this summer – especially with simple toys and props - blocks, bubbles, mud and water. Imagine the possibilities.

~Geraldyn Bywater McLaughlin
& Donna Winder

Kindergarten

Room 106

Last Friday was an important part of our school year. The sixth graders had their recollections. They shared stories from their years at Mission Hill. Many of the students who shared, I taught when they were five. It was an emotional morning.

One of Mission Hill’s beliefs is that students show their learning through exhibition. This is how exhibitions were born at our school. Three year-olds through ten year-olds shared their learning.

In the Peregrine Falcon class I asked the students to reflect on the year. They wrote multiple drafts of their thoughts. They rehearsed what it would feel like to stand up and share with their families and friends. They also practiced being patient while their friends shared. The day of exhibitions, each student took turns holding up a self-portrait and sharing their thoughts about the year. Julia shared, “I learned butterflies migrate.” Jaiden shared, “I learned Tainos catch fish.” And Zyel shared, “The butterfly lays an egg. Then comes out a caterpillar. He makes a chrysalis. then he turns into a butterfly. Have a great summer and see you in the fall.

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

Room 107

When Farrah’s moms came in, we learned that she has a big family with a lot of people who

love her (most of whom come from New York). Her family celebrates Thanksgiving and Christmas. At Christmas they “spend time together singing Christmas music, decorating the Christmas tree and playing with our new toys.” They like to do the DJ Shuffle and love listening to loud Rock and Roll music.

Gerson’s mom came in and told us that her family is from Manati, Puerto Rico and that Gerson’s dad’s family is from Higuey, Dominican Republic. His family loves to celebrate birthdays, however, Christmas is their favorite holiday. It is tradition that during this time they cook delicious, mouthwatering rice and pork.

Nyla’s mom came in and shared that she has family from Ireland, Puerto Rico, and Boston. Their family loves to do the Cupid Shuffle together and many Princess Dragon Bumblebees agreed that it was a fun dance.

Armani’s family is also from Puerto Rico. When his family came in we found out that Armani has two sisters and relatives in Puerto Rico who he gets to visit on occasion.

It has been amazing learning more about where our families are from. It is also hard to believe the end of this year is fast approaching. Jo-Ann and I extend a big thank you to our remarkably supportive families. Without them our year would not have been as successful and field trips like the Aquarium, Children’s Museum, Zoo, Apple Picking, Museum of Science, etc. would not have been

as much fun. Our final task of the year is the ice cream shop... because everyone eats ice cream! Have a fantastic summer and see you in September.

~Jada Brown
& JoAnn Hawksworth

Room 109

What a year of learning we have all had. It was truly amazing to come back this spring and see how much the children had learned and grown since I'd seen them last in the fall. I often wonder about the ways motherhood will change me as a person and an educator. I already feel a new kinship with my students' families. In the spirit of learning, and change, I asked my kindergarteners what they are most excited about learning this year.

I learned how to read and write. Reading is really fun for me but I don't know why I like writing so much. **-Maya**

I learned how to read books. I like reading Dr. Seuss the best.

-Emile

I learned to draw and I learned to take care of my friends by not hitting and kicking. **-Hiram**

I learned about the Taino. That was my favorite. **-Alex**

I learned to glue glitter to make my name. **-Khi**

I learned how to draw fairies.

-Kennedy

I learned how to make paper flowers with tissue paper and wire. They are beautiful.

-Beatrice

I learned that helping is good. I help by checking in with people when they get hurt. **-Theodore**

I learned new songs. My

favorite was *Octopus's Garden*.

-Kaia

I liked drawing. I learned how to draw a self portrait. **-Cole**

I learned how how to craft lots of stuff. Like right now, I'm about to craft a necklace with this bead I found on the floor. **-Kenneth.**

I learned how to count by tens!

-Jackson

I learned how to write nicely and how to sound out words and read. **-Zora**

I learned that my family comes from Sweden. **-Milo**

I learned how to write my name.

-Evan

~Jenny Goldstein

Grades One & Two

Room 204

Another year has come and is almost gone. Once again, I can't believe how quickly it went and how much your children have changed. Those that entered with tears and hesitation are leaving with smiles and an attitude of readiness. Those that entered with fears and apprehensions are leaving more brave and confident. Those that entered worried about making friends, now have a community that surrounds them. Those that entered feeling unsure about their learning, are now teaching others. I am so proud of the work they have done, the learners they have become and the people they continue to grow into. Thank you for sharing them with us and for allowing us the opportunity to know and grow such wonderful young people. They have taught us just as much as we have taught them – if not more.

It's been a wonderful year. Have a wonderful summer. You earned it!

~Jenerra Williams

Room 205

As I watched my students reflect back on their year as they prepared for exhibitions, I too took some time to sit quietly and think back about my first year at Mission Hill. I prepared a slideshow to show families and students some highlights from the year during exhibitions. As I sat on my living room couch the night before exhibitions previewing the slideshow I was overcome with many emotions. I looked back at all the smiling faces and hard work. I remembered the times I felt defeated and the times I hugged them so tight, feeling proud of something they accomplished for the first time. I reflected on all that they learned and all that they taught me. I thought about the times I patiently waited for them to figure something out on their own and how that same process reflected what my experience was like at times. As we wrap up the last few days of school, I feel blessed to have had each and every one of these beautiful children in my class, and I'm looking forward to the new adventures and experiences that await me next year!

~Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 217

It is important to find intentional time to reflect and recognize the important ways children are growing. Exhibitions were a beautiful time for me to

see this in the Lightning Dragons. As you read parts of each child's exhibitions below, I hope you too take time to reflect on the ways these children have grown this year! **Noah:** Something that was hard, but is now easier is writing. **Ruby:** The Taíno was my favorite theme; doing my project on pets was really fun. **Amber:** Maker, visitor, and reader are three words to describe me. **Brianna:** It was really nice when Janira carried my bag upstairs for me a long time ago. **Xavier:** My favorite book is *The Pigeon Wants a Puppy*. **Inka:** I'll always remember when I used the hose at the Fire Station. **Brian:** I learned the Taino used spears to fish. **Cyrus:** I am proud of how I made my Star Wars comics. **Jahlimar:** Math is easier for me, especially story problems. **Luis:** I like working in the library. **Amari:** Three words to describe be are small, fast, and fun. **Marquell:** I am proud of the writing in my journal. **Nevaeh:** I am getting better at reading. **Rui:** My favorite theme was the Taíno because we had a taste test. **Mekhai:** One of my favorite books this year is the *Pigeon Finds a Hot Dog* because it is funny. **Janira:** Counting money was hard before, but now it is easier. **James:** At math, Lucas helped me with my work by playing a math game. **Lucas:** I am proud of my Taíno house. **Anna:** I learned how to use math strategies, like breaking up numbers to solve math problems.

~Emma Fialka-Feldman

Grades Three & Four

Room 207

Goodbye Mission Hill. June 25th will be my last day at the Mission Hill School. I want to thank all of the wonderful families I have had the pleasure of meeting throughout my three-year stay at MHS. I would also love to thank the amazing and talented students I have taught for allowing me to teach and learn with them. I will always remember the wonderful experiences we had all together. Last, I would love to thank the staff of MHS for helping me grow into a thoughtful educator. All of these lessons and experiences have made me a wiser and stronger person, which will help guide me in my future. Once you become a Mission Hiller you will always be a Mission Hiller. I am saying goodbye, however it is not forever. I will do my best to be a frequent visitor. Please feel free to stay in contact with me. I am always here to support any member of our school community. Remember always "Be Kind" and "Work Hard"!

With love, Mr. Robert Baez

Room 216

Hello Family Members,
This week will be our last newsletter and I've been reflecting on this year for myself and the students. I've learned so much here at Mission Hill from families, students, and staff and yet there's so much more to learn! I've appreciated all of the support

from everyone inside and outside of the classroom. The work definitely cannot be done without the families' support.

Transitioning from one place to another place can be difficult, as we have found out through learning about migration and why people move. It's not easy on anyone, but sure gets easier when there is support and I think people appreciate any and all help.

As I continue to grow as a professional, one thing that I've appreciated is how families advocated for their child. I've never been annoyed by families who contact me and ask for my reasoning behind a decision or to re-think a choice or my teaching practice. It has helped me a lot to be reflective in the work that I do every day. I highly recommend that families continue to keep asking questions and advocate for your child. Yes, I may have a lot of children with different needs in the classroom, but at the end of the day I see you as my client. You are the one who pays taxes for your child's education and I want to do my best to serve your needs. I have valued all of my family relationships since I've learned so much from all the families and hope to better serve everyone's needs next year. Have a wonderful summer and I'm sure I will come back to Mission Hill smarter about the work that needs to get done in the classroom.

Enthusiastically,

~Josh Kraus, Elsa Batista
Selina Ruiz & Melanie Centeno

Grades Five & Six

Room 210

See you in the fall!

Room 215

As we near the end of this school year, I've been thinking intensely about the White Lions—as individual students and as a whole class. I'm thinking about starts, stops, beginning, middles, ends, transitions and transformations. We've seen your children inhabit all of these spaces several times with increasing degrees of gracefulness at each turn.

A lot of energy is expended when learning to navigate the world, the classroom, the self, and one can become tired. My hope is that our children never become jaded in this endeavor. My hope is that we adults lead by example, infusing our mantras and repetitive sayings with our human-ness. It is as just essential that I make some errors (bump my head) in full/partial view of students as it is that I “reassess” and “recalibrate” and “rebound” in front of them. Otherwise, telling a child that it is OK (good, necessary) to make mistakes rings hollow. Along with this, I've learned the importance of reassuring children that none of them are inherently bad and that they can make new/ different decisions at any time.

In closing, I've been sharing this quote from the late Maya Angelou because it gives us all room to breath easier. “Do the

best you can. When you know better, do better.” Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your child's life. Both the learning and the teaching has been a two-way street.

~Letta Neely

Grades Seven & Eight

Room 213

Can this possibly be the last newsletter of the year? We seem to say it every year – time speeds up in June and suddenly the end of the year is upon us. I want to sincerely thank our families for sending your children to us. They are the reason we are here and why we care so much about getting our work done right. I have learned from and with each child, and I hope we are both better off for our time together.

With summer vacation, I lose my daily time with your children and I'll miss them. But I know they are in a good place to move forward and to be successful in eighth grade or high school. In addition to acquiring more knowledge this year, they are more confident and have developed a broader worldview. That was clearly evident throughout our 7th and 8th grade portfolio presentations these last couple of weeks.

To our graduates, I say this. Please remember that the Mission Hill Habits of Mind and Work, and the Mission Hill Way (Be kind; work hard), are intended to be guides for life not slogans for school. They will travel with you to new contexts.

You can trust these habits and mindsets to steer you in a good direction. As you move on, you remain a part of our community. Represent us well, and stay in touch.

Report cards will be mailed home on the last day of school. A summer booklist will be included. I hope school vacation will give you a chance for more family time. Please make certain that reading has a place in your family's summer plans. Enjoy, and have a wonderful summer!

~Ann Ruggiero

Room 214

See you in the fall!

A Farewell

Dear Mission Hill Family,

This issue of the MHS news will be my last.

More than a decade ago, Helen Russell suggested I put my passion for, and experience with, kids who learn differently into volunteering at her school. What began as a few hours a week working with struggling readers found fertile ground for my interests and capabilities, and year-by-year a garden grew.

Math help, wordsmithing, short-term sub, music program developer, adjunct cook and bottle washer, district arts liaison, sex ed co-teacher, newshound, copy machine whisperer, and part-time fairy have rooted me in my work. Some of these shoots grew into sturdy perennials, while others were ephemerals as opportunity flowered and faded.

As it is with any garden, the gardener also grows. My soil and rain were my colleagues at MHS.

Those amazing teachers who welcomed a newbie without official credentials into their family, providing help, insight, fresh lessons and opportunities every day. My sunshine has been hundreds of wonderful kids, who let me into their worlds.

I have been fortunate to be a part of this unique community during its formative years, and into its next iteration in a new space and a new era. Now I stand looking at a fresh new plot waiting. The possibilities entice; my fingers itch to be in the dirt, helping a new composition of shoots to become.

While our paths are diverging, I look forward to visiting Mission Hill as the school continues its course, and we, as Leonard Bernstein wrote: *make our gardens grow*.

With thanks and love,

~Betsy Caruso

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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.

Boston Bikes' new women's bike initiative is pleased to present the first-ever **Mom & Kid Ride** on Saturday, June 14th.

The 5-mile ride will be low-pace, perfect for bikers of all levels and ages and will take place on paths and low-traffic streets through Franklin Park in Dorchester.

Check-in is at 11 AM at the Franklin Park Club House, with free face painting and bike decorating.

The ride will run from noon-1 PM, ending with a celebratory picnic and free ice cream social hosted by J.P. Licks...

The first 100 children to register will receive admission to the Franklin Park Zoo following the ride (free with every adult Zoo ticket purchased).

The Mom & Kid Ride will take place rain or shine.

For more information and to RSVP, please visit www.bostonbikes.org/women or call (617) 918-4458.

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