



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Monday, October 13, 2014  
*Columbus Day: No School*
- October 13-15, 2014  
*Progressive Education Network Conference held at MHS*
- Friday, October 17, 2014 at 9:45 am  
*Friday Share*

October 10, 2014

Volume 18, Issue 4

## *The Project Room*

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Friends,

Last weekend I debated the meaning of art, craft and design with two friends, one a carpenter and the other a blacksmith. We didn't fully agree but we got close. We agreed that art is about the experience of making something original that expresses something, even if that something comes from your subconscious. We disagreed about whether an audience was necessary. If a dancer dances in a room alone is it still art? We also did not quite agree on a craft. One definition is that making a craft is following an already existing design. If that craft design is altered, does that make it art? And is the design the plan or the elements of the finished product or both? Students, what do you think? Families, if you've got time at the dinner table or in your travels share your thoughts about art, craft, design and projects with each other.

During one conversation about classroom schedules Melissa, a former MHS teacher, pushed us to clarify what we mean when we use the words "project time". She asked us, "What is a project?" We responded with all sorts of thoughts drawn from our experiences. She offered her own. That a project isn't something you complete in a single sitting. It's something you create that takes time. Jenerra's classroom news last week reminded me of this. What do you think? Can a project be completed in a single working session? Or does it require more time?

Mission Hill's project room (room 208) will be ready to open soon. It will open with spaces for four different types of work—fabric and fiber work, design, construction and building, and mixed media art. These options may change through the year depending on use and student interest. Students may use the space when accompanied by an adult. If you are a family member, alumni or external community member and you would like to volunteer project room hours please call our main office at 617-635-6384 and let us know.

The intellectual and artistic value of such a space to create things and to have conversation about art may seem clear. But there are very practical reasons to have a project room too. Students can (I believe should) learn how to repair a piece of clothing—sew on a button or stitch up a hole. It is useful to take seemingly unrelated objects to create something new. They will be in problem solving situations at some point in their lives when that experience will come in handy. To design something requires forethought, a practical habit that will serve them well. Our project room is one more space where students can connect their hands and mind in a way that leads to more independence and self-sustaining skills.



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## KINDERGARTEN

### Room 108

**MOTION!** When you enter Room 108 you will now see those big letters hanging in our classroom. The students worked in small groups to paint the letters using a cooperative technique of rolling golf balls and large marbles in paint. As part of the schoolwide focus on physical science, we have been exploring motion in many ways, including “How can you move fast?” and “How can you move slow?” This week we added two pushcarts and one wheelbarrow to our motion exploration. The students are figuring out ways to push and pull the carts safely. So far they have moved blocks and people using the carts and wheelbarrows. Where can you find motion at home and in your daily life? Can you find ways to talk about motion and explore motion with your child at home?

*-Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin*

### Room 106

I am excited to announce that room 106 officially has a class name! We are now known as the Sparkling Birds. The students discussed how powerful, beautiful, and important animals are and decided to be named after an animal. After coming up with a list of animals, we had a conversation about adjectives, or describing words. We had several brainstorming sessions about what words we thought of when we closed our eyes and thought about the animals on our list. After several class votes to narrow down our choices, the name was finally decided: the Sparkling Birds! Be sure to keep your eyes out for some Sparkling Bird art in our classroom!

*-Liz Borson & Stephanie Batista*

### Room 107

It is often interesting to watch the interactions of children with their families, especially around the things that involve discussing the formalities of schooling. Often, the most outgoing student gets a little shy and at times we are surprised by a quiet student speaking confidently about his or her likes, dislikes, accomplishments and dreams for the year. Here is a small glimpse into the goal-setting portion of this year's Listening Conferences:

**Keep:** Loving to read and listen to books; Being a good classmate and friend

**Work on:** Learning how to do a cartwheel; Winning at Ruckus; Reading some words and getting better at math; Dealing with disappointment; Sharing; Building vocabulary; Expand circle of friends; Saying and understanding 13, 14 & 15.

**Get better at:** Doing handstands; Getting water for cooking and baking; Doing a back-flip; The counting Jar; Writing 4, 5, 6 & 7; Homework; Being a first time listener

*-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth*

### Room 109

For the first three weeks of school I noticed that not one student had used our writing center. This was surprising, because the writing center has always been a popular destination during Choice Time. I tried a few things-adding a vase of fresh flowers, laying out brand new sets of markers, colored pencils, and rock crayons with many types of paper-lined, grid, and plain.

It was time to make some big changes. The children helped me switch out the high desk we had been

using for two years and replace it with a low square table. With the new setup I knew it was time to introduce our message center. Once each cubby hole was labeled with the children's patterns, Kaia and Theodore explained to their friends what they are for. “They are mailboxes.” “You can write your friends a note or make them a picture and put it in their mailbox.”

It's been just about a week since we've made these changes, and it is wonderful to watch the transformation. The writing center has been busy with children writing messages, drawing pictures, and copying words. Sometimes just a few small changes can make a big difference!

*-Jenny Goldstein*

## GRADES 1 & 2

### Room 204

This year room 204 will be using the *Nature and Me* curriculum, developed by Boston University (BU). This summer BU offered a four-day summer professional development for teachers at the Arnold Arboretum, which I attended along with Juan (grades 3/4 teacher). The curriculum's intent is to teach children to engage with nature in a meaningful way, through hands-on activities in the classroom and at the Arboretum. On a series of field trips to the Arboretum, small groups will adopt a specific tree and do activities to learn about it. They will keep tree journals in which their skills for close observation and nature drawing will be honed.

We took our first of many trips to the Arboretum last week. Voices of excitement rang out as we entered



Children in room 204, immersed in the Nature and Me curriculum at the Arnold Arboretum.

the Arboretum. “Hey look at that beautiful tree!” “We came here with Kathy’s class before!” “Look! That’s the tree Miss Lauren likes!” “That tree looks like a Christmas tree!” I showed them the tree I adopted this summer and then we walked and sat along the main path to do some observational drawing. Their curiosity and interest was piqued! We are all looking forward to our next and first official visit later this month.

*-Jenerra Williams*

### Room 205

Robots, fairies, and food made from beautiful found materials, a jail disguised as a bank as well as a turtle house built with blocks, a reenactment of Tomie dePaola’s *Strega Nona*, and a written and illustrated story about trains and Angry Birds are some of the projects students in room 205 worked on last week during project time. We used the Mission Hill Habits of Work throughout the week. Forethought was used on Monday when students

completed planning sheets and made goals for the work in which they would engage. Perseverance was embraced as students encountered challenges: disagreements with peers, difficulties with materials, etc. We reflected halfway through the week to see how our work was progressing: what had we accomplished and what needed to get done to be ready to share our work on Friday? Production - everyone radiated a strong sense of pride as they stood up in front of their peers and shared what they had produced after a week of hard work. What projects did you work on this week? How did you use the MHS Habits of Work? Share your thoughts with your child and find connections.

*-Ashleigh, Kate, & Amy*

### Room 217

Listening Conferences provide an important opportunity for families and teachers to serve as collaborators for a child’s education. Having uninterrupted one-on-one time with each family has been a treat. Reconnecting with families who were in the classroom last year and developing relationships with new families has helped ground me. While the early school days gave me many opportunities to learn about the strengths and areas of growth for each child, sitting back and “just” listening during conferences complimented my growing understanding of each child. During listening conferences, I learned more about what is important in the child’s family, what has been challenging for him or her in school thus far, and what hopes their family has for their child. Each family also signed a compact. This compact lists the

child’s, the teacher’s, and the family’s responsibilities. Helping a child grow must be a collaborative effort. I encourage each family to review this compact with your child often so that everyone is reminded of what his/her responsibility is in this important work.

*-Emma Fialka-Feldman*

### GRADES 3 & 4

#### Room 207

Last week our class began our theme studies on simple machines. Our big kick-off event was a visit to the construction site at the MSPCA. We couldn’t have planned a better way to start learning about all the different tools that make work easier. Thanks to the generosity of the hospital and the workers at Shawmut Construction we were able to see what a real construction site looks like and how it operates. Our experience was enhanced by hard hats and vests donated to each child in the class, and a free pizza lunch! Most importantly, everyone at the site made us feel welcomed and openly showed how excited they were to have us. After our visit, the children went back to school with great memories and a newfound curiosity about how simple machines operate. I went back feeling grateful for the genuine care and unselfish interest that made this experience possible. A big thank you to Nancy and Mr. Cottone for making this experience possible.

*-Juan Cortes & Amina Michel-Lord*

#### Room 212

Next week I will be going to the National Institute of Progressive Education Network (NIPEN) and Mission Hill School will be hosting it. Last year I went as well and the

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director approached me with an idea of going to Boston and having the conference at Mission Hill. The conference will help me to understand progressive practices and focus on a goal I'd like to implement within the school or classroom. It's great to hear so many stories of progressive educators and their ideas.

The conferences dates are October 13th-15th. During those three days, 24 participants will be visiting different classrooms and getting different ideas to implement within their classrooms. I look forward to seeing all the ideas within Mission Hill School and hope this gives me insight into what I want to accomplish this year. If you have any questions about the conference, feel free to contact me.

-Josh, Brendan, & Heron

### Room 216

I am happy to report that the scholars in room 216 never want to leave! Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Each day we're alerted to the fact that the day is over because students' busses have arrived and its time to go home. Our busy little group is happy to work up to and

even after their parents have arrived. We send them on their way with a kind reminder that they can return the following day.

We have finally decided our class name...or should I say names! Drum roll please...for the first part of the year, starting immediately, our class will be known as the "Terrific Tunas" (we're practicing alliteration) and as of February first, our name will change to "Firecrackers".

I must say the process was lengthy and exhausting! Ideas were thrown in and then thrown out just as quickly...feelings were hurt and then assuaged but finally, a compromise was had and all involved have felt heard and represented.

With happy thoughts in our hearts,  
-Alicia, Shaina & Rachel

### GRADES 5&6

#### Room 215

Kim decides on a cold Sunday morning in April to plant lima beans. She learned to plant lima beans the year before in 4th grade. She plants in memory of her father who was a farmer in Viet Nam. Her neighbors treat her actions with suspi-

cion and curiosity. But the Cleveland, Ohio neighborhood comes alive with conversation and, you guessed it, planting. Kim has done the unimaginable: make neighbors neighborly; talk to one another; break through the silences; share seeds and stories. This is the evocative story in Paul Fleischman's lovely book, *Seedfolks*, which we are reading during our Literacy Block.

On Friday, Andrew MacBlane of the Boston Nature Center joined us in Room 215, and we also got to planting. We have planted lettuce, British beans, swiss chard, chives and strawberries which we will have to wait for until the summer.

In Room 215, we continue to find our way to each other. We just might take inspiration from Kim.

-Abdi & Angela

#### Room 210

Every Friday afternoon the students in room 210 do what we call the "End of the Week Reflections." Students are free to write about what is on their minds, but also have a list of prompts in their notebooks that they can use if they need to. The prompts include: "Something that went well this week was...", "Something that I think would improve the class is..." and, "Something I learned this week..." My hope is to dedicate one newsletter a month to sharing students voices through excerpts of their reflections.

"Something I was really excited about was the person I got. I got a person who I talk to often and play with." (This student is referring to drawing classmates names for "appreciations")

"Next week I will try to play soccer at recess..."

"I'm excited about Halloween but I



Construction Workers from room 207, ready for action!

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don't have my outfit. I always go with my mom."

"Next week I am going to try not to be very lazy at math..."

"One thing I wish went better is that I wouldn't have pushed \_\_\_\_ and that I wasn't playing mancala when it was reading time."

"I learned to read a little bit more. I also learned how to kick a ball really hard. Last, I learned a little bit more about the computer."

-Nakia, June & Elsa

### GOT NEWS?

Do you have news or information that you would like to share with the MHS community?

Email submissions to  
Dani Coleman:  
[dcoleman@missionhillschool.org](mailto:dcoleman@missionhillschool.org).

## GRADES 7&8

### Room 213

The 8th graders are rocking algebra! Here's what they had to say in the Week-in-Review reflection. "I'm very proud of myself for completing my math homework assignments. I was really productive during math class by asking questions and sharing my work with others....One thing that excited me about learning was the math equations because I really enjoy solving equations. I like number tricks as well because it's cool figuring out what the trick is." "What excited me this week was that I learned to backtrack and solve algebra equations..." "What excited me about this week is my math. I like to do algebra." "Something that went well for me in school is doing the algebra

even though I had kind of a hard time beginning how to do it." "Algebra is something I'm dying to learn about because my mother forgot how to do algebra and she wants me to remind her or teach her so if she ever goes back to school for algebra, she will remember everything about it."

Sometimes people think algebra is what you do with x's and y's. This year, the 8th graders will learn that it is so much more than that. We've had an awesome start. Ask your 8th grader to dazzle you a little bit!

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

### Room 214

"Reginald, I don't think what he did was right, he needs to apologize." Yavi is usually one of the quieter students in our class. However, on this day she was adamant about being heard. She went from one student to the next to make her point before

turning to me as the final arbiter. She was referring to an incident earlier when she felt as though a student was disrespectful to an adult. Yavi wanted this student to make it right. I told her that, in general, I don't think people should be forced to apologize and an apology should be genuine but I'll make time to address the issue at our closing meeting.

At the end of the day, the young man apologized, which led to a discussion of what it means to apologize and steps we can take as a class to avoid similar incidents. We are still coming together as a class and there is a lot of room for improvement. However, this incident is a sign that we've come a long way as a community since the first day of school.

-Reginald Toussaint, Carol East-José & Manny St. Vil



*Gerilyn Bywater McLaughlin is the recipient of a 2014 Bammy Award! (pictured at the top center, with her 2013-14 K0 classroom. See page 6 for details).*

## SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

### And The Winner Is...

Our own Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin has received the 2014 Bammy Award in the Early Childhood Program category! Geralyn is a founding teacher (and current K0 teacher) at MHS, parent of Zach and CJ (in Nakia and Abdi's classes), and is also the Director of Defending the Early Years a non-profit project working to support and nurture the rights and needs of young children.

The Bammys are given by the Academy of Education Arts and Sciences and are a cross discipline honor that identifies and acknowledges the extraordinary work being done across the entire education field every day.

We congratulate Geralyn for the award and for the ongoing work she does to advocate and support children and families both in an out of her classroom at MHS.

### Ping Pong, Anyone?

Laura and June are seeking a few used ping pong tables to use for Wellness classes. They are also looking for help to pick up a free donated table in Connecticut. If you can help with a donation, pick-up in CT or loaning a truck, please email [LauraIgolitko@missionhillschool.org](mailto:LauraIgolitko@missionhillschool.org).

### Smart Smiles

The Smart Smiles Dental Program is coming to MHS. This is a FREE dental screening program for ALL students. If your child does not have a dentist, it is highly recommended that you sign your child up. Forms will be sent home with all students

and must be returned back to school. Please contact Nurse Georgie if you do not receive the form 617-635-6384, x120.

### Turn in your Box Tops!

Please turn in any Box Tops to Courtney by 10/2/14 so they can be sorted and sent in. We collect them all year long for two big submissions: November 1st and March 1st.

### Questions about high schools?

The annual MHYC High School Information Night will be hosted for youth and families on Thursday, 10/16, from 5:30-7:00pm at the BCYF Tobin Community Center in the 2nd Floor Conference Room, 1481 Tremont Street, Roxbury. Dinner Will Be Served! Please RSVP to [Missionhillyouthcollaborative@gmail.com](mailto:Missionhillyouthcollaborative@gmail.com) or call (857) 237 0933.

### Brrr!

As fall approaches, we want to make sure all students have clothes to keep them warm through the winter. If your children could benefit from a new, warm, winter coat please let Courtney know. She will be getting new coats for any child that needs one in October (infants and siblings too). Call, email, or stop by Room 114 to let her know what sizes your family needs. She can also get extra seasonal clothing for children ages 0-12 on an as needed basis. Check in with her if that is something that will help your family.

### Family Council Positions

Bridget Lee (son Mauryon, 4th grade) and Rachel Goldsmith (son Adam, 1st grade) ran unopposed for

the two Co-Chair positions. Chad Cover (daughters Zora, 1st grade and Lena, K0) ran unopposed for Treasurer. The first meeting will be held on **Thursday, November 13th 5:45 – 7:00**. Dinner and childcare are provided. Please rsvp to Joni in the main office if childcare is needed by Tuesday 11/11.

### Good Morning Mission Hill Premieres!

Save the date for two exciting premieres of the *Good Morning Mission Hill* documentary! More info to come in next week's News.

Wednesday, 12/10/14, 6:00-7:30 pm  
Boston University  
College of Arts and Sciences  
General public invited: FREE!

Thursday, 12/11/14 6:00 - 7:00 pm  
MHS Auditorium  
MHS Families only!

"another splendid piece of work!"  
Alfie Kohn, award winning writer on children and schools

The freedom to teach  
**GOOD MORNING MISSION HILL**  
The freedom to learn

"A remarkable and inspiring film! What you see in this film is real learning."  
Nancy Carlsson Paige, founder, Defending The Early Years

**Boston University Premiere!**  
General Public is Invited!  
College of Arts & Sciences  
Wednesday, December 10, 2014  
6:00-7:30 pm

**MHS Premiere!**  
MHS Auditorium (MHS Families Only)  
Thursday, December 11, 2014

a new film by Tom and Amy Valens.  
creators of *AUGUST TO JUNE: bringing Life to school*

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*  
Deborah Meier, *Founder*

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

Mission Hill K-8 School  
*A Boston Public Pilot School*

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