



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Friday, October 3, 2014 at 9:45 am  
*Friday Share*
- Monday, October 13, 2014  
*Columbus Day: No School*
- October 13-15, 2014  
*Progressive Education Network Conference held at MHS*

October 3, 2014

Volume 18, Issue 3

### *Isla del Encanto*

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Friends,

Isla Del Encanto – The Island of Enchantment. Puerto Rico has enchanted me indeed in many ways. From its landscape that is picture perfect no matter where you look to its food that fed my stomach and my soul. The music and the dance still beat within me and I can still hear the ocean just before I sleep. Lastly, the people... warm smiles, and genuine hugs all to make sure that I felt welcome.

My work with I.D.E.A. (Institute for Democratic Education in America) is what took me to Puerto Rico. I was asked to help facilitate the second in a series of three conferences they are hosting. These conferences bring teams of community/educational organizers from around the country together to talk about and plan how to move their work forward around four areas: practice, policy, strategy and narrative. These organizers/educators are amazing people. The passion, sincerity and commitment they pour into their work is exemplary. I felt so honored to be among them and so at home. As a part of the conference we got to tour two schools, both in the city of Caguas: Escuela Diego Vázquez and Nuestra Escuela ([www.nuestraescuela.org](http://www.nuestraescuela.org)). There is not enough room here to tell you about these schools. It would take days! However, I will say this – their work is extraordinary.

Justo Mendes Arámburu, founder of Nuestra Escuela, says that the school is “a community based organization that offers support services – bio, psycho, social, academic – to develop talents and initiatives” and is “founded in love”. Sound familiar? On the tour of both schools, I drew many parallels to MHS – the close knit staff, the strong adult/student relationships, the student led academic program, etc. The one thing that sticks out for me is how deep their sense of community is. Community to them extends far beyond the walls of the school and is seen as not just a place that the school resides, but an asset, ally and co-builder in the work they do and the world they believe should exist.

I left Puerto Rico asking many questions about myself and our work here at Mission Hill. As we know, good questions can rarely be answered fully, if ever at all, but I will leave you with a few of mine. How can Mission Hill School deepen its connection to the surrounding community in a way that is meaningful for the school and for the community members we engage? How can those connections improve and uplift the community outside the walls of Mission Hill as a whole?

Though I am not sure when my next trip to Puerto Rico will be I know for certain that it won't be my last. The work that is being done there is inspiring, courageous, and infectious. As Justo says from the exploit of Don Quixote, their work is to help students “recover the capacity to dream and the skills to transform dreams and goals into reality, re-creating themselves in the process.” My capacity to dream has grown and I have been transformed by this amazing experience. Mi Corazón está lleno y estoy muy agradecida.

-Jenerra Williams, Grades 1&2 Teacher



*Jenerra skipping rope with school children in Puerto Rico.*

## CLASSROOM NEWS

### KINDERGARTEN

#### Room 108

Fun and exciting news from Room 108! Teachers and students in room 108 were enjoying apples from our own little orchard. We are wondering – are other classes enjoying different types of apples this year from our own backyard? Students in room 108 want to share with you all how wonderful it is to eat fresh apples from the trees. Camden, our 3-year-old student, said: “These are the best apples in the world!” Nikaye, Julian and Joziana were all eager to get apples from the picker. Our snack today was so tasty, economical and fantastic! Ms. Elizabeth and everyone in the class enjoyed Red Delicious and McIntosh apples. There are not many left on the trees, so come on by if you would like to have a nutritional snack! Remember, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away!”

*-Thuy Truong*



*Three and four year-olds picked apples from the orchard behind the school.*



#### Room 106

Happy October MHS Families! In room 106, the students are beginning to explore bookmaking. We first had a discussion about the different elements that make up a story. Who are the characters? Where are the characters? What is going to happen to them? Our first book will be a whole class book, comprised of bedtime stories for a certain newborn baby boy. The book will be sent home with each child for one night next week to be shared with families, so be sure to keep an eye out! Soon our students will be story-telling experts, and begin making books of their own. Looking forward to seeing everyone for our first family conferences!

Our door is always open,  
*Liz & Stephanie*

#### Room 107

Room 107 has been thinking deeply about what we should expect from each other while at school. We agreed that we want our classroom community to be a safe place where

we can feel comfortable coming to every day. However, it will take hard work to create such a space and here are a few ideas we shared last Friday to get us there:

Nyla: Stay on the wood chips when on the big playground.

Eamon: Do not push or bite.

Max: Tell the teacher if you get hurt.

Agboola: Share the fire engines.

Wren: We should not kick people .

Jordan: We should listen to the teachers.

Josie: No pinching.

Romeo: On the playground you should hold on tight to protect yourself.

Keith: No hitting. No punching. No kicking because it can hurt your body.

Madison: Do not kick off the structure.

Jeremy: We should not hit people.

Farrah: If someone bumps into you, wait for them to say sorry.

*-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth*

### Room 109

Since we've been talking about rainbows it's only natural that the children have shown a recent interest in color. Last week in art, Jeanne gave the children watercolors in the three primary colors, red, yellow, and blue. Using only these colors, the children were invited to make the secondary colors- orange, green, indigo, and violet.

Back in the classroom we are further exploring making color. At the easel we've been painting with blue and yellow paint, inspired by the book *little blue and little yellow* by Leo Lionni.

With watercolors, Ella discovered how to make another color, "Mix the red and white paint to make pink!"

After painting with pink for 3 days, I challenged her to make baby blue. She worked diligently mixing greens and blues. She rediscovered mixing red and blue make purple. It was tricky but she didn't give up. Pink and blue made a light purple. Blue and white... baby blue!!!

*-Jenny Goldstein*

### GRADES 1 & 2

#### Room 204

We are continuing our study of bubbles and each time we go out lots of questions emerge. Here are some wonderings:

Why do some bubble go up and some bubbles go down?

Why can you bounce bubbles off your clothes and nowhere else on your body?

If a bubble goes in the sun will it come back down?

I wonder why bubbles pop.

I wonder how the bubbles stay in the air sometimes.

I wonder why the little bubbles go

down.

Why do the bubbles pop when sun gets too hot?

I wonder if you take the glass out of the magnifying glass if it could blow bubbles.

I wonder why bubbles don't pop in the cold.

Will bubbles never stop?

I wonder if bubbles will make batteries go bad.

I wonder why bubble guns don't work when soap gets on the batteries.

How does it go in outer space?

How does it land on shirts?

We will begin to answer these questions through individual research, small group work and whole class explorations.

*-Jenerra Williams*

#### Room 205

Room 205 has been working on opinion writing all week. To start thinking about opinions, we took a class poll to get an opinion on recess. The results are in: we love recess!

We created an opinion statement that gave some reasons why we love recess so much. We talked about why opinions are important and how we can work hard to make a full opinion statement by using the word because. We think opinions are important because they help people learn more about us.

In other news, we have begun thinking about our class name.

We first came up with a long list of suggestions that included the Pacific Potatoes, the Doctor Hooves, the Golden Ninjas, Ashleigh's Epic Kids and the Playful Kittens, to name a few. There were so many great options that we decided to write our opinions in order to make the final decision. Our opinions needed

to explain why the potential name related to our class. We are hoping to have the final decision made by Friday Share!

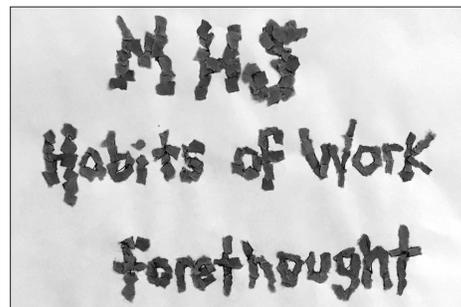
*-Ashleigh, Kate, & Amy*

#### Room 217

Starting a new school year not only gives children time to refresh and create new routines and expectations for themselves, but it also gives teachers and adults an opportunity to reflect on classroom routines and expectations. This year during project time I am trying something new! On Monday morning, students will be planning for the work they will do during project time. Instead of students creating a new project each day, they will be thinking about a project they want to complete during the week (or beyond!).

Adults in the classroom will support children by helping them to extend their thinking and modeling how to put forethought and perseverance into their work. It is no longer "just" a time to build a Lego spaceship, but instead an opportunity to work across the classroom to explore books about outer space to make a scene to go with the Lego creation. As children shared their works in progress on Tuesday, Brian showed his black painted sky - a beginning project to his Lego creation. Cyrus chimed in, "I'm inspired. Maybe I'll try that tomorrow."

*-Emma Fialka-Feldman*



### GRADES 3 & 4

#### Room 207

Now that vacation is officially over, it is important for children to get enough sleep. As mentioned in an article on CNN.com, "We know that sleep deprivation can affect memory, creativity, verbal creativity and even things like judgment and motivation and being (engaged) in the classroom," explains Dr. Judith Owens, director of sleep medicine at Children's National Medical Center in Washington. Children that do not get enough sleep tend to fall asleep in class, are cranky, impulsive and have difficulty participating in class. Studies report on average elementary school age children need between 10-11 hours of sleep each night.

Create a routine and set a regular bedtime! Half an hour before lights are turned out, turn off ALL electronics- video games, tablets, televisions etc. This is a great time for reading and quiet conversation about the day. "Consider that (sleep) is one of the building blocks of your child's health, well-being and academic success," Owens says. "It's equivalent to good nutrition, exercise and all the other things we try to foster and provide for our children." And just think, once the children are in bed you have a few minutes to yourself. That is important too!

*-Amina Michel-Lord & Juan Cortes*

#### Room 212

"What are your feelings about theft? How do you feel about stealing?" I asked this question last week to the class to gauge responses in relation to a couple of our students missing items.

"I don't think people should steal because it's not theirs. They should

ask to borrow the items."

"It's not good, but sometimes some may need to steal something – like medicine or food – in order to survive."

"You could get arrested for stealing property."

"You could get in trouble."

"I would feel mad /sad if someone stole my items."

These responses made me think about the haves and have-nots in our society. In addition, I thought of poverty and individualism in a capitalistic society. Why do some feel so angry when something is stolen? Perhaps even a desire of revenge?

For me personally, I don't want to create insecurity within the school. I'd much rather be in an environment filled with trust. I also would appreciate feelings of security and honesty with the students. These values are worth working towards and ideally it would be great if we could all share the same important resources.

I hope these ideas at least get a conversation going between parents and child around why stealing is not a habit one should get into at our school.

*-Brendan, Heron & Josh*

#### Room 216

The weather has been wonderful yet in room 216 Aahmonyea has decided to build a snowman! I hope his project doesn't bring snow sooner than January this year!

We've started listening conferences and it's been exciting learning more about our scholars in room 216. I've been asking scholars if there was one thing they could add to their daily experience, what would it be. One student commented that he would like more time to read and another commented that she would like more

math.....OK, I guess we have to extend the school day...or skip recess!

We're still in limbo in room 216: we don't have a class name! After a thorough process that included brainstorming, lobbying and a proctored vote, "Firecrackers" was the winning choice but we've had some pushback. I recommended we adopt both top names and use each for part of the year. Students are letting the idea marinate so hopefully we'll have our class name(s) soon.

*-Alicia, Shaina & Rachel*

### GRADES 5 & 6

#### Room 215

Last week our students volunteered to read to Jada's Kindergarten students. The level of enthusiasm and excitement was beyond an explanation. In preparation for the actual big day in the role of young educators and leaders, we had students meet with their partners in class and practice the chosen stories that they would be reading to their reading buddies the next day.

In addition to the books that our class chose to read to the Kindergarteners, our students also read other stories selected by their reading buddies students. It was a great experience for our young leaders and they actually exceeded our expectations in the first time they took upon such leadership role.

This is an ongoing serious commitment that our students will take on every Tuesday morning- one that is beneficial for the language development and literacy of both our older and younger students.

Reminder: Parents, please have your child read daily at least 30 minutes before bedtime.

*-Angela, Abdi & Andrew*

## Room 210

“When are we going to get to use computers?” is a phrase that I have heard several times over the first few weeks of school. Much to the students’ glee we are in the beginning stages of introducing new computers, student emails, and other exciting technological bits. Look for a letter with more information.

*Nakia, June & Elsa*



*Fifth and sixth graders explore the new Chromebook computers.*

## GRADES 7&8

### Room 213

In Room 213, we are reading *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. Before we began reading, we watched a discussion between the author and Salva Dut, whose story is told in the book. Salva was a “lost boy” from Sudan, a refugee from the civil war in his country. We follow Salva as he is forced to leave his home and family, and encounter many dangerous situations. But we will also see how Salva noticed a problem in his country and returned as an adult to make changes.

As we read, students are learning

new vocabulary, noticing author craft, becoming aware of the geography and cultures in Africa, and enjoying a good story well told. Here are some excerpts from student reader responses.

Ronnie: “Nya and Salva would not have been friends because Salva is a Dinka and Nya is Nuer. They would have to sneak to be friends because they are in different groups.” Peyton: “Nya must have developed upper body strength because she had to pick up the bucket, and lower body strength because of how long she had to walk. Last, is will strength, telling herself she can make it even though she has a thorn in her foot.” Arly: “I would choose (to be) Nya because her life is more “stable.” Salva has no family, except his uncle, but the rest might be dead. Nya is more protected.”  
*Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely*

### Room 214

As we were discussing the Pilgrims journey on the Mayflower, one student shouted, “ewww, that boat stank!” While another student responded, “They must have gotten used to it” We were on the tennis courts across the street from MHS in order to have a better idea of the dimensions of the Mayflower. It turns out that the ship, 90 feet long and 26 feet wide, was very small and had very little ventilation. However, it was the fact that their living quarters was only 5’6” tall that spurred the most conversation as many of the students are well above that height. There’s a lot of confusion surrounding the first English colonists that colonized the eastern shore of what is now known as they United States. Were they called Pilgrims or Puritans? What is the difference? What about the Native-Americans? Which

groups lived in the area settled by the Pilgrims? Did they help the Pilgrims? If so, why?

These are the question we will be answering in history class in the next couple of weeks. We started the year by looking into the Jamestown colony and now we’ve moved to the colony in Plymouth. By the end of our study we should have our questions answered.

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

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### Welcoming Alessandro

Shanah Tova means good year in Hebrew. It was the eve of the Jewish New Year that we brought our baby home from the hospital-a time filled with emotion and blessings. Our son has many names. His name is Alessandro Silvio D’Andrea. His Jewish Name is Aaron Moses. His nickname, appropriately coined by his pediatrician, is Tiger. Thank you so much for all the well wishes. I have been slowly catching up to getting back to people. Thanks you for the food train, the car seats, and all your prayers and blessings.

*With Joy, Kathy*



*Congratulations to Kathy (Clunis) and Antonino D’Andrea on the birth of their son, Alessandro!*

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

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

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

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