



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Monday-Wednesday, November 17-19
Grades 7 & 8 to Farm School
- Saturday, November 22, 8:30 am - 4:00 pm
Descriptive Review Conference at MHS
- Wednesday, November 26, 1:30 pm
Early Release for Thanksgiving Break
- Thursday & Friday, November 27-28
NO SCHOOL: Thanksgiving Break

November 4, 2014

Volume 18, Issue 9

Acknowledging Tragedy

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Friends,

On Child Street last Friday as a student from Margarita Muniz Academy was stabbed, Ann Ruggiero and I arrived in San Francisco. I got a text about the incident as we deboarded the airplane. We are fortunate that our staff and BPS personnel responded quickly to ensure the safety of everyone. Still it was hard to be so far away, knowing that this awful incident occurred.

Amy Valens, one of the filmmakers of Good Morning Mission Hill, picked us up from the airport and brought us to the school where she taught for many years. The school was celebrating El Dia de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead. Ann and I watched the student parade, read student writing about lost loved ones, and heard students vocally honor those missed and cared about. The next day we were in a high school with similar writing displayed. Reading the stories and looking at the photos in remembrance of loved ones gone, sparked thought about how our community deals with loss and tragedy. Reading the writing on display in some way was a premonition to the news on Monday about one of our teachers getting arrested. As one of our parents expressed, no matter what the outcome of this case, it feels like we are experiencing a death. It is the loss that makes us feel this way.

Two events, the stabbing and the sudden dismissal of a MHS teacher have shaken our community. Immediately teachers discussed these events with students and a team of counselors came on site to support our community. With our focus on routine, things will eventually be back to normal for our students.

But what about the future? How can these events make us a stronger community? Our staff will reflect on these questions and I hope you will too. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to you who have reached out in offering of support and encouragement through such a difficult time. I also thank those of you who reached out to ask questions and advice about how to respond to your children. I see that as evidence of our partnership, a key ingredient to our growing strength as a community.



Many thanks to families and friends who have reached out in so many ways to offer support and encouragement through this difficult time.

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

Room 108 loves to move. We walk, run, hop, skip and jump. And through our music we sing about motion. We learn that there is direction in motion. In *The Pirate Song*, while aboard the ship we sway 'this way, that way, forward and back' over the sea. In *The Elevator Song*, our bodies mimic an elevator moving slowing upwards as we stop on each floor. When we reach the top floor we go 'down, down, down, down, down' until we are on the main level. The beat of music determines how fast we will move our body: galloping, walking, hopping, tip-toeing or running.

Whenever you're in motion, ask your child about the speed and direction. Are we moving fast? Are we going down or up? Try walking side to side; is it easy or is it hard? Experiment, perhaps moving to the beat of a favorite song and determine how music affects motion.

-Donna Winder

Room 106

This week room 106 has started an exciting new venture- book making! We began by talking about the difference between an author and an illustrator, and thought about some of our favorite books where the author is the illustration! Eric Carle and Stephen Kellogg were a few who came to mind. We also discussed the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. The children then chose a topic, and began working on the rough drafts of their covers, including the title of their book. Be sure to ask the students what they're writing about!

The Sparkling Birds also continue to be fully immersed in our water study. We learned about the difference between absorbing and resisting, and did a "walking water" experiment, where we put two paper towel ropes into colored water and observed what happened. We even created some beautiful "Absorbing Art".

Come by room 106 to check it out!

-Liz Borson & Stephanie Batista

Room 107

On one recent morning, we used a recipe that Jeanne gave us to make play dough for our project time. After adding all the ingredients and letting it cool, there was no doubt that we were in major need of this therapeutic outlet. Throughout the week, Jo-Ann wrote down some of the conversations that occurred during their play. Here is a 20 minute sneak peek:

"Look, I wrote my whole name with play dough!" "I made an apple pie with a chocolate heart." Johnathan notices that Josie is busy creating and asks, "Can I help? She answers cheerfully, "Sure Jonathan!"

Equally intrigued by the flurry of activity, Jordan leaves his project time choice and engages in imaginative play with Madison saying, "I want to buy some cake in the bakery." Various people then entice him with their creations saying, "I'm making cupcakes with my play dough." "I made blueberry cake." "I'm making a big ice cream cone."

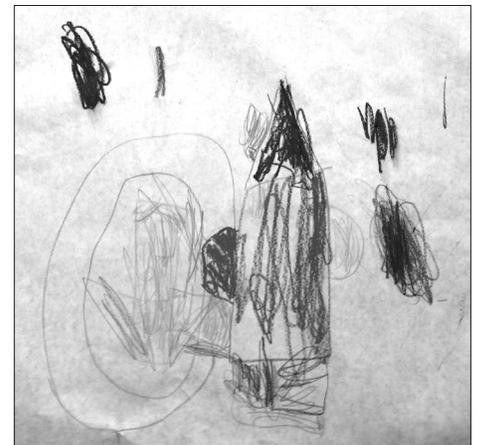
-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

Our investigation into story workshop continues and it is quickly turning into one of my favorite times

of the day. On Monday afternoon I had a chance to pause, look around, and take it in. Three four year-olds were sitting at an art table working on stories inspired by the color red. Two small groups of children were telling stories with Duplos. Another group was drawing in tiny books made of folded and stapled paper.

During the Story Congress meeting that follows our story creation time, Malachi shared his story, inspired by the color red.



Malachi's Story in Red.

"This huge circle is to protect the room. It has a lamp in it but you can't see it. A boy is looking out the window. He's looking at the city break. He feels scared. He calls the police and the firefighters to fix the city. They use their glue to fix the city. The police and firefighters go home and the boy goes to sleep."

-Jenny Goldstein

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

Last Friday, we said goodbye to one of our community members. Kaylanie and her family have been a part of Mission Hill for many years, so the goodbye was a difficult one.

CLASSROOM NEWS

After some yummy snacks, a little dancing and games we all sat down to share special thoughts she could take with her. Here are a few:

I'll miss you Kaylanie. I'll give you a hug.

I hope you learn a lot at your new school, Kaylanie.

I really hope you make a lot of friends there and I really don't want you to go.

I hope you make good friends like us.

I hope you enjoy your new school and I really love you.

I like when you helped me with math.

I hope you have a good time in Florida.

I have been so lucky to be your teacher.

As nervous smiles were exchanged, hugs were given, and tears were wiped, I asked Kaylanie if she wanted to share anything with us. She did. "I love you guys and that's it!" That's it indeed Kaylanie. Love.

-Jenerra Williams

Room 205

Reading books and listening to stories, taking trips and observing objects in flight, watching videos, and talking to experts are some of the ways we are finding answers to questions and learning about flight.

On Monday, Pilot Carleton Jones visited our class. The children were so excited to meet a real pilot! They asked many questions, did an activity to demonstrate the force of lift and got to make their own paper airplanes.

We learned about the different directions a plane can move: pitch, roll, yaw and about how thrust, lift and gravity work together to help a plane land and take off. Did you know that when a plane is landing its nose is actually pointed up? Many of the children were surprised to hear this, but after some demonstrations we started to understand that if the nose was pointed down the plane would be traveling too quickly toward the ground. Many students were feeling inspired after

Carleton's visit and were thinking about becoming pilots when they grow up!

-Ashleigh, Kate, & Amy



Pilot Carleton Jones demonstrating with a paper airplane.

Room 217

Reflection is one of Mission Hill's Habits of Work. With reflection, students learn to ask: what did I learn? What skill did I practice or improve? What am I proud of? What will change about my work next time? In order to help children develop this habit as writers, students are currently focusing their energy on two writing goals. One goal they have selected and one goal I have selected. Students can articulate the skill they are practicing which helps them focus their energy onto a few concepts, instead of imagining all the possible skills they could be working on. Some of these goals include: using finger spaces, writing at least three sentences, adding dialogue, and including a vowel in every word they sound out. Once students had their writing goals, they eagerly shared them with the class. As students raised their hands to be the next to share, there was an awe



Room 204 portrait. Good bye and good luck to Kaylanie and her family!-we will all miss you!

CLASSROOM NEWS

of stillness in the room. Our class is continuing to work on learning what it means for everyone to be working on something different. This was a moment when the children “got it.” Children are proud with the skills they are working on and are excited to cheer on their classmates too.

-Emma Fialka-Feldman

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

On a beautiful sunny morning last week, The Spectacular 16 ventured to the Arboretum to explore the trees, as part of the Nature and Me Program sponsored by Boston University and the Arboretum. Once inside the main entrance of the Arboretum, small groups explored the area to find a tree they had been given a picture of. Squeals of excitement could be heard as the groups inspected trees until they found the correct one.

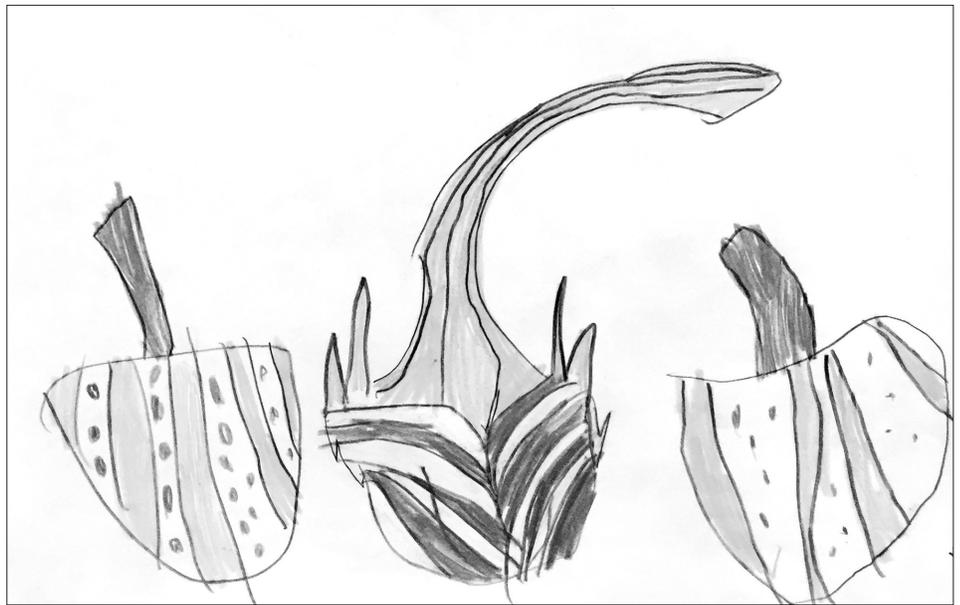
Once the groups located their trees, they sat next to/under their trees and answered a series of questions in their science journals. The questions included a map of the area, to help locate the trees during upcoming visits, as well as questions about what their entire tree looked like and what individual leaves looked like.

We will visit our trees multiple times throughout the year to document the changes that take place. Stay tuned to hear more about our science inquiry around these trees.

-Amina Michel-Lord

Room 212

This week had the pleasure of welcoming two guest lecturers. Eli’s Dad, Steve, came in to talk to us about the uses of robots and the history of the robot. We watched



Gourds, by Kaia.

movies of different robots and even saw the first robot ever created! One use of a robot was simply to get rid of burnt potato chips and ensure all non-burnt potato chips made it into a bag. Another robot stacked pancakes in an order. After the presentation, one student brought in a couple of robots and showed them to the class.

We also had Ruby’s Dad, Mark, come in and discuss how to create a small robot using a toothbrush, motor and batteries. The design process entailed four steps. First we received our motor and placed double-sided tape on it. Then, we stuck our toothbrush on top of the motor. Next, we stuck our batteries on. Finally, we connected the red and black wires before turning on the motor. Thanks to all the parents who came in. We learned a lot!

-Josh, Brendan, & Heron

Room 216

Our class had a wonderful week that culminated with a visit from the Boston Ballet and City Dance

last Friday. It was a great time for me to take a step back and simply observe my young charges in a new environment. It was a joy to watch not only the students but also the folks from City Dance and what they keyed in on. By watching the other adults teach our students I was able to learn. This learning was also enhanced by my conversations with the City Dance staff. I must say the power of observation was reinforced for me after last week! I highly encourage us all to try this. Sometimes talking is overrated and we all just need to take a step back and watch. By doing this, we can learn so much.

-Alicia, Shaina & Rachel

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

Here are a few of our recent End of the Week Reflections. Enjoy...

“Something that went well this week was when I did the ELA and math test. I think I did really well...”

“Something that I’m excited about for next week is watching more Rube

CLASSROOM NEWS

Goldberg videos because they are really creative and awesome. Plus im excited to make one of my own. I think it is going to be a really cool project.”

“I had a good time today cause we spent time with Eli and he is moving to Florida but it is sad because he is leaving the school. But I’m glad he is going somewhere with his family.

“This week was really fun I say that because I went to laser tag on Monday and on Tuesday I went to school and played football with the big kids...”

“This week music went well because we listened to a lot of music from Billy’s phone. We also got to make suggestions and I got to pick a song. That is why music went well this week.”

“Something that went well this week was when I was absent my friend Ali read my speech for me.”

“Something that went well for me this week is reading because I finished a really good book, I loved it.”

“Something that I’m sad about this week is that Eli left. Because he is a really nice person and a good friend. Even though he is excited about going to Florida and I would probably too if I was going.

-Nakia, June, Caitlin, & Elsa

Room 215

From a coevolutionary perspective, humans consciously participate in their evolutionary process; that an individual lives on a physical, life-force, mental and spiritual planes. Cool stuff. I am reading a book by David Marshak, *A Common Vision: Parenting and Educating for Wholeness*.

Art making is a tangible, yet mysterious point of entry into a child’s process of self creation and unfolding. Carlos Santiago, a graduate of Boston Arts Academy, where I first got to know him, has been making and teaching art in community settings, such as the Kroc Center, and the Eliot School since 2008 when he graduated from Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

Carlos is our artist-in-residence for the year! He has a launched a mural-making project with us in Room 215. We draw with him at least twice a week. And he will support other classrooms. Please welcome him.

-Abdi & Angela

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

This week we made our first trip to Jamaica Pond with Andrew MacBlane, MA Audubon Society Naturalist. We learned that Jamaica Pond is the headwater for the Muddy River. Our science focus this year is a collaborative project with the Muddy River Restoration Project.

At the pond, we recorded evidence of the current use of the pond and its surroundings. Several kids shared fond memories of going to the pond with family members when they were young. On this visit, noticing wildlife and skipping rocks were favorite activities.

We’ll monitor four parameters (pH, dissolved oxygen, electrical conductivity, and nitrates) to judge the health of the river in various locations. We’ll test water samples from five test sites from November through April, and then present



Artwork by Carlos Santiago, artist-in-residence in Room 215

our findings at the Muddy River Restoration Project Symposium in the spring.

We’re excited to be involved in this citizen scientist project. Perhaps you could plan another trip to the pond with your family and let your children share their learning.

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

As Elianna looked up from a computer screen and shouted “Hey Reginald! Did you know that Ghana had so much gold that the king made swords out of gold for his security guards?”

I overheard similar comments throughout the day, one student

was surprised to learn that at one time people traded gold for salt, another was excited to find out that Timbuktu was the intellectual center of the world and held the first university and library.

We took a small detour from US history to learn about the great African Empires. As we begin our study of the first Africans to arrive in the English colonies, I wanted to re-orient the way that students typically think of Africa and Africans. Too often, students walk away from learning about slavery with the idea that Europeans were able to enslave Africans because they were a superior civilization. I hope that by learning about some of the African Empires, our students will have a better context for how slavery evolved in the United States.

We created a timeline of the African empires that documents some of the interesting facts that we learned. The timeline is hanging outside our room.
-Reginald Toussaint, Carol East-José,
& Manny St. Vil



On November 11th, MHS alums, Yimara (Excel High School) and Siobhan (Boston Arts Academy), attended the Apprentice Learning alumni reunion at Spontaneous Celebrations. Summer job support is offered to all students who have participated in the program. To learn more about how our eighth graders participate in the world of work, visit www.apprenticelearning.org.

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Billy Buss takes Second Place!

Big news! Last weekend, MHS music teacher Billy Buss placed second (in the world!) in the annual Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition. Big congratulations from the entire MHS community for this prestigious honor!

BalletRox Dance!

BalletRox Dance! offers affordable ballet, jazz, tap, and hip-hop classes taught by professional instructors. There are currently openings for students in grades 3-8. For more information, call 617-224-7386 or visit www.balletrox.info.

Library Love

As many may know, we lost our library coordinator (Marietje) this year, due to budget constraints. A helpful group of families have taken on the task of regularly maintaining and organizing the school library to become more self-sustaining. We thank these families and also encourage other family members/caregivers to consider spending some time in our lovely library space. Call the main office to find out how to join in the fun 617-635-6384.

Good Morning Mission Hill Premieres!

Two exciting premieres of the *Good Morning Mission Hill* documentary!

Wednesday, 12/10/14, 6:00-7:30 pm

Boston University

Kenmore Classroom Bldg., Rm 101
565 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston
General public invited: FREE!

Thursday, 12/11/14 6:00 - 7:30 pm

MHS Auditorium

Now open to the public!

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.

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*

Deborah Meier, *Founder*

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

Mission Hill K-8 School

A Boston Public Pilot School

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**Thursday, 12/11/14
6:00 - 7:30 pm
MHS Auditorium
Now open to the public!**

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