



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Tuesday & Wednesday, 12/9 & 12/10
MHS Bookfair in Room 203
- Wednesday, December 10, 6 - 7:30 pm
Good Morning Mission Hill at BU (see pg. 6)
- Thursday, December 11, 6 - 7:30 pm
Good Morning Mission Hill Premiere at MHS
- Friday, December 12, 9:45 am
Friday Share: Abdi, Jenerra, Liz & GERALYN

December 5, 2014

Volume 18, Issue 11

Warming Up by Coming Together

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Friends,

Next week the temperature outside may fall, but we will be warm inside Mission Hill School with three events that bring us together.

The annual book fair will be open for business on Tuesday and Wednesday. The book fair brings lots of excitement to our students and staff. Students will get to preview the books, then make purchases. Please do not send more than \$20 to school with your child for book purchase. If you are sending cash, please put it in an envelope with your child's name and instruct your child to give the money to the teacher. Staff members often create a book wish list for the classroom from the book fair collection. The list is typically at the book fair, but may be sent home as well. We love gifts to the classroom library.

Every Wednesday at 5:00pm room 203 begins to fill up

with students and their parents and caregivers. They come together with Dani and Cindy (assistant in Emma's room) for Tech Goes Home. This multi-generational class is a great way to learn computer skills, have some laughs, and get to know other Mission Hill families. It's possible that Dani will offer it again in the spring. If you are interested, keep an eye on the newsletter when the weather warms up later in the year.

On Thursday I hope you and the rest of our school community will come to the showing of *Good Morning Mission Hill*, a film made by Tom and Amy Valens in 2011. After the film there will be a brief discussion with Deborah Meier (MHS founder), the filmmakers, and a few MHS staff members. This is an important event for not only building our community, but also understanding some of the school's history. The film will be showing at Boston University on Wednesday night. You are welcome to attend that showing if it works better for your schedule (for more information, see page 6).

Looking forward to seeing you lots!



Amy and Tom Valens, filming the documentary Good Morning Mission Hill.

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

Maybe you already noticed the Play = Learning posters throughout our classroom. Through last couple months, we have discussed teaching style in room 108 and realized that play is very important for children's development. It helps children to acquire knowledge in all kinds of ways. You can get to know more by checking out the posters or asking for a copy of "Play in the Early Years: The Key to School Success!" However, I want to talk about one more thing that children can gain from playing and that is self-recognition. Some researchers have found evidence that too much teacher-directed activity undermines young children's self-confidence and motivation to learn. If teachers show students how to do everything, then the student is copying. As a result, they won't have a chance to think about what they actually want and to express who they really are. By providing enough play time, children develop their own self-recognition. They may find out what they like and develop their strengths. It will become a virtuous cycle. Kids won't struggle as much and learn better if teachers provide an intentionally structured playing environment. I learned all these amazing things by working with the wonderful teachers and incredible kids in room 108. I've really appreciated the chance that Geralyn and the school gave to me. I enjoy being a student teacher in room 108 and I'm proud of it. This will be my last week to work here and I hope I can be a great teacher in the future with all what I've learned from Mission Hill School.

- LiYing Sun, student teacher

Room 106

Room 106 is welcoming the cold weather by beginning to investigate ice and snow. We began by observing various sizes of ice cubes and ice blocks in our water table (with some glittery objects frozen into them for fun). We thought about a few questions. Is all of the ice the same size? Why not? The students remembered that water can always change shape depending on the container it is in. "If you put water in different things and then put the things in the freezer, all the ice will be different." Like in Georgie's office!" -Julia

We also passed around an ice cube during morning meeting, and used four of our senses (omitting taste) to make observations.

"It's shrinking!" -Yassin

That's because it's melting!" -Sarah

"There's water now. It's cold." -Jediah

"It doesn't smell like anything." -Yesvirlin

We are hopeful for a snowfall soon to continue with our observations of freezing water!

Our door is always open,
Liz & Stephanie

Room 107

It is hard to believe it's December! It feels like only a few weeks ago we were establishing our classroom routines and getting to know each other. Now here we are, less than 20 days from our winter break. As we engaged in our morning calendar routine on Monday, I highlighted a few reasons why December was "special", including December being the last month of the year and that it marks the first long break from school. As I excitedly shared the idea of leaving school in December and coming back in a completely new

year, students eagerly mumbled to each other. As Jo-Ann and I listened, it was clear that there were other reasons students thought December was special.

"It's my birthday month."

"It snows in December."

"Christmas is coming."

"I'm planning on staying up all night and ...using my mom's phone to get a picture of Santa."

We listened intently to each other and as more ideas around Christmas arose, one student respectfully reminded the group, "Not everyone celebrates Christmas."

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

It's December and the Kindergarten two children are beginning to learn to read decodable books. The first books they will learn to read are simple. They have predictable patterns of text and the pictures match the words. The children are learning to point to each word as they read, to think about the beginning sounds of a word, and to look at the picture when they get stuck.

It's such a joy to watch the children as they come to know themselves as readers. If you have a few minutes, stop by and ask a Kindergartener to read you a book from their book bag. Soon their books will be going home for reading to families, too. Learning to read is hard work. I invite you to help us celebrate the struggles and successes of becoming a young reader.

-Jenny Goldstein

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

Bubbles floated through the air and smiles floated right along with them. This is a small glimpse into our fall curriculum potluck breakfast last Wednesday. Not only did we enjoy the delicious food and drink that families generously brought in, but we also showcased some of our many bubble findings from our physical science theme. We displayed information on the different bubble experiments ranging from “What Can Make Bubbles Stronger?” and “Why Do Bubbles Pop?” to “Does Heat or Cold Make Bubbles Pop?” There was also a display of bubble wands both small and large that the students made from a variety of items such as wires, pipe cleaners, string, popsicle sticks, dowels, etc. We had two hands-on tables, where family members could try making hand bubbles and a bubble in a bubble. It was an exciting and fun morning for all.

-Polly Wing & Jenerra Williams



Typrese experiments with bubbles at the Curriculum Potluck last week.

Room 205

Last week, the Lego Champions had a wonderful time at the curriculum breakfast. We enjoyed showing families all that we have learned about flight. Students were able to demonstrate how well their flying machines could fly. Each student was able to launch their flying machine at one end of the runway and watch it sail to the other end. Families were given feedback forms that explained how room 205 gives feedback. We try to always be kind, helpful, and specific when we give one another feedback. Families gave us some excellent tips on how to make our machines fly farther and longer.

Along with families, we have talked to a few experts in the field of flying things. We got to talk to the pilot Carlton, who flies out of Hanscom Air Force Base. We were also able to talk to Betsy, A former Mission Hill faculty member, who knows a ton about birds. Betsy took us on a walk to the Arboretum where we got to see and hear some of those amazing flying things for ourselves.

-Kate Needham, student teacher

Room 217

“It’s outside time! Not recess, Emma!” I often hear students quickly correct me as they line up for time outside in the afternoon. As consistently as we can, I take children outside in the afternoon for at least ten minutes before we dive into our quiet work/literacy time. While children are moving throughout the day in the classroom, I know they need many opportunities to move, play, interact with their peers, and spend time outdoors.

Winter provides us with a beautiful opportunity to talk and learn about

science – why snow melts, how the ice forms on the slides, and what happens to some animals when it is cold. We can develop shared experiences of building in the snow to write about in our journals. **In order for our class to go outside, children need to be prepared for the weather with hats, gloves, boots, snow pants, and jackets.** We have extras students can borrow, but please send in what you can. Please make sure your child comes to school with all the necessary belongings so we can continue to enjoy outside time (not recess!) each afternoon.

-Emma Fialka-Feldman

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

It was my first day of second grade. It was my first day at a new school. It was also the first day Mission Hill School opened its doors. I remember my teacher telling my mother not to worry about the lack of furniture, it would be there in due time. I remember meeting my first friends Melissa and Chantel on that first day of school, who I can still count on for anything. I remember Ayla’s first year at MHS as a teacher. I remember reading with Jenerra and Nakia when they were student teachers. I remember when Jeanne first became the art teacher. I remember so much, but most importantly I remember what Mission Hill taught me about community. Seventeen years later, I walk through the halls of MHS not as a student but as a proud community member. Someone stopped me in the hall the other day and made mention of my work in the office, classrooms, after-school and throughout the community. I don’t feel my

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actions warrant praise; it's just the Mission Hill Way. I am proud to be a founding MHS community member and I look forward to witnessing its continued growth.

-Ayanna Michel-Lord (Ms. Amina's daughter and MHS alum)

Room 212

I hope everyone had a restful and blessed time together. I wanted to thank families for coming to the Fall Curriculum Breakfast. It was great to see everyone and experience Brendan's PowerPoint presentation! We will continue our exploration of figuring out the answers to our comparative questions within our theme: Lego Robotics. A few highlights from the curriculum breakfast:

Students sharing out the personal narratives they had been working on. Shared documentation of our field trip experiences, work in the classroom, guest appearances and the first few weeks of school.

Display of Lego cars constructed by students within their groups.

I'm proud of the work that we have all accomplished together. It will be great to see all of final findings and conclusions!

-Josh, Brendan, & Heron

Room 216

Welcome back from what I hope was a wonderful four-day break. Whether you celebrate Thanksgiving or not, I hope you always have time (in each and every week) to think about what you are thankful for!

I am thankful for my hardworking, motivated students. For those of you that were able to visit with us during the Physical Science share last week you probably saw much of what I get to see and experience on a daily

basis.

The students in room 216 are deeply engaged in the process of Bridge Building and each day their vocabulary, as well as knowledge of concepts, is expanding. This week an important word has been "Constraint". Students are learning under what constraints they must work to complete projects and how these constraints affect an engineer's ability to get her job done. As Amishai put it Tuesday, it could mean that a material is "simply not available...that's a constraint." Well said!

-Alicia, Shaina & Rachel

GRADES 5&6

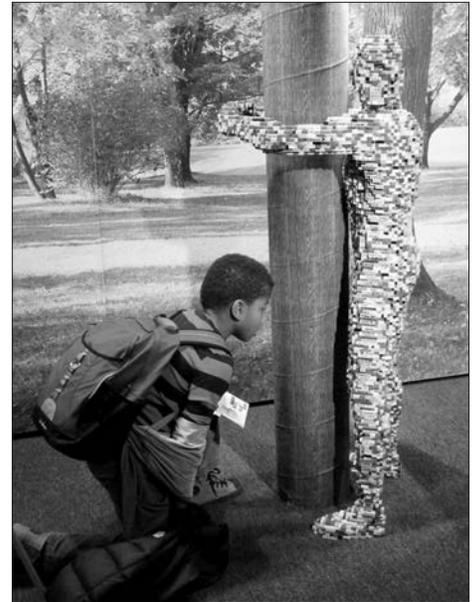
Room 210

Our new class name is the Frozen Fire! We were working on our name and were voting for other names like the Funky Monkeys, Cool Kids 21, Frozen Fire and a few other names. We had the last vote and it was Funky Monkeys and Frozen Fire. And the winner was Frozen Fire! Yay!

We were also writing paragraphs about why we liked these names and why we didn't. The name is cool and everybody likes it because Frozen Fire is an awesome name for a good class. And thanks to Dylan, because he thought of this name. If you want to learn more about our class name come to room 210! You are welcome to see our classroom and our projects, Mission Hill families. And we did a cool poster of our class name too.

-Anais Brito, grade 5

Room 215



Mauryon checks out a Lego sculpture during a field trip to see the exhibition, The Art of the Brick.

How are those "Healthy Brain Platter" calendars working out at home? Each student created a schedule for seven essential mental activities for a healthy brain and body to bring home last weekend. In our classroom, we make time for physical time, play time, focus time, connecting time and time in. Neuroscience is showing us how deeply our bodies and brains are connected. Mental wellness is linked to our connections to each other and the world; our brains have lots of opportunities to develop in different ways when we engage in different kinds of meaningful activities.

What does this have to do with our year-long essential question, "What is a community?" It is worth musing about the connections between mental wellness and community wellness as you share time as a family. Perhaps you can create a calendar together.

http://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/healthy_mind_platter/

We welcomed Joel Garcia and his

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family to our community. He is delighted to be here, observing, "Everyone seems happier here."

-Carlos, Angela and Abdi

GRADES 7&8

Rooms 213 & 214

Grade 7/8 Farm School Reflections

Everybody was chanting "FARM SCHOOL! FARM SCHOOL! FARM SCHOOL!" as the big yellow school bus rode up the steep, dirt road to a place we call our second home, The Farm School. Since this was my ninth and final year coming to this place, I planned to end my last trip with a big bang, and have the best time ever, so that's exactly what I did.

-Alexa

If you've never been to the Farm School, it smells like poop. That's the first smell you recognize. If you stay awhile and go to the woods, you'll smell the trees.... The only thing that smells good to me is the food. We had spaghetti with meat sauce for dinner....

-Khalia

Then we went back to work but our job was different. We had to feed the cows after we swept the hay. During that time I was scared because they had baby cows running around inside the barn and they came up to my waist. It was as big as a desk in our classroom.

-Zacari

This year when we did forestry, Will took us into the woods to check and see what was going on there. It was very cold and my boot kept on messing up my socks. I saw a dead rooster, which Gus almost ate. At one point we all started running through the woods - that was painfully fun. I got thorns stuck into my hands and

legs, but it was all good. The thing I always loved about the farm's woods is how enchanted it was. It made me think that one day there will be a well I fall into and I get warped to some medieval middle earth, thanksgiving time place. So that was very cool.

-Peyton

While we were waiting for the bus, we had our closing meeting. Then when the bus came, we took a group picture. Then we loaded the bus with our bags and the lunch that some of the kids had made us. We then said bye to the farmers. Like with everything on the farm, I felt happy and good. I learned that I am a hard worker and I can be a good farmer. It felt good to see the work I produce.

-Francisco

Even the smallest moments at farm school brought the group closer; I think it was just that we were in such a close environment together. Doing hard physical work in tight situations couldn't get any closer, and spending almost 72 hours with your classmates is obviously a bonding situation. That's a lot of time to spend with

your friends. It gives a lot of amazing memories we can share. I think it's a pretty smart way to bring the community together. Farm school was an incredible overnight experience and being close with my friends made it even better!

-Gigi



Laneah working at the woodpile.



Zacari shoveling mulch at Farm School.

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

MHS Online Family Forum

Did you know that the MHS online family forum is a GREAT resource for parents, caregivers, and staff? We'd love for you to join us today! Get to know the community better, stay informed about exciting school celebrations, accomplishments, and fundraisers, join initiatives, as well as get and share news and plans. To join, please email Amy Banzaert (parent of Eli in Jenerra's class) amybanz@mit.edu.

Our Deepest Condolences

Monroe Engel recently passed away after a long illness. Monroe's wife, Brenda Engel, is a founding member of Mission Hill School and its longest serving volunteer. Brenda has touched the lives of many families and young people over the years as the keeper of the school's archive of student work. For the past three years, she has been assisted with her work in the archives by Anne Martin. The MHS community sends our love to your family, Brenda.

Good Morning Mission Hill Premieres!

Two exciting premieres of the Good Morning Mission Hill documentary! Both evenings will feature panel discussions following the film. Filmmaker Amy Valens and Founding MHS Principal Deborah Meier will be at both events.

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
Free and open to the public!

Images from Farm 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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The freedom to teach
**GOOD MORNING
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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***