



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Monday, January 19, 2015
Martin Luther King Jr. Day: NO SCHOOL
- Thursday, January 22, 2015 9:15-10 am
Pajama & Literacy Day!
- Thursday, February 5, 2015
Family Council Meeting, 5:45-7:00 pm
- February 5-6, 2015 (times and dates TBA)
Family Conferences

January 16, 2015

Volume 18, Issue 15

Kingdoms of the Nile River

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Friends,

This week's letter is written to our students.

This winter term you will study civilizations that existed a very long time ago, thousands of years ago along the Nile River. This study will help you understand some of things you see in our city, tools we use in our daily lives, the heritage of some people in our community, how history is recorded, and how and why we learn from the past. These are all powerful lessons.

In order to learn as much as you can, there are some things you can do as you are in charge of your own learning. You will be a researcher. Your first step is to find the Nile River on a map or globe. Next, write down as many questions about the Nile River and the people that lived along the river more than 2,000 years ago as you can. There is no such thing as a bad or wrong question. This is a great thing for your whole family to do. Keep track of your questions. Mission Hill teachers have come up with questions too. You'll see some of these questions posted throughout the school.

Begin the mission of finding answers to your questions. Some of your questions may be answered through your daily learning at school from your teacher(s) and other resources such as books, adults, films, music, maps and museum collections. Keep track of the answers to your questions and new questions that come up for you. As you learn more you will begin to make connections from one piece of information to another. That's how learning happens. When you learn something new I hope you teach other people.

What will excite you about this study? What will you learn? What will you teach other people? What connections will you make to information and stories you already know? I look forward to learning with you about the people that lived a long time ago in this far away place.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alya Jones".

CLASSROOM NEWS

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

This week, MHS children started our new unit, Kingdoms of the Nile. In our classroom, students began the unit with life science, Egyptian animals. We decided to start with animals because young children adore animals. We will learn to appreciate animals for their contributions because animals help us in many ways besides being our friends. Camels help humans transporting heavy loads on their backs through the extreme heat in the desert. Donkeys, cows and horses help us carry goods and things through many country roads and muddy paths. They also help humans in growing wheat, fruits and vegetables. We will also learn about “sacred” animals in the ancient Egypt such as falcon, lion, lioness, snake, cobra, hippo, crocodile, goose, baboon, eagle, hawk, ram, jackal (a wolf family), and cat. We will pick a few animals and teach them in depth and some we will briefly introduce them through books, songs, art, poems and dramatic play.

-Thuy Truong

Room 106

Since the winter break, the Sparkling Birds have started to think about our new unit, Kingdoms of the Nile. We began by having a conversation about deserts. What do you think you know about deserts? “There isn’t any water there.” Hmmm. I asked if plants, animals, and people live there. “Yes! There’s cactuses. And lizards!” Do these creatures need water or can they live without it? “Everything needs water. But things in the desert don’t need as much.” The students

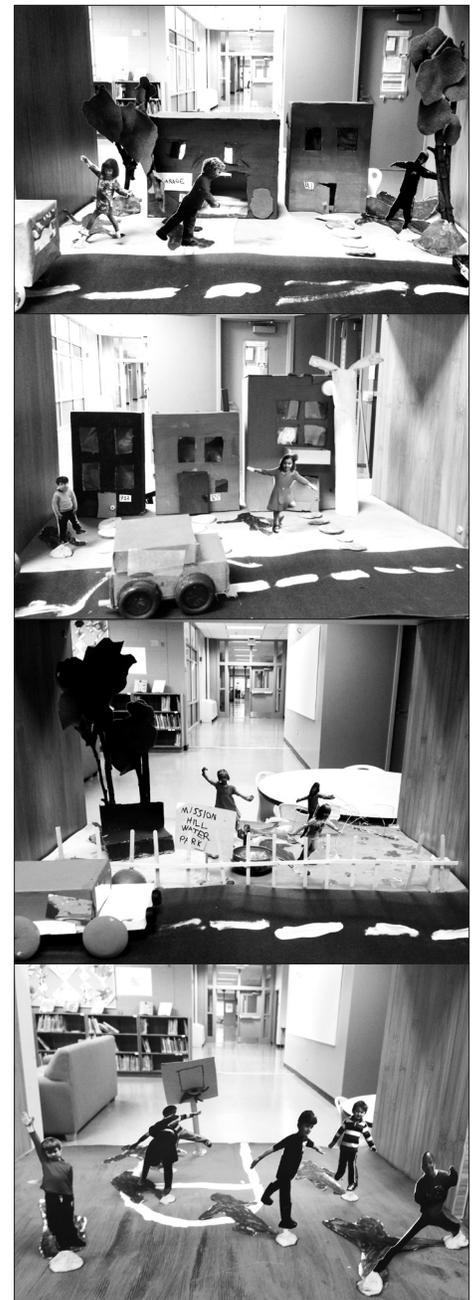
spent time looking at photographs, drawing pictures, and talking more about deserts. Andrew from the Boston Nature Center will be joining our classroom every Friday morning. He had his first visit with us this Friday. The students examined the differences between sand and soil, and made predictions about which is better for growing plants and why. We are excited to begin our planting experiment with Andrew this week!

-Liz & Stephanie

Room 107

“All of our books are gone.” After the winter break, as students entered the classroom, they found a new collection of books on our shelves. “I know what we are studying next!”, several of them proclaimed. “Egypt! I’ve seen that before.” Now that we have wound down our study of the scientific definition of power, the excitement around Nubia is growing. We briefly touched on the importance of the ancient Nubians and how, while they taught the Egyptians many things, they are often not given the credit for their contributions. However, before jumping headfirst into this theme, we decided to explore the power of our words and the effect our ideas have on building our community through finally beginning the process of choosing our class name. Here are a few of our options: Princess Dragon Bumblebees, Fire Dragons, Black Dinosaurs, Blood Suckers, Great Eagles, Batman, Princess Dragon Bumblebees of Bat Girl, Hot Wheel Driving Motorcycle, Hot Wheels, Super Girls and Super Boys. Stay tuned for our decision.

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth



Images of the Rainbow Fire Dragons’ project, Light in the Neighborhood.

Room 109

The Rainbow Fire Dragons are excited to share with you our learning from this fall’s physical science theme. Their culminating project, titled “Light in the Neighborhood” and affectionately nicknamed “our small world” is on display in the entry of the second

floor of the school. We invite you to take a look.

The work is a collaborative effort to show what we discovered about how light interacts with objects in the environment. The children chose what to represent and the materials that they would use.

Along the way a lot of questions were asked. Can you find evidence of these questions being explored?

How are rainbows born?

Where did we see our reflections outside?

Can you make an interesting shadow?

If the sun is in front of you, where will your shadow be?

Is that a shadow or a reflection you see in the puddle? How do you know?

Why do buildings have windows?

What kinds of man-made light did we see outside? Why is it there?

-Jenny Goldstein

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

The music and singing played. Eyes were glued on the people in the video. The Magic Explorers looked around with curiosity and nervous smiles. A new language was pouring out of the speakers as well as the seldom heard but familiar drums. After they listen, Billy asks, "What's your first reaction?" "A talking drum!" "Looks like some people are singing and holding hands." "The singing is from like where Shirley's family is from." "I think they are teenagers and kids." "Some schools in Nigeria look like that but the board is white."

He played the video again and pointed out the singing practice of call and response and different rhythms of the drums. The lesson

ended with a vocal drum call and response between Billy and the Magic Explorers...Doom, doom, doom, doom - bec! Doom, doom, doom, doom - bec!...and finally using drums to bring those newly-learned rhythms to life.

This proved a bit harder than it seemed and it was great fun. The Magic Explorers look forward to learning more rhythms and songs from the continent of Africa!

Here is the YouTube link to the Nubian National Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-cOKd2BGjYo>

-Jenerra Williams

Room 205

Where is Africa? Who lives there today? How big is Africa? What is Nubia? Can you find Egypt? What is the Nile? These are some of the questions we have started to explore this week. Looking at various maps, students engaged in a see, think, wonder activity to begin to share their noticings and questions about the continent of Africa and the places within it. Students also started to make connections while looking at pictures and artifacts and being asked, "Have you seen this before?" We read the book, *Africa is Not a Country* by Burns Knight, which shares short vignettes about children living in different nations of Africa today. Students wrote about similarities and differences between the children mentioned in the book and their own lives. Talk with your children about what else you think you know about Africa.

-Ashleigh L'Heureux & Kate Needham

Room 217

How will people know what was important to you? What would you

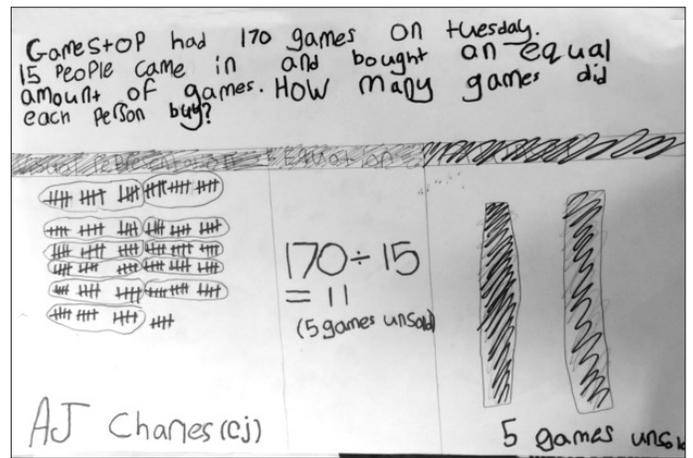
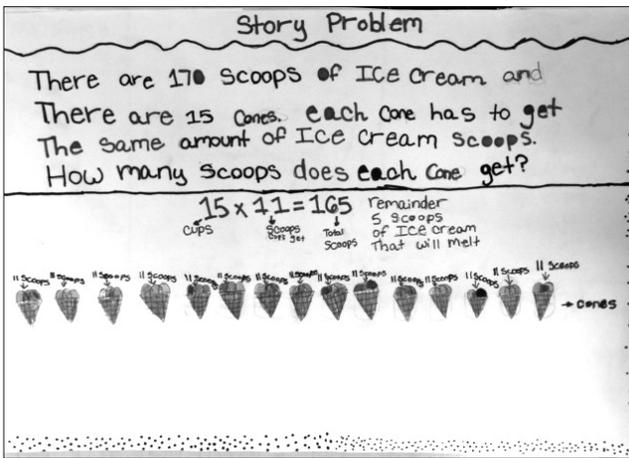


A group working on their poster for Mix it Up Day. Check out posters from the different groups posted around the school.

leave behind (or better yet, bury!) so that people in 1,000 or more years could know who you were and what you liked? In order to study civilizations from very long ago, I first have children think about the present day. We must know our stories well in order to learn about what is similar and different from people who lived long ago. This week children spent time thinking, drawing, and writing about an artifact they would bury so that people could learn about them. Children eagerly shared not only special toys (Legos, Pokemon), but also they talked about pictures of their friends and family that they would want someone to find. Some children said they would bury a favorite book or a book they had written so that people would know they loved to read and write. Sometimes in order to study something so far away and so long ago, we have to start with today.

-Emma Fialka-Feldman

CLASSROOM NEWS



Math word problems from Nakia's class.

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Monday, January 19th and The Spectacular 16 have spent the week researching and writing about Martin Luther King. What is something important that people should know about Martin Luther King Jr.? With this question in mind, students set out to learn about the life and work of MLK by reading books about him and listening to a recording of his "I Have A Dream Speech". After researching, students wrote and edited drafts of what they had learned. Students then illustrated their final drafts before putting it all together to create The Spectacular 16's book of Important Things to Know about MLK Jr. This work has helped students to understand the importance of Dr. King and why we are celebrating on the 19th. Be sure to stop by room 207 in the coming weeks to read our book and learn about MLK Jr.!

-Kristina Voss & Amina Michel-Lord

Room 212

This week we've been working on our dreams and hopes for the New Year. There has been lots of great thinking

around how we are going to accomplish our own hopes and dreams, in addition to the whole classroom's hopes and dreams. Some of the personal goals written by student were: "I will control my anger." "I want to be more patient." "I hope to do a construction project."

Some of our classroom goals were: "I hope the class will work hard." "I hope the class can be nice to one another." "I hope for the class to be helpful."

It's wonderful to restart our engines and think about how and what we will do to accomplish these meaningful goals. We hope to continue support one another to reach our goals. Please feel free to stop by anytime to see our wonderful hopes and dreams hanging from our ceiling.

- Sarah, Heron, Brendan, & Josh

Room 216

This week we mixed-it-up and what a wonderful experience! In 216 we welcomed students from K0 through 7th grade. I so enjoyed getting to know so many MHS students...can they come back?

I was thrilled to see students of varying ages working together to find things that we have in common.

In room 216 we discovered that we all have siblings, we love pizza (especially home-made), we like pets and love legos! Rose was caring with Eleanor and helped her work on our poster; Dillon, Amos, and Amari cleaned up the blocks without being asked, Oona drew a car and Julian tried to pretend he wasn't having fun! Brian is right next door so hopefully he'll come visit again!

-Alicia & Shaina

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

5th grade students have been working on division story problems. Please enjoy the images of their work!

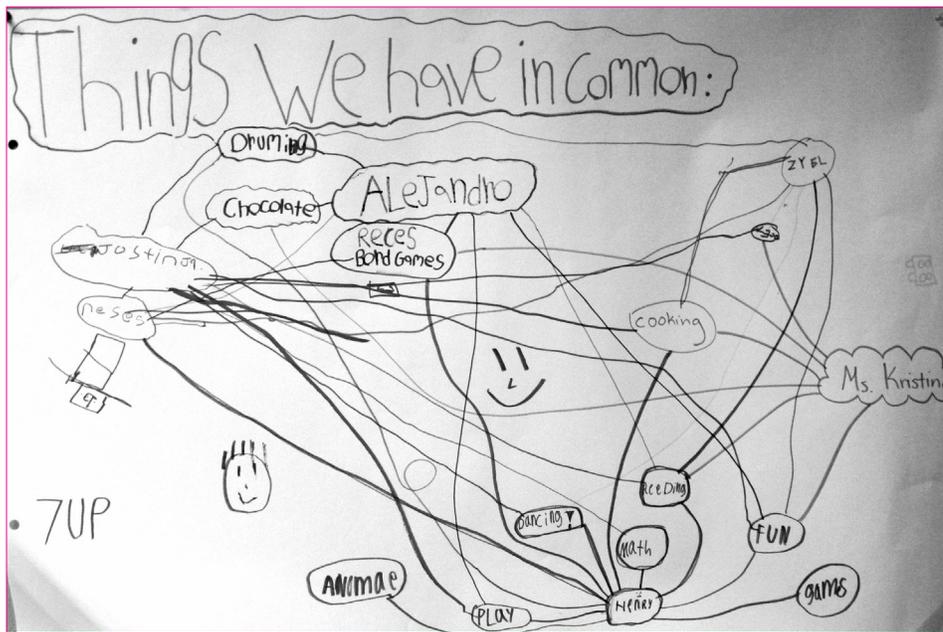
-Nakia, June & Elsa

Room 215

What does Martin Luther King Day mean to you?

"Martin Luther King Day means a lot to me because it is a day in honor of the people who died with Martin Luther King fighting for freedom and wanting everyone to be equal. I believe this is a great cause that we all should fight for. I really respect him and I think everyone should too."

-Zack McLaughlin



Another MHS Mix-it-Up poster.

“Martin Luther King, Jr. Day means a lot to me because I have some African American heritage and many African American friends. If Martin Luther King, Jr. never did what he did I might have not even be able to go to the same school. Since some of my ancestors were part African American I might not even be here because if my grandfather (who happened to be African American never met my Nana (because of racism) my Dad wouldn't be alive and neither would I. So if MLK never was a Civil Rights leader the African American people wouldn't have the rights that they have today.” -AJ Green
-Abdi, Angela, & Carlos

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

Save the date! On Saturday, January 24th, Room 213 has a field trip. But that's not a school day! Right, but it is the day Boston Arts Academy is performing the Broadway hit, *In the Heights*, at the Strand Theater in Dorchester and we have tickets for

everyone.

We are attending this musical as a class to launch our Term 2 Theme Studies. In both our study of the musical and the Kingdoms of the Nile theme, we will focus on the themes of identity, conflict, and legacy. What connections will we find between a modern day Latino culture and ancient African civilizations? How can we use dramatic presentations to share what we learn? Why is it important that all people's stories are told and heard?

Adult family members are most welcome to attend the show with us. Please call me about tickets.
-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

This week, we started examining the start of the Revolutionary War in history class. Specifically, we looked into Paul Revere's ride and the battles of Lexington and Concord. We also analyzed the Declaration of Independence. It's exciting to learn about historical events that happened so

close to home and the same was true for our students. As a whole we were more engaged than usual.

As I walked around the room, one student commented, “ohh, so that's why the school in Lexington is called Minuteman” a little while later another student said, “wouldn't the Loyalists also be Patriots since they were also loyal to their country?” A few students also figured that the New England Patriots are named after the patriots of the American Revolution.

Next, we will examine the role that African-Americans and slavery played in the Revolutionary War. One of the questions we will need to answer is how it is that a country founded on individual rights and freedoms ignore the rights of African-Americans (and women).

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

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Pajama & Literacy Day!

Come join us next Thursday and begin your day reading...in your pajamas! Whether you bring your favorite book or snuggle up with one from our collections, we look forward to sharing this special time with you! Thursday, January 22, 2015 8:00-9:30 am

Family Reading Morning Schedule:
8-8:30: Book Swap & Book Making (bring a book, get a new book, make a book)

8:30-9: Whole School Story Time
9-9:30: Reading and Literacy in Home Classrooms (Bring a dish or fruit to share)

Locations will be provided upon arrival!

CLASSROOM NEWS

Outside the Lines

MHS family members Amy Fleischer and Bridget Lee are restarting Outside the Lines, a family support/advocacy group for kids with special needs at MHS. All are welcome. The first meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at 6:00 pm in Room 203 (across from the main office). Childcare and snacks will be provided.

Family Council News

On Thursday, February 5, 2015 a working Family Council Meeting will be held at 5:45 pm. All MHS families are members. Come, have some dinner, meet some new friends and get involved. Childcare and dinner provided. Please RSVP to Joni 617-635-6384.

Save the Date: March 20, 2015, from 6:00 - 8:00 pm. Mission Hill Third Annual Movie Night! More info TBD.

Boston SpedPac Special Needs Camp and Resource Fair

Thursday January 22, 2015 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm at The Richard J. Murphy School Cafeteria, 1 Worrell Street, Dorchester 02122.

Healthy Communities Study

MHS is a part of a new national study called the Healthy Communities Study! The Healthy Communities Study is trying to find out how community programs and local policies help children be healthy. Our school was picked to represent our community in this nationwide effort!

To learn more go to: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/hcs/index.shtml>
An interest form was sent out before winter break, but an additional interest form will be going home with your student next week due to a low return rate.

IF YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY:

- A study team member will conduct an in-person visit with you and your child.
- They will ask about the foods your child eats and the physical activities that your child does.
- They will measure you and your child's height and weight.
- Your family will get gifts worth \$30 to thank you for being in the study.

Please fill out the Study Interest Form next week so you have a chance to be in the study!

-*Laura Golitko,*
MHS Wellness Coordinator

Free Cooking Classes!

Join the All Dorchester Sports League for Fit Kitchen, a series of 5 cooking and nutrition classes on Saturdays from 10:00-12:00 starting on January 24th. Open to children ages 10-18 and their families. You may register for one or all classes but space is limited and first come, first serve. Call 617 287 1601 to register.

Ping Pong, Anyone?

Wellness Coordinator Laura Golitko has a project up on DonorsChoose.org to purchase ping pong tables for MHS Wellness. Check it out at

<http://www.donorschoose.org/we-teach/2638507>. The project is open until April, 2015.

MHS Online Family Forum

Did you know that the MHS online family forum is a GREAT resource for parents, caregivers, and staff? 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) amy-banz@mit.edu.

Cold Weather Reminder

Please remember MHS students of ALL ages play outside as much as possible. Remember to send your child with layers and appropriate clothing, according to the day's forecast. If they enjoy playing in the snow, please send them with an extra change of clothing for that day. If you need extra gloves, scarves, or a jacket for your child please let your child's teacher know or call Courtney at 617.635.6384. We are happy to assist in any way we can.

Lost and Found

There are several large bins in our Lost & Found area (adjacent to the main office). Several winter coats, hats and gloves are included in this large collection of wayward clothing. Please stop by or contact your child's teacher if he or she has lost anything.

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*

Deborah Meier, *Founder*

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

Mission Hill K-8 School

A Boston Public Pilot School

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