



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Friday, April 3, 2015
Good Friday: NO SCHOOL
- April 6-10, 2015
PARCC Testing, Grades 3-8
- Monday, April 6, 2015
Struggle for Justice Curriculum begins
- Thursday, April 9, 2015
Family Council Working Meeting 5:45-7 pm
- Friday, April 10, 2015
Dress Like a Book Character Day

April 2, 2015

Volume 18, Issue 24

Too Young to Know

Dear Friends, Families, Students and Staff:

One of our teachers made this statement, “Too young to know”, as we talked about the current trend of technology devices in the hands of young children.

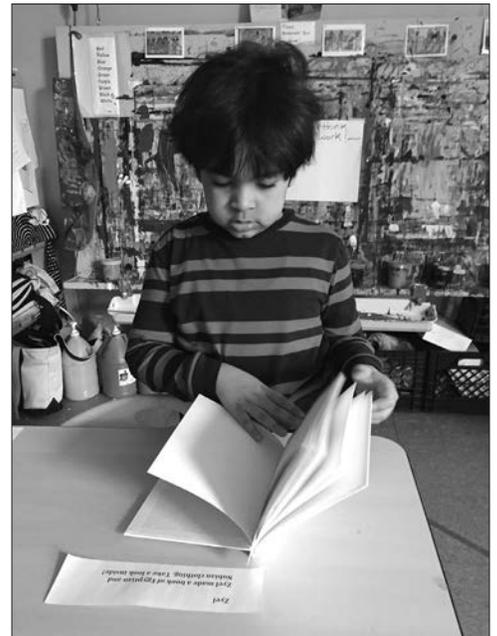
She reminded me that years ago parents were cautioned against using television as a baby sitter or pacifier. These days other devices are used (cell phones, iPads, etc) to hold the attention of and/or pacify our child while adults do their things.

I was a single parent and understand the need for a break; a moment to collect myself after a long day before engaging with my child. I understand the ongoing demand that children put upon their caregivers. However, I offer some food for thought as we navigate the world of technology and raising our children.

There’s a lot of talk about preparing for the 21st century. That talk is the root of current academic demands and often the reason behind use of technology in classrooms. I wonder how anyone knows what the future will require of our children. We know that technology has brought our world closer, and that all things—the good, the bad, and things we don’t understand—can be at our fingertips. With the world at our fingertips through devices, I want to remind you that our children are sometimes too young to know about what’s out there.

It’s not hard for emotional damage to happen. Whether through images that are not intended for young eyes that cause shock or disturb, or through communication with others that involves hurtful language, our children can be too young to know.

If you believe in preparing your child for the 21st century, involve your child in solving problems that you face balancing a budget, working with a colleague, attempting a fitness challenge or fixing something in the house that is broken. It’s not all about knowing how to use a technology device at a young age. What’s needed is creativity, problem solving, coping skills, and a growth mindset for success in the 21st century. These age-old desirable qualities just weren’t asked of the masses, only a few. The 21st century will require creativity from all of us.



CLASSROOM NEWS

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

Last week the children in room 108 learned about farming along the Nile river in Egypt and Nubia. In the spirit of planting, children also learned how to plant potatoes and beans here in the classroom. They started the lesson with a song that they love to sing called “The Itsy Bitsy Bean Seed”. This week is the end of our Kingdoms of the Nile Unit. Here are the words to the song (sung to the tune of the Itsy Bitsy Spider).

*The Itsy Bitsy bean seed
needs special things to grow,
Let’s ask the farmer,
She always seems to know,
Soil and water, and a little sun,
Help the Itsy Bitsy bean seed,
Grow up big and strong!*
-Thuy Truong

Room 106

Last Friday, students in room 106 went to the Museum of Fine Arts to see the ancient artifacts of Africa (including Egypt and Nubia). I knew the children would do a terrific job, and they certainly proved me right! The trip started off with a 39-bus ride, which was a highlight for many. When we arrived at the museum, we saw jewelry, bowls, utensils and masks from ancient Egypt and Nubia. Students particularly enjoyed the funeral procession masks that mourners would wear, which was something we read while learning about mummies. From there we moved on to view mummy coffins, sarcophaguses, and tomb walls decorated with paintings and hieroglyphics. Children identified symbols they recognized and were excited to see many depictions of gods and goddesses we had read about during



Planting beans and potatoes in room 108.

our unit study. We finished our tour by looking at a large false wall from an ancient Egyptian tomb. The students loved learning about tomb robbers, and this was a perfect note to end visit. I was so proud of each and every student, and I am so glad I was able to share this experience with them. Please stop by room 106 to view drawings and photos from our amazing trip.

-Liz & Renee

Room 107

“They believed in an afterlife.”

“Well, when you die you go to God in heaven.”

“No, when you die you go under the earth.”

Clearing up some confusion around the purpose of the pyramids prompted a small group of our students to engage in the discussion above concerning what the Nubians believed about death compared to their own family beliefs. However, as we continue to learn new things and engage in juicy conversations, we cannot help but notice that it’s

that time again. Time for reports and ultimately, time to reflect. When asked what they knew about Nubia, the Princess Dragon Hot Wheels said



Putting finishing touches on the mummy in room 109

the following:

“They have camels and pyramids and mummies and dresses”.

“The pyramids are big!”

“They have a lot of gold.”

“They have fish”.

“They like to eat fish and they have camels to ride.”

“They have a lot of dogs. They put them in cases and turn them into mummies.”

“They traded”.

“They have animals”.

“The weather is hot”.

“There are pharaohs.”

“Mothers live there. They have pyramids, camels and cows.”

“The Nubians wore necklaces made out of metal and gold..”

“Nubia is in Egypt.”

“They have cows and cowboys.”

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

Enjoy the photographs of children putting finishing touches on the mummy case. We welcome the community to visit our display in room 109!

-Jenny, Liz, Meira, & Angelina

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

On Tuesday we took a trip to the National Center for Afro-American Artists in Roxbury to see their exhibit called “Aspelta”. King Aspelta was a Nubian king who reigned in the 25th dynasty of Nubia. Our tour guide, who also happened to be the curator of the exhibit and the museum itself, was full of fascinating information! We saw artifacts found in King Aspelta’s tomb in the Nuri area of Sudan. The Magic Explorers noticed cartouches, the sarcophagus, the eye of Horus, hieroglyphs, and

they even recognized a statue that we saw on our trip to the MFA last month. They asked lots of questions. They even impressed Mr. Gaither with their own knowledge and connections. In one of Mr. Gaither’s final statements he said, “Museums are in the business of evidence.” It was quite evident that everyone who saw Aspelta’s tomb today was intrigued and inspired!

-Jenerra Williams

Room 205

“Hi welcome to the Museum of Nubian and Art and Culture, can I have your ticket please?” Room 205 did not look the same this week. This week it was known as, “The Museum of Nubian Art and Culture.” Students worked very hard together to make this happen. Working in small groups such as ticket collectors, curators, information desk, and tour guides, students were able to send out invitations, make tickets, and record a video of “the making of the museum” where they were seen displaying and talking about the artifacts. After all of this hard work, students of room 205 were able to successfully welcome other classes and parents into the museum and have the opportunity to show off all of their hard work.

-Emma Marrs, Student Teacher

Room 217

“Who stole the cookie from the cookie jar?” “James....” then “Xavier...” then “Luis...” then...

“The...camera stole the cookie from the cookie jar!” Last Wednesday our end of the day routine was beautifully interrupted with the class acknowledging some guests who had spent the day with us. We had the privilege of inviting Dan Habib (“the camera in our cookie jar song!”) to learn

CLASSROOM NEWS

about inclusion in our classroom. Dan Habib is the creator of a number of important films produced about disability and education. *Including Samuel*, produced by Dan Habib, has been shown at Mission Hill's Family Council and recently to 5th & 6th graders at their "Teach In." After the school day, Dan interviewed me about inclusion. At one point he asked, "Do you ever believe that inclusion isn't right for some kids?" I said, "I never, ever believe that inclusion isn't the right option for students with disabilities. I do however have doubts that adults will always do their part to make sure that school works for all kids." He made me reflect on how intentional inclusion must be. As adults we must all do our part. Are you giving your child time to talk about differences they have noticed in the classroom? Are you creating intentional play-dates to help your child learn that all kids belong? Are you helping your child recognize how much their classmates have grown throughout the year? Inclusion is about being in school with children with and without disabilities. It is also about making sure inclusion expands beyond the walls of our classroom.

-Emma Fialka-Feldman

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

The Spectacular 21 have been working hard to wrap up their projects and get ready for the theme breakfast this week. They are putting the finishing touches on their projects and getting ready to present them to families and the school community. Some of the questions they set out to answer during their research were:

How did the pharaohs dress?
What kind of food did they eat and where did it come from?
Did every mummy wear this dress? (A dress they saw at the MFA that was found on a mummy)
Why was art and writing important to Ancient Egyptians?
Who were the different gods and goddesses? What kinds of temples were there?
If you weren't able to see the Spectacular 21's projects at the theme breakfast, please stop by our room next week to check out all of our hard work!

-Kristina Voss & Amina Michel-Lord

Room 216

I hope you enjoy the long week-end. Each day this week at morning meeting students have asked, "Is Good Friday this week?... What is Good Friday?... What is Passover?... Do we have school on Friday?... Is Friday a holiday" Students have exchanged stories about family traditions and answered questions from one another connected to this weekend. I loved witnessing this exchange, students learning about how life is for one another. Getting



At the MFA with Abdi's class.

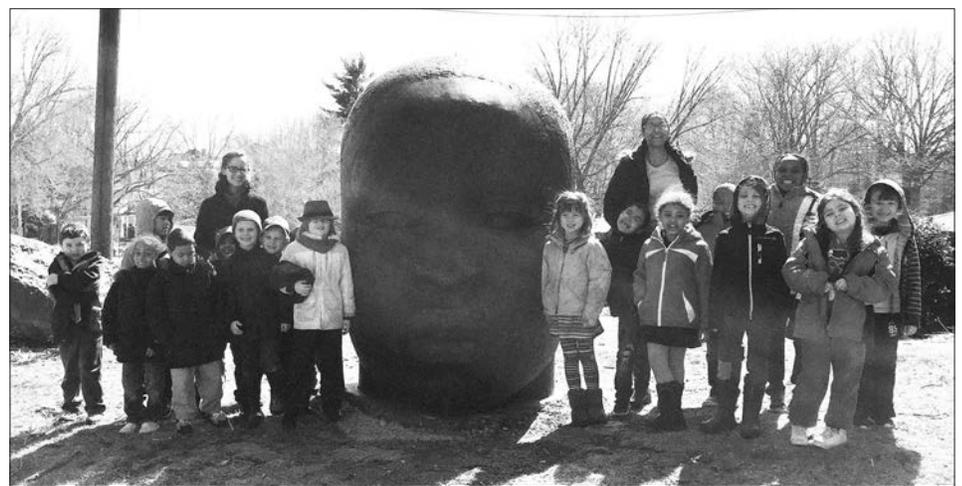
to know each other better is a focus for us. Our morning meetings and small group work times provide opportunities to hear each other in different ways. I wonder if they realize how much they are growing from listening to one another.

-Ayla & Shaina

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

The Abu Simbel temples are two rock temples in Abu Simbel, a small village in Nubia. The temples are on



The Magic Explorers at the National Center for Afro-American Artists.

CLASSROOM NEWS

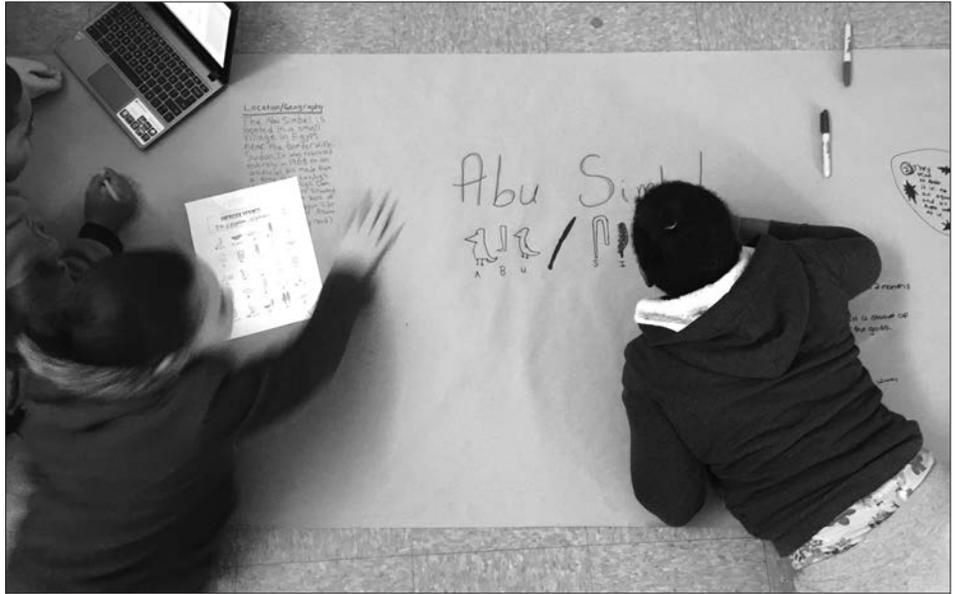
the Nassar Lake and are carved out of the mountainside. Pharaoh Ramesses II built them as a monument to himself and his queen Nefertari. The Frozen Fire class has spent time reconstructing the temples, during their curriculum Abu Simbel: Construction, Discovery, and Reconstruction.

-Nakia, June, Meron, & Elsa

Room 215

Theme Ancient Nubia is going out in style: carefully molded pyramids, a Nubian-dressed mannequin, with custom feather crown and jewelry, a scene of battle between Nubia and Egypt out of clay, the Nile River, and the sun-god, Apedemak, realized. The clay-works show exasperation but not surrender. I could go on about how my students learn to work with clay - how to breathe and press and shape clay.

One of the articulated goals of our theme study was: students will develop a museum "literacy" by becoming comfortable going to museums and using museums to learn and to critically examine questions of representation, ownership and power. Last Friday, we made our second trip to the Museum of Fine Arts and spent an hour talking with Dr. Rita Freed, Curator of the Egyptian Department. Barbara Brown of the African Studies Center at Boston University arranged our visit. Students were puzzled that the MFA has the largest collection of Nubian objects in the world, but displays a mere fraction of it. Dr. Freed tried to persuade us that the under-representation of Nubia was a matter of money not vision. Students asked: Where do you keep the objects? Are they ok? Do you think someone might try to steal them? How much will it cost to get them



Nakia's class works on their Abu Simbel project.

out of storage?

If you want to see the complete collection, all 21,700 objects go to www.mfa.org, type "Nubian," then refine your search by entering, "The Ancient World."

-Abdi, Angela & Carlos

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

Wrapping up our theme project is calling for some introspection. For the past few months, we've been examining three big ideas: identity, conflict, and legacy. We've looked for evidence of these ideas in three distinct class experiences: reading and attending *In the Heights*, watching and reading Martin Luther King's speech *What Is Your Life's Blueprint?*, and exploring the Kingdom of Nubia. We can see that identity, conflict, and legacy are themes that connect people across time and place.

In response, the kids are raising such deep questions. Will we struggle when we transition to high school

the way Nina in *Heights* did when she transitioned to college? Why is the image of beauty still a struggle for so many people despite MLK's clarity on self-worth? Why is the struggle for water experienced by the Nubians still being lived by the people in South Sudan?

Struggles shape identity, but how do we keep from being defined by our struggles? Legacies also shape identity, so how do we draw on the strength of those who came before? And what responsibility do we have to consider not only the legacy that we receive, but also the legacy we create?

Your children are grappling with these weighty, life-long questions. This would be a great time for you to share a family story. What makes your family unique? How do you resolve conflicts? What legacy do you hold dear and hope to see live on in your children?

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

The second half of the school year

CLASSROOM NEWS

has felt really disjointed. Maybe it was the neverending snowstorms, maybe it's because we just finished three days of PARCC testing or it could be that after being out of the classroom for three years I'm out of touch with the natural rhythm of the school year. Whatever the reason, it's been difficult to build momentum and find a groove. I know if I'm feeling it, so are the students.

There is light at the end of the tunnel however. We have two more days of testing next week and then we're done with PARCC for a while. More importantly, it's safe to assume we are not going to have a major snowstorm any time soon. That leaves us with April break as the only significant break until summer vacation. It will be perfect as we will need the time to prepare for portfolio presentations. I'm looking forward to the homestretch

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

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

The FOMHS Music Program Campaign Needs Your Support!

The Friends of the Mission Hill School volunteer fundraising crew has launched a new campaign to keep our music program going strong. Please consider a donation at any level, and please share the campaign with friends and family!

Hear all about our goals by visiting this web page:

bit.ly/MissionHillMusic

Get your Camp Physical!

Don't forget that summer programs ALL require a medical examination by a licensed physician within 12 months preceding the program. This is a state requirement for all children attending camp, so book your child's appointment now. Remember, Nurse Georgie needs updated copies of physicals as well, so drop a copy in her mailbox after your appointment.

Family Council News

All families at MHS are members of the Family Council! Contact Co-Chairs Bridget Lee bridgetelee@gmail.com or Rachel Goldsmith rachego@mindspring.com with questions or for more information.

April 9, 2015: Family Council Meeting (working session) in room 203 from 5:45 - 7:00 pm.

SWSG is collecting tabs for Ronald McDonald House

The students in the Strong Women, Strong Girls group are fundraising to help provide housing for those in need as part of their spring service project. They would appreciate any help collecting can tabs these next two weeks. Find tabs on all kind of cans: soup, vegetables, soda, juice, cat food, fruit etc. You can drop them off in the pink SWSG box in the office.

Apprentice Learning



Eighth grade apprentice, Arly Milano poses with her mentor, Managing Director, Narcissa Champion at Urban Improv, an interactive program for young people that uses improvisational theatre workshops to teach violence prevention, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Urban Improv has been a MHS program partner for over 15 years. Under Sissa's tutelage, Arly learned fundraising 101 as an administrative assistant preparing for Urban Improv's annual fundraiser, Banned in Boston. Don't miss it on April 10!

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

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

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