



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- May 4-8, 2015
Screen Free Week!
- Tuesday, May 5, 2015
Music Fundraiser at Tres Gatos! (See Page 6)
- Tuesday, May 12, 2015
School Picture Day!
- Thursday, May 14, 2015
Outside the Lines Mtg 5:45 - 7:00 pm, Room 203
- Wednesday, May 20, 2015
Spring Music Concert at MHS! (See Page 6)
- Thursday, May 21, 2015
Friends of the Mission Hill School Annual Mtg. (See Page 6)

May 1, 2015

Volume 18, Issue 27

Why go Screen-Free?

Dear Friends, Families, Students and Staff:

Way back when, in 1994, before smart phones and apps, Facebook and Twitter, a couple folks decided to start a movement to reduce the amount of time families were spending in front of televisions. “TV-Turnoff Week” was born. Over the years, participation in the event has grown (this is now an international event) even as the number of screens has exploded. This year we will celebrate Screen-Free Week May 4th – 10th. How do so many screens affect young children, our families and our communities? We don’t have all the answers, though we do know that, including when they’re multitasking, 8 – 18 year olds consume an average of 7 hours and 11 minutes of screen media per day (*Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010*). And that children who spend less time watching TV in the early years tend to do better in school, have a healthier diet, are more physically active and are better able to engage in schoolwork in later elementary school years (*Pagani, 2010*).

Did you know that the American Academy of Pediatrics endorses Screen-Free Week? They say “Screens, including televisions, computers, tablets and cellphones, are inescapable in today’s connected world. But when it comes to children, from toddlers to teens, screen time should be limited. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends parents develop a family media plan to manage electronic media to minimize potential health risks, and to maximize its benefits. Screen Free Week is the perfect time for families to connect with one another in various ways that don’t involve media. This helps contribute to the optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.”

Taking a break from screens isn’t just important for children. For the 72 hours of the NCAA tournament, the Maryland women’s basketball team gave up their cell phones. And “the players — or some of them, at least — discovered that they actually liked not having their phones.” One player noted, “Sometimes you’ll find yourself twiddling your thumbs — like, what are we supposed to do? — but it helps us enjoy each other more. Not that we’re forced to talk to each other or be around each other, but we’re more engaged, more in the moment.” (*Steinberg, Washington Post, April 2, 2015*)

Please join me, and many of us at MHS, as we turn off our screen entertainment (you can still use the screens for work) and turn on the world around us from May 4th – 10th. What will you do with all that time? Go for a walk? Garden? Write a letter? Play outside? Try a new recipe? The options are limitless. Make a Screen-Free plan with your entire family. Go to screenfreeweek.org for more ideas and information.

-Geraldyn Bywater McLaughlin

K0 Lead Teacher, MHS Parent & Defending the Early Years Director



KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

We read the Todd Parr book *It's Okay to be Different*. Todd writes, "You are special and important just because of who you are." We have taken time in our classroom to think about each one of us. The children thought about each other and made a list of what makes each of us special. Here is the list:

Emma is good at making friends.

Dixon is great at building towers.

Camille is great at knowing where stuff is on her iPad.

Simeon is good at building building rocketships and cities with Julian.

Willow is good at playing and looking and finding things

Camden gives great hugs.

Lola likes to draw and play "Compare".

Julian likes making paper airplanes.

Adrianna gives hugs when people are sad.

Lena is a good climber on the big rocks.

Drew sings very well and plays drums.

Shona is good at carrying heavy things.

Vidania is good at making cupcakes.

Ethan is good at playing at the dollhouse.

Joziana is good with animals. She loves the snails.

Nikaye is good with painting and cooking.

Jack loves school and books. He likes exploring and pointing.

-*Geralyn McLaughlin*

Room 106

It is hard for me to write this newsletter today, as it will be the last one I write this year. I will have an overlap with Kathy next week, and then will

be returning to the Russell J. Call Children's Center for the summer. I have had such a great year with the children here and it is going to be hard to say goodbye. I want to thank everyone in the MHS community who has supported me throughout my two years here, and I hope to see you all again in the future. I wish everyone a happy and successful end of the school year.

-*Liz Borson*

Room 107

"I like mummies!" "I saw a snake!"
"It was AWESOME!"

-*King Aspelta's Tomb*

The week before April vacation was filled with exploration for the Princess Dragon Hot Wheels. We were on a mission to find connections to Nubia in Boston. Our first trip took us to the Museum of Fine Arts where we saw numerous artifacts of both Nubia and Egypt. However, the favorite of all our students (as evidenced by their excitement) was of course seeing the real mummies of both people and animals! A few days later we took a trip to the Franklin Park Zoo. While there, our scavenger hunt introduced us to Nubian animals including vultures, ostriches, geese, storks, eagles, giraffes, chickens, crocodiles, camels, snakes, owls, hippos, etc. Our final trip of the week led us to the National Center of Afro-American Artists to see its replica of King Aspelta's tomb. Our tour guide, Mr. Edmund Barry Gaither, held our students (his audience) captive as he unlocked some of the secrets of this Nubian king. On each of our treks, students were excited to see much of what we studied come alive.

-*Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth*

Room 109

Weclome back! This week we returned to peas that had sprouted over the break. Using George Washington Carver, the plant doctor, as our inspiration, the class has explored what soil is and what helps plants grow. The children have each chosen what type of environment to grow their peas in, including soil, water and sand. What will meet the needs of our plants? We are also identifying what our various special gifts and talents. We will be reflecting on our own and other's in the class. What are the special gifts and talents of each one of your family members?

-*Meira Soloff, Student Teacher*



Images from growing onions in room 109.

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

“Everything at the Farm School!”

That was Roldani’s response and exactly what I was thinking when asked what they liked best at Farm School. It was such a great experience. We got up close to animals and even fed some goats. Other responses:
Maurice: Getting one of the eggs from the ducks.

Typrese: Petting the cows and putting the hay up next to them.

Michelle: Getting eggs from the chickens.

Simeon: Going in the duck house.

Peter: Getting the chicken eggs.

Liam: Seeing the horses.

Zyel: Brushing up the egg with the sandpaper.

Jaiden: Holding the eggs and seeing the horses.

Hiram: Watching them brush the horse.

Juel: I saw a horse.

Dillon: Seeing the calf.

Kenneth: Seeing the horses.

Adler: The whole thing.

Eli: Going on the swing.

Shirley: Seeing the baby calf and the pregnant goats.

Maya M: Seeing the horses in the house.

Maya L: Seeing the cows because there was a two day old calf.

Avian: Getting an egg from a chicken coop.”

-*Polly Wing*

Room 205

Our trips to the Farm School are one of my favorite moments each year. Seeing students in a new environment, engaging in different chores, and interacting with animals allows me to see the children in a different way than in the classroom. Zora,

Gianna, Cyrus, and Euan decided to curl up and lay down in holes like the chickens basking in the sun. Gimar and Azad found duck eggs. Victor spotted every dog that roamed the farm. Milo and Lukas fed the goats, while Nate pretended to herd them. Anand came face to face with a horse and marveled at how big his head was. Braxton, Lenardo, and Amos brushed the cows. Adam and Emile found chicken eggs. Students compared duck eggs to chicken eggs, noticing that the duck eggs were white and bigger in contrast to the smaller brown chicken eggs. We had fun playing field games with the farmers, and enjoyed a quiet snack and story in the horse barn at the end of our busy day. As the bus pulled away we waved to the farmers and students called out, “See you next year!”

-*Ashleigh L’Heureux*

Room 217

This week, we spent lots of time on buses! We had our exciting Farm School Trip to Athol, MA where students spent time reading, talking, finger knitting, and sleeping on the bus. At the farm, the children participated in farm chores and met many of the animals. On another day, we spent time on the 39 Bus. As part of our study of the desegregation movement in Boston, we are learning about the different neighborhoods. The 39 Bus took us through Jamaica Plain, Mission Hill, and Back Bay. We stopped in Mission Hill and Back Bay. In groups, children documented what they saw in the neighborhoods. There is always a lot to do and learn in in the classroom and this week reminded us about the important learning that happens when we leave our classroom too!

-*Emma Fialka-Feldman*



Ashleigh’s class at Farm School.

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

On Monday morning, third and fourth grades boarded the bus to go to our beloved Farm School. While everyone had a great time lots was learned as well.

Skye: Phoenix’s mom died. Her name starts with a “p” just like her mom.

Athena: They make a big fire. A pipe, that is insulated and it [water] goes into the room and makes the rooms warm.

Shawnmathew: Goats eat the pine needles.

Marquell: Ducks are really dirty.

Andrew: Hay gets delivered to the farm.

CLASSROOM NEWS

Jovanni: Horses don't like a lot of excited people around them 'cause they get scared.

Amari: Ducks can't talk to each other.

Nevaeh: Chickens take baths in the dirt.

Daniel- Ducks are really sensitive and they don't like people around. t

Nelson: A cow was born and her mom died after.

Zuhri: Ducks have eyes on the side of their heads. If they see creatures with eyes on the front of their heads they think they are predators and get scared.

Maya: Goats eat pine needles and spit out the sticks.

Janira: When cows get older they still want to drink their mom's milk and it annoys the mom.

Enaisja: You only milk cows in the morning.

Ruby: Farmers put a plastic clip around the baby cow's (older than a year) nose so they can't drink milk from the mom any more.

Vitoria: Road chickens don't forget how to fly and fly out of the coop.

Elias: I learned chickens eat seeds.

Kelise: Sometimes, when you get close to ducks they get scared and paranoid.

We are already looking forward to next year's visit and all it will entail.

-Amina Michel-Lord & Kristina Voss

Room 216

Last week, two students from room 216 participated in the Boston Athletic Association Relay Challenge. Here are some thoughts from Dalia and Kesler:

Kesler: It was fun. I want to go again! In the first round, Dalia took off and she ran. The two other teams couldn't catch up to Dalia. She passed the baton to my friend. My friend passed



Emma's class, exploring the city by bus.

it to me. I was running fast. At first, I was in first but a guy passed me and I came in second.

Dalia: There were a lot of people. We raced; I had to run three laps around the track. When it was done, we got to take a poll that said the Mission Hill School on it. We saw Miss Amina, Ayanna and her son. We also saw Mekhai. I can't wait until next year; I want to do it again! I hope some more kids come next year! Thank you Carol and Laura for getting our students involved.

-Ayla & Shaina

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

The class has been reading the book *The Middle Passage: White Ships Black Cargo* by Tom Feelings for our Struggle for Justice theme. It took him 20 years to create this wordless picture book done completely in black and white and the drawings are a reflection of that process. We are less than half-way through and it has elicited lots of emotions and dialogue

and questions with the class. Here are a few snippets...

"...another image took place in a tunnel...there must have been hundreds of people in that tunnel...I thought about what it would be like to be one of those people."

"Why was the man in the water, how did he get there?"

"I like how there are only pictures and you can think about the pictures in different ways. Example (drew a picture of a smiley face) This could mean happy, it could mean they are bald, it could mean nerves"

"Why did he only make it black and white?"

"I think this book tells the story in a weird way but good!!

"When I was looking at the book it was kind of jacked up because of the way the Europeans were treating the Africans, there should be an answer for why they made them slaves"

"Why did he draw a picture of black people with weapons, guarding other black people?"

-Nakia, June, & Meron



Middle school students display their Certificate of Excellence at the Muddy River Symposium.

Room 210

“I go about collecting ideas; I observe, hear, that’s how my ideas come to me. Sometimes, the ideas come to me through the materials, a rope, a cloth that means something to someone I know. Sometimes, I see something, and I get my ideas through conversations,” that’s how the artist Susan Thompson explained to us her creative process. We attended her show, “Threading Legacy,” on Thursday, April 16th. Thompson is an artist whose work is primarily inspired by African-American history as well as a variety of different cultural arts. We had been invited to make art with Susan by MassArt professor, Beth Balliro and her students. The workshop involved making banners to our loved ones using a variety of materials to create pieces inspired by the artist. Our banners are on display outside of Room 215. Please have a look. Susan Thompson will be exhibiting her work at Mission Hill School this spring!
-Abdi, Angela & Carlos

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

On April 17th, a group of 7/8 MHS students participated in the 9th Annual Muddy River Symposium on Energy, Climate Change, and the Environment at Wheelock College. After holding their knowledge and enthusiasm in stellar fashion, they received a Certificate of Excellence. During the poster session, the keynote speaker, Bina Venkataraman, listened to their presentation and asked many questions which students responded to thoughtfully. Later during her speech, Dr. Venkataraman frequently referenced the students’ work and commentary. MHS was the only school represented by middle school students; all other presenters were representatives from the Colleges of the Fenway. Many congratulations to the middle school and many thanks to Andrew MacBlane, from the Boston Nature Center, for supporting our young scientists!
-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

As I announced to the 8th grade class that we would begin working on our final research paper of the year in history, there was a range of emotions in the room. Some seemed anxious, others were clearly excited and many in between. They knew that it’s not just an opportunity to showcase everything they’ve learned this year but it’s also work that they will include in their portfolio presentations. It was clear that they knew this was important work.

Many students chose to extend work on topics that we explored earlier in the year such as the Boston Tea Party, the Stamp Act and other factors that led to the Revolutionary War. There are also some new topics that are connected but not directly related to ones we’ve already studied.

I’m excited, this is one of my favorite times of the year. In the next few weeks, it will not exactly be smooth sailing, but it will probably be the best work students have created.
-Reginald Toussaint, Carol East-José,
& Emmanuel St. Vil

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Spring Music Concert

Join us for an evening of music with your amazing MHS children!

Where: The MHS Auditorium

When: Wednesday, May 20, 2015
from 5:00 - 7:30pm

The FOMHS Music Program Campaign Needs Your Support!

The Friends of the Mission Hill School has launched a 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

Music Fundraiser at Tres Gatos

On May 5th, the Jamaica Plain restaurant, Tres Gatos, will host a fundraiser evening for the school's Music Program. Come get some dinner and hear music teacher Billy Buss perform. A portion of the evening's proceeds will be donated to support music education at our school. This is an adult-only event. Contact Bridget Lee for more information: bridgetelee@gmail.com

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, Georgia needs updated copies of physicals as well, so drop a copy in her mailbox after your appointment.

MHS Swag for Sale Online!

Mission Hill School sweatshirts, pants, and t-shirts are now available for online purchase! You may put in your order to CustomInk (you must pay for each piece separately). Joni will receive a single delivery with all of the items ordered during that 3-4 week period. Links and prices for each piece:

Adult Sweatpants: <https://www.customink.com/g/mww0-00a2-0drz>

Youth Sweatpants: <https://www.customink.com/g/mww0-00a2-0dra>

Adult/Youth Hoodie Sweatshirt: <https://www.customink.com/g/mww0-00a2-0dqh>

Adult/Youth Short Sleeve T-Shirt: <https://www.customink.com/g/mww0-00a2-0dsw>

FOMHS Meeting

"The mission of the Friends of the Mission Hill School is to work collaboratively with families, staff, community members, and neighbors to support the whole education of Mission Hill School students.... The goal of the Friends of the Mission Hill School is to build relationships and to seek public and private funds to support and expand existing school programs and to create new initiatives that enhance the lives and education of Mission Hill School students, families, and staff."

Families interested in learning more about the Friends of the Mission Hill School, a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible charity supporting the work of the school, are invited to the annual meeting on Thursday, May 21, 2015 at 6:00 pm in Room 203 (Dani's room).

Project America Run



MHS recently welcomed a special visitor, Army veteran Mike Ehredt, who came and shared the story of his journey across the US to honor fallen American soldiers. Running more than 30 miles a day, Mike stopped every mile along his journey to plant a flag inscribed with the name, rank, age, and hometown of a fallen soldier. Mike used a large map of the country and had students place flags across it to depict his running routes. We thank Mike and his crew for sharing his inspiring story with us.

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*

Deborah Meier, *Founder*

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

Mission Hill K-8 School

A Boston Public Pilot School

WWW.MISSIONHILLSCHOOL.ORG

20 Child Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

T 617-635-6384

F 617-635-6419