



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Monday, May 25, 2015
Memorial Day: NO SCHOOL
- Wednesday, May 27, 2015
Teacher Appreciation Day (see attached flyer)
- June 1 - 9: *Grade 8 Portfolios*
- June 10 - 18: *Grade 7 Portfolios*
- Thursday, June 11, 2015
Governance Board Meeting 5-7:00 pm

May 22, 2015

Volume 18, Issue 30

Keeping the Habits of Mind in Hand

Thandiwe Ramsey is now graduating from Boston Arts Academy and preparing to enter college in the fall. When she was a middle school student at Mission Hill, she responded to a design challenge by creating the graphic pictured here. I love the image because it speaks to an action I hope we instill in kids: keep the Habits of Mind in hand.

Deborah Meier has worked since the 1960's to make schools better places for kids and adults. She keeps before us the call to "use one's mind well." Her concern for education is rooted in deep beliefs about democracy and equity. Her work has had a profound impact on my life as a career transition teacher. Coming to grade school teaching later in life, I now have the zeal of a convert to share what I have come to deeply believe and hold dear.

The Habits of Mind came to Mission Hill by way of Deborah's Central Park East School in New York. There, high school students used the habits of mind to defend their work in graduation portfolios. When Mission Hill was started in Boston, the habits of mind were a central part of the school's mission statement, curriculum development, and learning expectations. As such, they became an integral part of the graduation portfolio process. Students select work from their middle school years to present to a committee as evidence of being ready to transition to high school. In the fourth year of the school, we started using worktags to identify the assignment and formalize reflection.

Use of the Mission Hill Habits of Mind and Work are a significant part of our school culture. I sometimes view this focus as planting seeds. Habits develop over time and with support. These are thinking practices that can be learned and that can affect outcomes in life, not just in school.

The Mission Hill website states, "The Mission Hill Habits of Mind are an approach to both the traditional academic disciplines (math, science, literature and history) and the interdisciplinary stuff of ordinary life. They are what lead us to ask good questions and seek solid answers. They are our definition of a well-educated person."

Throughout all teaching, learning, and social experiences, adults and students at Mission Hill attend to the Habits of Mind and Work. With a goal of using one's mind well, in school and in life, intentional teaching, modeling, and use of these habits is one of the most important frames we can develop in students.

Use of the Habits of Mind and Work develops along with the practice of reflection. Without stopping to think about what you did, what happened, and how you can do better, we can't give ourselves the feedback we need to grow. We see the practice of reflection in action this time of year as 6th grade students prepare for Recollections, and 7th and 8th grade students prepare for Portfolios.

More than anything we teach, it is the Habits of Mind and Work that will keep kids engaged in the world, continuing to learn with and from others and contributing to the world they will create. Thandi's design captures our intent – habits in hand, ready to use, and requiring action. Habits that support both thinking and reflection. Habits that move out of the classroom and school and into everyday life. Habits in hand.

-Ann Ruggiero, Grades 7/8 Lead Teacher



KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

Last week we had our annual field trip to the Children's Museum. All week the children were excited as we counted down to the field trip day and read a social story about being at the museum. Everyone dressed in a green shirt and we rode in two large vans equipped with car seats. We drove through different parts of the city and got on the highway to see cars, planes, buses and railroads, Downtown Boston, and the Boston Harbor. When asked what they enjoyed most about the field trip the children responded:

Joziana: The blocks, the bubbles, the balls going down, the digger... EVERYTHING!

Dixon: The climbing structure. I could get down by myself.

Lena: The climbing structure.

Nikaye: I liked climbing up. And then I can get down.

Julian: We were rolling the balls down the ramps.

Simeon: The water!

Lola: Blowing bubbles.

Emma: Blowing bubbles; building blocks.

Camden: Climbing structure...it was hard. I did it a little bit.

Drew: I make bubbles and they pop. I did the balls down that thing (ramp).

Shona: I blow the bubbles.

Ethan was excited as he pretended to drive the school bus. Camille loved blowing bubbles and playing with the balls and ramps. Jack enjoyed using the bubbles instruments to make bubbles and watched as they floated around him then popped.

-Donna Winder

Room 106

Have you heard of Caine's arcade?



Joziana, "driving" the digger at the Children's Museum.

It is a wonderful place created by a young boy. He took recycled materials and built an arcade in his father's storefront. See more here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=falFNk-dq96U>. Caine's work has inspired an event called the Global Cardboard Challenge <http://imagination.is/our-projects/cardboard-challenge/>. This challenge is project-based work. Our class is starting a cardboard challenge. Students are passionate about using their imagination to build and create. With this challenge we are adding a writing and teaching component. The process will be documented and we hope to inspire others to have cardboard challenges as well.

How can you help us? We need cardboard in all sizes. Recycled materials are also needed. Tops of soda bottles, tops of squeeze pouches, and anything you think we might find interesting. With this challenge there is no such thing as too much. Have you created things from cardboard? Please share your ideas with us.

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

"I think the ladybug should be free ... so she can see her family and get the things she loves...Being free would be a really good day for her."

-Geneva

Recently, the perfect opportunity presented itself to extend our thinking around slavery and what it means to be free. A student found a ladybug on the playground and insisted on putting it into a jar to take home. While she made a nice habitat for the ladybug, we spoke about how it might feel in the jar. Several students suggested she "let it go free", which prompted us to ask, "What does it mean to be free?" They then replied: Free means...

"They can live life."

"It can go outside and meet its mom and dad."

"You are not in a jar or in a cage."

"Being out in the wild with Mother Nature."

"To let it go out of the cage."

"To go back with your family."

"To go to the park and play."

"To let go of all the bad things that happened to you."

"Humans are free."

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

I recently attended a workshop at Lesley University where teachers from the Opal School in Portland Oregon shared their work around Story Workshop. I was so excited to be there. I was inspired and challenged. One way that my thinking changed was not only can children tell stories with materials, but that materials can help awaken memory and stories within children. I shared this learning with the Rainbow Fire Dragons when we were

back together.

Shortly after we received some new materials, including wire and clay. Experimenting with bending the wire back and forth and twisting it around fingers, I overheard children use the new language, "I'm using this wire to awaken a story."

Here is a story awakened from wire and beads, as told by Kaia:

"There once was a girl who went to a little village. And then she went to the door of the first house and nobody answered. And then she went to the door of the second house. She knocked on the door. And Nobody answered. And then she went to all the houses and knocked on the door, and nobody answered.

She drove off and drove to find a village where people were more polite. Then she got out of her car and she rang the doorbell. Nobody answered. And then she went to the second house and rang the bell. And then the door opened. But there was nobody opening it! And then she went inside and it was dark. All the lights were off and there were no light switches. And then she went upstairs to the attic and she saw lots of spider webs. And she saw something white behind one of them. It was a ghost and it chased her downstairs and out of the house. She quickly closed the door and hopped back into her car. And then she drove as fast as she could and the ghost chased her all the way home."

-Jenny, Meira, Angelina, & Stephanie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

We shall not be moved. Greensboro Lunch Counter Sit-In. *I, Too, Sing America.* These are three resources

that we used last week to continue our work with answering our guiding questions for our theme. What is struggle? What is justice? How does struggle create change? This song, incident/photograph and poem were all used to talk about the lunch counter sit-ins that happened in the South during the Civil Rights movement. How do these three things connect and reflect struggle, justice, injustice and beauty? Below is the poem we used for our discussion and here is a re-write of the poem by Keysha. Enjoy.

-Jenerra Williams

I, too, sing Los Angeles

I am the lighter sister

They call me at the table

They never call me to do nothing

But I won't give up

And see if they can do better than me

Tomorrow

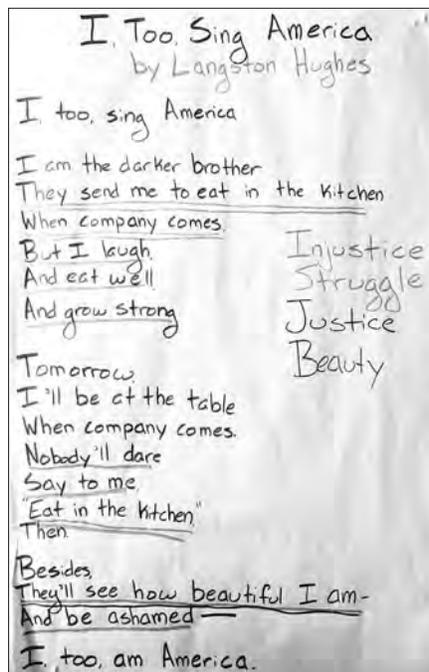
I will show them I am strong

Besides, they'll see me in that chair

and they will know me

I, too, am Los Angeles.

-Keysha



Room 205

Room 205 has begun viewing the African American Struggle for Justice theme through story quilts. We looked at the work of Faith Ringgold, famous for her painted story quilts. We read her books *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky* and *If a Bus Could Talk: the Story of Rosa Parks*. When looking at the quilts and books, students have been asking many questions and making connections between what they have learned about slavery, the Underground Railroad, and the Civil Rights Movement. Students have begun writing personal stories and then representing them through color, picture and symbol. Soon we will begin turning our stories into quilt squares, and with the help of families, turn our squares into a class story quilt.

-Kate Needham, Student Teacher

Room 217

Understanding history and events from the past can be challenging for young children. Interviewing people who participated in historic events and helped shaped history, help children develop perspective and learn that long ago, was not that long ago. Last week, our class took the 39 Bus to the South End Technology Center @ Tent City to interview Mel King. Mel King is an important community organizer, politician, and writer. He has made many contributions to Boston's civil rights history. As the students study the desegregation movement throughout the U.S. and within Boston, they generated a number of questions to ask Mel King. Luis and Elliot asked, "How did you help change laws?" Xavier asked, "Were you part of any sit ins?" and Erik asked, "Did you hold any signs? What did they say?" Mel

CLASSROOM NEWS

King shared that Rosa Parks was one of his heroes. He ended his almost 60 minute conversation with the children by saying that, "Listening in the most important way we can show kindness and love."

-Emma Fialka-Feldman

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Spring electives are off to an exciting start! Ayla and I are running a group called *Sketch The Neighborhood* in which students visit different places in JP and create sketches of our surroundings using various mediums. So far we have sketched the new leaves and red and yellow tulips in the school orchard with colored pencils, blooming trees in the arboretum with cray-pas, and colorful flower beds at the Loring-Greenough House with watercolor. We are documenting spring as it unfolds around us and have been enjoying the beautiful weather as we create our art. Stop by the gold wing to see some of our work!

-Kristina Voss & Amina Michel-Lord

Room 216

Room 216 is practicing the MHS way, "be kind and work hard." A new classroom routine we have adopted is called, Apologies and Appreciations. This routine usually takes place at closing meeting. It is a time for students and teachers to reflect on the day, appreciate each other's hard work or kindness and apologize to the class or an individual. Some appreciations have been, "thank you for reading to me," and "thank you for helping me." Some apologies have been, "I am sorry for calling you names," and "I am sorry that I hurt you."



Emma's class with Mel King.

This routine reminds us that a lot of positive and some negative things happen throughout the day. The process of acknowledging each other's kindness and feelings helps build and mend relationships. As we continue to practice the Mission Hill way, we watch our classroom community grow stronger. The teachers appreciate the hard work and kindness we observe everyday.

-Amanda, Ayla, & Shaina

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

There are many different ways to solve the same math problem as evidenced by these images.

Here is the problem:

Cindy had a party. She invited two guests. Her guests each invited four guests and those guests each invited three guests. How many people were at Cindy's party? Explain how you determined your solution.

-Nakia, June, & Meron

The collage shows four different student solutions for the math problem. The top solution is a tree diagram starting with 'Cindy' and branching out to show the number of guests invited at each level, with the word 'Wrong' written next to it. The second solution shows a tree diagram with a large '35' written next to it and the text 'People at the party'. The third solution shows a list of calculations: $1+2+4 \times 2+4 \times 3 = 35$, $4 \times 2 = 8$, $8 \times 3 = 24$, $1+2=3$, and a large '35!' with 'People at the party' written below it. The bottom solution shows a diagram with circles representing people and arrows indicating the flow of invitations, resulting in $= 35$ People.



Images from *Sketch the Neighborhood* elective.

Room 215

On Friday, May 14, Grades 5/6 participated in the School House Blues Program at the House of Blues. Here's what some students said about their experience:

"I really liked it. It was cool how the musicians knew a lot about the

songs."
 "The music was about justice. I liked how the music expressed what people were going through."
 "I liked the disco ball. It was fun when the lights change."
 "I knew some of the songs because my mom listens to them."
 "I was dancing the whole time."
 "I told my dad that I heard Blues songs, and he likes Blues too so he kept playing it all weekend."
 "They were songs about freedom, about being free."
 "I liked the music there."
 "I liked how rap was connected to the Blues."
 "All the music was connected together."
 -Abdi, Angela & Carlos

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

"A loud whistle echoes off the walls and we take off, diving from the edge...My eyes sting with chlorine, but all I feel is my beating heart."
 "SWISH ... my first shot ever!!! High fives all around. A chorus of oooooooooohs!!! Circling the court with bouncing energy! Heart exploding with happiness."
 "Find the pitch that sits on A, then..."
 "Sitting back. Hearing the noises. It starts going slow, then speeds up. And when we go up to the sky everything gets smaller and smaller and smaller..."
 "Head banging... Foot tapping... Beats pulsing through my body... Loud crashes echo from the drums..."
 "SQUEAK, SQUEAK, the toy makes as it rolls down the hall as a black furred puppy chases it down at full speed..."

"Sometimes teammates come at you and grab you or hug you. I'm sweating, I'm really hot, and my muscles are tightening up like flexing..."
 Intriguing? One of my favorite tasks is working with the 7th graders as they begin their *Beyond the Classroom Portfolios*. We ask students to share with their portfolio committees an out-of-school experience or passion that has helped them to grow. An essay and a demonstration/artifact accompany their reflective oral presentations. The fragments quoted above were generated during a brainstorming process to help kids identify the focus they will choose for this portfolio. When I started by reading some student examples from other years, the kids were quickly on board. Who doesn't enjoy sharing a special interest or passion with an appreciative audience?
 -Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

Sometimes learning something feels magic. There is no failsafe strategy that guarantees a student will learn a specific concept. Which is why I try several strategies when teaching how to write. The last couple of months, I've placed a lot of emphasis on how to structure an essay. I've used sample essays, graphic organizers that lays out the different sections of an essay (Introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion) and mini-lessons on a specific aspect of an essay. At one point, on of these strategies clicks for a particular student. It's almost like a switch goes off, you can see it in a student's eyes or the approach to their work. I can never predict when or how it will happen, but I still find it really cool.

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

I had that experience this week. We practiced writing the different sections of an expository paragraph (topic sentence, evidence, analysis) and there were a lot of, “oh, I get it” and students explaining it to their partners. It was like magic, it was really cool.

-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 is still working on the 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, Georgie needs updated copies of physicals as well, so drop a copy in her mailbox after your appointment.

BPS Calendar Update

It's official! There will be school on Bunker Hill Day, Wednesday, June 17th. And the last day of school for all students is now officially Monday, June 29th, which will be an early release day. Friday, June 26th will also be an early release day.

Images from the Music Concert



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

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School

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Teacher Appreciation Day

Wednesday, May 27th 11:30 - 1:30
Potluck Brunch

Call for Volunteers Please!!

We're looking forward to celebrating our fabulous Mission Hill teachers with a potluck brunch, and We Need Your Help.

Please sign up for a food dish based on your child's grade.

K0, K1, K2: Side dish or Salad
1st and 2nd: Main dish
3rd and 4th: Desserts
5th and 6th: Appetizers, dips, etc.
7th and 8th: Beverages

Can you also volunteer the day of the event?

10:30am - 11:15am Set Up Committee
1:15pm - 2:00pm Clean Up Committee
11:00am - 1:30pm Recess & Cafeteria Coverage*
* 8-10 volunteers needed here please!

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I can send the following food dish: _____

I can volunteer for the following time / committees:

Contact Meredith West at 617-416-1391 or westmerek@gmail.com with questions or to sign-up via email

Thank you!

Día de Agradecimiento a los Maestros

Miércoles, 27 de mayo 2015

11:30 am - 13:30

Almuerzo Potluck

Convocatoria de Voluntarios por favor !!

Estamos con ganas de celebrar nuestros fabulosos maestros Mission Hill con un almuerzo potluck, y necesitamos su ayuda.

Por favor, registrarse para obtener un plato de comida basado en el grado de su hijo.

K0, K1, K2: guarnición o ensalada

Primero y segundo: Plato Principal

Tercero y cuarto: Postres

Quinto y sexto: Aperitivos, salsas, etc.

Séptimo y octavo: Bebidas

¿Puede también ser voluntarios el día del evento?

10:30 am - 11:15 am Hasta Comité Conjunto

1:15 pm - 2:00 pm Hasta Clean Comité

11 a.m.-1:30 pm Receso y Cobertura Cafeteria *

* 8-10 voluntarios necesitaban aquí, por favor!

Nombre: _____

Teléfono: _____

E-mail: _____

Puedo enviar el siguiente plato de comida: _____

Puedo ser voluntario para los siguientes tiempos / comités:

Póngase en contacto con Meredith West en 617-416-1391 o westmerek@gmail.com con preguntas o para inscribirse en marcha a través de correo electrónico

Gracias!