



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Tuesday, May 12, 2015
School Picture Day!
- Thursday, May 14, 2015
Family Council Meeting 5:45 - 7:00 pm, Rm. 203
- Wednesday, May 20, 2015
Spring Music Concert at MHS! 5-7:30 pm
- Thursday, May 21, 2015
Friends of the Mission Hill School Annual Mtg
- Monday, May 25, 2015
Memorial Day: NO SCHOOL

May 8, 2015

Volume 18, Issue 28

Your Child's Biggest Cheerleader

Dear Friends, Families, Students and Staff:

With only nine weeks left in the school year, I feel both excitement for the year ending and urgency to do as much as I can with the limited time. Have students received what they need to move on to the next grade? Are there things we should have done differently? However, when I get to this point of worry, I remember that every child has his or her own journey and we cannot expect all of our young people to meet the same benchmarks at the same time. While it may be difficult to watch children struggle (the first inclination being to fight their battles for them), we must remember that there is more satisfaction for them in knowing they accomplished something on their own. Struggle builds character, but this is not to say that adults do not play a role in student success. In fact, we play one of the biggest roles, believing that the child can accomplish the seemingly insurmountable.

This reminds me of the time my niece and nephew invited me to their summer camp. They excitedly brought me to their favorite area—the ropes course. Surrounded by a myriad of challenges, the one I personally dreaded was over 20 feet high and stretched between two trees. I watched an adult wobble back and forth as he tried his best to get across, first standing and ultimately shimmying across on his stomach. My 6-year-old niece then said nonchalantly, “I’ve done that one before.” and offered to show me. I told her it was okay and that she did not need to, but she was determined. As she got into her harness, one by one children gave up after reaching the top of the ladder. With my fear mounting, I asked how far she had gotten. Upon hearing “the seventh step on the ladder” because she was “too scared to go any higher”, a sweet peace came over me. While waiting in line, every so often she would find my eye and say “You’re going to be here to cheer me on right?” I repeatedly assured her that I would be there to cheer her on and would not take our eyes off her.

When it was finally her turn, I counted the steps as she climbed and held my breath, hoping that she would have the courage to make it to step 10. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10! She had done it! And with a look back to locate her family, she kept climbing. She scaled the rungs on the tree, passed the ropes and headed to the canopy. She climbed back down step-by-step, making her way to the middle as we cheered her on. She wobbled, dropped to a seated position, shimmied to the other tree, touched it, shimmied back to the middle and let go with full faith that the harness and the person below would safely deliver her to her family. She waved as the crowd cheered for her and beamed with pride. She stood by us shyly, amidst the strangers’ high-fives, and when asked how she did it, she said that it was because she could see her family cheering her on down below.

Sometimes what children need most is the assurance that we will be there to cheer them on as they pass through challenging times. If we keep our promise, we just might see them soar to heights never thought imaginable. So, whether it be portfolios, exhibitions, reading, math, art, making friends, physical feats or writing, be your child’s biggest cheerleader in the coming weeks as we aim to end the year with a bang!

-Jada Brown, K1/K2 Lead Teacher



Families and teachers are our students' biggest cheerleaders.

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

"Is that fair?"

We have been thinking about this critical question a great deal this week. It is one way that our three- and four-year olds can connect to the current school wide theme. We have used puppets, role play, stories and actual classroom experiences to think about this question. One story we have read a few times is *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman. If you aren't familiar with the story, I highly recommend finding it at your local library. In the book, the main character "Grace" wants to be Peter Pan in the class play. One classmate says Grace can't be Peter Pan because Peter is a boy's name. Another classmate whispers to Grace that she can't be Peter Pan because he isn't black. "Is that fair?" I asked our children. Rich conversations have transpired. One girl in our class said, "I wanted to be a ninja and ----- (another child) said I couldn't be a ninja." This conversation around "Is that fair?" will continue in our classroom - as well as talking about what we can do to stand up when something isn't fair. Can you see ways to continue and connect with these conversations at home?

-Geraldyn McLaughlin

Room 106

Monday marked my return to Mission Hill School. I now know that this community is the most empathetic one I know. Since Monday I have had families past and present come to check on me and see how my reentry has been. Children as well as adults have made my return so warm and welcoming. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I was not sure about how I would be feeling. Hopefully this story will shed a little light. I was standing in the Zen garden with Ayla, folks from Green Dragons, and a volunteer. We were discussing the woolly garden. Suddenly, three voices from the second floor yelled, "Hi Kathy! Welcome back!" They were students from Ashleigh and Jenerra's class. It felt like I was home again. I felt that I was loved.

Back in my classroom the children are full of emotions, happy to see me back and so sad to see Liz leave. We are spending our days together sharing stories and writing about the things they did with Liz that they want to make sure we hold on to. Thank you Mission Hill for taking care of me as I have returned.

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

In connection to our theme, the Princess Dragon Hot Wheels recently had a conversation to define "slave", a word they will be encountering over the next few weeks. Their ideas included the following:

-In the Nubian book, the slaves were given to Nubia and they made the slaves do chores.

-Someone who is old and they help people in the night.

-A slave and slavery I think is when you get taken away from your family and you don't get to see them anymore.

-Something you use in the window.

-Something people used when kings and queens were around. A slave ... does things that the king and queen say.

-It's when you trap people in ancient Egypt ... It's like when your mom tells you to do something and you don't want to do it.



Painting in Room 109.

When given the definition, we asked how they might feel to do work they didn't want to and not be paid or respected for it. They shared that they would feel steaming mad, sad, angry and frustrated. Stay tuned for more sneak peeks of our conversations in the coming weeks.

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

This week we began our Faith Ringgold Author Study by reading *Tar Beach*. The children connected to the feeling of freedom as Cassie dreamed of flying over the city and her beloved George Washington Bridge.

Later on, the children mixed paint colors. They used yellow, red, blue, black, and white. They worked together to reproduce the exact shades of their pattern colors. Then they named the colors: Ella Pink, Khi Blue, William's Nina Green, Avian's Chartreuse Green, Kaia's Violet, Simona's Sun, Will's Ninja Red, Emeric Black, Theodore Grey, Moxie Brown, Evan Blue, Be Be Lavender, Renée Yellow and Théo Blue. Inspired by Faith Ringgold, next week the children will begin to reproduce their patterns on paper with tempera paint.

-Jenny, Meira, Angelina, & Stephanie



Students from the John D. Philbrick school visit the “famous” Lego Champion class!

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

Our Struggle for Justice theme is underway. We will focus on the Civil Rights Movement. Much of our work will be looking at the black-and-white photographs, poetry and songs that emerged from that struggle. Our guiding questions are What is Struggle?, What is Justice? How do you get justice? How does struggle create change?

This week we have focused on the Montgomery bus boycott. This pivotal moment in the Civil Rights era lasted 381 days and galvanized not only the people of Montgomery, Alabama, but a nation to join in the efforts of securing civil rights for ALL americans. We dissected photographs from the boycott, listened to songs and read books connected to it. One of the books we read was *If a Bus Could Talk: The Rosa Parks Story* by Faith Ringold. The story of the boycott is told from the viewpoint of the bus that Rosa Parks was on. We then wrote letters to people we know taking the different viewpoints of people and things directly involved in the boycott. Here is an excerpt

from Maya’s letter: “Let me tell you my story. I, Rosa Parks, was so tired. I wanted to sit down on the but then a white man came on. I did not get up because I did not want to get up. Then I got arrested!”

Be sure to ask your Magic Explorer what they know about the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Rosa Parks, and what change was created from their struggle!

-Jenerra Williams

Room 205

As part of our Nubia work, we wanted to share what we learned with other people. One way we brought awareness of this great civilization to the community was by organizing a display with student artifacts at the Jamaica Plain branch of the Boston Public Library. Another public way we shared our work was through an interview with a reporter from the Jamaica Plain Gazette. He wrote an article about our study of Nubia and our museum project. A teacher from the Philbrick Elementary School read the article in the newspaper and emailed me to see if his students could meet my students because his class was studying Ancient Egypt. Our class thought this was so cool,

many of them called out, “We’re famous.” They were buzzing with excitement the day the other class arrived. Students broke into small groups and talked about what they had learned; visiting students asked questions, and at the end we all shared a snack together. It was such a meaningful and rewarding experience for us all!

-Ashleigh L’Heureux

Room 217

Stay tuned next week!

-Emma Fialka-Feldman

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

One of the things I love about Mission Hill is the emphasis on thematic learning and the freedom we have to integrate it into other content areas like literacy and math. This allows us to make connections and explore the theme in depth and from multiple entry points. While our theme work is focused on reading and writing biographies, in literacy The Spectacular 21 are approaching our theme by reading historical fiction. This week we started book groups with texts from a variety of time periods. Students

had a chance to preview the books and choose their top two books. These choices were used to create the book groups. Not only will students be able to work on building comprehension skills but the books will also give them more context for the biographies they are working on. We are reading the following books: *Stella By Starlight*, *A Song for Harlem*, *Freedom's Wings*, *Sit-In*, and *Freedom On The Menu*. Keep a look out for some exciting projects connected to our book groups!

-Kristina Voss & Amina Michel-Lord

Room 216

The Farm School was a great field trip! We all were excited to be there. Here are some favorite moments the class wanted to share:

Dalia: We got to feed the pregnant goat.

Laudys: I liked playing around.

Jhayden: My favorite part was feeding the chickens.

Sara: My favorite part was when I got the scraps from the food and I put them on the floor for the chickens. I thought to myself, please don't peck me!

Justin: My favorite part was feeding the cows.

Kai: At farm school, my farmer was Finn and he was really nice. What I most enjoyed were the cows.

Amber: I saw fish eggs.

Inka: I liked collecting eggs.

Amishai: My favorite part was finding a Salamander in the woods.

Alejandro: I liked seeing the chickens.

Mekhai: I liked the cows and the chickens.

Arianny: I liked seeing Emily the cow.

Mauryon: I liked the dogs.

Ezra: My favorite parts were the cows

and the lake.

Aahmonyea: I liked when the farmers said that there was a mother cow and a baby cow.

-Amanda, Ayla & Shaina

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

Stay tuned next week!

-Nakia, June, & Meron

Room 210

"People have to be made to understand that they cannot look for salvation anywhere but to themselves...

Every time I see a young person who identifies with the struggle of black people I take new hope. I feel a new life as a result of it," wrote Ella Jo Baker, one of the key leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and later a member of the NAACP who led voter registration campaigns in the South. For almost two weeks, we have been reading a chapter about her life each morning. A child of share-crop farmers, born in Virginia, who would become the president of the New York City branch of the NAACP. Our essential questions for our theme are: What does justice mean to me? Who is a leader for justice? What does it look like to struggle for justice in my own life? What is an issue I will struggle for and why? Ella Baker's life and choices are instructive on different levels - she was wise, tireless, modest; she worked behind the scenes and she was a powerful, impassioned leader for justice. She was given a nickname, Fundi, which in Swahili is a name given to someone who generously and unselfishly shares her/his knowledge and skills with others. She serves as a model for us as we come to terms with Ferguson, New York

and Baltimore.

-Abdi, Angela & Carlos

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

When we returned from April break, students brought home a "last 9 weeks" plan to take us through the end of the year. You were asked to sign one copy to return to school, and to post the other copy on your refrigerator. Now, we have only 7 weeks ahead of us, and we need your help. As stated before, your child has a lot to do before the school year ends. Your child and her/his teachers need your active support!

- Please monitor screen time and bedtime.
- Please talk with your child about her/his work.
- Please call us with any questions or concerns.
- Dani Coleman will call you soon to schedule your child's portfolio.

Presentations will take place in June, and each takes 2 – 2 ½ hours. Families, along with teachers and external community member, are required to attend. Please watch this film clip from the Mission Hill School website to see what your child is preparing for <http://www.mission-hillschool.org/a-year-at-mission-hill/> Scroll down to Chapter 9: Seeing the Learning.

Please call us if you would like your child to attend before school and/or after school study hour (Monday and Wednesday, 8 – 9 am and 3:30 – 4:30 pm). We want all students to end the year proud of how they have grown and what they have accomplished, both as learners and as community members.

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

As students were putting away their materials, Elianna asked, "Reginald, can you create a list of due dates like you did for the research paper?" I told her I would get it to her before we meet again. We had just the first class where we went over the specifics of the literary comparison assignment.

As part of their 8th grade portfolio, students must write a comparison of two works of fiction and present it to the committee. There was a great deal of anticipation in the beginning of class students were anxious to get started with the work and by the end of the class many of them were relieved that the assignment seemed very familiar. I explained to them that's the whole point, the goal is for them to pull together the work they've been doing over the years at Mission Hill.

As with any assignment, there will be some bumps on the road. However, I'm really looking to guiding the 8th grade students through the process as they always rise to the occasion.
-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 is trying to keep our music program going strong. Please consider a donation at any level, and please share the campaign with friends and family! Visit: bit.ly/MissionHillMusic

Spring Music Concert

Join us for an evening of music with your amazing MHS children! The concert will feature choral performances and selections from our wind, string, guitar and percussion ensembles. Refreshments, a raffle and special gifts will be provided for those in attendance! Save the date on your calendars!

Where: The Mission Hill School Auditorium

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

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).



Abdi's class went to see Susan Thompson's art show "Threading Legacy," back in April. Her quilts, which are inspired by African-American history, are currently hanging on display at Mission Hill School.

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

Team Hoyt at Mission Hill K-8 School

May 12th, 11:30a-12:30p, 20 Child Street, Jamaica Plain, MA



Rick Hoyt uses a wheelchair. That has not stopped him from living a very full and amazing life. He, along with his dad, Dick, have formed “Team Hoyt” and they have competed around the world doing marathons and triathlons. The Hoyts have competed in over 1100 athletic events in the last 34 years. They have run in 71 marathons - 32 of them being the Boston Marathon. They have also completed in 252 triathlons, 6 of them being Ironman distance events.

Dick, 74, is a retired Lt. Colonel, having served in the military for 35 years. Rick, 53, is a graduate of Boston University with a degree in Special Education. Rick was born in 1962 as a spastic quadriplegic with cerebral palsy and as a non-speaking person – but despite these disabilities, Rick’s mind and spirit have always been strong. His family supported his quest for independence and inclusion in community, sports, education and the workplace, culminating with his graduation from Boston University.

You may visit their website at www.teamhoyt.com to learn more about their story and see many pictures of their journey through their 34 years of racing.

Rick and Dick will inspire students at the Mission Hill School with a one-hour presentation that reinforces their philosophy of “Yes You Can”. This opportunity is made possible by the Active Schools Acceleration Project at Tufts University and the Mission Hill School’s Wellness Champions, Carol East-Jose and Laura Golitko.

BalletRox Dance!



Join us for a week of professional dance instruction and fun!

**BalletRox Dance! is located at Spontaneous Celebrations,
45 Danforth St., Jamaica Plain, near the Stony Brook Orange Line Station**

August 17 to 21, Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Extended Hours: 8:30 am to 5:30 pm

Open to Students Ages 6 to 14

If you love to dance, this is the program for you! We will be teaching at least three different dance styles during the week, such as ballet, hip hop, lyrical, tap and jazz. Plus dance arts each day, and a final performance at the end of the week. Weather permitting, we will also spend some relaxing time at the Stony Brook playground and park across the street. Bring your own lunch!

Costs for the week:

Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm: \$150 plus a \$25 registration fee

Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 5:30 pm: \$200 plus a \$25 registration fee

If there is enough interest, we may open additional weeks August 3-7 and August 24-28. To register online, go to: www.balletrox.info/registration.

For more information, or to inquire about our Afterschool and Saturday Program, contact us at: info@balletrox.org.