



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Wednesday, October 21, 5:45-7:15 pm
Outside the Lines Meeting (see flyer)
- Thursday, October 22, 6:00pm – 7:30pm
Teaching in Themes: An Evening with the Authors @ Wheelock College (see pg 6)
- Friday, October 23, 2014 at 9:45 am
Friday Share: Abdi, Cleata, Kathy, and Geryllyn
- Saturday, October 31, 11 am-3 pm
Mission Hill HS Community Meeting (see flyer)

October 23, 2015

Volume 19, Issue 5

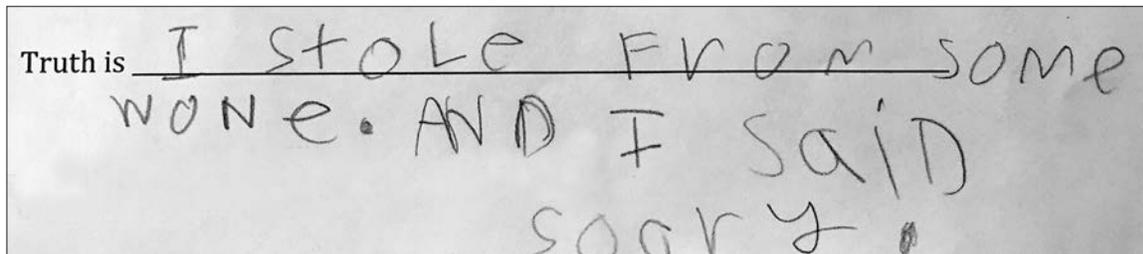
To Tell the Truth

Dear Mission Hill Friends, Family, Students, and Staff,

There's a line in our school's statement of purpose that says "It (democracy) requires us to be prepared to defend intelligently that which we believe to be true, and that which we believe best meets our individual needs and those of our family, community, and broader public—to not be easily conned."

The other day several students and a bus driver reported a child's inappropriate behavior on a school bus. I spent the afternoon talking to that student about the reports that came in. As the child denied any wrongdoing, our conversation morphed into one about telling the truth. Telling the truth can be hard. Some students see it as something to be avoided.

This week's letter features some truth telling. Inspired by an art installation by Hank Willis Thomas, students and staff were given the opportunity to respond to this prompt. Truth is... Here is what they had to say.



Truth is... Seeing people for their innate and potential greatness rather than as the sum of their circumstantial challenges. Truth is...I think colors are beautiful. Truth is...That I forget what I said. Truth is...I like doing math. Truth is...I hate doing math. Truth is...I love to sing and stick up for my friend. Truth is...Courage of the heart to say the hard things. Truth is...Some people say rude comments, mostly about my hair. Truth is...I stole from someone and I said sorry. Truth is...I am moving. Truth is...I like soccer time best. Truth is...Once in guitar I messed up big time. Truth is...I have been playing soccer for five years. Truth is...I feel like my friends do not like me at school. Truth is...I play air guitar. Truth is...When I say I hate this school, I don't mean it. Truth is...I do not like lunch. Truth is...I like school pizza. Truth is...I love MHS and art. Truth is...I wish math was longer. Truth is...The people who knock down my stuff, I feel like knocking down their stuff. Truth is...I said I'm full of love. Truth is...I hid candy in my room. Truth is...I ate something behind my mom's back. Truth is...I feel that you hate me. Truth is...I like choice. Truth is...I have been in quicksand. Truth is...I love being kind. Truth is...I had a fight and I love MHS pizza. Truth is...I love writing and playing Pokémon.



Jaslin's bag of apples!

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

It has been a tradition at Mission Hill School for classrooms to work together to come up with a class name. The process is a community-building one, and leads to meaningful literacy and math experiences. Naming your class is an abstract concept and is a tricky idea for the youngest students to grasp. In past years we've waited until January when the class is a bit older and can better understand what we are deciding. Last year we kept the name "Room 108" all year because that is what made the most sense for the group.

This year our group was ready by mid-October to grasp the concept of naming our class. I explained the idea and students quickly got excit-

ed. They were inspired by our trip to Blue Hills when generating our list of possible names: Red Foxes, Otters, Snow Owls, Birds and Carrots. After taking time to collect and analyze our data through a few rounds of votes we are happy to announce our results. We are the Otters! Playful, spirited, curious and social!

-Geraldyn B. McLaughlin

Room 106

How do I know when a curriculum is going well? One way is to listen to the folks learning about it. I recently got an email from Lydia, Simeon's mom. They were visiting a farm, and while visiting, Simeon heard a black-capped chickadee. He said, "Mom, you have to send that picture of the black capped chickadee to Kathy cause I was listening to it while you took the picture."

Christina, the intern in Jada's class told me of an interaction between herself and Jasmine, the intern in my class. Christina told me that while they were traveling, Jasmine was pointing out birds and said "I think that's a sparrow."

On our way to apple picking on Thursday, Neli said "Kathy, I saw two hawks." At apple picking, I thought I saw a hawk too. As the bird approached I realized it wasn't a bird at all. It was a plane! We had a good laugh about that. Please keep sharing your bird stories with us.

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

"I AM GOING TO THE APLO-THRD (apple orchard) in 2 DAYS."

Spirits ran high as our traditional apple-picking trip drew near. From the day it was announced, students asked daily, "Is apple picking today?"



Josie gives a thumbs up to apple picking.

In preparation, for our trip, we drew and wrote about what we might see when the day finally came. We predicted seeing: frogs, apples in trees, apples on the ground, leaves, pumpkins, birds, the sun and of course... kids.

October 15th finally came! As we approached our destination, the entire bus happily sang out our Farmer Brown song. After a quick lunch we met the animals and then boarded the tractor to the orchard. Several students began singing again and just as I said, "I've never seen green apples here.", both kids and adults pointed out rows of trees laden with green apples. As I laughed, the song grew louder.

While filling our bags, I realized our predictions were right! Apples were everywhere and the Shelburne Farm Orchard was bursting at the seams with more than just our 130+ school group! The sky was blue. The air was crisp. It was the perfect day for apple picking!

*-Jada Brown, Jo-Ann Hawkesworth,
& Cristina Noonan*

CLASSROOM NEWS

Room 109

In Room 109 we are continuing our apple study. We discussed the apple life cycle and everyone was especially excited to talk about what happens when apples rot! We discovered that the part of the apple that we eat is actually a seed carrier for planting new trees. We are working on finding a way to represent the apple life cycle on a mural. This week students studied the shape of apples and did apple printing with paint and cut apples. We also had some fun doing an apple tasting to compare and contrast different apples and make a graph of our preferences.

We continue thinking about leaves and creating wonderings about why leaves change color. Our leaf rubbings have taught us a lot about the veins and stems in the leaves. We are excited to learn more about their life cycle next week.

-Deborah & Stephanie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

We recently took a trip the Boston Nature Center. Students first played a fun relay race game to sort living and nonliving things. Then we ventured out the meadow and used large nets swooping through the tall grasses looking for insects. Later, we harvested radishes, kale, and husk cherries. It connected nicely with our study of garden ecology and how living things work together in a garden. We saw bees pollinating flowers and aphids eating Kale. Andrew, a teacher naturalist from the Boston Nature Center, taught us about how ladybugs eat the aphids and help protect our plants. The next day we used all the vegetables we harvested to make a yummy salad

fresh from the farm!

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 212

Life was a little short last week in 212, with the long weekend and myself out for 2 more days at a training. This week the children started their own nature journals and compared what they observed this month with what they observed in September. They are noticing that the leaves are changing and there are less animals and the plants are brown instead of green. We will continue to observe our schoolyard and plan for the big trip to Drumlin Farm on Friday October 30 at 9:45 to 2:30. Chaperones are welcomed, but the cost for chaperones is \$8.00. Please email me at sbrown@missionhillschool.org if you are interested in coming with your child. The permission slips went home last week-please check your child's book bag.

Children are also busy writing stories and learning how to use their writer's



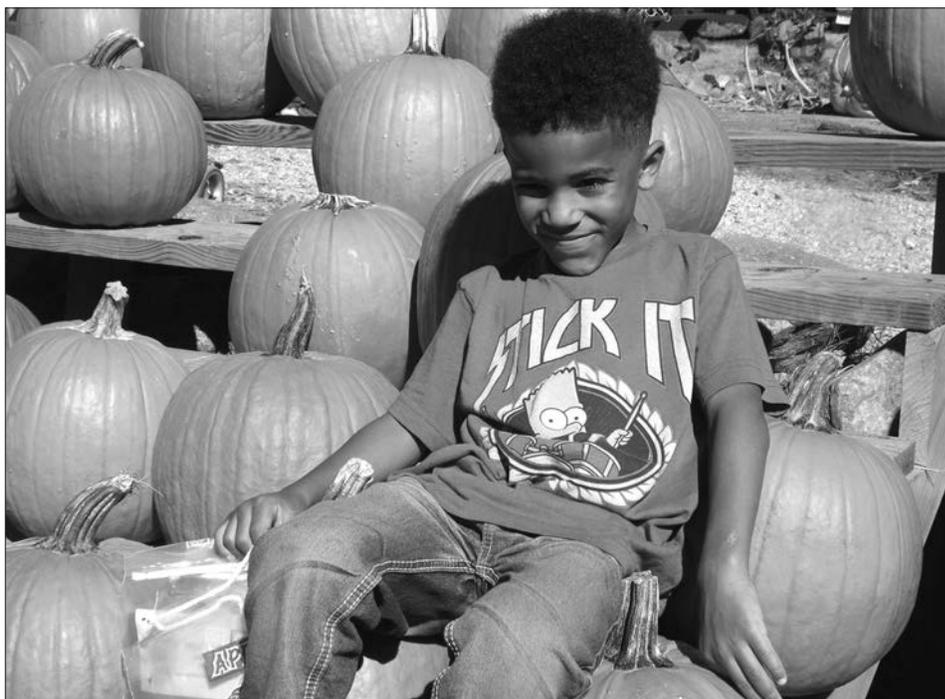
Kate and Ashton enjoy an apple.

workshop folders and we are getting closer to starting book groups.

-Suzanne Brown

Room 217

On Thursday, the Pizza Ninjago Dragons went to Shelburne Farms. Everyone got to ride a hayride, see farm animals, pick apples, and meet



Avian in the pumpkins at Shelburne Farms.

CLASSROOM NEWS

our gardener friend Ms. Peg, who lives in Stow. She told us many new things about apples, farms, and trees. Here are some of our favorite parts...

Jackson: I liked picking apples and the hayride.

Nyla: I liked looking at the animals. The goats were so cute!

Cole: It was the best day! I liked riding the bus and riding the hayride. I also liked seeing new towns.

Hiram: I liked going on the bumpy hayride. The sweet juicy apples were so good.

Ashton: The whole day was my favorite. Lunch was good and the bus was fun.

Nashly: I liked going on the hayride and trying the apples.

Lumi: I liked hearing the story about Sweet Pea the goat.

Julia: I liked the apples and seeing the animals. I liked the story about Sweet Pea. I also liked seeing the rabbits.

Khi: I liked the lunch and that my

mom and Nathan came.

Armani: I liked the apple picking.

Damarion: I liked the hayride. It was so funny.

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 203

Last week we took our annual fall apple picking trip to Shelburne Farms in Stow, MA. As we prepared to go, we had flashbacks of last year when it rained on us pretty badly but as the day arrived and the morning broke we could see that it was going to be a beautiful day. It was indeed!

As we arrived there was excitement in the air! We began by having lunch and looking at all the animals. There was a llama named Sweet Pea that we saw last year who was now a year older and much bigger! There lots of smiles and chatter as kids saw her again. A tractor-pulled carriage ride took us to the orchard and we began picking, filling our bags to brim with



delicious macintosh apples!

Our ride home began with a delicious apple cider donut and ended with tired bodies, satisfied bellies and lots of smiles and memories to last us until next year!

-Jenerra, Danny, & Nelly

Room 204

Relationships are an intricate part of building a successful classroom environment. A classroom does not run only by giving students directions, but showing them that as a teacher you care about what they think and feel. Children know when you care and they sense when you are concerned or upset about something and they want to reach out to you. As the weeks roll by I am noticing more and more the different levels of connection that each student shares with me and I value each of them. One child recently welcomed me into his circle of friends to read his writing, while another just wanted to give me a hug. One student thought I would make a good mom. Sometimes we simply want to teach, but how can we when we have more than just a student



Geneva's radish from the Boston Nature Center field trip.

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

in front of us? We have a person with many compartments of life all wrapped up in one soul, who wants us not only to teach but also to care.
-Cleata & Shaina

Room 207

Last Friday was a beautiful fall day to go apple picking! After about an hour ride on the coach bus, everyone hustled off the bus to eagerly eat lunch. Children gathered at the two lunch tables and happily chatted as they enjoyed their food. Soon after, we visited the animals- goats, llamas, while we awaited the arrival of the hayride that would take us into the orchard.

As we entered the orchard on the bumpy hayride, squeals of excitement could be heard as we bobbed down the apple tree lined lane. When we arrived to our picking spot we hurried off the hayride and began picking apples. Children screeched with joy as they looked for apples to be picked. "This one is so red. Look at this one. It is perfect!" Some hastily picked and quickly filled their bags while others were very selective before they plucked apples off of the branches. Whatever the method, each bag was filled with yummy apples ready to be transported home. It was a wonderful day, one that will hold lasting memories for us all.
-Amina & Amanda

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

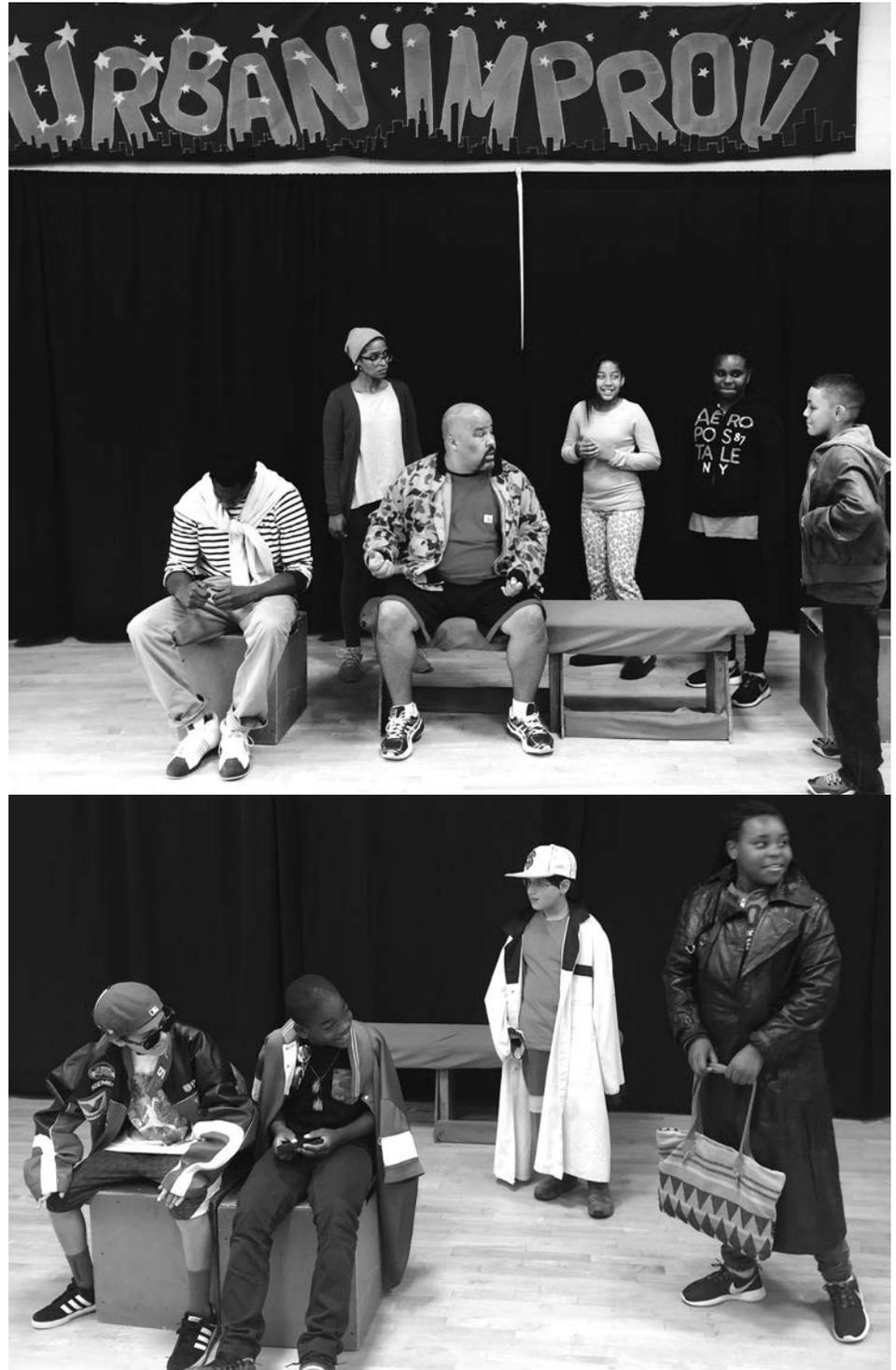
From the Urban Improv website: "Urban Improv is an interactive program for young people that uses improvisational theater workshops to teach violence prevention, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Today: this means cyber bullying.

The program's innovative curriculum helps students deal creatively with major issues in their lives. It is truly a rehearsal for life."
Please enjoy the photos from our first week at Urban Improv.

-Nakia, Manny, Elsa & Alanna

Room 215

Veterinarian and animal behaviorist, Vint Virga, is the author of our Read Aloud book for our nature science



SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

theme. *The Soul of All Living Creatures* uses diagnoses and wisdom collected over 25 years of observing puzzling animal behaviors to illuminate aspects of our own humanity. This book, which I found on a shelf in the used bookstore, Rodney's, in Cambridge opened up a way of thinking about the purpose and texts of Read Alouds in 215. Before the book, I was fuzzy about how to make Read Alouds purposeful and connected to my students. How would I justify to them my selection of readings? Everyday at 1:30pm (except on Wednesdays when we read at 2:30pm) I read Vint's book. My students sprawl on the floor, or draw in their sketchbooks; each listens in her/his preferred way. Read Aloud is an opportunity to listen to another voice, an informed perspective on a theme. I've also started to include other texts, such as our own newsletter. Ayla's cover letters work just fine. "Let's hear what Ayla is thinking about..." and we begin. I encourage you to read aloud together at home, starting with news from Room 215.
-Abdi, Cindy & Carlos

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

Although most adolescents want to meet expectations for academic assignments, they often need support from school and home to achieve their goals. Organizing and planning are two vital skills that are developing at this time in their lives. We provide supplies to help kids organize themselves and their school materials. For example, color-coding is a helpful organizational approach. 7th graders have blue math folders and notebooks. 8th graders have green math folders and notebooks. The literacy

and theme folder and notebook are purple. And then there is the all-important black plastic folder.

At family conferences, we talked about how you can support your child with work that needs to be done at home. The black folder is key. It contains a homework assignment sheet that is updated daily, a weekly reading log, and any documents going from school to home (newsletter, notices, forms to sign and return). Reviewing this on a regular basis with your child will help them to develop habits to support learning. We are showing kids how to break big week-long assignments down into smaller parts to be completed each night. Checking the work plan at home and keeping electronics away until work is done is a support your child is likely to need from you.
-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

I started the class by asking students to think about what they need in order for them to complete the rough draft of our first history assignment by the end of the day. A couple of students asked to work in the fishbowl, one student asked to work in the hallway. The rest of them spread around the classroom and

they all immersed themselves into the work.

About 20 minutes into the class Alex broke the silence, "It's mad quiet in here," The students kept working. It would be another 15 minutes until a few students started whispering. It was our longest stretch of uninterrupted work so far this year. It made me think of how far the Habits of Work of the 8th grade class has come. Whereas several students failed to complete the assignment they all used their time wisely. Now that they've all produced something the focus will shift to persevering through distractions in order to meet the next deadline.
-Reginald Toussaint

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Halloween and Holidays at MHS

If you are a new member to our MHS community please note that we do not celebrate holidays - including Halloween. Do not send in candy or costumes to school. Additionally, we do not celebrate birthdays at school. We do celebrate our theme projects and other work we do. We also come together in a variety of ways and celebrate with school spirit days throughout the year. There are times



David and Zacari focusing on history writing.

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

when families and students do teach us about their home culture and celebrations. If you have questions just check in with your child's teacher.

The Power of Play

In case you hadn't heard, we have had filmmakers in the building recently. Director Kirk Simon and his team are making a documentary called the Power of Play. The film will follow a few different schools across the country.

If you have not filled out an MHS media release (purple form), please call the office to have one sent home with your child. We will need releases for all children in the building.

This is a film description from Kirk's website: "We will examine how some of the most innovative schools in the country are meeting the challenges in education today, and talk with leading experts in the field. By visiting play-integrated schools across the country, we will see first-hand how students excel when they take active roles in their educational pursuits."

For more info, visit: <http://www.simonfilm.camera/new-page/>

Mission Hill High School

Our next community design meeting has been moved to Saturday, October 31st, 11am-3pm at Mission Hill School, to allow Deborah Meier, MHS Founder, to join us! Come prepared to collaborate, create and share!

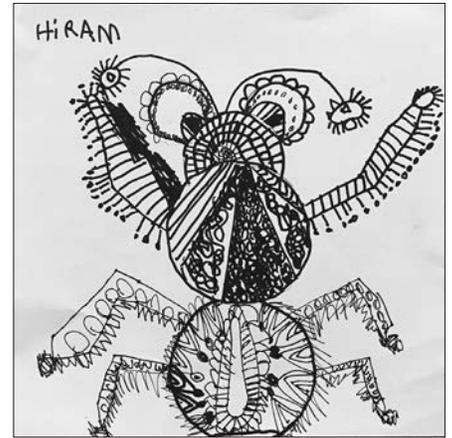
Sing It! Choral Music Program
Community Music Center of Boston (CMCB) offers a vocal music

program called Sing It! on Thursdays at MHS. It is held on Thursday afternoons for children in grades 4-6 from 3:30-4:45pm. It is also open to mature and motivated 3rd graders who love to sing, in addition to anyone in the neighborhood in that age range. For more information call CMCB (617) 482-7494.

Library News

This year, the library Bookfair/Fundraiser will be held from December 14th-18th. There will be a wonderful selection of books, but we are in great need of family volunteers. To find out more and sign up for volunteering, contact Lisa: lpredsosa@missionhillschool.org

In art class, students have been studying insect identification, drawing pictures of beetles with patterns, using pencil and marker.



Jasmine and Eamon collect insects at the Boston Nature Center.

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*
Deborah Meier, *Founder*
Tommy Chang, *Superintendent*

Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School
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Join us for the 2nd annual

Boston Young Changemakers Exchange!

As part of City Awake, we are bringing together young changemakers from all around Boston to **inspire and be inspired**.

Come put your **empathy, creativity, and problem-solving** into action – and check out what other young people are doing to change the world!

Already started something?
Are you a young person under 21?

[Sign up to present!](#)

Highlight a project or social venture you've started!

Connect with new resources, **inspire** others, and **spread** the spirit of changemaking!

Saturday
November 7th
3:00-5:30pm

BPS Bolling Building
2300 Washington Street, Roxbury

[Register here!](#)



Learn more about [Ashoka Start Empathy](#) and [Changemaker Education](#), plus check out [Most Likely to Succeed](#).