



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Friday, October , 2014 at 9:45 am
Friday Share: Nakia, Kate, Deborah, and Suzanne
- Monday, October 12, 2014: NO SCHOOL
Columbus Day
- Thursday, October 22, 6:00pm – 7:30pm
Teaching in Themes: An Evening with the Authors @ Wheelock College (more info next week!)

October 9, 2015

Volume 19, Issue 3

A Recommended Read

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

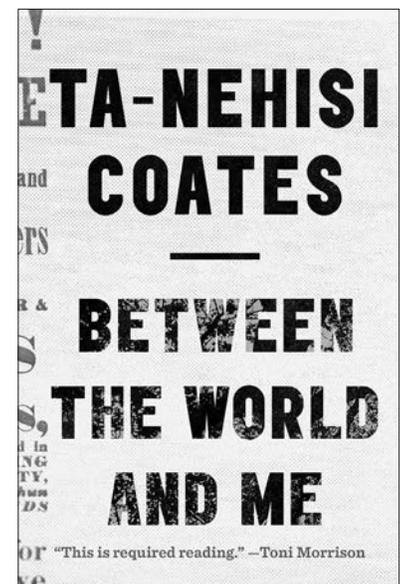
This summer I read a few great books related to our work at Mission Hill. I'll share titles with you, as they are relevant to our school and child rearing work this year. *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates was given to me this summer by Abdi, grade 5&6 teacher. I pushed my stack of other summer books aside to read it and I'm so glad I did. It provided a way in for me to process troubling news.

Over the summer on the news we heard more stories of police brutality. A black woman was pulled over by police. A series of unnecessary and unfortunate events that began with her interaction with the police led to her death. Stories of Black boys and men being shot or brutally treated just kept coming along with communities at unrest struggling to deal with a centuries old problem. Coates writes about his life as a black male father relating to his son. He reflects on police brutality, but also the brutality of existing as a Black male in our country. He does this in a way that brings the reader close to the details of life, making connections to real people, not just names on the news or numbers from a report.

Rachel Goldsmith, head of our Family Council, made arrangements for our families to engage in dialogue about race. This will happen this winter in late February. I hope this will be a well-attended event and beginning of work we need to do as a community. While this is a focus for families, it is also a focus for staff.

Mission Hill staff began this school year with our boys of color in mind. Based on our observations, review of student work and other assessments we know their academic performance trails their white peers. We asked ourselves, what are our specific concerns and what can we do to address them? After considering many things that we would like to see improved, we decided to focus on sustained independent reading. You will hear more about this. To bridge this gap of reading among our students, it will require efforts beyond our regular school day or activities.

This united effort to get our boys reading, to stop and think about them and their welfare takes me back to Coates' writing. At one point he talks about not having any have money, but that he had people. My hope is that we give our boys things that no one can take away despite the violence against them—curiosity, intellect, and people that care, to name a few.



CLASSROOM NEWS

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

"I liked the trip! I like the birdies and the duckies. I was listening," reflected Elian. "The owl fly-ed. The deer peed. The otter walked and flipped. The hawk flapped. It was fun!" said Nadre. The animals that they saw on our trip to the Blue Hills Reservation in Milton gave Nadre and Elian lots to think about and talk about. We went to the Blue Hills on Thursday and spent time Thursday afternoon and Friday reflecting on the trip and recording some of our thoughts.

Danae said, "I remember the red fox and the deer and the snowy owl. I liked them. The otter was swimming and eating. I remember sitting next to Emily and her mom." Thanks to the parent volunteers who came to help us out!

Please mark your calendars for Friday, October 23rd and Friday, December 11th. Those are two days that Room 108 will be sharing at Friday Share! 9:45am - 10:15 am.
-*Geralyn B. McLaughlin*

Room 106

In room 106, we have named our class The Flying Birds. We have also become very interested in birds. Recently we have begun to learn about how they communicate, the sounds they make are called bird calls. We have been reading books and listening to the bird calls to hear the differences. So far, a favorite among the songs we've heard is from the state bird, the Black Capped Chickadee. It goes "Chick-a-dee-dee-dee." We've also learned that the owl's call is "who-who who-who" and the Blue Jay has a high chirp. We will continue to listen and learn about the communication between as many



different birds as we can find.

On Monday, we went on a field trip to the Trailside Museum at Blue Hills Reservation. We were able to see many different birds, including hawks, vultures, owls, and ducks. We also had the opportunity to touch different parts of the birds, like their wings, talons, and even some skulls!
-*Samantha Peters, Student Teacher*

Room 107

Last week a few tiny visitors came to our classroom. After reading a few stories about caterpillars and looking

closely with magnifiers, the evidence showed that these were indeed Monarch caterpillars. In our passionate examination of the creatures, the first observational drawings yielded the following comments:

Jaslin: A little caterpillar sleeping.

Janee: That's what the caterpillar is going to grow to. The caterpillar was sleeping and then it grow bigger like that.

Jayden: I draw a caterpillar. He was sleeping in that tunnel.

Nikaye: I saw the holes in the leaf. The caterpillars are sleeping and they are cold. When they are cold they need to put their jackets on.

Jeremy: The caterpillar was not moving. It's just eating some lunch.

Avian: I saw a caterpillar with antennae coming out. It was yellow and black.

Sophia: I saw a caterpillar. It closed its eyes from the sun and it was moving.

Vidania: I see the caterpillar inside. Her eating blue leaves.

Agboola: The caterpillar get out of the tunnel and the leaf stay in the bottle.

Jonathan: A caterpillar is in there...It is on a leaf eating..



CLASSROOM NEWS

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

Room 109

We've been spending time outside making observations including a rainy day nature walk around the south yard and orchard. We explored in small groups, collected fall materials, and walked with adults who took notes. On Monday we had a great trip to the Blue Hills where we met an Owl and a Red tailed Hawk!

This week students are taking turns in small groups to do a "walk and draw". We explore and observe trees, leaves, and seeds while taking along clipboards and colored pencils. We are also reading books about leaves and compiling a list of questions:

"why do some leaves change just one color and others change more than one color", "why do leaves fall", "why is the word for fall "fall"!)", and the big question "why do leaves change color?!" Students were so excited during a search to see if we had any Maple Trees in our yard, to discover Maple "seeds" that looked exactly like the pictures we'd seen in our research.

-Deborah & Stephanie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

Our first and second graders might know more about gardening than I do! After sharing a long list of what they already think they know about gardens, we began to share our wonders. Through observations, conversations, and read-alouds, students have started to ask many intriguing questions. Here is what we hope to find out:

Why and how can a worm grow back if it gets cut?



Why do evergreen trees stay green all year long?

Why do bugs and bees like flowers?

How do seeds grow into plants?

Why do worms eat dirt?

Where do ladybug's spots come from?

Do caterpillars and butterflies go to the bathroom?

How do flowers grow pollen?

I'm looking forward to learning more alongside these tiny gardeners as we search for answers to our many wonders!

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 212

Hello Room 212 Families! Last week we took the leftover applesauce and made fruit roll ups in the dehydrator. It got rave reviews from all the kids. This week we are going to the Boston Nature Center on Friday at 9:45 to explore the trails and observe. In the classroom the children are learning a new routine called Reader's

Workshop. They rotate through different centers and do a variety of activities such as independent reading and art and poetry center, reading journals and word study. The goal is to be as independent as possible so we can start to have reading groups.

In Nature Study we have started thinking about temperature looking at the thermometer outside and thinking about is it hot, warm, cool or cold? We are also sketching plants and thinking about what we observe. Our next field trip is to Drumlin Farm at the end of October.

-Suzanne Brown

Room 217

Before a study of seeds, the students were asked: what does a seed need to grow?

Armani: I think water and sometimes dirt.

Keziah: It needs the sun to grow. It also needs a gardener to grow it.

Gerson: The sun!

CLASSROOM NEWS

Jackson: There needs to be aired soil.

Cole: It needs rain.

Ashton: But it can't have too much. It needs the right amount of sun and water to grow right.

Lumi: It needs the sun for both the temperature and the light.

Nyla: It needs good soil.

Our raised bed in the kindergarten play yard is doing well but with frosty months approaching, our garden needs some help and new ideas. The class is beginning to brainstorm ways to meet a new challenge: growing a thriving garden in Boston. Some of their great ideas for indoor gardening so far include: a hose with holes in it to act like rain, a garden that can move outside for rain and then come inside for us to learn, little pots with our names put under lamps, gardens in the window, and plants next to each of our lamps with watering cans.

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 203

Last week we asked, "How do things grow together?" We explored this in many ways and it led us to the question, "How do reading and writing go together?" To answer this we did the following activity. Each person read their just right book, found one word they couldn't read, didn't know the meaning of, or thought was interesting. We then began writing a class story with those words. Here is our work so far. Stay tuned for the completed story!

Shawn – snickered

Lukas – solar

Anna – Christmas

Kimberly – gingersnap

Janira – fierce

Luis – revolutionary



Rui – factory

Maya M. – underneath

Skye – England

Zuhri – loyal

Nevaeh – docker

Braxton – vitamin-mineral

Typrese – plop

Amari – wrinkled

Rafael – knocked

Peter – horsepond

Maya S. – picture

Where: England, horsepond, farm,

When: The reign of Charles I, 1493,

Time of Year: Christmas

Characters: Slappy-farm worker,

Frankenstein V-magician, Bob-

by-revolutionary who owns the

farm, kids Mike and Molly-Bobby's

grandchildren, Raven-evil wizard

Problem: A gingersnap factory is

near the farm and Raven works

there. Raven steals food from the

farm with her wizard mind (powers).

The people on the farm are going

hungry. Raven forces Slappy the farm

worker to cook for her.

-Jenerra, Danny, & Nelly

Room 204

The words of the song Building Bridges ring out among students during morning meeting. I invited the students to teach me some of the songs from the MHS songbook. The words to Building Bridges seem appropriate to learn and to help the Bee Squad (our class name) think about how different we are, but also how we can still get along as a community. Most students said they did not know the song, but with some help from Ayla, Kelise, and Shirley we were soon singing in harmony! In our discussion about the lyrics, some students voiced their fear of bridges and described them as scary. After explaining to them that the song is not about real bridges, some students shared that it was about being a community and trying to get along as friends. One student said, "I reach out to and you reach out to me means we can be friends" another shared "It's about us being a community!" The Bee Squad rocks.

-Cleata & Shaina

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Room 207

Listening conferences take place during the beginning of the school year at Mission Hill so that teachers can learn about our students from those who know them BEST- students themselves and their families. Amanda and I have enjoyed our time meeting with our students and their families. We have heard about what is going well with the start of school with hopes, dreams and aspirations for the year ahead of us. We have heard stories that include siblings and other family members. We have heard about previous challenges- some that have been overcome while others are still works in progress.

After each Listening Conference, Amanda and I have been amazed as to how much we are learning and our excitement about our year together with our children (and their families) grows. Collectively we are writers, dancers, mathematicians, artists, scientists, gymnasts and readers who have goals we want to achieve. Amanda and I are elated to be part of the amazing learning and growth that we know will take place.

-Amina & Amanda

GRADES 5&6

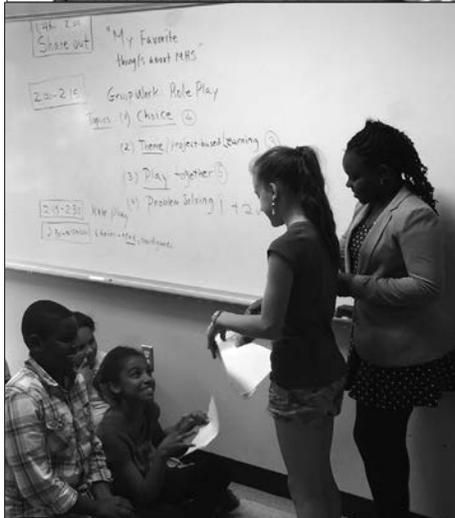
Room 210

Enjoy photos of our grade 5/6 Orientation Day. Activities included classroom visits for new students paired with veteran MHS students, a movie viewing (of *Good Morning Mission Hill*), and a veteran student Share-Out.

-Nakia, Manny, Elsa & Alanna

Room 215

Choice. Stick with the task. Show



your work. These are the norms for thinking and working with numbers in Math 6 this year. Students articulated them; students are working to own them. Math is scheduled 10:30-11:30 every day. On Mondays, we gather in the meeting area to discuss how the class is going, make adjustments, review concepts, frame the week. We discussed the challenges students were having with doing homework. The challenges involve getting daily assigned work that is due the next day. Students said that different nights were busier than others, and if they had a list of the assignments they could organize their time so they can complete their homework. Anais, Tato and Didi proposed that I give them a list of homework assignments for the week, which I check/collect the following Monday. I will do my best to act on this proposal, now that the whole class is in support of it. Relationship between prime and composite numbers is the central concept we are exploring, and developing a variety of strategies for solving math problems, such as building models, making lists and tables and drawing diagrams is the skill we are learning.

-Abdi, Cindy & Carlos

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

Week-in-Review is a reflection we do every Friday afternoon. The specific prompts change, but in general we focus on what went well, what was challenging, and plans for the next week. Here are excerpts from last week's reflections.

"Something that went well this week is that the book is getting good and I

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

want to keep reading"... "What was on my mind throughout the day was food and the food I was thinking about was lasagna because I have not had none in a long time"... "What went well for me is I did my reading, I was being kind, I did my homework, and I was not being mean"... "Something that went well for me is that I participated a lot"... "Wednesday had a good start but a bad ending. It's like a roller coaster. When you're going up which is kind of the good part but then the scary bad part is when you go down. That was how Wednesday was"... "Something that was challenging was HW because I didn't get distributive property but now I understand it"... "This week had a lot of mixed emotions that sometimes distracted me but sometimes helped me focus."

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

The Acts of Kindness segment is my favorite part of Friday Share. It's one of the many ways we celebrate being kind at Mission Hill. I've been to hundreds of Friday Shares and hearing the various acts of kindness from the previous week still puts a smile on my face.

Over the years, I've tried to incorporate an act of kindness segment into meetings but it hadn't always felt right, until this year. At our closing meeting, students share a high from their day and they can also choose to shout out a classmate they've seen do something kind or worked hard. It's only been a few weeks but it already feels like it's

something we've been doing for years.

I'm sure there are many reasons for why it's caught on this year and not the previous years but one of the main reasons is because the students in 214 we're willing to try something that felt a little silly at first. So, I'd like to shout out the students in 214 for being a group of young people who are willing to take risks and most importantly, willing to take the time to appreciate each other.

-Reginald Toussaint

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Where's Yertle?

Over the first month of school many students have come by room 108 to say hello to their good friend, Yertle the Turtle. Yertle began at Mission Hill School the very first day of the very first year - back in the fall of 1997. Yertle has been with the school every year since. This summer, Yertle spent time exploring Kamini's yard in West Roxbury. Yertle had great adventures basking in the sun and finding worms to eat. One day this summer Yertle was so excited she decided to head for the woods. Yertle saw her chance and scrambled away and left on an adventure in the wild. Yertle has been in my life for over 25 years. At Mission Hill she has comforted many sad children, and has been a great listener when children want to practice reading. Although a big part of me is sad that I can't see her every day and care for her in our classroom, another part of me is and happy that she has gone on the

biggest adventure of her life. Carpe diem, Yertle!

-Geraldyn

Family Council Elections

The MHS Family Council is in need of families to fill a number of positions. The following roles are available:

A Second Co-Chair (2 year term). This person will work alongside the Lead Co-Chair, Rachel Goldsmith. Chairs serve for two years with the Second moving into the lead role after a year, on a staggered basis. The two Co-Chairs will run the meetings and ensure the business of the council takes place.

A Secretary (1 year term). This individual will take minutes of Family Council meetings, distribute them to the Co-chairs and Treasurer promptly for review, and then upload them to the BigTent online forum document folder. The Secretary will be chair of the Communications committee.

A Treasurer (1 year term). The person in this role documents income and expenditures and organizes fundraising activities, with the support of members of family council. The Treasurer will be chair of the Fundraising committee.

If interested in any of these positions, please submit a short paragraph detailing your interest to Courtney at courtney.bruno@bc.edu by Tuesday October 13th to be considered.

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

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