



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- December 24, 2015-January 4, 2016  
*Winter Break: NO SCHOOL*
- Tuesday, January 5, 2017  
*Students return to school  
Ancient China Curriculum Begins*
- Thursday, January 14, 2016, 5:45 -7 pm  
*Family Council Meeting*
- Monday, January 18, 2016  
*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day: No School*

December 18, 2015

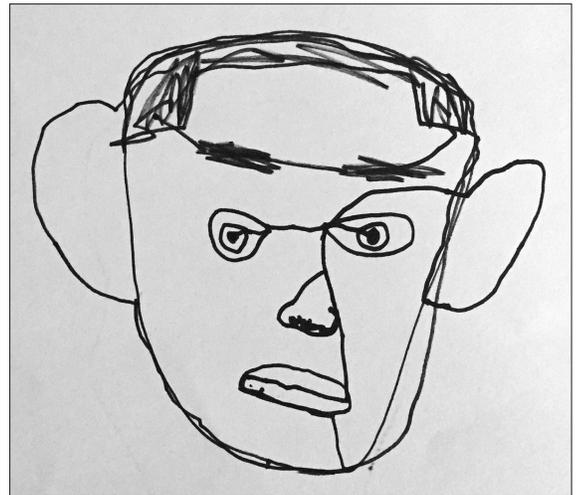
Volume 19, Issue 12

## Wrapping up Fall

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

Lots of good work took place this fall. Students shared their learning at Friday Share, at the fall family Nature Breakfast, and on display boards in the hallway. They also worked toward becoming stronger at all sorts of things- reading, researching, observing, speaking, handling conflict, etc. They spent quality time outside.

Educators at Mission have been busy working with others and learning too. During our first few days of school the Power of Play documentary film crew began filming in our kindergarten through grade 2 classrooms and the entrance to school. With the exception of one child met with an unwelcomed microphone, the filming went well. At curriculum night we responded to requests for child care. This yielded better, but still not fabulous caregiver attendance. A weekend curriculum event to get more folks out may be on the horizon. There was a great turn out for the high school planning event that involved many community members. This was a real launch of collective work and the beginning of new partnerships in our school design. Teachers heard you during the season of listening conferences. If you missed it, and still have not met with your child's teacher, contact them or me or the secretary so we can get you and your child's teacher together face to face. We can come to your home if that's the best place for conversation. We opened our school doors to educators from Japan, Netherlands and across the United States. They came to see the work we do with students and reflect with us about what makes our school a special place. Our staff attended conferences, training sessions and weekly professional development- all to do a better job of teaching. The educators at MHS see themselves as learners and continue to grow. I'm really proud of that.



*Continuous line self portrait, by Luis.*

The caregivers of our school took on a range of leadership roles and worked in partnership with staff. Families spoke at the School Committee meeting in opposition to the change of plans regarding or space in the building. Families were represented at the fall Governance Board meeting. They also turned out for a Family Council evening with Urban Improv and for our Nature Breakfast.

Our fall easily contained enough activity for an entire year.

Next week you will receive your child's report card or narrative report in the mail. This report about your child's learning this fall will be your "news" for the week. I hope you enjoy reading the report with our child(ren). Also enjoy this much needed break and time with family.

### KINDERGARTEN

#### Room 108

Transitions can be difficult for anyone - especially young children. Our routines help us with transitions. For example, have a few different "Good-Bye" songs and games that we rotate throughout the week. Some involve dancing, some involve drumming, and all involve singing. This week, our good-bye songs took on special meaning as we sang good-bye to Kyra Freedman who has been with us part-time this semester from Wheelock College. Kyra finished up her student teaching on Wednesday. We made her a thank-you card and sang her a few good-bye songs. Best of luck, Kyra! Next week, and in January, Ms. Donna and I welcome parent volunteers to come to our classroom to help. Please let us know if you can donate an hour, or two or even more. Muchas gracias!

*-Geraldyn & Donna*

#### Rooms 106 & 109

This week has been filled with conversations about porcupines. Porcupines! you might be saying to yourself. What is going on? We were inspired based on an experience on of the students hand.

Last week Parker and her family were in Vermont. While there Parker's dog Charlotte encountered a porcupine. We had conversations as a class about perspective. We wondered what Charlotte might have been thinking when she saw the porcupine. We wondered what the porcupine was thinking when he saw Charlotte. Violet offered, "Maybe the porcupine thought Charlotte was a predator." We reminded ourselves about the meanings of the terms predator and prey.

Well, Charlotte unfortunately got a face full of quills. Simona reminded us, "The porcupine wasn't trying to be mean, it was just protecting itself." Parker also brought in the quills for us to see. We read a poem about porcupines that provided us many words to describe the quills. Spinney, spike, bramble, bristley are all now apart of our vocabulary. In fact at recess, children brought in a dried stem that they said was bristley!

Children decided to make cards for Charlotte. William A. said, "Maybe we could put them on her collar". Feel better Charlotte and thank you for the inspiration this week.

*-Kathy D'Andrea*

#### Room 107

It's been a long time coming but it is finally here. It's time for us to choose our class name. In our first conversation last week, we brainstormed names that we thought would be representative of who we are as a classroom community. The names included: Two Avas and the Two Kittens, Stars, Mission Hill Class, Red Cheetahs, Buzzing Bees, White Cheetahs, Lego Champions, Princess Dragon Bumblebees, Princess Cars, Cheetahs, Champions of Earth, Golden Seahorses, Cat Cheetahs, Fantastic Fins, Mario Carts, Nature, Cats, Cute Kittens, Dragon Bees, Monsters, Snowflake Stars, Cartwheels and Earth.

In our next conversation, we spoke about what our voting process would look like. We agreed that for our first few votes, students would be allowed to vote (repeatedly) for any name they thought might fit. However, as we continue, our voting will become more and more restricted until we come to a final decision. We have already noted some classroom favorites

but anything can happen. Hopefully we will have a class name for the fast approaching New Year. Have a safe and happy winter break. See you in 2016!

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

### GRADES 1 & 2

#### Room 205

We end each day with a closing circle. This community meeting is a time for us to reflect on our day and hear about how everyone else's day went. We practice being active listeners and making everyone feel like they belong by being quiet and looking at the person who is speaking. Sometimes we use a number to rate our day, sometimes we give a compliment to the person sitting next to us, other times we share the pit (lowest part) and peak (highest part) of our day. Recently, I had been talking to the class about how hard we worked during read to self at the beginning of the year, but now it was starting to seem like more and more kids were getting distracted during this time and not actually reading. So we worked on it by modeling, noticing, and practicing, and we got better. Then at a closing circle this week while sharing pits and peaks, many of the students shared that their peak of the day was that the whole class worked hard during independent reading time. I was a bit surprised at first, that this was the best part of their day, and it reminded me how good it can feel to work on and improve something. Feeling proud of yourself or your community should be one of the best parts of your day! What are you working on to improve?

*-Ashleigh L'Heureux*

**Room 212**

Both fall and our first unit are coming toward an end. As the children today discussed the weather we talked about snow and how the freezing point is 32 degrees. They understand and are anticipating the first day of winter. They have observed and recorded how it is getting darker earlier and that the plants are changing. The leaves have fallen. What they are wondering about is that if winter is coming, why is it so warm? Why is today 60 degrees and we don't need our heavy coats? Kenneth offered that he and his Dad discussed something called Global Warming and that it is getting warmer each year. He said that the smoke we are putting into the air is making things warmer but he wasn't sure what to do about it. It is a big question and one that grownups are grappling with. As I reflect on this unit and think ahead to our unit on the world of work I'm wondering about how we can use what we observed to understand how adults are taking action and how we can as well.

-Suzanne Brown

**Room 217**

Report writing gives teachers a time to look back on the year so far. The report is so much more than the 1's, 2's, 3's, and 4's given to the different standards we work on. Each child is a unique individual working on a unique set of skills that is just right for them. Every child in the classroom has improved at something they are working on. Not all children in first and second grade read chapter books by December. Not all children in first and second grade can solve every word problem or equation. Not all children in first and second grade keep their hands to

themselves without a reminder. Not all children in first and second grade can stay on task and focused without sitting near a teacher or away from a special friend. Not all children in first and second grade can come into the classroom with a calm, relaxed body. However, all children in first and second grade CAN be their own person, try hard, and be kind. Children in room 217 are constantly working and growing. Report writing was a nice time for me to see just how far we have all come.

-Kate Needham

**GRADES 3 & 4**

**Rooms 203**

Has anyone ever asked you "What is your favorite dinner?" Or "What do you like to do in summer?" How about "Who is your role model?" Your answers to these questions could reveal so much about who you are as a person. It was with this idea in mind that I brought the "Question of the Day" board to Room 203.

I started doing a "Question of the Day" as a camp counselor in the

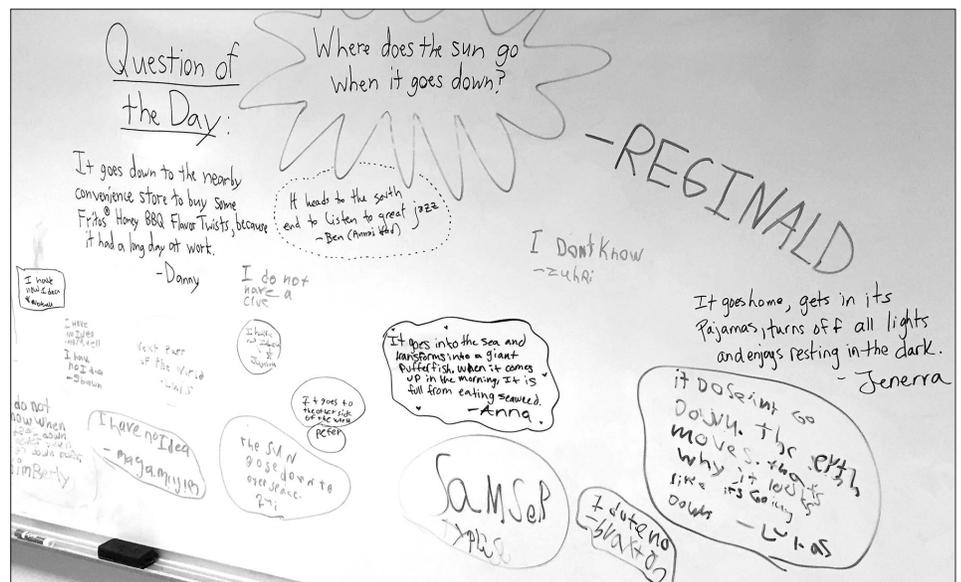
summer, and Jenerra thought we should make it a part of our daily routine. Students write their answer up on the board, I take a picture of it, and the answers go into a book which we publish each month. We have had almost 70 questions so far, written by myself, students, and teachers around the school.

Over the past four months I've learned that Marquell loves to have lobster for dinner, Shawn likes going to camp in summer, and Rafael's role model is The Flash! If you ever happen to stop by Room 203, you can take some time and learn about our community!

-Danny Flannery, Student Teacher

**Room 204**

We are almost there, the end of the first trimester and so much has happened since the beginning of school! I watched students develop their reading and writing skills. I listened to some great discussions about nature and what we can do to help our environment thrive. I watched them learn about each other and support each other in difficult situations. I lis-



Question of the day in Room 203.

*Math with grade 6 students. Lily and Emelia's work and math goals (L to R).*

tened as some students shared their mathematical thinking and problem solving skills with their peers. So much as happened in room 204 that just makes me beam with pride to be their teacher.

Recently the Bee Squad welcomed two new students to our community and it is incredible how in such a short time they become blended as if they have been here since September! Yeilyvette and Mirah came to us as fourth graders from other BPS schools, and they were welcomed immediately by the Bee Squad. There is no doubt that they belong there!  
*Cleata & Shaina*

**Room 207**

Several times a year the entire school comes together for an all school sing-a-long. This took place this week at Friday Share. We lifted our voices together as we sang some of our favorite Mission Hill songs. Some of the songs included *The Bog Song*, *Oh How Lovely Is the Evening*, *The More We Get Together*, *There's A Hole In The Bucket* and *This Little Light of Mine*.

One of my favorite songs is *Oh How Lovely Is the Evening*. The lyrics are:  
*Oh how lovely is the evening  
Is the evening  
When the bells are sweetly ringing  
Sweetly ringing  
Ding, dong*

*Ding, dong*

Ask your child about their favorite Mission Hill School and ask them to teach it to you! Happy Singing!  
*-Amina Michel-Lord & Amanda McCarthy*

**GRADES 5&6**

**Room 210**

For the last two weeks the Crispy Leaves class has been having indoor rowing for wellness.

In indoor rowing you use rowing machines where you strap your feet on to the foot rests, grab the handles, and sit on the seat. You push off with your legs while keeping your arms straight until you reach your chest. Then you push forward with your arms a little bit and you slide forward with your legs. You try to pull hard so the pounds monitor goes to a high level. Thanks so much to Laura, our wellness coordinator, and her friend, Ryan, for for getting us this awesome wellness session. We will probably go on a field trip to the a community boating place where we will be able to use our new rowing skills and participate in activities such as racing and explorations.  
*-Anais Brito & Amishai Goodman-Goldstein, students from the Crispy Leaves*

**Room 215**

Is this a story about change, or do these numbers describe another kind

of relationship? Can we infer information and express our understanding in graphs or numbers, or both? Math 6 has been a lot of fun this year with the Crispy Leaves and FireFlies because we talk, we meander, we explore in less linear, computational ways. Accuracy is a value that has its place. Reasoning and meaning-making (see Lily's work) are in the foreground for us. We deconstruct a math problem; organize information in sensible ways: translate the language so it reads real to us, tell each other what we observe happening or try to predict what might happen...If we can continue to be flexible in our thinking, creatively bring different (even unrelated) strategic knowledge, help each other, be invested in asking questions that complicate and enliven conversations rather than in giving the answer, then we might approach Algebra, as Emelia is bent on us doing (see her goals).

*-Math 6 with (some of) the FireFlies and the Crispy Leaves, & Abdi*

**GRADES 7&8**

**Room 213**

*"The world is in greater peril from those who tolerate or encourage evil than from those who actually commit it."* Albert Einstein

Our class is talking about kids taking action to make change, especially

## SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

in world situations like the ones at hand. We have noticed the things that are being said and done. For example, people, even a presidential candidate, are saying all Muslims are terrorists, and that refugees should not be allowed in our country. Someone also disrespected and mocked a reporter who has a medical condition. None of this is okay, especially from adults who should know better. We young people have great ideas and strong voices to stand up for others and ourselves. We have the power to call adults back to sanity and the responsibility to speak the truth. In meeting Autumn made a connection to what we were studying last year, when Martin Luther King wanted to fill the jails. None of the adults volunteered, but all the kids did. Now we want to stand up in the same way.  
-Lynka, Evelyn, & Autumn, (students) for Room 213

### Room 214

When I announced to the seventh grade would not be working on the Muddy River project Aniya responded, "Does that mean the 8th graders won't work on high school applications?" A few other eighth graders looked anxious. On Fridays, while the seventh graders work on the Muddy River project the eighth graders huddle to work on their high school applications.

Applying to high schools is a lot more complicated than when I was in the 8th grade. While every school is part of the Boston Public School lottery, many of them have their own lottery process and a few require

essays and recommendation letters. Which is why we've incorporated the process into our curriculum. We research high schools, select schools that are a good match and complete individual applications.

The 8th graders make the best of our time together. Which is understandable since I am sure that the whole process is nerve wracking. Hopefully, we've alleviated some of the stress by going through the process together.  
-Reginald Toussaint

## SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

### Carpentry Help Needed in K0

The K0 class needs help fixing our much-loved rocking chair. The spindles for the back of the chair have come out (I can't get them back in!) and need to be reglued. Are you up to the task? Please contact GERALYN in Room 108 if you can help!

### Smart Smiles

The Smart Smiles Dental Program is coming to MHS on January 7th & 8th. This is a FREE dental screening program for ALL students. If your child does not have a dentist, it is highly recommended that you sign your child up. Forms have been sent home with all students and must be returned back to school. Please contact Nurse Georgie if you did not receive the form 617-635-6384, x120. **First**

### Work Experiences Apprentice Learning Update

Eighth graders complete their workplace apprenticeships this week. David worked at Caramelo, Yamilet and Ronnie at Nazareth Childcare

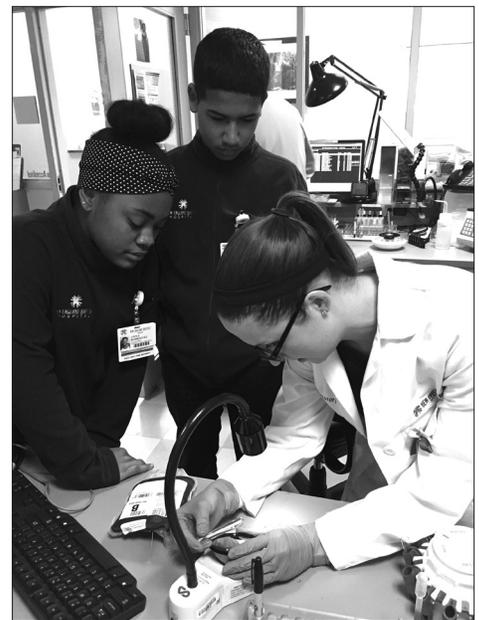
Center, Leah at Station 8 Salon, and Aniya and Julian at New England Baptist Hospital.

Students practiced positive workplace skills such as communication, self-presentation, persistence, and taking initiative learned from real world experts.

Congratulations to these young adults. We look forward to helping them secure summer jobs and enriching summer experiences that will continue to prepare them for success in high school and beyond.

Our next group of eighth graders begins classroom preparation in January and apprenticeships in March. Please contact us if you would like to host a student.

-Helen Russell & Taylor Norman



Aniya and Jullien learn about taking blood samples at the New England Baptist Hospital.

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

Mission Hill K-8 School  
A Boston Public Pilot School  
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