



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Thursday, March 3, 5:00-7:00 pm  
*Governance Board Meeting (see flyer)*
- Thursday, March 10, 5:45-7:00 pm  
*Family Council Meeting*
- Monday, March 14, ALL DAY  
*Family Conferences (Rescheduled)*
- Thursday, March 17  
*NO SCHOOL: Evacuation Day*
- Friday, March 25  
*NO SCHOOL: Good Friday*

February 26, 2016

Volume 19, Issue 17

### *The Project Room-2016*

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

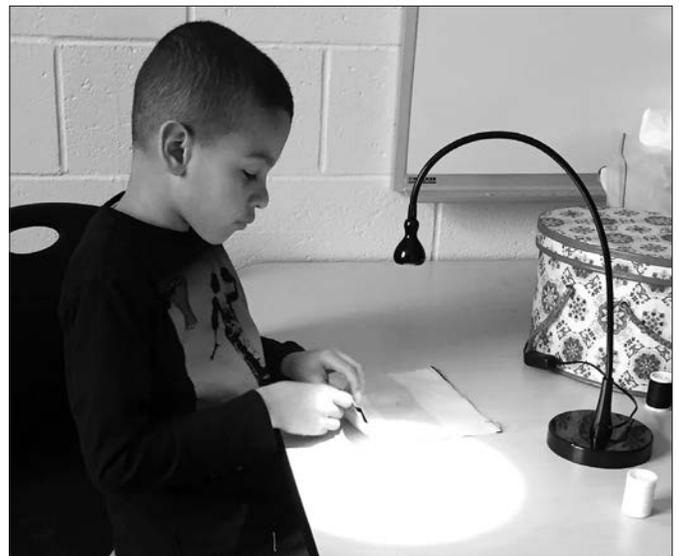
In 2014 I wrote a letter to you all titled *The Project Room*. Here's a bit of it. *Mission Hill's project room (room 208) will be ready to open soon. It will open with spaces for four different types of work—fabric and fiber work, design, construction and building, and mixed media art. These options may change through the year depending on use and student interest. Students may use the space when accompanied by an adult. If you are a family member, alumni or external community member and you would like to volunteer project room hours please let us know.*

*The intellectual and artistic value of such a space to create things and to have conversation about art may seem clear. But there are very practical reasons to have a project room too. Students can (I believe should) learn how to repair a piece of clothing—sew on a button or stitch up a hole. It is useful to take seemingly unrelated objects to create something new.*

One of our families generously funded sewing supplies and we used some of school budget for other materials. Back then Joel, Kathy, Marietje and I organized the space and presented to our staff ways that the Project room could be used. The room had everything it needed except staffing. That made it a space that kids were not using as we hoped despite our goals and efforts. Now Dani Coleman is based in the project room and the room is finally being used as described in that newsletter written two years ago.

Children are building, sewing, making buttons, making beads and all sorts of other projects. Dani facilitates their work and learning. It's a beautiful thing. Volunteers would still be great to have. We'd love to have a family or community member come in one or two hours a week to work with students or help document through note taking, film or photography the work that is being done.

Many thanks for the patience, contributions and flexibility of our school community to finally bring the vision of our Project Room to life.



## KINDERGARTEN

### Room 108

Just before break, a special visitor came to our classroom and shared a wonderful pop-up book about Chinese New Year. Kaila Wong is a familiar face, as she is our resident speech therapist. However, one day she came and joined us on the rug to read her book and share her beautiful artifacts from Chinese New Year: gorgeous lion and dragon puppets, a red lantern that actually lights, and lucky money in a red envelope. The students were excited to try the frag-



Children in room 108 investigate artifacts from the Chinese New Year.

ile marionettes, and waited patiently for their turn with the lighted lantern.

On Monday, after break Ayan excitedly shared with us that she had gone to Chinatown to see the parade - and she couldn't wait to tell Kaila! Thanks so much, Kaila, for teaching us all about Chinese New Year.

*-Geraldyn McLaughlin & Donna Winder*

### Room 106

If you've come by room 106, then you know major geometry projects are happening. Tangrams are everywhere and they are inspiring us. You might not know that tangrams are a Chinese puzzle said to be invented during the Song Dynasty. There are seven pieces. Five triangles, one square, and a parallelogram.

We read Grandfather Tang's Story by Ann Tompert. The story inspired us to recreate animals with our tangrams and create some things of our very own. The following was overheard while children manipulated tangrams:

Simeon: This is what I do. I make something really cool and then I tell Jediah how to make it, if it's not cool I don't tell him.

Jediah: Look what I make! You just put these small pieces there! You can do it! I don't have a diamond!

Angelina: Who wants to make a polar bear

Simeon: I'm gonna make a polar bear

We are now working with paper tangrams as well. The children arrange them to represent something they like, the color or paint the background, and then they dictate a story about their tangram.



Working with Tangrams in room 106.

*-Kathy D'Andrea*

### Room 107

*To see the world through the eyes of a child...*

I am often reminded that the things we adults find important are vastly different from what is on the minds of children. This is no more apparent than when we reflect on the day at our afternoon meetings or when we make goals at our family conferences. While both lenses are important, during conferences the adults are often focused on the academic aspects of schooling and request adding goals like: "Work on learning letters."

“Get better at reading.” “Work on writing his/her name.” However, our students often ask to add goals like: “Get better at splits.” “Run faster.” “Build with the big K’NEX.” “Get better at riding trikes.”

In connection, this week Jo-Ann, Mary Beth and I were diligent in infusing our ancient China theme throughout the day. While some students were fascinated with tasting Jasmine and White tea, making paper and listening to stories like Basket Weaver and Catches Many Mice, The Weaving of a Dream, and The Stonecutter, when asked what they remembered or liked about the day, some students recounted eating animal crackers, playing sharks, kitties and monsters with friends and building a restaurant. Why? Because those experiences were undoubtedly the most important to them.

*-Jada Brown, Jo-Ann Hawkesworth & Mary Beth Fields*

### Room 109

While studying Ancient China and Maps we have also been learning about measuring as part of our math work. First we learned about the concept and purpose of measuring. To do this, we talked about things we’d like to measure, the vocabulary longer/shorter, bigger/smaller, measure, and compare. We used non-standard measuring tools such as cubes and craft sticks. One day we had an exciting lesson when everyone measured their shoes with cubes, traced their shoes, and then measured everyone’s shoes with cubes.

On another day a group of students spent a long time using craft sticks to measure the entire length of the classroom. This was a big project. They worked together to line every-

thing up straight, move obstacles, fixed sticks that got bumped by feet and, finally, to count them all. The final count was 134! Another group worked together to measure and count the circumference of the rug in the drama area. Lots of very focused work time.

*-Deborah Freeman*

### GRADES 1 & 2



*Soley writing to her pen pal in Seattle.*

### Room 205

Some very exciting mail from Seattle, Washington arrived for each member of the Tiny City this week! The students were so excited to open letters from their new 1st grade pen pals across the country. This connects nicely with our study of maps, because student were looking to find Seattle on a map. We also had some conversations about the difference between Washington state and Washington D.C. Everyone then chose special letter-writing paper to

write back to their pen pal. Ask your child about what their pen pal likes to do and how they responded. We’re looking forward to continuing to exchange letters for the rest of the year!

*-Ashleigh L’Heureux*

### Room 217

Gong xi fa cai! Happy spring festival! Two Thursdays ago, room 217 dressed in red and celebrated Chinese New Year. We spent the week decorating the classroom. Kids made lanterns to hang across the ceiling, a portrait of Confucius, and a poster saying “Gong Xi Fa Cai” in Mandarin. Children practiced writing the Mandarin calligraphy my sister Allie taught them on her last visit. Allie then came in to teach us how to make tofu and pork dumplings. The class loved working together, like a dumpling factory. All of the students made and tried the dumplings, and even shared them with adults around the school. We practiced saying happy new year (literally: happy spring festival), may I have a red envelope, and thank you. Allie gave each child a red envelope with Chinese coins inside. We finished the party



*Natalia making dumplings to celebrate the Chinese New Year.*

## CLASSROOM NEWS

by learning about the parades and special dances that are performed in Chinatown. It was such a fun way to celebrate a culture and get excited about the study of Ancient China.

-Kate Needham



*Silkworms!*

### GRADES 3 & 4

#### Rooms 203

“What’s that Miss Jenerra?” a few students asked as I came to the rug with a container in my hands. We were reading a book entitled *Silkworm Moths* for read aloud. It was unlike me to leave the rug during read aloud, so I had their full attention. As I sat down on the rug and put the box in front of me, I shared that I had ordered silkworms over the break and these were them! Replies of excitement and disbelief filled the air. We had read two Chinese folktales about how silk was discovered in and smuggled out of China. We were now reading a nonfiction book to learn about these fascinating insects. As it is with all of our learning, having

a tangible resource is preferred. So... we have the best resource of all for learning about silk! Did you know that silkworm moths don’t have mouths because they don’t eat? We will build a habitat, watch them grow, and share our findings with others. We invite you to stop in to check out these amazing insects and learn about them.

-Jenerra Williams & Mychaela Kelly

#### Room 204

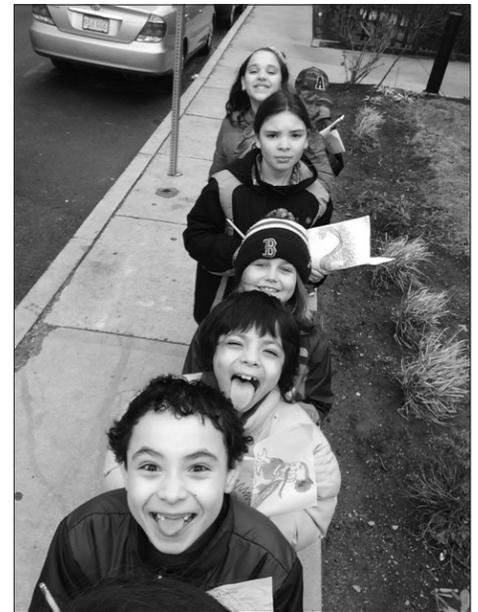
As we celebrated the 100th day of school this week I began to look at where there has been progress and what goals still remain for the current school year. When asked to reflect, many students shared that they would like to move up one to two reading levels. One student shared “My goal is to read all the books in *Diary of A Wimpy Kid* series”, while another one shared “I would like to read nine books and fix my behavior because it has not been good”. A student also shared “My goal is to get better at my math and explain it more”. Guiding students to set goals has motivated them to finish what they start and to have forethought in planning what they need to do to accomplish their tasks or assignments. This is an important habit of mind for them during project/theme time as we study influential emperors of Ancient China and their different styles of leadership and contributions.

-Cleata, Danny & Yesenia

#### Room 207

Before the February break, the 3/4th grade took a trip to Chinatown. We had some much fun exploring and tasting food. Please enjoy some pictures from our trip!

Amanda & Amina



*Room 207 in Chinatown.*

### GRADES 5&6

#### Room 210

Usually when we return from Farm School I like to write about sounds from the farm, quotes from the kids that capture the essence of time spent there. This time I was struck by the fluidity of the transitions to and from different learning experiences. Abdi commented, “Notice how the farmers just say, “hey meet us in the horse barn”, and they all get there”. This level of freedom also got me thinking about their ability, and willingness to



*Harvesting and preparing food at Farm School.*

just play. It's not very often that kids have a chance to simply get up and go outside right after dinner when at home.

I began to think of all the different reasons why children just aren't getting outside to play as much these days. Obviously, living in Boston, none of us live with the sheer amount of space and land that the Farm School provides. For many of us, safety, and safety after dark are of concern. Increases in technology (computers, televisions, video games) keep children and adults indoors more these days too, and some children find their extracurricular time more structured (hockey practice, ballet, piano lessons). Even the advent of the "play date" is no match for the raw, unadulterated exploration that takes place at the farm. That type of clean-your-plate, grab-your-coat-and-go experience is unrivaled in its value for children. Whether the farm is cold, muddy, or covered with with ice and snow. They are happy simply

being, running, tagging and inventing games long after the sun goes down.

*-Nakia, Manny, & Elsa*

### **Room 215**

Farm School state of mind starts when a cue forms to load bags and pillows unto the bus. Anxious thoughts recede, rhythms of corporation and connection take shape, and there's enough space and variety for any child to find a groove here: a farmer who organizes work in the way you might, and another who does things differently, all within the natural order of things, and this natural order is generous with mistakes and all kinds of energies. I am interested in the slower energies this visit, and I am not sure why. I watch Angel's hands get muddier from a sweet, crunchy carrot he is munching. He shoves carrots at Nakia and me to try them as soft flecks of dirt fall from his hand onto the cold ground.

The kitchen crew is peeling papery onion skins. One set of hands are racing to peel as many onions because mixing spices for the Mexican rice is more appealing. Another child looks casually out the glass door to the far field. Flecks of onion paper fall from the table.

What is replicable about the Farm School state of being at MHS? The day begins with work then breakfast then morning meeting then farm work then snack then more farm work then lunch. What could we be doing with our 5/6 schedule that is generous with all kinds of energies, mistakes and imaginings?

*-FireFlies with the Crispy Leaves at the Farm School*

### **GRADES 7&8**

#### **Room 213**

As we continue our brain study, each student created a list of questions. I think we're as fascinated by the questions and the thinking and

wondering and conjecturing they elicit than we will be by the answers we research! Here's a sample of our brains at work.

How does your brain know what you're tasting? How do we think? What makes songs stay in the brain? Where does creativity come from? What is a coma? What causes beliefs? What is *deja vu*? What does psychological trauma do to the brain? Where in the brain do you form opinions? What's your mind like when you're unconscious? Why do our brains not do the stuff they do when we are asleep when we are not asleep? How is daydreaming different from sleep dreaming? How does meditation affect the brain? How do you develop feelings? Why does it take longer or faster for someone to process something? How do you have thoughts? When you think, why are there voices in our head? Can babies that don't know how to speak be able to have thoughts or voices in their heads? How much can you change your brain? What happens if you get lead in your brain? Why do I zone out? How does my mind help me do math? How did I get so good in math? Does color change our moods? Does the color change our mood because it represents memories? Why do we choose to do bad things when we know that it is bad? When we get scared, does our brain get scared? What part of the brain makes us wonder?

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

### Room 214

One of the first questions I was asked on Monday was, "Reginald, when are we going to get together with our book group to talk about the book?" I reassured them that we would meet soon. We've been reading these novels (*Somewhere in the Darkness*, *What My Mother Doesn't know*, *Among the Hidden* and *The House of Scorpions*) for a about three weeks and haven't had the chance to discuss it yet. The students were getting impatient.

On Tuesday, we finally met with our groups. It went better than expected. There was the initial awkwardness of meeting with a group for the first time but once we settled down the conversation was fluid. The feedback from the students was overwhelmingly positive. At our end of the day meeting, two students shared that talking about the book with their classmates was their highlight of the day. A few students already have their mind on which book to read in the next round of book groups.

-Reginald Toussaint

### SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

#### Family Conferences

**Family Conferences have been rescheduled for Monday, March 14, 2016.** If you haven't already, you should be receiving a notice of you and your child's (or children's) time and date. If it is impossible for you to attend at your scheduled conference time, please call Tiffany in advance for a schedule change. If there is any

issue such as transportation or child care that makes it difficult for you to attend, please call 617-635-6384. We may be able to help.

#### Election Day Bake Sale!

**When:** Tuesday, March 1,  
7:30-10:30 am & 3:00-7:00 pm

**Where:** Mission Hill School Gym

**Who:** MHS Family Council

**Why:** To raise money for our school!  
**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

We need people to BAKE: muffins, cupcakes, cookies, brownies, whole pies & cakes. Please wrap your items for sale. You may drop food off at Dora Golding's house (19 May Street in JP) the evening of 2/29 or bring them directly to the sale. We also need people to help sell the goodies; between 7:30-10:30 am & 3:00-7:00 pm

If you can help, please contact Dora Golding at [dkmgolding@yahoo.com](mailto:dkmgolding@yahoo.com) or (603) 305-3077.

#### Governance Board Meeting

Mission Hill families, you are welcome to attend MHS Board Meetings. Please come out to meet board members, participate in important conversations about education, learn ways to support our school and consider being a member in the near future. Both dinner and childcare will be provided. Please RSVP for childcare at 617-635-6384.

**When:** March 3, 2016

**Where:** Art Room-211

**Time:** 5:00-7:00 p.m.

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

Mission Hill K-8 School  
*A Boston Public Pilot School*  
[WWW.MISSIONHILLSCHOOL.ORG](http://WWW.MISSIONHILLSCHOOL.ORG)

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# It's Dinner and a Board Meeting!

Upcoming Meeting Dates: 6/2/16



Hello Mission Hill families!

You are and have always been welcome to attend our Board Meetings.

Please consider this your official invitation to come out and meet our board members, hear a little about important conversations in education, learn about ways to support our school and hopefully consider being a member in the near future. We consider your presence valuable so both dinner and childcare will be provided. Please **RSVP for childcare at 617-635-6384.**

We hope to see you there!

**When: March 3, 2016**

**Where: Art Room (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)**

**Time: 5:00-7:00 p.m.**

# ¡ Es comida y una reunión de la junta directiva del consejo de administración!

Fecha de la reunión próxima: 2 de Junio, 2016



¡Hola familias de Mission Hill!

Es y siempre ha podido asistir a nuestras Reuniones de la junta directiva.

Por favor piense que esta es su invitación oficial conocerse a nuestros miembros del consejo, oír un poco sobre conversaciones importantes en la educación, aprende sobre modos de apoyar nuestra escuela y con considerar ser un miembro del consejo en el futuro próximo. Consideramos su presencia valiosa por tanto la comida y el cuidado de niños se proporcionarán. Por favor

RSVP para puericultura al 617-635-6384

¡Esperamos verle allí!

**Cuando: El 3 de marzo de 2016**

**Donde: Salón de arte (2do piso)**

**Tiempo: 5:00-7:00 p. m.**

# ELECTION DAY

# BAKE SALE

**WHEN:** Tuesday, March 1, 7:30-10:30 am & 3-7 pm

**WHERE:** Mission Hill School, by the gym

**WHO:** Run by the MHS Family Council

**WHY:** To raise money for our fabulous school!

## **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**

**We need people to BAKE:** muffins, cupcakes, cookies, brownies, whole pies & cakes, quiches, etc. Please wrap your items for sale. You can drop off your baked goods at Dora Golding's house (19 May Street in Jamaica Plain) the evening of February 29 or bring them directly to the sale table.

We also need **people to help sell** the goodies; please consider volunteering for a shift (any length of time) between 7:30-10:30 am & 3-7 pm.

If you can help, please contact Dora Golding at [dkmgolding@yahoo.com](mailto:dkmgolding@yahoo.com) or (603) 305-3077.

# DIA DE ELECCIÓN

# VENTA DE

# PASTELES

**Cuando:** Martes, 1 de Marzo, 7:30-10:30 am & 3-7pm

**Donde:** La Escuela Mission Hill, por el gimnasio

**Quien:** Consejo de Familia

**Por qué:** para recaudar dinero para nuestra escuela fabulosa

Necesitamos **personas para hornear:** magdalenas, galletas, pasteles, quiches, etc. Por favor, ponga sus artículos a la venta. Puede dejar estos productos horneados a la casa de Dora Golding (19 May Street, Jamaica Plain) durante la noche del 29 de Febrero o llevarlos directamente a la mesa de la venta.

También necesitamos personas para ayudar a vender; P\por favor, considere ofrecerse como voluntario para un cambio (cualquier periodo de tiempo) entre las 7: 30-10: 30 am y 3-7 pm.

Si usted puede ayudar, por favor, póngase en contacto con Dora Golding [dkmgolding@yahoo.com](mailto:dkmgolding@yahoo.com) o (603) 305-3077.