



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- February 8 & 9  
*Family Conferences*
- Thursday February 11  
*Bake Sale & Family Council Meeting (see pg 6 and flyer)*
- Wednesday February 10, 9:30 -10:45 am  
*Outside the Lines Meeting (see flyer)*
- February 15-19  
*February Break: NO SCHOOL*
- Thursday, February 25  
*Race Conversation @ MHS (see below)*

February 5, 2016

Volume 19, Issue 16

### *Conversation(s) About Race at MHS*

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

On behalf of Family Council leadership, Divya a MHS parent of two students, presented an idea to our staff this week. She spoke about bringing MHS families and staff together for a discussion about race. The goal of this conversation would be to open up the dialogue, to begin to create understandings about how to talk about it in our school community. How does race play out in my life? How does race play out in my school? How can I talk to my children about these issues in a way that they can understand? The idea is to build relationships and speak honestly among one another. This discussion would be the start, the beginning of a journey.

Talking about race, particularly in a racially mixed group can be emotionally charged and hard to move forward. So who would facilitate our discussion? Divya investigated professionals that work in the field of anti-racist education. She found Paula Lima Jones, Racial Justice Program Manager at the YMCA, to facilitate our conversation. The President of our Family Council, Rachel Goldsmith, inspired Divya to get the ball rolling on this discussion and has worked alongside to plan this important talk time. She agreed that Paula was the right person for this work with us.

Please join the conversation on Thursday February 25th from 5:45 to 7:45pm at MHS in the school library. Childcare and dinner will be provided. Dinner will begin at 5:30.

We hope a diverse group of people will attend. You can help make that happen by volunteering to make phone calls to MHS families. Please contact Rachel or Divya if you can help with outreach. Translation services and transportation will be provided for those in need.



*Bamboo and Panda paintings by Lucia, Natalya, and AJ.*

## KINDERGARTEN

### Room 108

As part of the schoolwide study of Ancient China, I want our youngest students to begin to understand that they are part of a larger world. We have begun looking at globes and maps (which are very abstract) and at books with families from around the world. Our students know their own families very well, and we will be building on that knowledge to learn about other families in our classroom as well as families around the world - giving special attention to China. When you come in for your family conference, you will get a chance to share some special thoughts and connections about your own family. We are looking forward!

-Geralyn McLaughlin & Donna Winder

### Room 106

Hi I am Melly Bowen, I am the new student teacher in Kathy's classroom. I am very excited to be working with your children and really learning about how your children explore and navigate their own learning. I am currently a student at Wheelock



Building ancient Chinese houses in Kathy's class.

College, completing my undergrad in Early Education along with Developmental Psychology. As many of you know your children are learning about the ancient China, so I have designed a lesson where your children will be learning about ancient Chinese houses. They will be able to make their very own featuring the designs of the houses back then and engaging in thoughtful conversation. I am very excited to see where this journey brings us and to get to know your children as learners!

-Melly Bowen, student teacher

### Room 107

*"These horses (animal crackers) are from the emperor's imperial army."*

When we brought boxes of our ancient Chinese artifacts into the classroom, the Golden Seahorses could not resist the urge to take a little peek sporadically throughout the day. After unpacking and demystifying the boxes' contents, we realized just how much these last few weeks have been filled with newness. We have had new projects, new visitors, new curriculum, new music and Mary Beth-our new student teacher. Our exploration of ancient China has introduced a newness of thinking, had us welcome challenges and entertain ideas based on items we have seen, touched, tasted and/or smelled. Below are a few musings, appreciations and realizations:

"Look! This [book] is from China!"

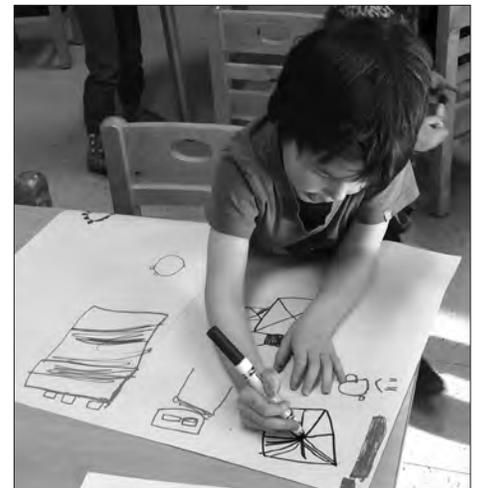
"It's a fan!"

"We're making the Great Wall of China!"

"We're making an exhibit of China! Josie will be the supervisor."

"Ooh! A lantern! Can mine light up too?"

"Hey! We can put a string across the



Map making in Deborah's class.

room and hang them [lanterns]!"  
"Why are the clothes like that?"  
"We can make a house for the people."

"We need a river and a bridge."  
"We should be the Ancient China Class."

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

### Room 109

We are wrapping up our work on place and maps. Our map work has helped us to grasp what a map represents. It has helped us to understand that what looks not too far on a map can be a really far distance to travel. Just as letters and words

## CLASSROOM NEWS

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represent speech, numbers represent quantity, and clocks represent time, maps represent our physical world. This concept of “representation” can be both fascinating and challenging for young children.

Our opportunity to revel in the representation of space and place for a while has been really fun. And we'll keep using this new tool! Rex and Adelaide came in with a note asking us to find Ecuador. Simona asked us to find Needham. Every time someone is traveling to a place, hears of a new place, or a place is mentioned in a book, we can look it up on the map! We hope to fit a trip to the Mapparium into our future plans.

*-Deborah Freeman*

### GRADES 1 & 2

#### Room 205

We welcome four new students to our classroom this week, while Suzanne is out. Before the students arrived, I asked the Tiny City how we can help make the new students feel like they belong. Here are their ideas: say good morning, give them a spot to put their things, give them a hug, introduce yourself, give them compliments, tell them things about yourself, invite them to play, and be helpful. Another child suggested that we make them signs to feel welcome. So, outside of our classroom hang four cheerful signs to welcome Eli, Simeon, Xavier, and Kenneth. During this first week together new friendships have already formed and other students have stepped up to be helpful, teaching others about routines and where to put materials. We're so happy to learn and share experiences with our new classmates.

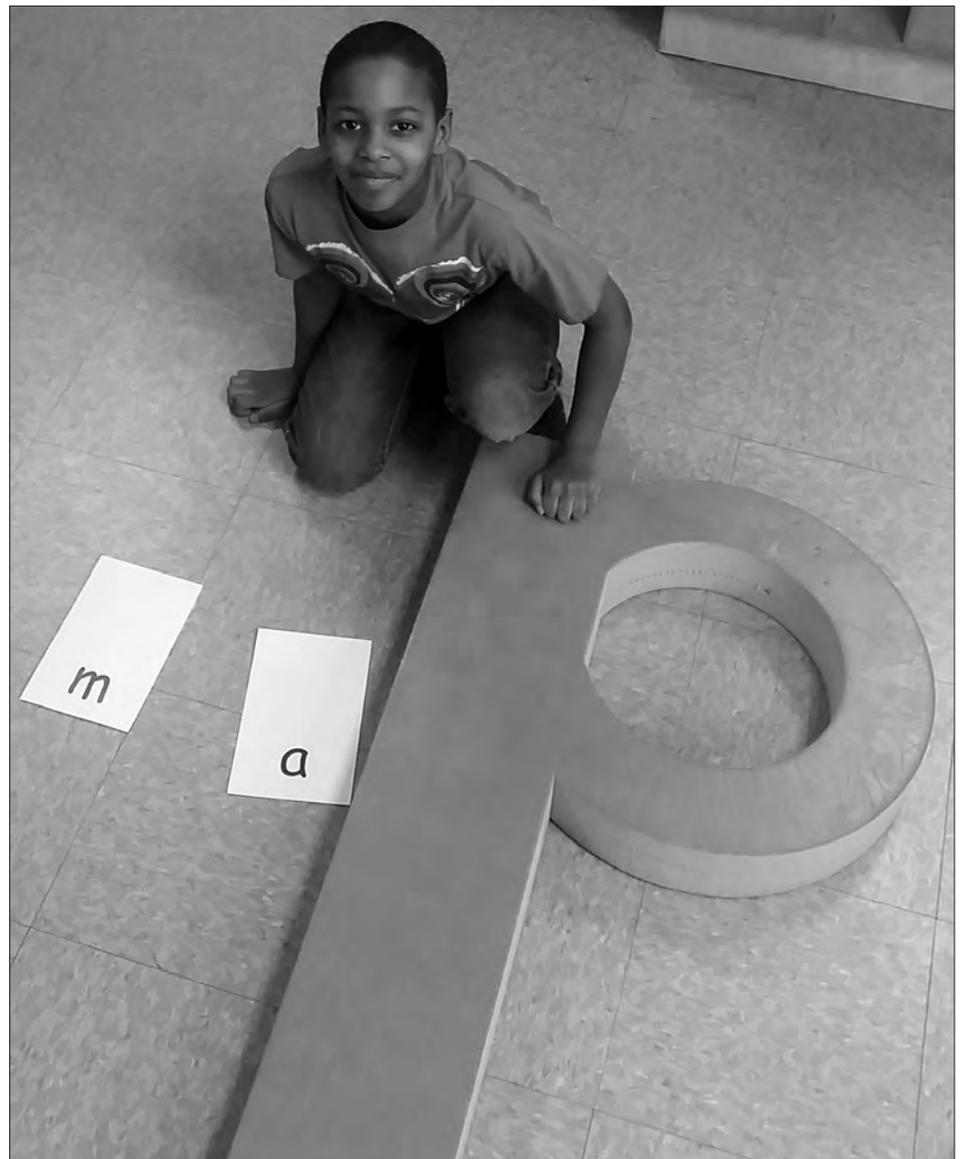
*-Ashleigh L'Heureux*

#### Room 217

Certain relationships and dynamics are ingrained by the middle of the year in a small class. Some students have formed great friendships and others have struggled to find the right match amongst so few children. Some students need to be kept apart from one another unless supervised by an adult. It can be hard to truly get to the bottom of issues that seem to repeat on a daily basis. It seemed like the room needed some fresh faces to mix it up. This addition came sooner than we thought!

Room 217 welcomed six new visitors this week. Jaiden, Natalia, Milan, Moxie, Romeo, and Evan from Suzanne's class will all be with us for the next month. This new mix of students has been great for our community. We are working on our friendship making skills, community agreements, and inclusiveness to new faces. There are new friendships forming that are wonderful to see. Children are playing, creating, and learning together in a new way.

*-Kate Needham*



## GRADES 3 & 4

### Rooms 203

Our focus question this week was “Why study China?” As we discussed the question on Monday, I reminded The DJ Room of our Habit of Mind relevance. Using this habit requires answering questions like “Why does this matter?” and “Why is this important?” As I asked the question, hands began to pop up and while I was anxious to hear what they had to say, I asked them to just hold their thoughts and continue thinking about this important question as we encountered China this week.

With the focus question to lead us, we began exploring some new aspects of China. We read and responded to poetry written by ancient Chinese master poets like Du Fu. We began building different structures inspired by pictures of Chinese buildings. We learned about the significance of Chinese names and how they are created. Then we created our own. We also tried our hand at making Chinese dumplings that were delicious!

Why study China? This may be a question that you have asked as well. Take some time this week/weekend to talk to your child about your answers and theirs!

*-Jenerra Williams & Mychaela Kelly*

### Room 204

“Emperor Qin was ambitious.” “But he was really mean.” For our study of Ancient China, we are focusing on emperors who had a lasting impact on Chinese society and culture. One of the questions we are using to guide our thinking is “How can you be an effective ruler?” Having just concluded the study of our first emperor, Qin

Shi Huangdi, students had mixed feelings about his rule: “Emperor Qin made an army of over 8,000 terracotta soldiers” said Adler. Noah added “And he made a tomb with jewels on the ceiling and rivers of mercury.” Hamse countered this argument by saying “But he forced people to build for him, like soldiers, criminals, and poor people.” While the class agreed



*Cleata's students studying Emperor Qin and creating terra cotta soldiers.*

that the projects built during Emperor Qin's rule were amazing, his harsh form of leadership is probably why his dynasty collapsed shortly after his death. As we move on to our next emperor, Gaozu of the Han dynasty, we will continue to explore what makes an effective ruler.

*-Cleata, Danny & Yesenia*

### Room 207

Recently, I was a choir member in Speakeasy's production of Violet. I was on stage portraying a choir member, which is something I know a lot about seeing that I am a real member of three choirs/groups. How lucky was I to be able to participate in a passion of mine for 15 performances?

As a young girl, I discovered that I loved singing. I joined the 100-voice chorus in elementary school and loved performing! Little did I know, way back then, that singing would afford me so many awesome opportunities. I sing at church on a regular basis. I have sung for MHS. I have sung at weddings to celebrate couples coming together. I have sung at funerals as families said goodbye to their loved ones. I sang behind Mariah Carey for thousands at the TD Bank Garden. I sang at the memorial service for the Late Senator Kennedy. I have traveled to South Africa and Barbados to sing. I LOVE TO SING!

It is my hope that children will find something that they are passionate about. Who knows what that passion will develop into? Only time will tell. I look forward to hearing about the awesome opportunities these passions will afford them.

*Amina & Amanda*

## CLASSROOM NEWS

### GRADES 5&6

#### Room 210

*Stay tuned next week!*

*-Nakia, Manny, & Elsa*

#### Room 215

We said goodbye to a classmate and welcomed two new students. To say goodbye requires a whole set of repertoires: the cards, secretly organized and signed; words of appreciation and closure; the sharing of Oreo cookies. To welcome involves a separate set of learned and spontaneous gestures, coordinated rapidly in response to someone new. Let's get them binders. You'll need your own cubby. Here's the K-Quad. Joshua Collazo (Grade 6) and Sabrina Morales (Grade 5) are new students who have joined the Fireflies. They, too, are rapidly trying to get coordinated, calibrate their rhythms to the groove around them, make friends who can make the way easier. The question I was asked this week: is your classroom ready to receive new students? We are very welcoming, for sure. Someone volunteers to give a new student a tour, another to get materials. To prepare ourselves to have a new student work and play with us, I don't think we are. We have more work to do: I feel we have to slow down, talk about the taken-for-granted ways and mores. We can start with the simple, obvious ones.

*-The Fireflies, with Carlos & Abdi*

### GRADES 7&8

#### Room 213

Back in September in Room 213, we found inspiration in the Mission Hill School mission statement as we built our community. We have all experienced the power of love, and know that feeling "stronger and more



*Students in Jenerra's class build the Great Wall of China.*

loved, not weaker and less loveable" is a condition that sits well with us. We'll continue to be mindful of this calling – much harder to implement than read about.

And now that we have started the Ancient China Theme, we are again connecting with the school's mission statement, this time focusing on the passage that states, "...our community must be prepared to spend time – even when it might seem wasteful – hearing each other out..." We ask, How would the world be different if all peoples were "prepared to spend time ... hearing each other out"? Knowing that we have much to learn from history, we are turning to books and artifacts to "hear out" a culture very different from our own.

To begin, we are reading *Red Scarf Girl*, Ji-Li Jiang's memoir of growing up during the Cultural Revolution. Kids are asking, "Why would they do that?" We will continue "hearing from others" as we build our understanding of China from more recent to ancient times.

*-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely*

#### Room 214

We are scattered around the room. Most of us are seated at desks, but a few are in the meeting area. Leah, is sitting in a self-made nook by the front of the room.

Even though I was expecting it, I was slightly startled by the alarm. It signifies the end of independent reading. "Derricka, what page are you on? I'm on page 21"

"Reginald, that was kind of confusing, the book changed from topic to topic."

"Can we write our names in these books?"

It was the first day reading our new independent reading books. Some students seemed excited while others are still not sure what to make of their book. We only read for ten minutes today, we will read for fifteen tomorrow and work our way up to 20 minutes.

I'm really looking forward to our first book club meeting when we get to talk about our books.

*-Reginald Toussaint*

## SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

### Family Conferences

Family Conferences are being scheduled for February 8th and 9th. 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. Let's not waste the time of any teacher by standing them up. 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. Your presence means a tremendous amount to your child and his or teacher.

### February Vacation Activities

Courtney has compiled a list of February Vacation activities for families. Many on the list are free or on a sliding/reduced scale fee. Most programs require advance registration and all are first come/first serve. Take a look at the attached flyer for more information.

### From Nurse Georgie

In the recent weeks we have noticed an influx in the stomach bug among Boston Public School students. We are writing to remind you if your child has diarrhea, vomiting, and/or a temperature over 100 degrees they should stay home from school, and, for an additional 24 hours after their symptoms go away. Doing so will help us make sure all the students stay healthy.

### MHS Events for Next Week

Family Council will be having a bake sale at the Forest Hills T station on the morning of Thursday, February 11. Drop off baked goods the day or evening before on the porch at 142 Carolina Avenue in JP (yellow house down the street from MHS) or contact Rachel Goldsmith about helping at the table that morning [rachelgo@mindspring.com](mailto:rachelgo@mindspring.com).

There will also be a Family Council Meeting that same night (2/11) from 5:45-7:15pm in the library to plan the Movie Night fundraiser scheduled for Friday, April 1st. This meeting will be potluck so bring a dish to share if you are able and childcare will be provided.

### Mindfulness for Families

In an earlier newsletter, Jenerra wrote about the mindfulness instruction now going on in three classrooms

at MHS. If your child is in Jenerra's, Abdi's or Amanda's class, s/he may have described some of the ways they have been learning to be mindful. Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to what is happening in the present moment, without judgement. Mindfulness can help us be more responsive to what is going on and less "reactive". Students have practiced mindful breathing, mindfulness of sound, mindful looking, mindful walking—even mindful eating! Have you ever wondered about how you could use mindfulness as a parent or other caring adult? Here are some links to ways to practice mindfulness with your family. May you be happy and peaceful,  
-Betsy Caruso

<http://tiny.cc/basic5min>

<http://tiny.cc/mindfulnessnoday>

<http://mindful.org>

<http://mindfulschools.org>



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)

20 Child Street  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130  
T 617-635-6384  
F 617-635-6419



# MHS Bake Sale & Family Council Meeting!

## Bake Sale Info

**Where:** Forest Hills T Stop

**When:** Morning of Thursday, February 11, 2016

**How to Help:** Contact Rachel Goldsmith [rachelgo@mindspring.com](mailto:rachelgo@mindspring.com) or (617) 905-4646

Please drop off baked goods on Wednesday evening (2/10/16) or Tuesday morning 2/11/16 on the porch at 142 Carolina Avenue, Jamaica Plain (yellow house right down the street from MHS).

## Family Council Meeting Info

**Where:** MHS Library

**When:** 5:45-7:15 pm

**Topic:** Movie Night fundraiser scheduled for Friday, April 1st.

This meeting will be potluck-bring a dish to share. Childcare will be provided!



# MHS Venta de pasteles & Familia Reunión del Consejo !

## Información de venta de pasteles

**Dónde:** Forest Hills T Detener

**Cuándo:** La mañana del Jueves, 11. de febrero de , el año 2016

**Cómo ayudar:** Contacto Rachel Goldsmith [rachelgo@mindspring.com](mailto:rachelgo@mindspring.com) o (617) 905-4646

Por favor deje productos de panadería en la noche del miércoles ( 02/10/16 ) o la mañana del martes 02/11/16 en el porche de 142 Carolina Avenue , Jamaica Plain ( casa amarilla a la derecha en la calle de MHS ) .

## Consejo de la Familia Información de la Junta

**Dónde :** Biblioteca MHS

**Cuándo:** 5:45-7:15 pm

**Tema :** recaudación de fondos la noche de película programada para el viernes 1 abril.

Esta reunión será de traje - llevar un plato para compartir. Habrá cuidado de niños !

# OUTSIDE

# THE LINES

Outside The Lines is a support group for parents and caregivers of children with special needs and all other members of our inclusion community.

Come join us Wednesday morning from 9<sup>30</sup> - 10<sup>45</sup>

Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Contact: Amy Fleischer

fleischer.06@comcast.net

## REUNIÓN de Fuera

## de las LÍNEAS

Fuera de las líneas es un grupo de apoyo para padres y cuidadores de niños con necesidades especiales y todos los otros miembros de nuestra comunidad inclusiva.

Miércoles

9<sup>30</sup> a.m. - 10<sup>45</sup> a.m.

10<sup>th</sup> de Feb. 2016

Contacto: Amy Fleischer

fleischer.06@comcast.net

## February Vacation Activities

Many sites require advance registration. All are first come/first serve.

**Boston Nature Center: Ages 5-14. Must pre-register.**

[http://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/program-catalog#program:sanctuary=21:program\\_code=43352](http://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/program-catalog#program:sanctuary=21:program_code=43352)

**Boys and Girls Club:** <http://www.bgcb.org/find-your-club/>

**YMCA:** <http://ymcaboston.org/youth-teens>

**BCYF:** FREE Water Safety Classes for youth ages 5-12 during February school vacation week. Please see the flyer for more information. Must pre-register.

[http://www.cityofboston.gov/images\\_documents/BCYFSwimforSafetyFlyer\\_tcm3-50026.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/BCYFSwimforSafetyFlyer_tcm3-50026.pdf)

**Franklin Park Tennis Association:** Must pre-register.

<http://www.franklinparktennis.org/Home.html>

**Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center:** Full or half days available. Must pre-register. <http://www.sportsmenstennis.org/community/vacation-week-camps/>

**Reggie Lewis Center:** Various activities including programming specifically for girls interested in sports.

<http://www.rcc.mass.edu/reggie-lewis-programs/reggie-lewis-community-outreach-programs/reggie-lewis-after-school-programs>

**Bird Street Community Center:** Bird Street keeps multiple sites open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and all registered SACC students are eligible to attend over the school vacation weeks. <http://www.birdstreet.org/school-age-child-care>

**Free Ice Skating on the Frog Pond** – sponsored by the Highland Street Foundation. February 15-19<sup>th</sup> 10am-9pm. Guest appearances, giveaways, and refreshments. Additional activities on Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup> including a giant snow slide.



# Swim for Safety

## FREE WATER SAFETY CLASSES

February 16 – 20, 2016

Classes will be held at your local BCYF pool.

BE SAFE AND CONFIDENT AROUND WATER

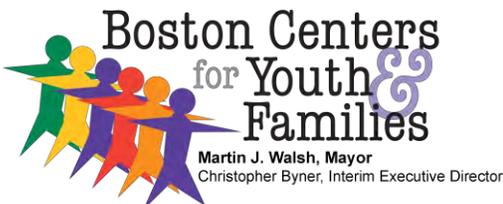
In our continued effort to provide child safety programs to our communities, Boston Centers for Youth & Families is offering FREE Water Safety Classes for youth 5-12 years old!

- Space is limited.
- Pre-registration required.
- One lesson per child.
- Schedules will vary per site.
- Don't forget a towel and swim suit.



Have FUN, Get Healthy!

Basic swim lessons can build the confidence needed around water. These basic lessons will have you eager to continue to learn!



BCYF Blackstone Community Center 617-635-5162  
BCYF Charlestown Community Center 617-635-5169  
BCYF Condon Community Center 617-635-5100  
BCYF Curtis Hall Community Center 617-635-5193  
BCYF Draper Pool 617-635-5021  
BCYF Flaherty Pool 617-635-5181  
BCYF Hennigan Community Center 617-635-5198  
BCYF Holland Community Center 617-635-5144

BCYF Leahy-Holloran Community Center 617-635-5150  
BCYF Madison Park Community Center 617-635-5206  
BCYF Mason Pool 617-635-5241  
BCYF Mildred Avenue Community Center 617-635-1328  
BCYF Paris Street Pool 617-635-1410  
BCYF Perkins Community Center 617-635-5146  
BCYF Quincy Community Center 617-635-5129