



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- 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

March 4, 2016

Volume 19, Issue 18

Letter Writing Week

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

I smiled when I saw a folded piece of paper in my mailbox on Tuesday with my name on it. I opened it and read several questions with answers from one of our students.

Q: Where is your favorite place to be at school?

A: Recess

Q: What is your favorite smell?

A: Vanilla cake

The questions and answers I got from my student writer gave me enough information to connect with her through a letter. Everyone in our school got one of these questionnaires to give and receive information about another school community member. It's a great way to find out what we have in common and how we are different.

It's Letter Writing Week at Mission Hill, one of my favorite weeks of the school year.

This week we are all writing a letter to someone in our school. By Friday or so each letter will be written, put in our "mailbox" and ready for delivery.

Letter delivery day is very exciting. Classrooms wait with anticipation of receiving their letters that are delivered door to door. Then the letter reading and smiles commence.

What will come of all these new connections? A new friend?

Learning the name of someone that you see everyday? Developing

a relationship with an adult or student that is not in your classroom? No matter what the connection is, Letter Writing week brings us together in a wonderful way that could lead to a lasting new relationship.



KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

In room 108 we have been adding family stories and photographs to our wall display: Our Families, Our World. We are learning more about each other, our families and the connections we have to the big world we live in. Please remember to send in your family photo and questionnaire so we can learn about your family and add you to our world map! We have also read some interesting picture books of families around the world: *Global Babies* and *Carry Me* are two examples.

For our special focus on China we have made Chinese-inspired fans in the art room with Jeanne, and experienced a beautiful fan dance performance by William, James and Kenneth's mom, Lei. Lei was born in China and learned the dance as a child.

Looking Ahead: On Wednesday, March 23rd we will travel via the 39 bus to the Museum of Fine Arts. We will be gone from 9:45 am until 12:30 pm. Please let me know if you can join us!

-Geralyn McLaughlin & Donna Winder



Room 106

Last week our student teacher Sam came back for a visit. She came to work on a special project with the children. She shared with them that she knew they were working on Ancient China and learning about the Great Wall of China. She asked them if they wanted to join her in creating a replica in the class. Children worked in small groups to brainstorm their ideas. They displayed their plans for other children to see.

The students told Sam what materials they needed. They asked her for newspaper, paint, clay tape, and pictures of The Great Wall. Then they started to work. The children made mountains out of newspaper to create the hillsides of China. They made bricks for the wall out of clay and let them dry. They then added them on to the mountains. The next step is painting The Great Wall. Come by for a visit and ask them about their replica.

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

*A picture is worth a thousand words.
A slideshow tells a story.*

It was difficult for the Golden Seahorses to decide what to present at Friday Share last week. Though we had been creating our Weaving of a Dream scenery and building our terracotta soldiers, those projects were works in progress and/or due to their large scale, would be difficult to pull off our walls. While we began measuring our replica of the Great Wall and found that it was 45 1/2 of Ava's feet long, 9 yards and 14 inches long and 33 1/2 teacher feet long, because we were measuring for fun, there was no tangible student work to represent our learning.

In addition to our lantern making with Mary Beth and tea tasting, we cooked stir-fry vegetables with rice noodles for students to try out their chopsticks skills. For some, due to previous experience, holding the sticks between their fingers was a small challenge. Others made up for a lack of experience by using the chopsticks as skewers. However, there was no time to write reflections. In the end, a few students briefly shared what they knew about China, followed by a slideshow.

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

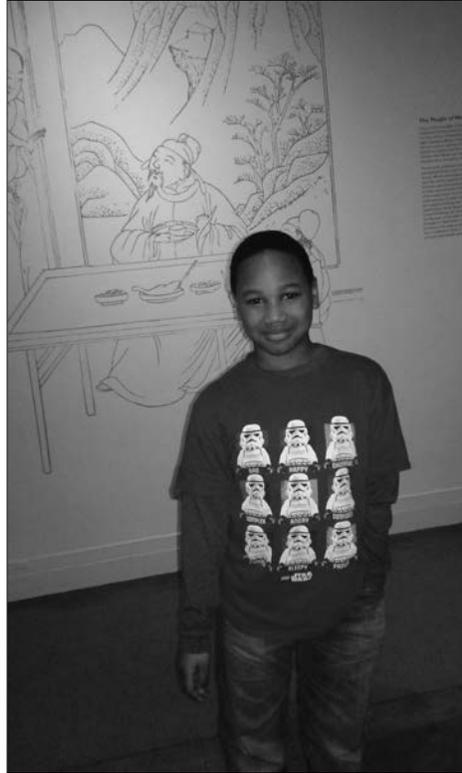
We are learning about Ancient China through looking at pictures, reading books, viewing videos, and hosting special guests. In the block area students work each day to construct parts of the Great Wall of China. We viewed a few minutes of a National Geographic video showing the wall. It was very exciting to get a sense of the enormity of the wall. Inspirational photos in the block area are consulted each day during building time. Soon we'll work on painting the environment surrounding the wall.

As part of our map study, we used a projector to trace a map of Ancient China and are working together to paint the map using watercolors. We're also working on a large torn paper dragon modeled on wonderful dragon paintings from one of our books. On Wednesday, William's mother visited to show us a Chinese Fan Dance. It was beautiful and graceful. She brought in several different kinds of Chinese fans to show the students, each with a different purpose, and the students loved the dance!

-Deborah Freeman

GRADES 1 & 2**Room 205**

How big is the Forbidden City? How did the people of China decide what character means what thing? How did the emperor make clay people who could fight? When did the last emperor die? How did the people of China create paper? Who discovered bamboo first? Why does the secret to making silk have to be a secret? These are some of the questions the students have been exploring the past couple of weeks. Each child chose a topic and used books and videos to research and



learn about their topic. Then we learned about paragraph writing with topic sentences and details. We're going to put all our paragraphs together into a book all about ancient China.

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 217

A big schedule change occurred in my class last week. I made the decision to swap our morning project time with our afternoon literacy time. Students did well at project time in the morning, and I did think it was a nice way to start the day because of the fun engaging activities related to seem and play. I was very concerned however, for a few of my students who were unable to come back from recess and lunch and engage in literacy activities. Literacy is such a crucial time of the day and a few too many of my children were not transitioning back from lunch and recess time in a way that made them ready to learn. First and second grade is a

time for critical literacy development for children so they can be successful. Social and behavioral problems were coming up daily in the afternoon that had to be addressed and took me away from literacy instruction. With Mission Hill's school-wide focus this year on literacy levels of boys of color, there was no time to waste. Last Wednesday I made the decision to switch literacy and project time. We had some very meaningful discussions about why the switch needed to happen and most kids were in full agreement that it was a better plan. We've been having check-in's before and after literacy time to set goals for ourselves and see if we accomplish those goals individually or as a group. I am hoping that this change will continue to aid in the development of reading, writing, and spelling skills that are being learned.

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4**Rooms 203**

As we moved through the beautiful hallways, the students in my group were both excited and amazed. They chattered and pointed as oo's and ah's floated through the air. Our museum guide pointed out interesting facts about different pieces we were looking at and as she did the life of the Ancient Chinese began to feel more real and closer to our own experiences than it had before. Our "Ancient China: Land of Dragons" tour at the Museum of Fine Arts was chock full of information and beautiful art for the eye to behold. The students and I made lots of connections to our work at school.

After the tour we did a project where students were asked to create a room in a house, inspired by the Ming Dynasty house in the museum. As we made our way back to school, the sun

was shining, the bus came right away (woo hoo!) and The DJ Room was alive with chatter, each sharing their experiences about what they saw. Our next trip to the MFA will focus on The Silk Road, our main thematic focus.

-Jenerra Williams

Room 204

The challenge to increase reading comprehension of nonfiction texts has inspired us to implement reciprocal teaching strategies in Room 204. Reciprocal teaching strategies involve students taking turns to role-play as summarizer, questioner, clarifier, predictor and visualizer. Students took on the tasks of reading in groups, supporting each other with reading complex words, and understanding the text. Reading different articles on topics from our Ancient China theme was resourceful for students because they were able to use the strategies they've learned and practice reading challenging texts while learning about Buddhism, the Silk Road, fireworks, and so much more! Students have shared that they like reading in a group because it helps them to understand the information and learn new words. We have seen a lot of hard work and focus from the students during Quiet Work Time since we began using reciprocal teaching strategies. This has been a great way to learn even more about Ancient China!

-Cleata, Danny, & Yesenia

Room 207

Lift Every Voice And Sing was a poem set to music in 1905. In 1919, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) dubbed it "The Negro National Anthem" for its power in voicing the cry for liberation and affirmation for African American people."

Every member of our community should know this important song. We have been taking time during Friday Share to learn it. We are only learning the first verse but I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the other verses as well. Hopefully you and your family will find yourself at a function with the opportunity to sing this song be able to sing along.

Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicings rise,
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,

Let us march on till victory is won.

-Amina Michel-Lord & Amanda McCarthy

GRADES 5 & 6

Room 210

Stay tuned next week!

-Nakia, Manny, & Elsa

Room 215

Last week the 5th and 6th graders went to the Farm School for 3 days of work, play, and learning at the farm in Athol, Massachusetts. When they were there they did farm chores, farm work, and they learned what it is like to be a farmer. The 5th and 6th graders arrived at Sentinel Elm farm at about 12:15pm. They went on a tour of the farm for a couple of hours to see the animals, the barns, and the fields.

There were three different groups for farm work, one had barn work, one had garden and kitchen work, and one had forestry work. After their farm work all of the groups walked



back to the bunkhouse for a nice cup of lemonade and a plate of popcorn for snack. To do chores, the young farmers split into 4 groups. When all the chores were done, all of the kids came back to the bunkhouse for a dinner of homemade hot dogs. The next day they woke up at 6 in the morning for morning chores.

After a couple hours of chores, yoga, breakfast, farm work, and snack the 5th and 6th graders split up. The 5th graders made picnic tables while the 6th graders did blacksmithing, wood burning, sheep shearing and making dinner. After a nice moo shu pork dinner they played farm jeopardy and went to bed. On their last day, they did farm chores and work. They finished their work and got on the bus to come home. Basically what we learned at the Farm School was to open the door and live.

-Zack McLaughlin, Grade 6

GRADES 7 & 8

Room 213

When is a book worth reading even if we don't like it? How do we benefit by reading a genre that is not our preferred type? Does a story always have

CLASSROOM NEWS

to be about people like us to hold our attention and interest? What do we shut down inside of ourselves when we find people who are different from us not at all interesting?

We started reading *Red Scarf Girl* by Ji-Li Jiang to launch our Ancient China Theme Study. We found some initial natural connections to this memoir of growing up in China during the Cultural Revolution. Many students could relate to Ji-Li's story of how she was named, her description of her home life with siblings, parents, and grandmother, and her experiences with friends in school.

But then things got hard. Why are there Chinese words in an English book (e.g., da-zi-bao, yuan, da-dui-zhang)? Why are there big words we haven't encountered before (e.g., bourgeoisie, proletariat, capitalist, ideology)? Why can't we read another book like *Wonder* (a much loved book we read first term)?

We're learning how to make sense of difficult ideas, and then make connections to our own lives and experiences. Dictionaries, relevant videos, discussions, and reflective writing are helping us. Stretching minds isn't always comfortable, but we're learning that that's okay.

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

On Monday, we finally presented our independent research projects! Overall, the presentations were a success. We'd been planning these presentations for a while. However, on Monday morning, it was clear that many students were getting nervous.

"Reginald, who's coming to the presentations?"

I replied that "Many people told me

they were coming. Some teachers are coming with their class?"

When students heard that some of their peers from other classes might attend they became even more nervous. One student blurted, "I'm not presenting." The grumbling continued throughout the day. As the time to present grew closer the nervousness amplified even more.

However, once the first group of people came, the mood in the room changed quickly. The weeks of research and practice were evident. A few students came to me to express that they were receiving a lot of positive feedback. During our afternoon meeting, a large majority of students said that the experience was positive. It was great to see so many students feeling that they rose to the occasion.

-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. 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.

Urban Improv @ Family Council

Please join Family Council for a workshop with Urban Improv on on

Thursday March 10th from 545-715. We will be discussing how to talk to your kids about difficult topics. There will be childcare and a pot-luck dinner so please bring a dish to share if you are able.

Family Movie Night

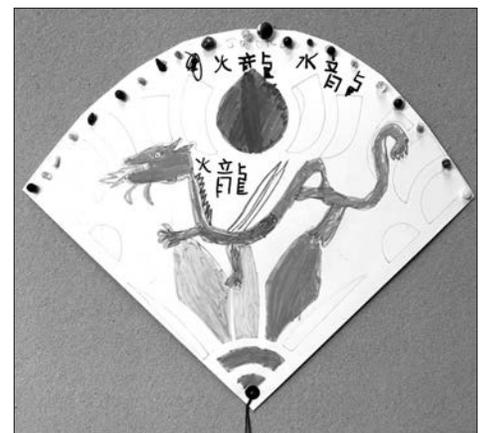
Movie Night will be Friday, April 1st from 6-9 in the MHS auditorium. The main movie will be the Dream-Works feature "Home".

Please plan to help out and/or come to this fun event! We need volunteers to help get food donations, make posters to advertise, set up, operate the AV equipment, work at the event and help clean up.

Tickets will be for sale at the door for those who are able to contribute. Food will be available for sale as well. This has been our biggest fundraiser in the last few years and is also a great night to get together with MHS folks you know and to meet some new people.

Thank You Families

Many thanks to Rachel Goldsmith, Dora Golding and the MHS Family Council for their work raising funds for MHS with two bake sale fundraisers last month.



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

Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School
WWW.MISSIONHILLSCHOOL.ORG

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

From the Nurse's Office: Health Information and Updates

Mumps Alert

Six confirmed and fourteen suspect cases of mumps in Cambridge residents have been reported to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) since mid-February. All have been students at a large Boston-area university. The six confirmed cases have documentation of two doses of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, and the majority of the suspected cases are believed to have had two doses of MMR.

Symptoms and Diagnosis

Mumps virus is spread through infected respiratory tract secretions. It can be spread within three to six feet when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or with direct contact with infected secretions (e.g. sharing water bottles). The incubation period can range from 12 to 25 days. Parotitis (swelling of the salivary glands) is the most common symptom (30-65%), but non-specific symptoms such as muscle aches, anorexia, malaise, headache, and low-grade fever may precede the parotitis by several days.

Mumps is usually a mild illness, but there can be severe complications. People are considered infectious from two days before symptoms begin until five days after the onset of parotid swelling. Therefore, **those suspected of mumps should be isolated and should refrain from public activities for five days after the onset of swelling**

Zika Virus Update

Zika virus disease is caused by Zika virus that is spread to people primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito. The illness is usually mild with symptoms lasting for several days to a week after being bitten by an infected mosquito. People usually don't get sick enough to go to the hospital, and they very rarely die of Zika. For this reason, many people might not realize they have been infected.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms of Zika are fever, rash, joint pain, and conjunctivitis (red eyes). The Zika virus usually remains in the blood of an infected person for about a week but it can be found longer in some people. Once a person has been infected, he or she is likely to be protected from future infections. **See your healthcare provider if you are pregnant and develop a fever, rash, joint pain, or red eyes within 2 weeks after traveling to a place where Zika has been reported.** Be sure to tell your health care provider where you traveled.

Treatment:

Treat the symptoms:

Get plenty of rest.

Drink fluids to prevent dehydration.

Take medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to relieve fever and pain.

Do not take aspirin and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

If you are taking medicine for another medical condition, talk to your healthcare provider before taking additional medication.

MHS MOVIE NIGHT!

Movie Night will be Friday, April 1st from 6-9 in the MHS auditorium. Come and see some Pixar shorts (appropriate for all ages) and the DreamWorks feature "Home".

Please plan to come to this fun event! Those who are able to contribute can make a \$5 donation per adult and \$3 per child. Food will be available for sale at the event. This is a great night to get together with MHS folks you know and to meet some new people.



MHS NOCHE DE PELÍCULA!

Noche de película será el viernes 1^a abril a partir de 6-9 en el auditorio de MHS. Venir y ver algunas películas cortas de Pixar (apropiado para todas las edades) y la función de DreamWorks "Home".

Por favor haga planes para venir a este evento divertido! Aquellos que son capaces de contribuir puede hacer una donación de \$ 5 por adulto y \$ 3 por niño. Alimentos estará disponible a la venta en el evento. Esta es una gran noche para reunirse con la gente que conoces y MHS a conocer gente nueva.

Please join MHS Family Council for an evening with

Urban Improv

Thursday, March 10th from 5:45 – 7:15pm in the library

We will be discussing how to have difficult conversations with your children on a variety of topics. Childcare will be provided and there will be a potluck dinner so please bring a dish to share if you are able.



Por favor, únase Consejo de la Familia MHS para una noche con

Urban Improv

**Cerrado jueves, 10mo de marzo, de 17:45-19:15 en la
biblioteca**

Vamos a discutir cómo tener conversaciones difíciles con sus hijos sobre una variedad de temas. Habrá cuidado de niños y habrá una cena compartida por favor traiga un plato para compartir si son capaces.