



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Wednesday, May 4, 2016
Family Fun Night 5:45 - 7:00 pm (see flyer)
- Thursday, May 5, 2016
Kindergarten to Farm School
- Friday, May 6, 2016
Grades 3 & 4 to Farm School
- Tuesday, May 10
Picture Day!

April 29, 2016

Volume 19, Issue 24

It's Screen-Free Week Once Again!

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

If you are new to Mission Hill School, you may be new to Screen-Free Week - a national celebration of time spent without screen entertainment. At MHS, we join this annual event and embrace the chance to turn off digital devices and turn on the real world around us. To be honest, as my sons have gotten older, their resistance to participating in Screen-Free Week has grown proportionally. I've stayed strong to our commitment, though, as I know that I need this forced break as well!

I read recently that, "the average child in America spends more time consuming electronic media than going to school, with many teenagers going online 'almost constantly.' And parents aren't necessarily being good role models. A British study showed that while six in 10 parents worried that their children spend too much time in front of a screen, seven in 10 children worry that their parents are the ones who are plugged in and tuned out." (NY Times, March 15, 2016)

How will you spend your extra time when you turn off the screen? In my experience it is good to plan! Consider taking time this weekend to make a plan for your non-screen entertainment. Join us at school for a picnic dinner and Family Fun Night on Wednesday, May 4th (flyer attached)! Also, the tips below might help...they are from our friends at Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, a Boston-area nonprofit that sponsors Screen-Free Week.



Tip #1: Rearrange the furniture. Turn your living room into a place for family interaction and play by arranging the furniture so the TV is not the focus of the room.

Tip #2: Start the day screen-free. Create a morning routine that doesn't involve screens.

Tip #3: Enjoy screen-free meals. Make meals a time for your family to talk about the day without distraction from TV, smartphones, and other screens.

Tip #4: Encourage sensory play. Provide easy play options, like sensory play—which gives children the chance to explore using their sight, touch, and other senses—to engage kids while you get things done around the house.

Tip #5: Explore the outdoors. Make memories by planning outdoor activities that the whole family can enjoy together.

Tip #6: Create Activity Kits. Make activity kits using supplies you already have to keep children busy during transitions (the time between one activity and the next) and other tricky times of the day.

Tip #7: Limit your own screen time.

-Geraldyn Bywater McLaughlin

K0 teacher and parent of Zack and CJ (grade 6)

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

Please see the front page letter this week about celebrating Screen-Free Week, May 2 - May 8th, 2016.

-Geraldyn & Donna

Room 106

Screen-Free week is next week. It is one of my favorite times of year because it help everyone- grownups and children-be cognizant about their screen time. When I was growing up we had one television channel so it was easier for my mom to monitor how much time we had. The show she was most worried about was *The Little Rascals*. I think she thought I would learn naughty behaviors. I did sneak and watch it whenever I could.

Families today have different challenges. There are multiple screens. Children have opportunities to watch television and use ipads, smartphones, and tablets. It also doesn't help that companies market screens as good things for children. They even have a potty that has a place for an ipad so your two year-old can watch something. Just for the record, two year-olds do NOT need an iPad to go to the potty.

Here is what we know about screens: Screen time can be habit-forming: the more time children engage with screens, the harder time they have turning them off as they become older children. Including when they're multitasking, 8 to 18-year-olds consume an average of 7 hours and 11 minutes of screen media per day—an increase of 2.5 hours in just 10 years. For older children and adolescents, excessive screen time is linked to increased psychological difficulties that include hyperactivity,

emotional and conduct problems, difficulties with peers and poor school performance.

For more info visit <http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org>

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

Spring has sprung. The Golden Seahorses have noticed flowers emerging from the soil, buds blooming on trees, birds chirping and they long for the warmer temperatures that greeted them in the September. However, they were more than overjoyed a few weeks ago when winter had its last hurrah, filling the playgrounds with snow. Weeks prior to this we took advantage of the steep slope on the big field and snuck in a few minutes of sledding. Unfortunately the cold temperature limited us to sliding down the hill only once. However, when this last burst of winter came, we decided to fully embrace it.

Armed with a few sleds and container lids we approached the slope. For some this time meant conquering the fear of the unknown, figuring out how to share the few available "sleds", being resourceful, imitating others to gain success and/or pushing their bodies to scale the snowy hill...to do it all over again. As the first few sleds made it to the bottom of the hill, the air was filled with laughter. Some students slid down on their stomachs while others made room for 3, 4, or 5 on their sleds. Those who tired of the hill made snow angels on the field. Warming up with some hot cocoa and whipped cream completed this fun-filled learning experience that we hope they will hold it in their hearts for years to come.

-Jada, Jo-Ann & Mary Beth



Children from the Golden Seahorse classroom enjoy early Spring sledding.

Room 109

We are talking about work and workplaces in our classroom. Students have developed a pretty extensive list about things they'd like to learn more about including: MFA, libraries, zoos, shops, markets, and restaurants. Some questions that came up so far: what happens in big buildings like the John Hancock building, where do musicians work?

This week a group of students began building an "office" in the drama center. After some conversation about what the school office might be like, we took an impromptu trip upstairs to look at it and visit Tiffany.

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The most exciting discovery was the special “phone” she talks on to make announcements or call out the buses. There was a lot of excitement that day when the bus announcements started! The classroom “office” is shaping up well with shelves for paper, pencils, trays, and of course a special phone for announcements.

-Deborah

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

Coming next week!

-Ashleigh L’Heureux

Room 212

The trip to the farm was amazing! We arrived and toured the farm with our tour guides Rafe and Eliza. We saw chickens, goats, ducks and cows. We saw vegetables growing in the gardens and under hoop houses. The children loved seeing the baby calves nursing from their mothers and looking into the nesting boxes of the chickens to see eggs. One child just couldn’t believe that was where milk came from! We will be referring to the farm in the upcoming weeks as we talk about where our food comes from. This week inspired by the farm, we will be planting our own garden.

-Suzanne Brown

Room 217

All of the first and second grade classes visited the Farm School in Athol, MA on Monday. It was the perfect way to welcome students back from April Vacation. Students were split up into groups of five and assigned to a farmer. Children were then brought around the farm to meet cows, goats, chickens, ducks, see the grounds, and swing on a tree swing. Eyes were wide and everyone had huge smiles on their faces.



James, Alize, and Jaiden swing on a rope swing at Farm School.

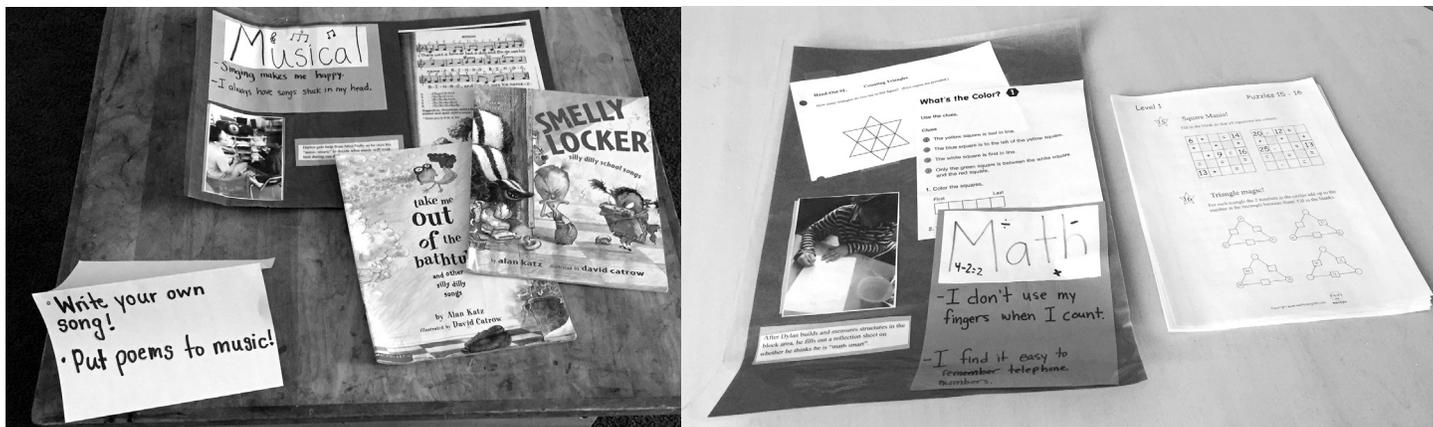
Students ran up and down the hills and fields taking it all in. We all fell in love with the farm dog, Gus, calling to him and petting him all day long. I didn’t know roosters actually crowed!” said Alize when she was near the hen house. “Come here goat-y, I have some nice grass for you,” said Evan as he bravely inched towards a goat’s mouth”. Cole declared it “the most fun, special day” and I definitely agree. The Farm School puts children into a completely new environment and it is a pleasure to watch them experience it. On our bus ride home, over half the class fell asleep. That is always a good sign that students had a long, busy, and exciting day.

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4

Rooms 203

The DJ Room has started our “World of Work” theme. We are so excited about all of the learning activities we have in store for the next couple of months! During the week before April vacation, we explored Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences. The students of Room 203 explored the eight multiple intelligences or “smarts”: body smart, music smart, word smart, picture smart, people smart, self smart, nature smart, and math smart. We had stations for each type of “smart” where students could do different activities. At the end of the week, we took the Gardner Intelligence test and everyone was able to see what kinds of “smart” they are! This week, we researched different types of jobs and students were able to learn more about jobs they



Multiple Intelligence stations in the DJ Room for the World of Work.

were most interested in and see if it matched their “smart”. Next week, we will be looking at resumes, job applications, and how to present yourself to a future employer!

-Mychaela Kelly, Student Teacher

Room 204

The Bee Squad discussed the importance of sleep this week as students expressed and showed tiredness or low energy. One student shared that he goes to sleep at one o'clock in the morning and needs a break every few minutes in order to function throughout the day. As we draw close to PARCC testing, more energy and motivation is needed to perform at our best. I encouraged students to get to bed early enough so they can rest well and be energized during the day for play and work. Some students expressed that they will get to bed earlier, one student asked the question “Why do we need ten hours of sleep?” This brought us to talk about how the brain works hard and needs to rest so it can work better at problem solving in reading, math and making the right decisions. Research backs up the importance of sleep, with studies showing that “sleep is an important key to health” and “sleep loss can mess with your judgment”.

Children 7-12 years old need 10-11 hours of sleep each night. We hope this discussion on sleep will help us to reduce some of the time we spend watching TV, playing video games and other screen time.

-Cleata, Danny and Yesenia

Room 207

The Friday before vacation there was tons of energy pulsating through the school! Not because it was a beautiful spring like day. Not because it was the last day before the vacation. (Ok, some of the enthusiasm may have been due to the upcoming vacation). Everyone was excited because all the K1-8th grade classes were going to Chez Vous, a local roller skating rink. I missed the last time we went to Chez Vous, four years ago and had heard many stories from my colleagues. Some of the stories were funny while others were a bit scary- a student fell and broke her wrist. So this time I wasn't sure of what to expect.

We had the most wonderful time! Picture 230 children and adults rolling around the rink as we grooved to the music coming out of the huge speakers. New skaters inched slowly around holding the railing along the wall while others held the hands/

arms of more experienced skaters. The most experienced skaters whizzed around moving and grooving. Even teachers could be seen rolling and swaying, having a good time. And of course there were TONS of falls- big ones and small ones and even a few wipeouts, with only a very FEW tears.

Now everyone has new stories to tell from this trip to Chez Vous and I am excited to have a few of my own. I am glad that all of them are good ones and I bet many folks are already looking forward to the next time



Nikaye and Micah rollerskating at Chez Vous.

we go. This was a great community outing and an awesome way to spend the last day before the April vacation.
-Amina & Amanda

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

Spring is always a busy time of the year. New theme, Electives, standardized testing, and the constant lure of vitamin D after a hard New England winter. We also have the the 6th Grade Recollections projects and 5th Grade Exhibitions.

Every year, it never ceases to amaze me how well the sixth graders do during our Recollections work. Students comb through years of their Mission Hill work and reflect on both the work and the memories it sparks. When all's said and done, they produce and share beautifully reflective pieces of writing. The culminating moment is when they all stand poised in front of an audience and a microphone. They speak eloquently about a wide range of topics including their own work, learning styles, feelings about next year and details about struggles from the past. As an audience, we listen and share in those memories. We also get to hear the things that make each person's school experience unique. Each year, there are moments that make us laugh and those that make us cry. We have just begun our work, and we are grateful to be able to experience it with them.

-Nakia, Manny, & Elsa

Room 215

How do the FireFlies understand what it means to be a writer? How many of them are connected to their literary, writerly selves? What evidence might we collect to observe a

full-blown or an emergent writer? I have been using the newsletter updates as an opportunity to reflect on how we are writing in Room 215, the conditions and exercises that might work at particular times of the week. I know that we take pleasure in reading other writers - and as a group, this year, we seem to reach for fiction, especially contemporary, suspenseful ones. We are still working on how to share our writing with each other, and at least two FireFlies are privately working on longer pieces. I am waiting for an invitation to read them.

As a class, the FireFlies made huge gains as readers this year. Most of us are reading at grade-level based on the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments. Writers need to read a lot. Writers need time with books, and even deeper time with the voice, imaginings of a favorite author. It is by apprenticing with my favorite writers (reading as many books by them) that I discovered my own voice as a writer. For example, I read and re-read James Baldwin's essays and discovered stylized possibilities for using commas! I puzzle now about how the FireFlies might grow in their own interests in writing, and with whom they might apprentice: who might lead them to see things with words.

-Abdi & Carlos with the FireFlies

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

When we returned from April break, we realized we had only nine weeks until the end of the school year. As stated before, your child has a lot to do before the school year ends. Your children and their teachers need your active support!

- Please monitor screen time and bedtime.
- Please talk with your child about their work.
- Please call us with any questions or concerns.

Dani Coleman will call you soon to schedule your child's portfolio. Presentations will take place in June, and each takes 2 – 2 ½ hours. Families, along with teachers and external community member, are required to attend. Please watch this film clip from the Mission Hill School website to see what your child is preparing for. Scroll down to Chapter 9: Seeing the Learning. <http://www.mission-hillschool.org/a-year-at-mission-hill/>

This is a great time of year for kids to attend before school and/or after school study hour (Monday and Wednesday, 8 – 9 am and 3:30 – 4:30 pm). We want all students to end the year proud of how they have grown and what they have accomplished, both as learners and as community members.

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

Earlier this month, I issued a challenge to the 8th graders in history class. They had to work with a partner or in a group of three people to make a presentation on the causes of the Civil War. The rest of the decisions, such as the groupings and how they will make their presentations were left up to them. The winners of the challenge would earn special privileges such as having access to my chair for a week.

The goal of the challenge was to see how well they worked in groups when they get to choose their partners. My students often argue that

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they are more productive when they are working with their friends and/or that they are equally as productive when they engage in small off-topic conversations.

The students were really excited about the challenge. However, there was only one group that was able to maintain their focus throughout the week: Evelyn, Asmani and Jullian. They used the habits of work effectively, especially forethought, and held each other accountable. Great work you three!

-Reginald Toussaint

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

New End-of-School-Year Dates!

School will now OPEN on Bunker Hill Day, June 17. June 23 and 24 are early dismissal days. Friday, June 24 is the new LAST DAY of school.

Muddy River Project

Jaylin, Kenya, Derricka, Ali, Christian, and Dario presented the 7th graders' Muddy River work at the 10th Annual Muddy River Symposium on April 14th at Wheelock College. MHS worked with Andrew MacBlane and the Boston Nature Center on this project. Students assessed the water quality of the Muddy River by collecting data at five locations: Jamaica pond, Leverett Pond, The Fens, Charles Gate, and the Charles River. The central goal was to observe the change in water quality from December to March by analyzing four parameters: dissolved oxygen, pH, electrical conductivity, and nitrates. By analyzing the data, we were able to hypothesize what



Kenya, Jaylin, Ali, Dario, Christian and Derrika presenting at the Muddy River Symposium.

environmental factors (i.e.: salt, fertilizer, geese, etc.) affected the Muddy River water quality. The water quality of the Muddy River is heavily influenced by many environmental factors especially salt, fertilizers, and general roadway run-off at each collection site throughout the changing seasons.

National Take Back Day

The Allston Brighton Substance Abuse Task Force (ABSATF) encourages the safe disposal of unwanted and unused prescription and over the counter medications. The Brighton Police Department give the public an opportunity to prevent prescription drug abuse by ridding their homes of dangerous expired, unused, and prescription medications. National Take Back Day is April 30, 2016.

Bring your medications for disposal to the lobby of the Brighton Police Station (D-14) located at 301 Washington Street.

Needles and sharp objects will not be accepted. Please be sure to properly dispose of the unwanted pills, enclosing them in a sealable plastic bag. Liquids will be accepted if secured in a leak proof container. Any names or personal information from the bottles must be removed prior to disposal. This event is completely anonymous; there will be no questions asked.

School Picture Day!

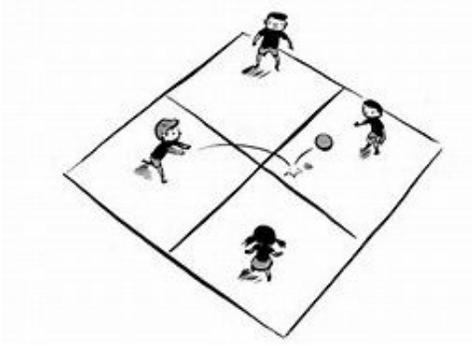
School Picture Day is scheduled for Tuesday, May 10, 2016. Please look for the order envelope from your child's teacher.

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

Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School
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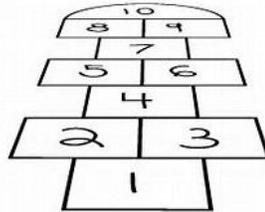
Wednesday, May 4th, 2016 is
Family Fun Day at
Mission Hill School!



Everyone is invited to
celebrate an evening
of "Screen-Free" play
and picnicking!



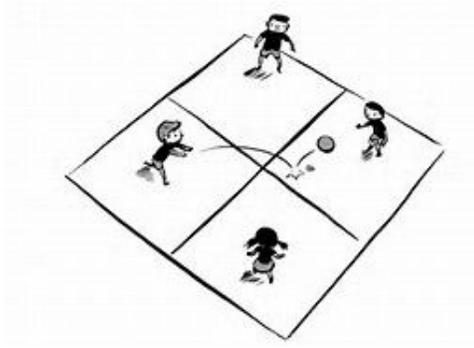
Hopscotch!
Four Square! Tag!
Sidewalk Chalk....
And board games, too!!



Bring a picnic dinner and a blanket for your
family. We will provide games and equipment.

We will gather in the South Play Yard (near the circle driveway and the
apple orchard) from 5:45 - 7:17 pm. If it rains we will meet in the K-Quad.

If you have questions - just talk to Tato or AJ (Room 215);
Geraldyn (Room 108); or Ms Deborah (Room 109).

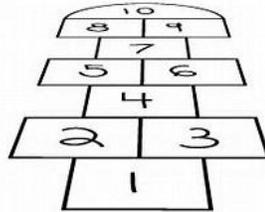


Cerrado miércoles, 4 ° de
mayo de 2016 es
Día de Diversión Familiar en
Mission Hill School!

Todos están invitados
a celebrar una noche
de juego "Pantalla
Libre" y hacer picnic!



Rayuela
Four Square! Tag!
tiza de la acera ...
Juegos Y de mesa,
también !!!



Trae una cena de picnic y una manta para su familia. Vamos a ofrecer juegos y equipos-. Vamos a reunir en el sur de corral (cerca de la calzada círculo y el huerto de manzanas) de 5:45 19:17. . Si llueve nos encontraremos en el K-Quad.

Si tiene alguna pregunta - acaba de hablar con Tato o AJ (Habitación 215);

Dear Families,

Next week,
May 2th – 8th , we will be participating
in Screen-Free Week!



Screen-Free Week is a nationwide event sponsored by Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood and celebrated by schools, families, and other civic and community groups each year. During Screen-Free Week, millions of children and adults pledge to spend seven days screen-free. Instead of watching TV or playing video games, they tend to read, play, think, create, get physically active, and spend more time with friends and family.

Studies show that children who watch less TV are more likely to read well and to be physically fit. Turning off screens also allows for more family time. Each week, American children spend more time in front of a screen than they do in school! Screen-Free Weeks is a great way to jump-start our kids into more reading, learning, and active play. It's also a lot of fun!

Many parents choose to join their children in forgoing screen-based entertainment all week long and engaging in other fun activities. This kind of support is the best thing you can do to ensure that your child will have a successful and beneficial experience.

Please ask Geralyn (Room 108) if you would like more information about the effects of excessive screen time for children and about Screen-Free Week. You can also learn more by visiting www.screenfree.org.

Please return the permission slip below to let me know if your child will be participating.
Sincerely,
Mission Hill School

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Screen-Free Week: May 2nd – May 8th

Student's Name:
Teacher's Name:

- Please check the appropriate box(es):
- Our whole family will participate in Screen-Free Week.
 - Let me know how I can support the group effort!
 - Just our child will be participating. We will help him/her complete the program.
 - Thanks, but we will not participate this year.

Estimados Familias,

2 de Mayo -8 de Mayo, 2016, el salón de su estudiante estará participando en la Semana Libre de Pantallas. Semana Libre de Pantallas es un evento nacional



patrocinado por La Campaña de Una Niñez Libre de Comercial y será celebrado por las escuelas, familias, y otros grupos cívicos y comunitarios durante este año. Durante la Semana Libre de Pantallas, millones de estudiantes y adultos se comprometen pasar siete días sin pantallas. En vez de ver la tele, o jugar videojuegos, trataran de leer, jugar, pensar, crear, ponerse activos físicamente, y pasar más tiempo con las amistades y la familia.

Estudios enseñan que los niños que ven menos tele son más probables de leer bien y estar bien físicamente. Apagando las pantallas también permite que haya más tiempo en familia. Cada semana, los niños de América pasan más tiempo frente de una pantalla que lo que pasan en la escuela! Semana libre de pantalla es una forma buena para darles un empujón a nuestros hijos para que lean, aprendan, y sean más activos. También es mucha diversión!

Muchos padres escogen acompañar a sus hijos en entretenimiento continuo toda la semana y involucrarse en otras actividades toda la semana. Este tipo de apoyo es lo mejor que usted pueda hacer para asegurar que su hijo/a tenga una experiencia exitosa y beneficiosa.

Por favor díganme (Geraldyn en salón 108) si gustan más información de los efectos de tiempo excesivo en las pantallas para niños y sobre la semana libre de pantallas. También pueden aprender más visitando www.screenfree.org . Por favor regresen la forma de permiso que viene abajo para dejarnos saber si va estar participando.

Sinceramente,
Mission Hill School

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Semana Sinantallas: 2 de Mayo – 8 de Mayo, 2016

Nombre del estudiante:
Nombre de maestra/o:

Favor de checar la línea/s correcta:

- Nuestra familia va participar en Semana Libre de Pantallas 2015
- Déjame saber cómo puedo apoyar el esfuerzo del grupo!
- No mas que mi nuestro hijo/a va participar. Le ayudaremos completar el programa.
- Gracias, pero no vamos a participar este año.