



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Friday, October 21  
*Friday Share: Deborah, Kate, & Nakia's Classes*
- Tuesday, November 8, 7:00 am to 7:00 pm  
*Election Day Bake Sale at MHS*
- Thursday, November 10 @ 5:45 pm  
*Family Council Meeting @ Dudley Library (see pg 6)*
- Friday, November 11  
Veteran's Day: **NO SCHOOL**

October 14, 2016

Volume 20, Issue 4

### *Are you Interested?*

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

There are several invitations floating about in our community. If you are a student (depending on your grade level) you are invited to join the Girls Scouts, a debate league, a chorus, and cheerleading squad.

Starting next week during the recess and lunchtime Girl Scout groups will meet on the following days: Tuesday 12:20 to 1:20 -Daisies (K-1), Wednesday 12:20 to 1:20 -Brownies (2-3), Thursday 12:40 to 1:30 -Juniors (4-5) and Friday 12:40 to 1:30 -Cadettes (6-8). What will you do? Learn about friendship, engage in fitness activities, learn about nutrition, develop leadership skills through team building, organize projects and research the contribution of women through history and today.

Students are also invited to join a Cheerleading Squad Planning Committee. Layla from Abdi's room got staff approval for her idea to begin a cheerleading squad. She needs other students to join her in the planning and to be on the squad. Ask your teacher if you can speak with her in room 215, or you can write her a note to express your interest.

If you are in 7th or 8th grade you are invited to join the Debate League. Practices have begun, but it is not too late to join. The practices take place on Mondays and Wednesdays after school from 3:45 to 5:00pm.

Sing It! Chorus invites students in grades 3-6 to sing on Thursdays after school.

If you are interested in Sing It! or Girl Scouts, ask your teacher, Tiffany, or Ayla for a permission slip. The slips must be returned before you can participate.

If you are an adult in our school community, consider joining our Governance Board, being a Class Family Representative, or assisting with the newly proposed Cheerleading Squad. The MHS Governance Board discusses school wide initiatives and advises school policies, with the staff making final decisions. The Board approves the school budget and conducts the principal evaluation. There is a minimum of four meetings per year, with other meetings set as needed by the Board. Class family representatives assist with communication among the families in the classroom. For example, the class family representative might remind families of an upcoming field trip or share a teacher's wish list with the classroom community. Our students need assistance with adult supervision during their cheerleading squad meetings and practices.

If you are interested in any of these opportunities please e-mail me, Ayla, at [agavins@missionhillschool.org](mailto:agavins@missionhillschool.org). I will forward your interest to the appropriate person.

### KINDERGARTEN

#### Room 108

Have you seen our stick bugs? In our classroom we are caring for stick bugs that were brought to us from our good friend Andrew at the Boston Nature Center. I have never had stick bugs in my classroom, so it has been an exciting experience for me, as well as the students. Did you know that stick bugs molt? Naomi was observing the habitat and saw something that looked like a stick bug - but it was not moving and it was a bit shriveled up. "What is that?" she asked. We talked to an expert - Andrew! Andrew told us that stick bugs molt - so we will be learning more about what that means. How do you care for stick bugs? Ask your child to tell you about how we care for the stick bugs and what stick bugs need to survive.

-Geraldyn B. McLaughlin

#### Room 106

Each week our student teacher Caity brings a new concoction to our class. They have been lovingly coined *Caity's Concoctions*. She started by making sidewalk chalk paint with the students. It was such a big hit that we had to continue. *Caity's Concoctions* incorporate science, math, literacy, and art. The children are creating and investigating materials that help them understand how products work together.

An added step that Caity takes is that she documents each of these events. She takes pictures and records what the children are saying and doing. This allows the children, families, and other teachers to see the learning that is happening in our class. There is currently documentation of her sidewalk chalk adventure outside



Caity, making a concoction with children in Room 106.

room 106.

So far Caity has made sidewalk chalk paint, playdough, and moon sand. While making play dough Caity asked, "How does it feel?" The following are some of the children's thoughts.

Lola: "The conditioner will make it more sticky."

Simeon: "It feels like cookie dough."

"Cornstarch will make it less sticky."

Yeuri: "It's like it's not done."

Bowie: "It's kind of hard to mix."

-Kathy D'Andrea

#### Room 107

*"Be nice to each other and hold hands if you want, but it has to be on the rug."*

As we complete the compilation and signing of our classroom Constitution, I think back four years to when Euan, Michelle, Shirley and Anand were in my classroom. If ever there was a doubt that kindergarten students could grasp concepts around the presidency and government or take seriously the idea of signing

their names to legal documents, they dispelled it. While students in previous years of implementing this curriculum did the same, this group of students not only came in dressed up, but came dressed in period clothing. As our new group discusses what expectations we will decide on to govern our classroom, here are a few that were on their minds:

- Don't snatch toys from other people if you want to use them.
- No fight playing.
- Hold hands and walk on the street with your friends.
- Don't touch broken papers. They are dangerous.
- Don't hit the dollhouse with a block because it might break.
- Play and clean up.
- Go to breakfast.
- Go outside.
- Keep the buildings safe.

-Jada Brown & Kenisha Epps

#### Room 109

This week we are studying our names and getting ready to go apple pick-



Stick bugs in Room 108.

ing. Closely examining the names of everyone in our class gives us an entree into literacy this year. We are looking at initial letters, recognizing things that are the same and different about everyone's name (letters, length, sounds, etc.) As part of our name study we read *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes. This is a great story about names, "name calling", and kindness. It connects together our classroom community work and our name work. We'll keep everyone's name posted as a resource for our writing and letter learning throughout the year! The class was excited this week to prepare for our Thursday apple picking trip. To get ready we read about apples, orchards, the apple life cycle, and created a class book about what to expect at the orchard. A short but busy week!

-Deborah & Stephanie

### GRADES 1 & 2

#### Room 205

*Breathing in, I see myself as a flower. Breathing out, I feel fresh. Breathing in, I see myself as a mountain. Breathing out I feel solid. Breathing in, I see myself as still water. Breathing out, I reflect things as they are. Breathing in, I see myself as space. Breathing out, I feel free.*

These words come from the book *A Handful of Quiet* by Ticht Nhat Hanh. This book has given us some images to think about as we practice mindful breathing.

Every week on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Betsy visits our class for mindfulness practice. We have learned how have a mindful body and focus our attention on our breath by placing our hand on our belly and feeling it expand and contract with each breath we take. We have also learned about heartfulness and sending kind thoughts to others. We talk about how we feel when we practice mindfulness and when mindfulness might help us. Try sitting somewhere at home or at work and pay attention to your breathing. Whenever thoughts come into your mind, let them and then bring your attention back to you breath by quietly saying breathing in, breathing out. May you be peaceful. May you be happy and calm.

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

#### Room 216

"Also, Danny, there used to be some people who didn't want girls to be in the military" William A. said during our read aloud. 'Wow', I thought to myself, 'I did not see read-aloud taking this turn'. Our students are bringing topics to discussions which can be difficult to navigate, as they often don't have a clear or simple

answer. So far this year, we have discussed racism, birtherism, war, and gender roles/norms, to name a few. Not one was a planned discussion, but all arose from student connections to theme work or read alouds. In our discussion of women serving in the military, we discussed how gender roles and stereotypes have prevented women from working in many careers in the past, and I used a personal connection to facilitate the conversation: "Did you know that as a male 1st/2nd grade teacher, my job goes against gender roles? Imagine if I wasn't allowed to be your teacher?" Josie gasped and said "No more medieval music!" and Neli held onto my arm as if I was literally about to get up and leave forever. It can be so challenging to help students understand complex issues, especially when they are new and developing. We do not always agree, nor do we need to, but I see it as my role to facilitate conversations and help students gain a better understanding of the issues which face our society today.

-Danny Flannery & JoAnn Hawkesworth

#### Room 217

The current theme, *Who Counts?* is wonderful for helping guide democratic discussions as we continue establishing our classroom community. We are looking at how our voices are heard and how we can help each other be heard. Last week we began thinking about our class name. It is helpful to have a class name for the school to know us as, other than the generic "Kate's Class" I call when lining up outside.

After a fun, creative conversation about class names, I would like to formally introduce you to The United

Kates. Many students offered up options for class names. They ranged from Kate's Dragons to The Math Guides. We talked about how it was important to represent all the kids in our class and what we are interested in. Options like "The Air Jordans" were turned down when students realized not everyone loved basketball. Students supported each other's ideas by voting and giving valid arguments for why one name was a better option than another. After brainstorming, we used a caucus style format to vote. The majority ruled. In the final vote, The United Kates won by a landslide.

*-Kate Needham*

### GRADES 3 & 4

#### Rooms 203

Why is voting important? This is the question we discussed this week. Here are some of their thoughts:

- You vote to see if what you are agreeing on is ok.
- You vote to decide on something.
- Some things are important to vote on to decide if we should have something or not because it's too dangerous.
- Without voting people would barely agree on anything
- Voting helps you decide if something is important or it matters
- It makes things fair
- It's a way to practice our right
- ....Like if you are voting for president, you can make the world better
- You get to choose the option/choice that is best for you

This discussion led to the writing and giving of persuasive speeches about what our class name should be. By the time you read this we will have voted on our name. Be sure to read next week for the big reveal!

*-Jenerra Williams & Ji Yun Park*

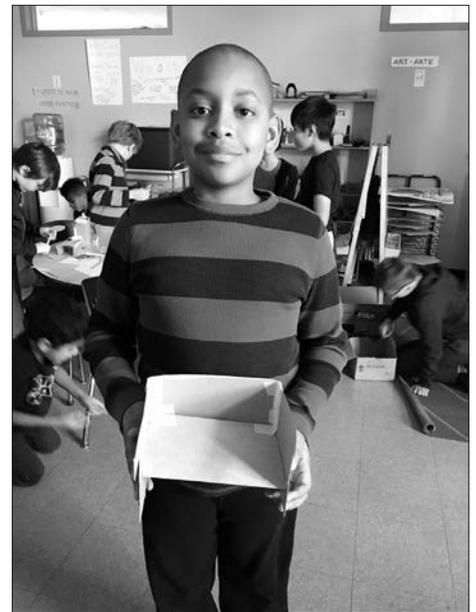
#### Room 204

I was thrilled to hear a student refer to theme as one of his favorite subjects during a listening conference session. The same student later asked "Can we work on booths during quiet work time?", in reference to designing and making a voting booth from a project time choice. After being redirected to make a choice from the literacy activities, he persisted, "Can we count up the votes?" I had to smile because I realized at that this student had the power to persuade!

Our theme work is so embedded in our day, with students exercising their democratic voices in their choice of projects. Which activity will they start with? Can they vote on ideas for the classroom? During the selections of topics to debate during literacy, a student requested that we do a recount because he wanted to make sure that his topic of choice was given fair attention. The winning topics are:

- Should Christopher Columbus have a holiday?
- Should students have toys in school?
- Should cereal be a dessert?

*-Cleata Brown & Mayra Rivera*



*Ashton displays his voting booth model.*

#### Room 207

Enjoy the photos of our apple picking trip!

*-Amanda & Amina*

### GRADES 5&6

#### Room 210

Generating classroom names is always an interesting process. It begins free and fun, kids coming up with the most ridiculous ideas they possibly can. As they began to think about their identity as a group,



*Room 107, picking apples in Harvard, MA.*



and what name they want to represent them, the tone changes a bit. They still offer up funny and unique options, however they are more intentional with them the second time around. This is how a child could write a compelling persuasive paragraph, and share with a straight face on why the "Squids" is the best choice for a name.

After several discussions, writing assignments, shares and votes, we were only left with three: 5xAtion, 5th & 6th Triumph, and FaZe. Our new class name is 5xAtion! The 5 and X that make up the "fix" sound, represent 5th and 6th together. Also note that the "X" is meant to be near the 5, like an exponent in math, and the "A" should always be capitalized.

*-Nakia & Manny*

### Room 215

October has come quickly, and it feels like we are steadily coming together as a class. I wish I could jump ahead and see what November holds for us. In a recent study of restorative justice, I invited students to look ahead to the end of year and express a feeling or sentiment about their year. Here's what they put on their posters:

Laylah: This year I feel kind.

Andrew: This year I was heard.

Jada: This I made more friends. I feel noticed and happy.

Richelle: This year I wasn't bullied.

Melissa: This year I felt respected.

Justin: This year I got respect.

Sabrina: This year I did what I had to do.

Nevaeh: This year I was kind.

Amber: This year I was helpful.

Jack: This year I was fun.

Chrisvely: This year I worked hard.

Zuhri: This year I was heard.

Jovanni: This year I was kinder.

Aahmonyea: This year I was nice and respected.

Janira: This year I feel safe.

Rafael: This year I was respected.

Daniel: This year I was kind.

Max: This year I was friendly.

Mekhai: This year I was polite.

Carlos: This year I helped kids learn more.

Abdi: This year I practiced mindfulness.

*-Abdi & Carlos*

### GRADES 7&8

#### Room 213

Every Wednesday morning, two students from Harvard University, Mandela and Milan, teach a digital literacy class to some of our 7th/8th graders. We started last week with Scratch, a language that MIT developed to introduce people to programming concepts like code execution, loops, and precision. This week, we began to introduce logic and conditionals.

At the end of the hour, Anais asked, "Ann, do I have to go to recess? I want to finish my program." With Mandela from Harvard beside her, she began to troubleshoot her code to find out why it wasn't executing properly. Anais was using Boolean logic to create a quiz show game. Later, Anais invited me to play. I entered my name when prompted. Then I was asked, "What is the capital of the Dominican Republic?" I responded, "Boston." The program responded, "Sorry. You are wrong." Next I entered "Santo Domingo," and saw the message, "Yes. That is correct."

In the weeks ahead, we'll continue working with Scratch and Processing.js to develop more sophisticated, useful, and fun programs. Our goal is

to learn how to make basic programs, animations, games, and websites.

-Ann Ruggiero, Elsa Batista & Letta Neely

### Room 214

How do you use your voice? How do you respond when you think something is wrong or someone has done wrong? Those are some of the questions we've analyzed this fall as we've launched our theme study.

We've explored these questions during literacy through short stories, the Article of the Week and the class text, Lois Lowry's *The Giver*.

We've looked at instances where an individual chose to speak up against a wrong. In the last few days, we've begun to shift our focus to ourselves our city. We've looked at many statistics about Boston and its many neighborhoods.

Through it all, we'll be asking ourselves, is this the kind of city and/or neighborhood we want? How can

things be improved? Is there something that just doesn't seem or feel right? Then, we'll learn about how local government and how decisions are made in Boston. Lastly, we'll create a plan for how to address some of the problems we see in the city.

-Reginald Toussaint & Frances Pearce

### SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

#### Message from Family Council

The Family Council needs to assign three caregivers to serve on the Governing Board to represent our diverse group of Mission Hill caregivers. The Governing Board meets quarterly and makes decisions on policy and budget for the school. The board includes faculty, student, community, and family representatives.

If you are interested in serving as a family representative for our school this year, please contact Ari Montgomery (arijoy@gmail.com or 352.214.5692) by Friday, October

28th. If elections are necessary, the family council will contact families again before our next, November 10th, meeting. The next Governing Board meeting is December 15th.

**NEW LOCATION:** The next Family Council meeting will be on November 10th at 5:45pm at the Dudley Branch Public Library (65 Warren St, Roxbury, MA 02119). We hope this location will be easier for families not located near the Mission Hill School.

#### MHS Family Online Forum

We welcome you to connect with the school family community by joining our online forum at BigTent.

Please sign up by visiting this page: <https://www.bigtent.com/groups/mhsfamforum>

#### MHS T-Shirts For Sale

Come by the Main Office before they sell out! \$10.00 - One Price Fits All! Youth XS - Adult XXL.

Restorative Justice @ Mission Hill School: Learn more at <http://restorativejustice.org/>

**What happened?**

**What were you thinking at the time?**

**I felt**

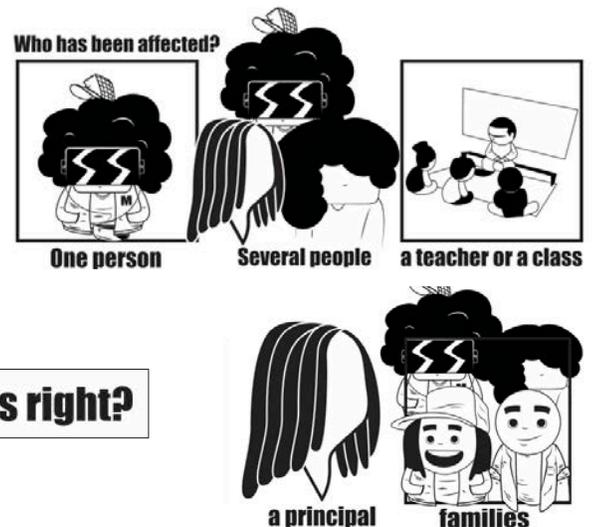
**The other person felt**

**What have you thought about since?**

**What do you think you need to do to make things right?**

**Actions**

**Words**



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

Mission Hill K-8 School  
A Boston Public Pilot School  
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