



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Friday, November 4  
*Friday Share: Theatre Share!*
- 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 28, 2016

Volume 20, Issue 6

## Welcoming Schools

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

Our staff has reflected on our successes and where we have failed to support transgender and nonconforming students. This summer our staff took a school climate survey to get a sense of our knowledge base. Through the survey we saw that we had a lot of learning to do. We took Steven Chen from the BPS Equity Office, up on his offer to lead us in a Welcoming Schools training. We scratched our regular staff meeting for two weeks in a row to begin the Welcoming Schools training. We got so much out of the beginning sessions that we have decided to continue, going all the way with the full Welcoming Schools sessions.

What are the existing policies to protect students in Boston Public Schools? Superintendent Circular number EQT-7 (You can find this on the BPS website [www.bostonpublicschools.org](http://www.bostonpublicschools.org)) states the following: *“Massachusetts law and the Boston Public Schools require that all classrooms, programs, activities, and employment practices be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity... We aim to achieve inclusion of transgender and gender nonconforming students while maintaining students right to privacy.”* I encourage you to read the full policy.

How do we support and educate families to create a school that welcomes everyone? A teacher shared that one of her families was not in favor of our teaching about this kind of acceptance and student protection due to a religious conflict. Family values may not line up with Mission Hill's belief about a fully inclusive and supportive community. However, respect is expected from every member of our community even when we disagree. A most healthy school that is supportive of all students requires action from all constituencies - staff, families, students and partners. That means we all have to be educated. It also means that as we learn, we remember we are all learners and pull each other up. Vocabulary and social norms are changing rapidly in our society. As we learn, we need to share what we know. Welcoming Schools offers the following steps to take at home:

- Establish a respectful environment at home.
- Model caring and respect for other people.
- Share books with your children that include different kinds of families; feature boys and girls doing a wide range of activities and showing a wide range of emotion; show kids sticking up for each other in the face of bullying behaviors; and model positive ways to work things out and handle conflict.
- Talk with your child about your religious beliefs. Help him or her understand that while you might disagree with someone else's beliefs, you can still respect the person.

With this focus so present in our school community, you may hear questions or conversations among your children. Welcoming Schools has materials for families that will be available at the next Family Breakfast in November or upon request if you'd like some material sooner.



## KINDERGARTEN

### Room 108

In Room 108 we have read a few books about our hands. One book is *Hands Can* by Cheryl Willis Hudson and John-Francis Bourke. And the other is *Hands Are Not For Hitting* by Martine Agassi Ph.D. and Marieka Heinlen. After reading those books a few times, and talking about the ways we can use our hands, we made this student-generated list:

#### Hands are for...

Emerson: rolling and exercising  
Giovanni: hugging  
Jonathan: eating lunch  
Lliam: putting seatbelts on  
Marissa: washing  
Massimo: touching things and reaching to the sky  
Mira: kind things - hugging and helping  
Naomi: playing with the animals  
Parker: building a rocketship  
Perse: playing with the animals  
Rowan: drawing  
Sabina: putting seatbelts on, building and making  
Kelise (5th/6th grade visitor): raising  
*-Geralyn B McLaughlin & Donna Winder*

### Room 106

Last week we read *If I Were President* by Catherine Stier. I asked the children what they would do if they were president. James said "I would eat a big pumpkin chocolate chip cookie." Joziana said "If I were president I would pick people up who fell." I then asked them if they could, what they would use their voice to do. Children responded by saying "sing and talk to people." Angelina took my charge very seriously. She wrote, "I would use my voice to stop bullying." I shared the ideas that children



*Carmelo makes apple prints for the lawn of the White House.*

had with the other children. All the students were excited about Angelina's Idea.

We then worked on thinking about how bullying makes us feel. Hannah said, "Sad." Angelina said, "Upset." Simeon said, "I would feel angry." Yeuri said, "Bad, Bad." We also brainstormed ideas about how we could help stop bullying. Greta said, "Tell people not to bully." We also decided

to make signs. Misael said, "Say bullying is very, very unkind."

We will be writing and practicing our work so that we can begin our anti bullying campaign at Friday share on November 4th.

*-Kathy D'Andrea*

### Room 107

While completing and signing our Constitution, we read a book about the White House and found out that not only does the president live there, but that soldiers used to live in it, it almost completely burned down in a war, our first president never lived there because it was not built yet, it houses a movie theater and a bowling alley, and has a lot of windows and chimneys. In order to make things come alive, we began making a picture replica of the White House by first painting the sky and lawn. We then made brick prints on large white pieces of paper (because the stone and brick was what was used to build it) and our MassArt volunteer Wilton added apple prints to represent the flowers on the lawn.



*Hannah's "sad" drawing.*

A few weeks ago, we began reading *The Kid Who Ran for President* in preparation for our students to begin writing their own campaign speeches. In order to get started, we decided to ask about what students thought the “issues” were in kindergarten. Simply put, what are the things that they think about and could not live without. What do you think they were?

-Jada Brown & Kenisha Epps

### Room 109

This week we focused on learning more about our school community, neighborhood, and city. In our classroom we created maps of our room, talked about how we make decisions (sometimes we discuss, sometimes, we vote, and sometimes the teachers decide.) We toured the school in small groups and some students made maps of the school. Then we talked about how decision making happens at our school. Now we are moving on to the larger communities we are part of. We are looking at maps of Boston and finding places we know (our school, the arboretum, the MFA, where do we live!). Who are the decision makers and how do those decisions affect us?

-Deborah & Stephanie

### GRADES 1 & 2

#### Room 205

How do you use your voice? What does it mean to vote? Why is voting important? Who is important? These are some of the questions we have been exploring while setting up our classroom, getting to know one another and creating a learning community. It is a tradition here to choose a class name. Here is a small glimpse into part of our process.

*One day during project time, Ms. Ashleigh decided as the leader of our classroom, that only the first graders would vote on the class name this year. Students sat quietly as they waited on the meeting rug for their turn to make a project time choice. Some students chose to build US landmarks in the block area, while others made flags. A small group of second graders began whispering to each other at the art table as they began making signs. At the end of project time, we all came back together on the meeting rug and Ms. Ashleigh asked the group at the art table to share about their work:*

Soley: We were gonna make a protest. We thought it was unfair that the first graders got to vote and we did not. Madison and Geneva clapping in agreement:

Kaia: It was my idea to make the protest. July and Soley made the signs; me and Eamon made the flag. I know that the 2nd graders would get to vote other times, but I think the class name is one of the most important votes of the year.

Eamon: If only the 1st graders voted for the class name it wouldn't be fair because the 2nd graders wouldn't have any idea in it.

Madison: If the 1st graders only get to vote, it's not fair. The whole entire class should get to vote.

Soley: A protest is when everyone stands up and holds signs, chanting what they want; trying to get someone to do something for them.

Agboola: It's not fair that 1st graders have to vote or else they can't do anything that they can do.

Eamon: In our class constitution it says we will provide fairness.

Kaia: Last year everybody got to vote. We're studying voting and in the book we read, it said everybody



*The United Kates at the Paramount Theater, where they saw James and the Giant Peach.*

should have the right to vote.

Beatrice: If only the first graders can vote, if a lot of 2nd graders like one name and they were going to vote for it, it wouldn't get true information about what class name most of the kids like

July: I asked you if we were allowed to vote and you said no, we wanted to encourage you to let everyone vote.

Kaia: I read a little bit about protests at home and I learned a little about them in kindergarten. Once, I was walking back from some place I saw a protest, that some people who had been put in jail should be let out and we had a little talk about protests.

Bea: I have protested before for schools to be fully funded.

Arianni: All of us are supposed to vote.

Raymond: It's not fair because the 2nd graders can vote, my big sister could vote for our class name.

Arianni: There are more 2nd graders than first graders, maybe 2nd grad-

## CLASSROOM NEWS

ers know how to vote more than 1st graders.

Beatrice: The leader shouldn't make all the decisions.

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

### Room 216

"What if Anna went upstairs to get her coat after she went to the bathroom?" -Neli

"When did Nate go to the bathroom?"

-Nico

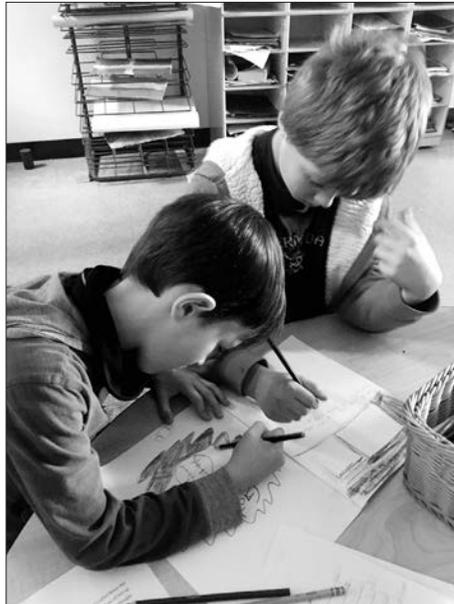
"We're making a magazine for the trial." -Jack Ozro

This week our room is abuzz with discussions of our upcoming mock trials, which will be occurring at the end of this week. Students are currently directing their efforts towards preparing for their role in the mock trial. Each student will serve as a judge, prosecutor, lawyer for the defendant, witness, or bailiff/court reporter. Preparation for a trial involves a lot of deep thinking; students consider viewpoints of witnesses, weigh evidence, determine what information is relevant to the case, connect witness statements to form a complete story, and use conjecture to consider "What if?" questions. Utilizing Mission Hill's Habits of Mind has allowed students to put themselves in the shoes of lawyers and judges, seeing how each plays a role in the judicial system. These understandings will be supplemented by our field trip next week, when we will visit the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court!

-Danny Flannery & JoAnn Hawkesworth

### Room 217

Last Thursday, the United Kates took the orange line all the way to Emerson College. Allison, our theatre teacher, invited us to a production



Students in room 216 use Habits of Mind to prepare for their mock trial.

of James and the Giant Peach put on by college students. It was almost all of the students' first time at a play or musical. Roald Dahl's story came alive with insect props, creative costumes, puppetry and huge peach backgrounds. Here are some of the comments students made after the show:

Yediel: I liked the characters.

Evan: I liked all of the parts except

for the mean aunts.

Jordan and Gerson: The giant peach was so cool!

Mia: I liked the actors.

Romeo: How did they make it all look so real?

James: How were they able to stand on the peach?

Wren: How did they make eating the peach look so real?

Warlin: How did they make the smoke? What was it?

Emeric: How were the aunties so mean in the show but at they end when we asked the actors questions, they were really nice?

-Kate Needham

### Room 203

Having extra hands to help out in the classroom is an integral part of teaching and learning the way we do. In order to meet children where they are and to allow them to use their hands and brains in ways that best suit them, the teacher needs a little help. Volunteers are great for this work!

In my room this week I had:

- A volunteer from Boston Partners during 4th grade math. (He comes every week).
- Student volunteers from Boston Arts Academy helping me hang art work.
- A parent volunteer that traveled on a field trip with us.
- Two college students: one from Wellesley and one from Mass College of Art, who help on Fridays.

"Doing nothing for others is the undoing of ourselves." These words by Horace Mann capture the purpose of volunteerism well. These volunteers have exemplified the best of volunteerism not only by helping us,

but by edifying the human spirit!  
*-Jenerra Williams & Ji Yun Park*

### Room 204

The Nerd Squad have been diligent, organizing ideas to support their arguments for their debates. Students asked if they would be paired with those opposed to their argument. Brian and Adler, who are opponents for the argument “Should students bring toys to school?” have requested to debate each other. Ashton decided that students should bring toys to school, because it would teach them how to be responsible. Kenneth and Nate both argued that cereal should be a dessert because of the the dessert-like flavors found in some cereals, such as chocolate and sugar. Regardless of the fact that Columbus Day gives us a day off from school, a number of students have written arguments against Columbus having a holiday, including reasons such as his cruelty to Native Americans and that he was a liar and an evil person. It will be a wonderful experience to listen to some of the debates and see the Nerd Squad in action as they defend their arguments. Stay tuned!  
*-Cleata Brown & Mayra Rivera*

### Room 207

Last week we continued exploring what we we think voting means. “Voting makes things fair.” “Voting might bring people together.” “Voting is about our class name not one person’s name.”

We spent time figuring out what our class name should be. First, we brainstormed many different possibilities. We narrowed down the possibilities to The Perseverers and The Be Kind Work Hard Squad. Groups began to campaign. They made signs and wrote speeches about what they



*Morgan volunteers in J&J's Genius' classroom*

thought the best class name for room 207 would be. After showing our homemade identification cards, so that we could register to vote, ballots were cast in a homemade voting booth along with homemade voting box. At last our secret ballots were tallied and the votes were in! Room 207 will now be known as The Be Kind, Work Hard Squad! There was some disappointment from the opposing group, “I think it is a good name for us, I am just disappointed that our name didn’t win” said one supporter from The Perseverers group. Indeed our new name is a good fit for us as we will all strive to persevere to live up to our name as the Be Kind, Work Hard Squad!  
*-Amina & Amanda*

### GRADES 5&6

#### Room 210

“Recognize when you’re feeling emotional and tell the person how you feel” “Assume good intentions” “We should be nice, we are all humans, we

know each other, so we should all get along.” Those are the three agreements that emerged from a restorative justice circle our class created. It began with a few general agreements, respect the talking pieces, speak from the heart, listen from the heart, say just enough, and trust that you’ll know what to say when it is your turn. The focus of the circle was to figure out what kind of community that we would like to have, and what are the steps we could take to make it happen. The agreements all came from students and were voted on by consensus via the “fist of five”, the same structure that we use as a staff for decision making. I am very much looking forward to more circle times, as well as well as seeing the results of this one.

*-Nakia & Manny*

#### Room 215

Double the Friday Shares, double the fun. Last Friday, after read aloud and packing green folders to travel for the weekend, we launched our version of Friday shares. Mekhai Tinsley brought in a robot he has been building all summer that responds



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to his voice commands. We gathered around the robot, and slowly kept creeping up to the table where Mekhai had placed it. Building robots is Mekhai's passion; the robot dances, does yoga and tells the weather, and more. On November 4th, Mekhai will share at Friday Share in the auditorium.

Our own classroom shares grew out of this experience. When Mekhai was finished, students asked: Can I bring something I am working on at home to share? Can I share something I have done at school that I am proud of? The answer is, yes!

*-Room 215 (may have a class name this week), Carlos and Abdi*

### GRADES 7&8

#### Room 213

Our schedule is more full than ever this year with specials, classes held outside of our classroom that are an integral part of our school program. For the Wednesday "3rd Day" schedule, students received their first choice among the electives of Debate, Digital Literacy, Geography, or Music to accompany Literacy, Math, and Science classes. On Thursday afternoon, students attend Art with Jeanne or Theatre with Allison on alternate weeks. On Friday, we end the week with Coach D's exhaustingly energizing PE class.

On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, Betsy comes to us for a 20 - 30 minute mindfulness class. Although adjusting to being still is hard for some, we are recognizing times when the energy in the room reflects our attempts to be mindful. Our goal is to learn some tools that will help us in school and in life to regulate our responses and reactions and to be kind to ourselves.



*Members of the Nerd Squad, hard at work preparing their debates.*

And on Tuesday afternoons, 8th graders participate in Apprentice Learning. They're excited to begin their job site work in two weeks.

With so many wonderful opportunities throughout the week, we are mindful of the energy we also need for our literacy, math, history and theme classes. Do you know what your child's favorite time of the week is?

*-Ann Ruggiero, Elsa Batista & Letta Neely*

#### Room 214

Some students huddled in the meeting area, others were getting some water while others were continuing the conversations they had during recess and lunch. Richard came up to me and asked, "Are we going to read now?" He looked disappointed when I told him no. I reminded him that we read earlier in the day. He smiled and said he was hoping we could read twice in one day.

We are more than halfway through *The Giver*, our class text for the fall.

We are really enjoying the book. Yes, it's a strange book. In some ways we have to suspend logic in order to follow the story but many of us can relate to the main character as he takes on the responsibility of taking on the memories (and the pain) of his community. However, the best part of the book is the questions that it raises: What makes a family? Is it good to be different? Is choice a privilege or a right?

As we read the book, we are paying close attention to the writer's style and what makes it a good book. We will use our conversations and analysis of *The Giver* as a springboard to engage in conversations about books the rest of the year.

*-Reginald Toussaint & Frances Pearce*

### SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

#### Debate Team News

Congratulations to the MH Debate team on their first tournament! The following is from a letter received from the Boston Debate League:

*“Congratulations Mission Hill debaters and coaches for an amazing first tournament! On October 15th they were a force to be reckoned with.*

*Mission Hill had a total of 6 debaters, in 3 teams, represented. Zac McLaughlin won the 6th place Speaker Award in the Novice division. The team of McLaughlin & McLaughlin placed 10th overall in the Novice division (Zack & CJ).*

*This is a testament to the hard work and culture-building that was done within a very short time. We look forward to working with you all throughout the 2016-2017 season.”*

### Election Day Bake Sale

Help is needed for the MHS Election Day Bake Sale, on Tuesday, November 8th from 7am to 8pm, outside the gym. Setup will happen the night before and the table will be open all day, selling baked goods, grab-and-go meals, coffee, and popcorn.

Please consider baking, donating store-bought goods, and/or signing up for a shift(s) at the table. We also need contributions of prepared take-away lunches and dinners for voters to grab on their way out, and bottled water to sell. The online signup sheet is here: <http://www.slottr.com/sheets/2718282> or text Rachel Goldsmith at 617-905-4646.

Baked goods can be left on Rachel's porch (142 Carolina Avenue, Jamaica Plain) the night before or brought to the sale table anytime on Tuesday 11/8. Please let us know how you can

help and spread the word! The goal of the Family Council is to have as many people participate as possible, in however small or large a way they can.

### MHS Family Directory

Every year, the Family Council helps to compile a schoolwide directory, to facilitate and encourage communication between MHS families. In the next week, expect to receive a phone call, email or text from a MHS caregiver, asking you to fill out a form to be included in this year's directory. If you have questions, please contact

Dani Coleman [dcoleman@mission-hillschool.org](mailto:dcoleman@mission-hillschool.org).

### MHS T-Shirts Still for Sale

T-Shirts are still available in the main office. \$10.00 - One Price Fits All!  
Youth XS - Adult XXL

### Family Council Meeting

**\*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.

### Thank you, Boston Arts Academy Volunteers!



*On Wednesday, MHS hosted over 25 Boston Arts Academy students as part of their Community Volunteer Day. Young artists came and helped with the grade 5/6 Teach-In, organized and cleaned in the library, cafeteria and closets and spent time helping out in classrooms. Many thanks to the volunteers!*

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 Election Day Bake Sale!

**Where:** 20 Child Street-Gym Entrance (voting location)

**When:** Tuesday, November 8, 2016 from 7:00am - 8:00pm

**What:** Bake, Donate Goods, and/or Work a Shift at the Table!

**Who:** Contact Rachel Goldsmith at 617-905-4646

**How:** *Sign up:* <http://www.slottr.com/sheets/2718282>

Setup will happen the night before and the table will be open all day, selling baked goods, grab-and-go meals, coffee, and popcorn.

Please consider baking, donating store-bought goods, and/or signing up for a shift(s) at the table. We also need contributions of prepared take-away lunches and dinners for voters to grab on their way out, and bottled water to sell.

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## MHS Elección Día Bake Sale!

**Dónde:** 20 Niños de la calle-Gym de entrada (lugar de votación)

**Cuando:** Martes 8 de noviembre de, el año 2016 de 7:00 am - 8:00 pm

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

**Qué:** Hornear, donar alimentos, y / o trabajan en un turno en la mesa!

**Quién:** Póngase en contacto con Rachel Goldsmith al 617-905-4646

**Cómo:** Regístrate: <http://www.slottr.com/sheets/2718282>

El programa de instalación suceda la noche anterior y la mesa estará abierta durante todo el día, la venta de productos de panadería, agarra-and-go de las comidas, café y palomitas de maíz.

Por favor, considere hornear, la donación de los bienes comprados en la tienda, y / o suscribirse a un cambio (s) en la mesa. También necesitamos contribuciones de comidas para llevar y comidas preparadas para los votantes para tomar en su salida, y agua embotellada para vender.

Inscribirse en línea: <http://www.slottr.com/sheets/2718282> o texto Rachel Goldsmith al 617-905-4646.

Los productos horneados se pueden dejar en el porche de Rachel (142 Carolina Avenue, Jamaica Plain) la noche anterior o que se señalan a la mesa en cualquier momento la venta el martes 11/8. Por favor, háganos saber cómo puede ayudar y difundir la palabra! El objetivo del Consejo de Familia es tener la mayor cantidad de personas participan como sea posible, de una manera más o menos grandes que pueden.