



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- December 23-January 3  
*Winter Break: No School*
- Wednesday, January 4  
*All Students Return to School*
- Friday, January 6  
*Friday Share: All-School Singalong*
- Thursday, January 12, 5:45-7:00 pm  
*Family Council Meeting, Location TBA*
- Monday, January 16, 2017  
*Dr. MLK Jr. Day: NO SCHOOL*

December 16, 2016

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### *Fall 2016 and Winter 2017*

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

As we prepare for the break in our daily routine with December break on the horizon, it's a good time to look back at the fall and look ahead to the next trimester.

We began the fall with a number of successful family events. Meeting up in the play space near South Street proved to be a great idea for our evening meet and greet in September. Other family events that shaped our fall include Back to School night, Listening Conferences, two Family Council meetings, two Governance Board meetings and a curriculum breakfast. If you missed any of these events contact the main office at 617-635-6384. We can provide a summary, notes, or assistance to schedule a missed meeting with a teacher. A highlight for me this fall was witnessing our students exercise their voices during this fall theme, Who Counts? This study of democracy, government and voice could be seen, felt and heard throughout the school. What students learned about voting rights, the election process, government and how to be heard was evident in their projects, songs, art, speeches, dances and poems. This was a fall to remember as we all witnessed our country simultaneously divide and come together through an election process. I think we all learned many lessons from it.

MHS staff have already begun to plan for the winter theme of Ancient Greece. Our students will dive into the past through research, stories, and the arts. They will learn about myths, fables, life in Ancient Greece, and the many things that artifacts can teach us about the past. Winter school wide events include Mix-It-Up week, Pajama/Reading morning, family conferences, and a culminating Ancient Greece curriculum breakfast. There are quite a few things happening behind the scenes this winter too. Decisions regarding our school budget for fiscal year 2018 will be made and approved. We will assess staffing needs and make adjustments guided by our budget, BPS and BTU requirements, and staff desires. Changes will be shared with all of you at our April Board meeting and through the school newsletter. If your child is on a teacher's radar for retention, you will be notified in January. This winter MHS staff will attend three conferences- PEAK Inclusion Conference in Denver, CO, the North Dakota Study Group in New York, NY and the Teacher Powered Conference in CA. All of these conferences will add to what we can bring to our MHS community.



*Théo and Gabriel using their voices at Friday Share.*

The first day of winter is approaching. I hope you will celebrate it along with other things that we are privileged to experience. There will not be a newsletter next week due to reports coming home. Look for your family winter conference date enclosed with your child's report. I wish you peace and joy during this close of one calendar year and entry into another.

## CLASSROOM NEWS

### KINDERGARTEN

#### Room 108

Working hard and being kind is an on-going practice in the Dinosaurs' classroom. Everyday we find ways to use kind words, helping hands, safe feet and listening ears. We also practice how to be peaceful. Today we had visitors from other kindergarten classes. Because different faces can change the dynamics of a classroom we had an important morning message reminder: "Good Morning Dinosaurs, We will have visitors in our classroom. We will be kind and peaceful." The Dinosaurs were welcoming; they found ways to be kind a peaceful: no pushing and no hitting, helping to clean up, giving hugs and ice packs when needed, reading books with a calm body and listening to those who were talking.  
*-Donna & GERALYN*

#### Room 106

This week the Butterflies class put on a play. They performed a puppet show of *The Mitten* by Jan Brett. It was a production. Last week was Caity's take over week and the children worked with Caity to create all aspects of the play. The children made a plan and built the stage in the block area. Some children made puppets and others shared the puppets they made with other children.

The children then collaboratively decided on who would be what part for the puppet show. It took time and patience on the parts of all involved. Children also discussed who should be invited to see the play.

They asked families and siblings, and many of the classes in K-Quad. The morning came for the play and they were ready. They had rehearsed.



*Kaysha holds the book as Tyrell takes the oath of office. Najia looks on.*

Simeon was the narrator and while he read the words, the children held up their puppets.

I asked the children about their play experience. Alyssa said, "It felt awesome." Lola said "I liked when the bunny rabbit came out." Simeon said "My favorite thing was narrating."  
*-Kathy D'Andrea*

#### Room 107

Last week our candidate speeches officially began. Each day we elect two presidents/vice presidents (one to govern the morning and the other to govern the afternoon). Each day, each president/vice president comes up with a law for the classroom to vote on. Our first law was the Big Playground Law where president Emily proposed extra time outside. The vote was unanimous and in no

time we were off climbing the structures and going down slides.

We then had the Puppy Law where we were encouraged by president Janee to go into the neighborhood to find cute puppies in a pet shop. When presented with the dilemma that the shops in walking distance mainly sold pet food and toys, Janee suggested we visit anyway in hopes that we might see one. The law was passed. We found a pet shop and as we were walking inside a puppy was walking out.

Though passed, the vote was not unanimous. Sophia voted no, which confused the other students. They encouraged her to stand up (a yes vote) for the proposed law but she stayed seated. In that moment, we spoke about being ok with someone

## CLASSROOM NEWS

not voting for what we want as well as the power in not succumbing to the pressure of others views even when you are the only one. The goal of this curriculum is to know that our voices/ideas/perspectives count. Sophia got it.

-Jada Brown & Kenisha Epps

### Room 109

As winter begins to settle in we are following the interests of the children by contemplating the changing seasons. This week we spent time with "The Mitten" by Jan Brett, a Ukranian folktale. The boy in the story loses a mitten, made by his grandmother, and animals use it for warmth before he finds it. Many animals burrow inside for warmth before the exciting end when the bear sneezes and everyone flies out. In between there is space for conversation about grandmothers, family, ways we care, being together, and all of those pesky cold weather clothes! There was a lot of interest in the animals in the story and the students created a mural with a big mitten and

many animals, and students acted out the story working on sequencing, voice, and how the smallest animal had a big impact! We excitedly heard Kathy's class had created a puppet show of the "The Mitten" with Caity. We visited on Tuesday to watch. We continue to talk about winter, and family, even as we look ahead to Ancient Greece by beginning to look at world maps.

-Deborah & Stephanie

### GRADES 1 & 2

#### Room 205

During the past couple of weeks the White Wolves have been working on how to use your voice. We have been exploring the different ways that we can use our voices and the different messages we can convey. We listened to the song *One Day* by Matisyahu and discussed the different messages being told through the lyrics of this song. Then we watched a dance called *Moving Forward* that had music without lyrics and discussed what message the dancers were conveying.



William holds Mew, another new member of Team Rocket.

Then the students chose a message that they wanted to convey and chose a form of voice to express their message. Students chose to express their messages through art, song, poems and dance. Some of the students messages were: love, never give up, strong, no more animal cruelty, and be nice to your friends. The students enjoyed making their projects and sharing them with each other.

-Nicole Miller, Student Teacher

#### Room 216

How do we welcome someone to our community in the middle of the year? The members of Team Rocket were so excited last Wednesday to learn that we would be getting a new student! Kyle joined our class on Thursday, and he has fit into our community seamlessly! Theo and Gabriel have enjoyed talking with Kyle about superheroes, and William D. and Natalia have been working hard with Kyle in preparation for our final set of trials. Like all of our students, Kyle was very excited when this Wednesday we welcomed a long anticipated addition to our commu-



Team Rocket welcomes Kyle to their classroom.

nity: our new classroom pet, Mew! Mew is a blond guinea pig, and he is only three weeks old! Mew was very nervous for the first day, spending most of his time shivering in his castle. Everyone was careful to be quiet around the cage and treat Mew with kindness. On the second day, Mew was much more friendly and even let students pick him up. William A. said "Ooh, I can feel his claws on my shirt!" Feel free to stop by Room 216 and pay Mew a visit!

*-Danny Flannery & JoAnn Hawkesworth*

### Room 217

The United Kates poets have been hard at work learning about acrostic, repeating and rhyming poems. I have been pleasantly surprised that students are excited and creative when writing poems. No one seems to be too worried that their poem won't be perfect or "good", instead they are writing with gusto. I wanted to share some poems that have been written so far.

*Reader  
Orange Rocks  
Math  
Exciting  
Oh so honest  
-by Romeo*

*Jump  
Awesome  
Music  
Eager  
Small  
-by James*

*The cat hit a bat  
And the ball hit the man who was fat  
And the rat bit the man who was fat  
But the rat went flat  
Because of where the man who was fat sat  
And the cat no longer hit bats*

*-by Julia*

*Family is kind  
Family is good  
Family is laughing  
Family is cooking  
Family is nice*

*-by Yediel  
-Kate Needham*

### GRADES 3 & 4

#### Rooms 203

December is always a time of reflection for me. It brings to an end our school-wide theme, report cards are being written and another calendar year is coming to a close. As I write this newsletter, I am knee-deep in report cards and thinking deeply about each one of J & J's Geniuses. What my reflections reveal is that they have all grown so much in the first four months of school! Academic levels have gone up, friendships have been built and fostered, artists have

blossomed, tempers have softened - a community of growing, caring learners has been building up around me day by day. There are many things I haven't noticed but as I stop to reflect on each one of them, the community we have built becomes more visible.

It inspires me to keep planning, keep moving forward, and to keep working toward growing every child in all the places they need. Speaking of working....back to those reports!

*-Jenerra Williams & Ji Yun Park*

#### Room 204

Stay tuned in the new year!

*-Cleata & Mayra*

#### Room 207

Last week ended the fourth graders' time at Urban Improv. While each of them had fun every week, they also learned many things. Here are their responses to "What did you learn from Urban Improv?"



*Fourth graders finish up their trimester with Urban Improv.*

I learned...

**Adler**-That you should use your imagination.

**Amos**-That controlling your feelings is really important in life.

**Anand**-There is more than one way to solve things if you are mad.

**Anna**-How important acting is in my life.

**Arlis**-That you don't have to fight back.

**Braxton**-That controlling your anger can change things.

**Brian**-To be patient with other classmates.

**Chani**-That sometimes things don't go your way. And you shouldn't hit people or hurt their feelings.

**Euan**-To think before you act.

**Dillon**-That acting can be really fun.

**Gianna**-How to make a change. How to open my mind about things. Before I get into trouble, I think.

**Jahlimar**-That sometimes life is unfair.

**Kevauna**-About music.

**Keysha**-That if you listen to them (The Urban Improv Troop) that bad things can get much better.

**Kimberly**-To be kind to your family.

**Lenardo**-To be kind.

**Liam**-That that you shouldn't try to be like everyone else or do what everyone else is doing because you might get hurt.

**Lucas**-That family doesn't just mean you are related.

**Luis**-That I like playing the piano.

**Maurice**-That if someone makes you mad you don't interact with them.

**Maya**-That their scenes taught me to be nicer to people.

**Michelle**-That acting is pretty hard.

**Nate**-That you should use your head and not physical force.

**Noah**-That it's a lot better to use your words and not your fists.

**Peter**-New ways to figure out problems.

**Rui**-That my body feels calm after Urban Improv.

**Simi**-How to express my feelings better.

**Typrese**-That the songs taught me to enjoy your life.

**Xavier**-How to play music.

-Amina Michel-Lord & Amanda McCarthy

### GRADES 5&6

#### Room 210

I love football a lot. I play it every chance I get at school AND home. I never thought I'd see myself playing football but I am now. I started playing last year when we had electives. Manny showed all the girls a video of other teenage girls playing football, so Giselle, Dalia, and I signed up for it. Manny said it was called "Girls Flag Football" and it was only for girls. Also, that was one of the reasons why I wanted to do it since it was only going to be girls. When we started playing I wasn't there half the time. But then I started being there a lot more and had so much fun. I learned to catch, throw, and everything. The two 5th and 6th grade classes came together and made a time for us to have movement. Movement is for us to be able to move our bodies before we start our day of learning. After the whole break and school came back around, I wanted to play football EVERY movement time we had. So that's exactly what I did. Dalia, Richelle, and I played and started to play with the boys. I got touchdowns and felt great about it. Ever since last year when Manny and Nakia showed us that elective, I thanked them almost every chance I could. Now I knew and I learned that

you CAN do what you want even if some people think GIRLS can't play.  
-Josmarie Mercado, student in the 5xation class



Images of happiness from the Firefly classroom.

### Room 215

Is it enough to be told, “be happy?” Yes. No. It is unusual that a school expects students to be happy. The pursuit of academic achievement precludes the pursuit of happiness. I have attended too many graduations where speakers brag about how they’ve slogged to make it; how their education has eschewed joy, delight, happiness. Yes, it is important to be reminded to be happy at school. No, it is more important to set up to be happy learning, and to practice and assess actions that make one happy. The DragonFlies spent one day last week identifying 5 actions that would make them happy and acting on them - not thinking about them but acting on them. If drawing makes you happy, when will you make time today to draw? Playing with friends makes you happy? Write down a time when you will play with friends. During the winter break, tell each other to be happy and do things that make you happy. Take turns making each other happy, and tell each other, be happy.

Happy winter break,  
-*DragonFlies, Kat, Carlos & Abdi*

### GRADES 7&8

#### Room 213

As part of our theme studies, kids chose an issue discussed during the presidential campaign to research. Topics chosen include: immigration, wage and economic inequality, gun control, gender equity, Black Lives Matter, health care, inequity in the justice system, and poverty.

There are a number of requirements for our final project. Writing a letter

to the new president is one that kids have balked at a bit. They have wondered how they would write to someone who has said mean things about them and people they care about. Bryan started his first draft this week and showed us all how it is possible to use our voices to communicate respectfully, even with those we disagree the most. **Here are excerpts from Bryan’s letter.**

“Hello, Mr.Trump, my name Is Bryan and I’m in the 7th grade at Mission Hill School in Boston. I am from the Dominican Republic. My research issue topic is Black Lives Matter and my personal connection is I have some friends and family that have been treated unfairly by police.... Black Lives Matter is a movement that started ....

What I learned from my research is that police are treating innocent black and Latino people like they don’t matter. I said Latino people too because they are getting treated the same way as the black people. For example, ...

What can you do to makes things better? I know you said a lot of things that a lot of people disagree with but you can try to make things better by saying to the police to treat everybody the same way. Thank you, Mr.Trump, for reading my letter. How will I continue fighting for a change? I will keep sending letters to people that have the ability to change major issues.”

-*Ann Ruggiero, Elsa Batista & Letta Neely*

#### Room 214

The first term is almost over. It’s time to reflect on the highs and lows of

the first few months of the school year. I have the luxury of writing report cards for my students. It also provides an opportunity to review, reflect and evaluate. What did we do well? What was exciting? Where did we fall short? Students will also have opportunities to reflect on their progress and growth during the first term. When appropriate, I incorporate their reflection into the reports. Nothing in there should be a surprise to students and their families.

The best part of this process is that it allows all of us, teachers and students to think about what we need to do better next term. It’s great that the break coincides the beginning of the new term. We’ll have a chance to exhale and begin new.

-*Reginald Toussaint & Frances Pearce*



*Ayan is a ballet princess and Soley dressed as Medusa for Dress Like Your Favorite Book Character Day.*

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

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