



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Monday, January 16, 2017
Dr. MLK Jr. Day: NO SCHOOL
- Thursday, January 19, 2017, 6-7:00 pm
Urban Improv Family Workshop @ MHS (see flyer)
- Friday, January 20, 2017 9:15-10:15
Family Morning Reading/Pajama Day! (see flyer)
- February 9&10, 2017
Family Conferences (contact your child's teacher for more information)

January 13, 2017

Volume 20, Issue 13

Student-to-Student Voice

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

A forum for student voices to be heard school wide was the purpose of a town hall meeting held in December at MHS. Students came prepared with comments, thoughts and questions to share with their school mates. Amanda and Amina's students volunteered to make sure every student made it to the stage, where they addressed us all. I know some of our teachers read the school newsletter to their students and some caregivers do as well, so I thought our school newsletter would be a good vehicle for our students to revisit what their schoolmates had to say. What follows are our student words shared at the town hall meeting on December 16. Many thanks to all our student leaders that contributed, including those who typed the comments to share with you.

"I want people to be kind. It would be helpful. So please be kind."

"I see lots of fake tasers, swords, and mostly guns. What I want to do is stop all of this fake weapons STOP!"

"Don't play with food or waste food."

"No more arguing because you can get hurt."

"Hello my name is Amos and I'm going to read my speech. I think we should spread kindness. I care about this because I have seen the opposite of kindness-bullying-and I want it to stop. Some examples for kindness are help out, stop fights from happening, or break up fights if they are happening. I also think we should control our bodies and feelings. It'll spread kindness, trust me."

"For those of you who don't know I'm Dillon. Many classrooms are currently working to stop bullying and spread kindness. I think this is a good thing because I have seen many displays of kindness recently. I have also unfortunately heard way too much inappropriate language around our school. We all have to stop these things. Our school is a great one. But there is always something to improve. And we have improved. This year we introduced Restorative Justice to our school. It's been a success. And that is just one example of how we improved."

"We should be kind and not mean." (Bucket filler poem was read).

"I know that there have been some hard things happening of the U.S of A lately, but we don't have to let them affect our school. "When they go low we go high", said Michelle Obama. "Now we have more work to do", said some other person from politics. Don't let U.S politics affect our school life. Thank You." -Anna Mahnke.

"Hi my name is Euan. I think our community should work together and be kind to each other and friends with each other. If we become great friends then you and everyone else in our school will love and help and have a good year. We should stop saying curse words and say good words. Me and others say you don't have to love people but you have to respect them. Thank you."

be helpful	Kind words
listen to each other	Play nicely
Respect	Restorative Justice
Spread kindness	Work together

Words from the brainstorming session preceding the first MHS Town Hall Meeting.

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

The Dinosaurs, including our friend June who has been with us all week, are focusing on keeping ourselves healthy. We are learning how to sneeze and how to cough without sharing our germs. We continue to read the book, *Germs Are Not for Sharing*, written by Elizabeth Verdick. Because we don't want to share each other's germs, we sneeze into a tissue, cough into our sleeve and wash, wash, wash our hands. We practice singing our ABC's as we wash our hands and we are also learning two new songs about how to cough and sneeze. Here are the words to the shorter song (sung to the tune of Mary Had a Little Lamb): When you have to cough or sneeze, cough or sneeze, cough or sneeze, When you have to cough or sneeze, Cover your mouth please. We are encouraging the Dinosaurs to practice coughing into their sleeves, sneezing into tissues and washing their hands frequently at school and at home so that we may stay healthy and active. If you have any questions regarding when to keep a sick child home, please contact Nurse Georgie.

-Donna & June

Room 106

The creation of an agora is underway in The Butterflies Class. Children cleared the block area to make a replica of an Ancient Greek agora. James asked, "Do you have any pictures?" I shared with James that I did not have any photographs, as cameras were not yet invented in the time of Ancient Greece. I then pulled out some drawings I had and the children worked collaboratively to build the site.

Lola said, "Can I get some paper? I want to make some money." I replied, "Would you like use a book to research the kinds of money they had?" Together we looked through the books. She found a page with pictures of gold coins. Each coin had a different symbol. We discovered that gold was a popular color in Ancient Greece. We also learned that some of the columns on building were painted gold too.

As we continue to read the book, *Megan in Ancient Greece*, we learn about life back then. Olives, grapes, pears, figs, fish, chickens, and pigs were all available in Athens. We have also learned that urns for water and baskets were items used in daily life.
-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

Welcome back families! We are happy to hear that many of our students had a safe and eventful winter break. Several students shared about their



Lola making ancient Greek coins.

time spent with family while another brought evidence of her journey to Washington to see the White House and other government agencies. With the inauguration of our new president quickly approaching, the Working Presidents took the time last week to think about what they wanted to say to our current president before he leaves office. They drew pictures and wrote the following messages.

Dear president Barack Obama, I hope you had a good time being president. I hope you have a good year.

Dear president Obama, Thank you president. I really, really like you as president. I really want you to stay president. I really want to see you and I love God. Barack Obama is my dad.

Dear president Barack Obama, I wish I could be vice president.

Dear president Barack Obama, I wish I could be president.

Dear president Barack Obama, I want to hug you. I want to go to the White House and make you happy.

Dear president Barack Obama, I hope you had a good Christmas.

Dear president Barack Obama, I am G'Mauree Lewis. I wish you were here with your friends. I wish I can bring my friends too.

-Jada Brown & Kenisha Epps

Room 109

During these first few days, back from December break, we are focused on settling back into our classroom routines. We've practiced playing together at centers, taking turns in our circle time, remembering our classroom agreements and rules, and excitedly going through our day. This

week we introduced Classroom Journals and began to sound out words to accompany our pictures. There is a broad range of where students are with their writing. Some are familiar with sounding out words, for some it is new, some are not quite ready, and some are already experts.

For our literacy workshop we have had “name day”: children practiced writing their names using playdough, whiteboards, magnet letters, and paper. Some students practice all uppercase letters and some practice lowercase letters. This is a fun way to remember the reading workshop routines. Reading workshop is a short time each morning when we practice letters, reading groups, sight words, or letter sounds before beginning project time. We had our first talks about Ancient Greece and are ready to focus on our new theme next week!

-Deborah & Stephanie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

We have started to talk about the difference between goals and intentions. Goals are something specific we can work towards achieving and intentions are more like ways to live our everyday life or how we behave in a moment of the day. By thinking about and setting our intentions we continue to foster a strong community. Building community is not just meant for the first few weeks of school, it takes continued work to strengthen it, just like any relationship. By living out our intentions we create a community that matches our values. Values are the things that are important to us. Students mentioned these as values: kindness, being helpful, hard-working, education,

fun, interesting activities, safety, forgivingness, peacefulness. From our values, students created intentions.

Here are some of their intentions:

Geneva: to be considerate, for example listening to friends

Eamon: to work hard, for example writing my best

Arianni: to be kind to friends, for example help people

Kaia: I intend to be kind and work hard, for example I will listen to others and concentrate or focus on reading

Nathaniel: I intend to always be nice to people in need, for example if they have been hurt or sad

Raymond: to be good, for example I won't talk at meeting

Soley: I intend to get along with other students, for example letting go of an argument if someone is disagreeing with me

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 216

With a new term upon us, I took time over the break to reevaluate our practices in Room 216. One change I decided to make was in our morning choices; the entire year so far students have come in and worked on drawing, puzzles, math games, writing, and reading. I decided to change puzzles to clay so that students could have more time to practice sculpting and building with clay, which will be helpful as we study Ancient Greece. Taking the place of math



Julia, Mia, and Wren's map of room 217.

games on Wednesday mornings is a new activity called World News! I noticed quickly how interested all of the students are in learning about the many unknown countries on our world map. We set a goal to label every country once we know something about it, and so every Wednesday morning, students will read and reflect on news stories connected to countries around the world. They will learn new information, make connections, ask questions, and find out what they love about the world around us. In our first week of World News we have already added Japan, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Brazil, Taiwan, China, Trinidad & Tobago, Russia, Turkey, and Madagascar to our world map! Come by and share what you know about the countries of the world!

-Danny Flannery & JoAnn Hawkesworth

Room 217

Students in 217 are learning to be cartographers. Our first task was to work in groups to create maps of the classroom. Students learn best by creating from their own understanding from their own experiences. Starting with a student created map of the room before talking about a map of the world suits children developmentally. Starting from their own sense of “place” lets kids understand where they are and what symbols are trying to represent. We looked at a huge map of Boston to find our school, our homes, and where our families work. We are learning the difference between cities, states, countries, and continents. This work will lead us into our study of Ancient Greece.

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4



2017 MHS Mid-Year Staff Retreat.

Rooms 203

Stay tuned next week!

-Jenerra Williams & Ji Yun Park

Room 204

Room 204 has been journeying to the past with our current focus on Ancient Greece. The Nerds have brainstormed many ideas about what they know about Ancient Greece and what they would like to learn about Ancient Greece. Greek myths, architecture, Greek lives and war were some area of interests. In class, the Nerd Squad have been having a blast reading Greek Myths, such as Medusa and Athena, Arachne the Weaver, and Daedalus and Icarus. Some students are creating their own myths as well, using the characteristics of myths that we’ve discussed in class (gods/goddesses, magic, lessons, etc). Adam has been creating a myth where his protagonist, Lusiis, decides he wants to take part in an opera and

asks his father (the king) for permission. Adler, on the other hand, figured that he could imagine a myth in his favorite setting of Star Wars. The amount of ingenuity and creativity from our Nerd Squad is fantastic!

-Ryan Young, Student Teacher with Cleata & Mayra

Room 207

As I sat down to write this week’s article I came across this piece in my archives. It expresses my feelings about the important work MHS staff do three times a year when we meet for our Staff Retreats and captures the work staff did last weekend.

“Toward these ends, our community must be prepared to spend time—even when it might seem wasteful—hearing each other out. We must deal with each other in ways that lead us to feel stronger and more loved, not weaker and less lovable. We must

expect the most from everyone, hold all to the highest standards, but also respect our different ways of exhibiting excellence.”

The above is an excerpt from the Mission Hill School Mission Statement. This past weekend we put those words into action. Staff members gathered for our Winter Retreat in Essex, MA to examine our school. Agreements were made and disagreements hashed out. There were tender moments as well as difficult ones. We reflected on things that have gone well thus far and made adjustments to things we believe need to improve. When our meeting was done on Saturday evening, we had a tasty meal and enjoyed each other’s company talking and playing games. After a good night’s rest we gathered again to continue our important work.

This is time-consuming yet critical work that must be done. I consider it a privilege to be part of a dedicated group who willingly come together three times a year, outside of our school week to tackle ideas big and small related to our beloved school.

-Amina Michel-Lord & Amanda McCarthy

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

Stay tuned next week!

Room 215

Hello Mission Hill. After the vacation Abdi’s 5th and 6th graders had a community building conversation and went over the goals, actions, and practices. After we worked on finishing Part 1 of the novel, Wonder, we started Part 2 on Monday. Before we read Part 2 we read a quote and talked about what we thought it meant. We did book discussions

about it and read-alouds. To read aloud, we took turns for each paragraph to read the story to the whole class. We also started a new art theme and we did silhouettes and we all put our own Zodiac symbol in the center. In Science class, we walked to the Arboretum with Andrew MacBlane from the Boston Nature Center, and observed ecosystems. By acting like green growing plants and trees and critters around us and how they might get destroyed, we learned how different living things depend on each other. Those are some of the things we have been doing since vacation.

-Laylah & Melissa, *The Dragon Flies*

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

The new term has started and we are busier than ever. Academic Support continues before and after school on Wednesday, 8 – 9 am and 3:30 – 4:30 pm. The 7th graders started Urban Improv this week, and will continue each Friday for nine weeks. The 8th graders are working to complete high school applications with deadlines in the next two weeks. Then the long wait begins with high school assignments not released until March/April. Some 7th and 8th graders started the CHILL snowboarding program this week and will spend Thursday afterschool/evening at Wachusett Mountain! And excitement is really building for our Farm School trip in February the week before February vacation.

Family conference appointments were mailed with report cards. If you need to re-schedule, please call the office. Thank you!

-Ann Ruggiero, Elsa Batista & Letta Neely

Room 214

I usually introduce an assignment by saying, “Now it’s time to show me what you understand.” I don’t give tests and quizzes often in history class, but at the end of each unit of study, I provide students with opportunities to show me what they understand. Lately, they have been more and more creative about how their choices for how to demonstrate what they know. Most importantly, they have had to extend their learning while creating the projects.

Currently, the 8th grade class is working on projects about the Cotton Gin. A few students have chosen to extend their research and write about their findings. However, the majority of the class has chosen to demonstrate their understanding in more creative ways. Their projects include building models of the cotton gin, writing a play about the impact of the cotton gin, writing historical fiction essays and researching modern production and uses of cotton.

I am really pleased with the work I have seen so far, I can’t wait to for the final product.

-Reginald Toussaint & Frances Pearce



Greek Zodiac image by Jorge.

CLASSROOM NEWS

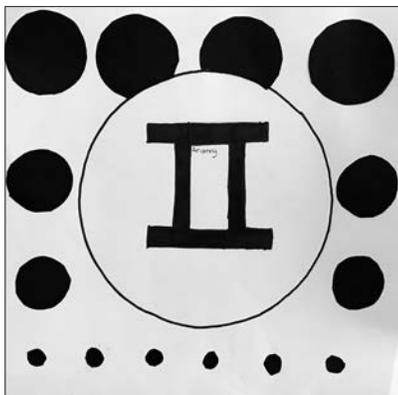
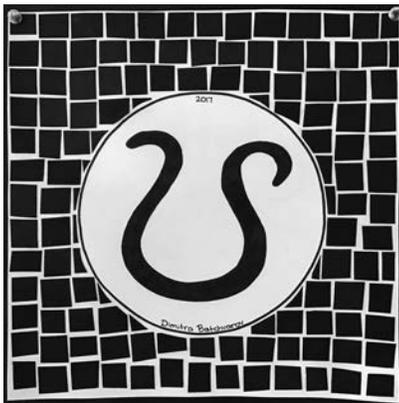
SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Family Council

Thank you to all who attended last night's meeting. We will be posting the meeting minutes in next week's newsletter. Please contact us at familycouncil@missionhillschool.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Urban Improv Family Workshop

All families are welcome to join the folks from Urban Improv next week, as they host a Family Workshop at MHS. Discuss parenting challenges and practice communicating with your children about difficult issues in their lives, using improvisational theatre techniques! Thursday, 1/19/17 from 6-7 pm. Childcare and dinner will be provided-please RSVP to Amina at amichellord@missionhillschool.org.



Greek Zodiac images by Didi and Arianny.

Welcome, Samantha!

My name is Samantha Sencer-Mura and I am Ayla's Principal Intern for the rest of the school year. I am currently a Masters student in the School Leadership Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Prior to this year, I worked as a teacher and Community Programs director at a Middle School in Oakland, CA. I am very interested in the principles of Democratic Schools and I completed my internship last semester at Boston Arts Academy. I feel very privileged to be a part of the Mission Hill community for the rest of the year and I am excited to learn with you all. If you have any projects or initiatives you would like support on, please let me know. I will be at Mission Hill on Tuesdays, Fridays and some Mondays. I will also be popping into classrooms over the next few weeks to get to know you and the students, so I hope to see you all soon!



Samantha Sencer-Mura, our new Principal Intern from Harvard.

News from the Art Room

We entered into the Ancient Greek theme study with a continued focus on signs and symbols. Grades 5-8 are making artwork inspired by the Greek zodiac. First, students researched the symbol and meaning of each of the twelve groups of constellations, then chose one to draw with black marker and then add to a background of patterned paper mosaic. Grades 1-4 are creating books based on Greek myths. Kindergarteners are also making books based on Aesop's fables.



Books based on Greek Myths, by Simi, Sophia, Emile, and Noah.



Greek Zodiac image by Brianna.

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

Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School
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It's Family Reading Morning ...and Pajama Day!

Come join us and begin your day reading...in your pajamas! Whether you bring your favorite book or snuggle up with one from our collections, we look forward to sharing this special time with you! If your child attends the before school program, reading will begin at 8:00 a.m. in the cafeteria. If your child arrives at 9:15, reading will happen in classrooms. Please consider joining us for this event as well as our weekly Friday Share beginning at 9:40 a.m. in the auditorium.

When: January 20, 2017

Where: Cafeteria and Classrooms

Time: 9:15-10:15



Can you think of a better way to start your day?



¡Es la Mañana de Lectura Familia ...y Día de Pijamas!

¡ Acompañarnos y comienzan su día leyendo en sus pijamas! ¡Si trae su libro favorito o se arrime con uno de nuestras colecciones, Queremos compartir este tiempo especial con usted! Si su hijo(a) asiste el programa antes de la escuela, la lectura comenzará a las 8:00 am en la cafetería. Si su hijo llega a las 9:15, la lectura será dirigida en el salón. Por favor, considere acompañándonos para este evento, y también nuestro Compartiendo Viernes semanales comenzando a las 9:40 am en el auditorio.

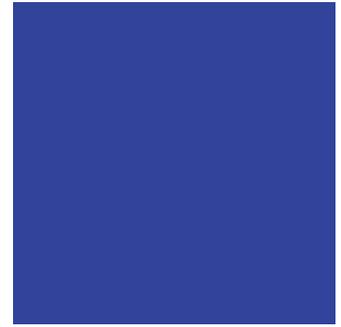
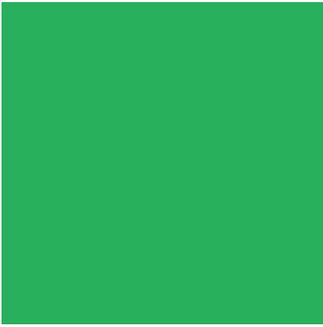
Quando: El 20 de enero de 2017

Donde: Cafetería y Salones

Tiempo: 8:00-9:30



Pensarías en una mejor manera de comenzar su día?



URBAN IMPROV PARENT WORKSHOP



Discuss parenting challenges and practice communicating with your children about difficult issues in their lives.

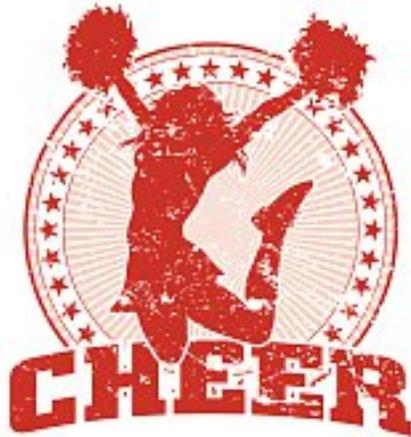
**MISSION HILL SCHOOL
THURSDAY, JANUARY 19
6:00-7:00pm**



**PIZZA DINNER &
CHILD CARE PROVIDED**

****RSVP to Amina Michel-Lord at amichellord@missionhillschool.org****

Mission Hill's Cheerleading Squad Information Meeting



If you are interested in getting more information and or joining the first ever Mission Hill Cheerleading Squad, please join our first meeting.

Date: Thursday, January 19, 2017

Time: 1:05pm

Location: Small Room in the Cafeteria

If you have any questions see Laylah in room 215.