



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Friday, March 24, 9:45-10:15 pm
Friday Share: Abdi, Cleata, GERALYN, & Kathy
- Thursday, March 30, 9:15-10 am
Ancient Greece Curriculum Breakfast
- Thursday, April 6, 5:30-7 pm
Family Council Meeting at MHS
- Friday, April 14, 2017
Good Friday: NO SCHOOL
- April 17-21, 2017
April Vacation Week: NO SCHOOL

March 17, 2017

Volume 20, Issue 20

Invitation to Bully Talk and Article Discussion

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

This week's news cover is long, but please bear with me. I'd really like you to read the letter below. It's a great read and preparation for a special night we are having soon. A behavior specialist, Henry Oppong, who works with our school suggested coming in to speak with parents and caregivers about bullying-- a great idea. Bullying is a word that means different things to different people. It's helpful to know what it is and how to respond. He will be here on Tuesday, March 28 from 6:00 to 7:00pm to lead us in learning. If you can, please arrive at 5:45 for a brief discussion of Amy Murray's letter below. Child care will be provided.

About *THAT kid (the one who hits, disrupts and influences YOUR kid)* By Valerie Strauss November 14, 2014. Amy Murray is the director of early childhood education at the Calgary French & International School in Canada. The following post, which appeared on her blog, Miss Night's Marbles and which I am republishing with her permission, is a powerful open letter directed to parents about THAT kid, the one other kids go home and talk about, the one who is violent, curses and gets angry in class, the one who parents worry will hurt, disrupt and perhaps influence their own children.

Dear Parent:

I know. You're worried. Every day, your child comes home with a story about THAT kid. The one who is always hitting, shoving, pinching, scratching, maybe even biting other children. The one who always has to hold my hand in the hallway. The one who has a special spot at the carpet, and sometimes sits on a chair rather than the floor. The one who had to leave the block center because blocks are not for throwing. The one who climbed over the playground fence right exactly as I was telling her to stop. The one who poured his neighbor's milk onto the floor in a fit of anger. On purpose. While I was watching. And then, when I asked him to clean it up, emptied the ENTIRE paper towel dispenser. On purpose. While I was watching. The one who dropped the REAL ACTUAL F-word in gym class. You're worried that THAT child is detracting from your child's learning experience. You're worried that he takes up too much of my time and energy, and that your child won't get his fair share. You're worried that she is really going to hurt someone some day. You're worried that "someone" might be your child. You're worried that your child is going to start using aggression to get what she wants. You're worried your child is going to fall behind academically because I might not notice that he is struggling to hold a pencil. I know. Your child, this year, in this classroom, at this age, is not THAT child. Your child is not perfect, but she generally follows rules. He is able to share toys peacefully. She does not throw furniture. He raises his hand to speak. She works when it is time to work, and plays when it is time to play. He can be trusted to go straight to the bathroom and straight back again with no shenanigans. She thinks that the S-word is "stupid" and the C-word is "crap." I know. I know, and I am worried, too. You see, I worry all the time. About ALL of them. I worry about your child's pencil grip, and another child's letter sounds, and that little tiny one's shyness, and that other one's chronically empty lunchbox. I worry that Gavin's coat is not warm enough, and that Talitha's dad yells at her for printing the letter B backwards. Most of my car rides and showers

(Continued on page 2)

are consumed with the worrying. But I know, you want to talk about THAT child. Because Talitha's backward B's are not going to give your child a black eye. I want to talk about THAT child, too, but there are so many things I can't tell you. I can't tell you that she was adopted from an orphanage at 18 months. I can't tell you that he is on an elimination diet for possible food allergies, and that he is therefore hungry ALL. THE. TIME. I can't tell you that her parents are in the middle of a horrendous divorce, and she has been staying with her grandma. I can't tell you that I'm starting to worry that grandma drinks... I can't tell you that his asthma medication makes him agitated. I can't tell you that her mom is a single parent, and so she (the child) is at school from the moment before-care opens, until the moment after-care closes, and then the drive between home and school takes 40 minutes, and so she (the child) is getting less sleep than most adults. I can't tell you that he has been a witness to domestic violence. That's okay, you say. You understand I can't share personal or family information. You just want to know what I am DOING about That Child's behaviour. I would love to tell you. But I can't. I can't tell you that she receives speech-language services, that an assessment showed a severe language delay, and that the therapist feels the aggression is linked to frustration about being unable to communicate. I can't tell you that I meet with his parents EVERY week, and that both of them usually cry at those meetings. I can't tell you that the child and I have a secret hand signal to tell me when she needs to sit by herself for a while. I can't tell you that he spends rest time curled in my lap because "it makes me feel better to hear your heart, Teacher." I can't tell you that I have been meticulously tracking her aggressive incidents for 3 months, and that she has dropped from 5 incidents a day, to 5 incidents a week. I can't tell you that the school secretary has agreed that I can send him to the office to "help" when I can tell he needs a change of scenery. I can't tell you that I have stood up in a staff meeting and, with tears in my eyes, BEGGED my colleagues to keep an extra close eye on her, to be kind to her even when they are frustrated that she just punched someone AGAIN, and this time, RIGHT IN FRONT OF A TEACHER. The thing is, there are SO MANY THINGS I can't tell you about That Child. I can't even tell you the good stuff. I can't tell you that his classroom job is to water the plants, and that he cried with heartbreak when one of the plants died over winter break. I can't tell you that she kisses her baby sister goodbye every morning, and whispers "You are my sunshine" before mom pushes the stroller away. I can't tell you that he knows more about thunderstorms than most meteorologists. I can't tell you that she often asks to help sharpen the pencils during playtime. I can't tell you that she strokes her best friend's hair at rest time. I can't tell you that when a classmate is crying, he rushes over with his favorite stuffy from the story corner. The thing is, dear parent, that I can only talk to you about YOUR child. So, what I can tell you is this: If ever, at any point, YOUR child, or any of your children, becomes THAT child... I will not share your personal family business with other parents in the classroom. I will communicate with you frequently, clearly, and kindly. I will make sure there are tissues nearby at all our meetings, and if you let me, I will hold your hand when you cry. I will advocate for your child and family to receive the highest quality of specialist services, and I will cooperate with those professionals to the fullest possible extent. I will make sure your child gets extra love and affection when she needs it most. I will be a voice for your child in our school community. I will, no matter what happens, continue to look for, and to find, the good, amazing, special, and wonderful things about your child. I will remind him and YOU of those good amazing special wonderful things, over and over again. And when another parent comes to me, with concerns about YOUR child... I will tell them all of this, all over again.

With so much love,
Teacher

Thank you for taking the time to read. I hope to see many of our families on March 28th.



KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

“Help me! Help me!” cried the Lion. The Mouse heard the pleas and scurried over. “Chew, chew, chew!” the mouse said, as she released the Lion from the net.

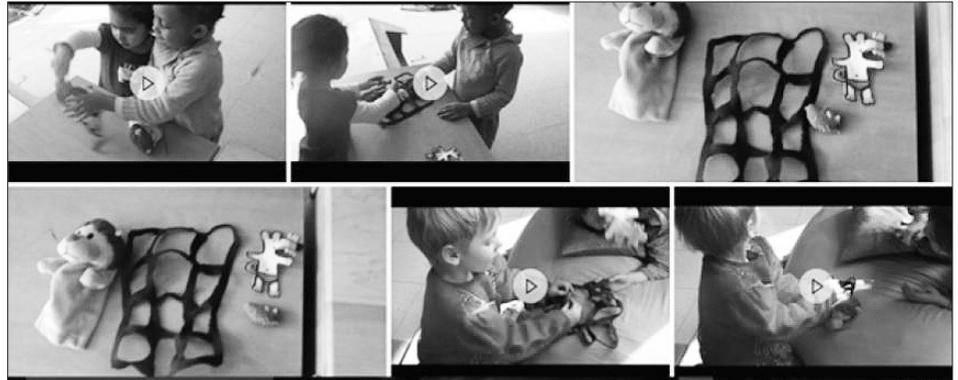
I watched this version of The Lion and The Mouse unfold, as Marissa and Naomi played on a recent afternoon. Marissa had chosen the lion puppet and Naomi had chosen one of our felt mice. A net made of felt was a vital prop. These days, there are many versions of The Lion and The Mouse being crafted and shared in Room 108. Some versions include a hunter as one of the characters, some versions are told by pairs of students, and some versions have a sole storyteller (who plays all the parts). No two versions are exactly the same! We are getting ready to share some of these stories at our curriculum breakfast on March 30th. Hope to see you then!

-Geraldyn and Donna

Room 106

Snow, snow, and more snow. We started this week strong. Children continued practicing their Lion and the Mouse play. Last week many students practiced it for our class and another class in the school. They then incorporated the feedback. One student was shy during her performance. An audience member shared with her that she might have something called stage fright. He told her that one way to help it go away was to keep practicing the play in front of people. She did just that, and when I asked her if the suggestion helped she shared that it did.

The children have listened to the comments others have shared. You



The making of the Lion and the Mouse in rom 108.

can also see this in their third draft of the documentation panels of Ancient Greece. Simeon drew a urn. His third draft had many more details and looked similar to the urns of Ancient Greece. He beamed with pride as we added it to the wall. Danae drew about the clothes of Ancient Greece. She shared what she wanted to draw, what size and how many pieces of paper she needed, and how she wanted it mounted. As children completed their third drafts, I become their framer. They shared ideas and I helped them actualize it.

Field trip dates to note : 4/27/17, 5/8/17, 5/18/17, and 5/23/17

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

In connection to the upcoming Olympics, we have begun to talk more extensively about measurement. On one recent occasion I asked, “If I wanted to know how long or tall something is, how could I find out?” “Measure it!” one student responded. The rest agreed. “But how?,” I asked. “My daddy has a long tape you can use.” I took out an example of the measuring tape I have on my keys. “Yeah, but my dad’s is bigger!” As we continued the conversation, we explored the different ways and tools that can be used to measure and how to make sure it is accurate. One

important thing we learned was that when measuring, you cannot leave spaces between your tools. We then decided to measure the balance beam from our mini-Greek classroom gym with foot lengths. Counting aloud together (heel-to-toe) we agreed that it was ____ of my feet long. Students were eager to try it out and as they did, we kept recording different numbers. A few students were puzzled and so I asked the question, “Why are we getting different numbers.” After a few guesses came the answer, “We have different sized feet.” Measurement will come in handy when figuring out the distances of events like the long jump, discus and javelin. Stay tuned.

-Jada Brown & Kenisha Epps

Room 109

Coming next week...

-Deborah & Stephanie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

Over the last few weeks, students have been studying Ancient Greece. The students of room 205 were split into research groups based on their interests and what they wanted to learn about Ancient Greece. Groups conducted research on food, art, architecture, and games and toys. As groups concluded their research,

their task was to create an object or presentation to show all they have learned about their specific topics. Each student worked very hard and showed extraordinary creativity creating their projects. Currently, every student is in the process of showing their project to a peer in another class, and another teacher or faculty member to seek feedback on their work. Some examples include; models of temples, paper mache vases and masks, student written and directed plays, and replicas of Ancient Greek games.

-Lauren Walton, Student Teacher

Room 216

About a month ago I began inviting my students up for lunch in groups of three and four, with the goal of getting to know them better in a smaller group setting. I know from personal experience that sometimes a smaller group can encourage students who are more quiet to contribute to a discussion, and I have been very happy to gain greater insight on who my students are as people. Here are some of the things that I learned from our lunch groups:

Milan and Neli both have baby sisters.

Darby collects Pokémon cards.

Theo had a lot of fun on his recent trip to Disneyworld.

Josie used to crawl backwards as a baby.

Nico, Théo, William A., and William D. can literally spend half an hour telling jokes without any of them getting the least bit bored.

With the arrival this week of our new student Abel, I look forward to having him join our lunch groups and learning more about our new member of Team Rocket!

-Danny & JoAnn

Room 217

Room 217 has begun to take our re-written Greek plays and turn them into plays. Students are so excited to show friends and families the Greek myths they have learned by acting them out. Students are creating costumes out of bright colored cloths tied around them, and props out of construction paper and found objects. They chose their favorite stories to act out in small groups. Right now, students plan to act out the stories of Io, the creation of the first man, Heracles, Pygmalion, Echo, and Pandora. Each play is being written and created by the students. We will send out invitations to our play soon!

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 203

All of the third and fourth graders are in the process of writing Greek myths. We have been working on them for a while now and in Room 203 we are getting closer to a finished product. J & J's Geniuses are working hard and are in different phases of writing. Some are still writing their first drafts. Some have begun the editing stage. Still others are typing them and doing final revisions.

Last week our authors finished the covers to their books with Jeanne in the art room and they look great! We also began to do illustrations that will accompany their text. Students are really excited and into their myths! When it's time for working on them there is never a complaint. In fact, there was a day last week when Typrese couldn't work on his and he said, "Aw man! I really wanted to do that today!"

We all share Typrese's excitement about myth writing and can't wait



Portrait of Athena, by Skye.

to share our finished product at our upcoming Ancient Greece Curriculum Breakfast, Thursday, March 30th at 9:15AM. See you there!

-Jenerra Williams

Room 204

On the days when school wasn't cancelled because of snow, the Nerd Squad were hard at work with their Greek Expert Groups. As the Ancient Greece unit draws to a close, students are working on final projects as a culmination of all they have learned. In the food group, we have been cooking and researching different Greek foods (as well as tasting). Brian helped to prepare a delicious chicken pita wrap with a tzatziki sauce. Architecture students are building various types of pillars in order to transform a classroom to Ancient Greek standards. In culture, there are several student sub-sections of theatre (who are creating a play), Olympics (making posters about the Olympics and Olympic torches),

CLASSROOM NEWS

clothing (making their own togas), and war (creating models of the Trojan Horse). The science and medicine group are creating non-fiction books about subjects of their choosing; Kenneth decided to write about disease, while Nate chose to study olive oil. We're looking forward to seeing the completed projects that our Nerd Squad create!

-Ryan Young, Cleata Brown & Mayra Rivera

Room 207

Three times a week all three 3rd and 4th grade classes mix up into our Ancient Greek expert groups. Each teacher hosts a group, and my focus is on food.

We started by exploring various foods that Ancient Greeks ate- pomegranates, olives, apples with cinnamon and honey, pears and almonds. Soon after, we began cooking. Our first recipe was Loukoumades- Greek donuts. They were SO easy to make and DELICIOUS! Most recently we made Greek chicken pita sandwiches with homemade Tzatziki sauce. Those were pretty yummy too!

After each of our cooking and eating experiences we take time to reflect on the food we learned about, cooked and ate. In these reflections children write about the significance of the food to the Ancient Greeks, what the food tasted like, how we prepared it and if we liked it or not.

When we are done with this theme, the plan is to combine the recipes and reflections together to make a cookbook. We will share our cookbook with the entire 3-4 learning community in hopes that families will make some of the recipes we made. καλή όρεξη (Enjoy your meal).

-Amina & Amanda-Amanda & Amina



Greek donuts, called Loukoumades, made by grade 3/4 cooking experts.

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

Enjoy the photos of students playing in the snow.

-Nakia & Manny

Room 215

Our formal exploration of mindfulness began on Thursday afternoon with Betsy Caruso. The DragonFlies stretched out on the rug and benches, comforted by the familiarity of the language, "breath," "calm," a Tibetan bell; the familiar repertoires of being together to learn. "Mindfulness is the ability to know what's happening in your head at any given moment without getting carried away by it," said Dan Harris, of ABC News, in an animated video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4>). Harris argues that mindfulness and meditation are the next public health revolution, just as physical exercise was the rage in 1980s. Betsy walked us through short, meaningful listening exercises; we described what we heard, how the room felt, how our bodies felt in the room. As a class, we are trying to expand the space/time between stimulus (a put-down, for

example) and reaction; we are learning to replace reaction with response. The ability to respond wisely instead of react blindly IS a superpower, and it is within each of us.

(P.S. watch the video, and try-on mindfulness at home).

-Abdi, Kat, Carlos and Room 215-DragonFlies

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

Philosophy means "love of wisdom." The work of philosophy is related to using your mind well. When we "do" philosophy, we ask questions, investigate life, and wonder what is going on. Thinking with others helps us to focus our ideas and deepen our thinking.

In Ancient Greece, philosophy involved personal connections, conversations in the marketplace, formal dialogues, and stories. Philosophers had followers and students, people who gathered to hear them and argue with them, question them and respond to their questions. Many of the highlights of these exchanges were preserved as apho-



Fifth and sixth graders, enjoying the snow.

risms, sayings or succinct comments that captured a deep belief or guide for life.

This week, we explored a connection between Socrates statement, recorded by Plato, “The unexamined life is not worth living” and the Mission Hill Habits of Mind and Work. We wondered: What key point or big idea does the quote support? Have you had an experience that connects to the idea? Who is the person behind this quote? What questions would you ask them? What impact does the quote have on you?

-Ann Ruggiero, Elsa Batista & Letta Neely

Room 214

Room 214 visited the Farm School a couple of weeks ago. As we do every year, the students write narratives about their experience at the farm immediately after the trip. The following are a few excerpts from the narratives:

“Those tools were very heavy and I thought I was going to die, but I lived.” -Jonathan

“Up close goats look extremely evil, and you can probably get used to them quickly, but I sure didn’t.” -Elias

“Have you ever made 300 dumplings from scratch? I have” -Derricka

“The air felt different than in Boston, it felt a little more heavy, but maybe it was just because it was kind of cold and windy.” -Ella

“Then Reginald called us to get dessert I could tell by the smell that it was cookies. They tasted delicious.” -Chantal

“We went to the enchanted forest. When I first went through that path, the trees were sparkling like diamonds in the sky.” -Nataliah

The Farm School experience is so rich, it usually results in really good writing. This is also true about this year’s Farm School narratives.

-Reginald Toussaint

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Welcome Allie!

Mission Hill’s new theatre teacher, Allie Meek, received her MA in

Theatre Education from Emerson College. She has experience working with children of all ages and in a variety of settings; from classrooms, after-school programs and theatre companies. She completed her student teaching at the Boston Arts Academy and is currently the Music Theatre Program Director at the North End Music and Performing Arts Center (NEMPAC), a Teaching Artist at Watertown Children’s Theatre and the Huntington Theatre Company, as well as the Theatre Teacher at the Amigos School in Cambridge. She is absolutely thrilled to join the community at the Mission Hill School and introduce theatre to all of its students!



CLASSROOM NEWS

Camp, Camp, Camp!

Camp Season is upon us. Check out the Summer Programs page under Family Resources on the MHS website. Courtney updates programming with new information throughout the year. If you'd like her assistance, fill out the Summer Is Coming survey found on the Summer Programs homepage. She also has a Courtney's Corner page with year-round resources and city-wide events.

Get your camp physical!

Don't forget that camps all require a medical examination by a licensed physician within 12 months preceding camp. This is a state requirement for all children attending camp, so book your child's appointment now. Remember, Georgie needs updated copies of physicals as well, so drop a copy in her mailbox after your appointment.

Scholarships available!

Looking for scholarships for summer opportunities? Courtney has a limited number of scholarships available to various programs throughout the city such as Hale Reservation and Farm School. Contact her immediately to be considered. Most programs also offer financial assistance but it may be a separate application. Always ask if they do!

Family Council News

Please join us for our second Urban Improv Family Program, which will take place on Thursday, March 9th, and the next Family Council meeting, which will be held on Thursday, April 6th. More details to come!

Babysitting and dinner will be provided for the meetings. Please RSVP for babysitting: familycouncil@missionhillschool.org

Ancient Greek projects

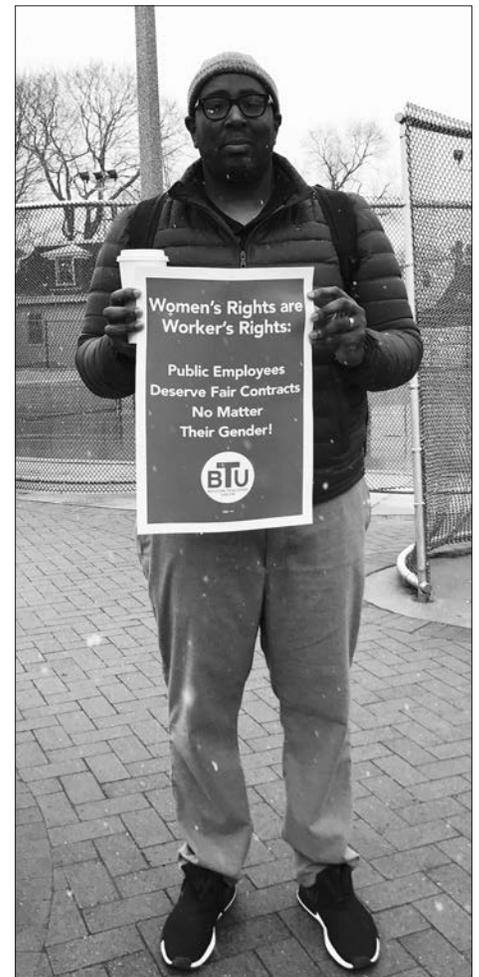


Top to bottom: ancient Greek headwear created by grade 3/4 historian/artists; Jasmine putting finishing touches on her crown of golden leaves; the finished product.

MHS Receives Whole Child Award



Read all about it on the school website: www.missionhillschool.org!



Grades 5/6 teacher, Nakia Keizer, joins the BTU-sponsored walk-in on South Street.

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

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