



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Thursday, March 9, 6-7 pm
Urban Improv Family Program @ MHS
- Friday, March 10
Grades 3/4 to Farm School
- Friday, March 10, 9:45-10:15 am
Friday Share: Deborah, Kate, & Nakia
- Friday, March 17, 9:45-10:15 pm
Friday Share: Jenerra & Reginald
- Friday, March 17, 9:45-10:15 pm
Friday Share: Abdi, Cleata, Geralyn, & Kathy

March 3, 2017

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Service vs. Community

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

Did you ever answer a question during an interview that you wish you could redo? After learning something, getting more information, or finding better words to express yourself, do you wish you could turn back the clock? That happened to me recently. Maybe my experience will be helpful to you.

I was a panelist at a conference, North Dakota Study Group. The theme of the panel and the conference was Practices for Racial Equity, Justice, and Community in Education. The panel moderator of the panel asked, “What motivates you to do the work you do?” My response? “Gratitude.” I continued, “Service and my membership in a wonderful community”. She asked me the question again. I said, “It makes me a better person”. I wasn’t prepared to answer that question so my responses were knee jerk.

A bit later I sat in small group of conference participants. One of the people in the group was another panelist, Antonio. Antonio is a young artist who took time away from the traditional education workplace/schooling scene to assist his partner in parenting. During our conversation he raised a new concept for me, the difference between service and community. He shared his resentment for educators who come into schools as an act of service—to do good. Instead he wants educators that are part of the community.

This distinction had not occurred to me before. People who come in with a service mindset might believe that they are saving someone else through their actions, he explained. People who are part of the community contribute to it because they have a different investment- they see the community as giving back one day. Their motivation for children to be resilient, educated and have a problem solving mindset is because one day those children will be caring for them, making decisions for them—the citizens who will impact their lives. Someone that serves, makes contributions and goes back to another home or community that they care about and invest in.

Consider Mission Hill School as a community. What is your “membership” like? Do you see yourself as a community member? Or do you see yourself as someone that serves the community? If you see yourself as someone that serves our community, what would it take for you to become a community member? How could your view of investing in our students shift so that you see their success as your success? How could it shift so you know their neighborhoods? How could it shift so they see you as members of the community, someone with long lasting ties? What kinds of events, learning experiences, and/or conversations do we need to have to know the difference between community, and service so we can be more deliberate about both? How can be be a community that still maintains space for service?

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ayo James".

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

"I am king of the mountain!"... "Ladies and gentleman!"... "This is my castle!"...

Proclamations and declarations were made with gusto, as the K0 students clamored to the top of the snow mound on the playground. The snow plow driver had pushed snow from the parking lot into our play area - creating an inviting mountain to conquer. The mountain of snow also became a launching point as the children created paths to slide down on their bellies and bottoms. To me, they looked like penguins playing as they climbed up and slid down...over and over again. In my book, snow is one of nature's best playful gifts. Experimenting and imagining with snow and ice turns our familiar play area into a whole new world.

-Geraldyn and Donna

Room 106

Aesop's Fables were a favorite of mine growing up. I did not know Aesop was Greek, nor did I know that he was alive a very long time ago. The emphasis in the stories was always on the lesson, and I was young that I guess I thought if you watched animals carefully enough, they would teach you a lesson. It may very well be part of the reason I am still fascinated by them today.

In room 106 we have been reading different versions of *The Lion and the Mouse*. Our first read only had pictures. The children looked carefully at the pictures and made guesses as to what was happening in the story. We have currently read four different versions. The children are working in groups to retell the story. Many children have chosen to make puppets.

One group will be putting on a play.

The children have come up with ideas for their stories. They will share their re-tellings once they are ready. Additionally, the whole K-Quad is working on retelling the story of *The Lion and the Mouse*.

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

Over the past few weeks, we have inundated ourselves with all things Greek. The Greek music we have been listening to in the morning has had students asking questions and elicited a little dancing from time to time. During rest time the Greek myths we have been reading have introduced us to many gods and goddesses as well as characters like curious Pandora, strong Hercules and the swift-footed Mercury (messenger of the gods).

This week our taste tests of various Greek foods have continued as we received grocery donations from families. We have been able to make Riganatha (grilled crusty bread drizzled with olive oil and topped with tomatoes, feta cheese and oregano), hummus and tasted two kinds of olives (black and green).

We have also continued to learn about the Olympics and read several books about its origin. One thing we learned was that there was a foot race that required its participants to run in full armor. In connection, we have been working on creating our own armor that includes shields and helmets so that we can try it out.

-Jada Brown & Kenisha Epps

Room 109

This week we have continued with our Ancient Greece work and settling back in after our days away. Students



Jonathan, Marissa and Naomi enjoy the snow!

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have been reacquainting themselves with their Ancient Greece projects (puppet shows and *The Lion and the Mouse* art projects). The school vacation week came so quickly after our snow days that it was a lot to remember! This week have begun discussions and preparations for small group interest projects. So far we have a small group interested in learning more about Goddesses and Gods, another interested in learning more about the Ancient Greek Olympics, and others are still thinking. We walked in small groups, this week, to Fresh Hair to look at the small mosaic in the sidewalk outside. This was fascinating and a great introduction to our talks about mosaics and ancient greek art.

-Deborah & Stephanie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

In February, we welcomed a new community member to the class, Cocoa Bean the guinea pig! In the fall, students learned about democracy, and were introduced to the process of creating and passing a bill. A number of bills were proposed by the students, and ultimately voted on for approval. The addition of a class pet to the class was one of the bills that students voted in favor of. After some research, it was decided that a guinea pig would be the perfect option for a class pet because of their low maintenance and easygoing nature.

Students in the class will take turns every week caring for Cocoa Bean and her daily needs. Some jobs students will perform in order to do this is provide fresh water, fill her food bowl, replenish her hay, feed her fresh fruits and vegetables,



L to R: NDSG attendees: Samantha (MHS Principal Intern), Deborah Meier, Amina Michel-Lord, Cleata Brown, Ayla Gavins, Danny Flannery, and Ann Ruggiero.

and clean her cage. After getting the opportunity to bond with Cocoa Bean thorough petting and holding her, students are becoming more and more excited to take on the roles of a guinea pig owner!

-Lauren Walton, Student Teacher

Room 216

About two weeks ago I attended the annual meeting of the North Dakota Study Group in New York. The focus of the conference was “Practices for Racial Equity, Justice, and Community in Education.” One of the things I was most struck by was the wide range of work people were doing within education and the range of experiences people brought to every discussion. I met with high school students from Vermont who wrote legislation to expand educational pathways for students in their state. I met with teachers in southern Texas, in New York City, and in California who discussed their commitment to

progressive education and the challenges they’ve faced in their schools. I was especially excited to meet Deborah Meier for the first time and share how much I love working at Mission Hill. Everyone I met at the conference was operating from a place of caring and dedication to working with children, and I return now to Mission Hill with renewed excitement for my work with Team Rocket and a new interest in visiting more schools around the city and country to deepen my understanding of what progressive education can look like.

-Danny Flannery

Room 217

The United Kates are continuing to read and interpret Greek myths. We have had many conversations about a myth’s “message”, character’s motives, and new vocabulary. Here is the beginning of the story of Io, as told by Gerson, Julia and Romeo.

“Zeus, king of all gods often fell in love with young women. Hera was jealous because Zeus had more ladies. Hera was so jealous. She had caught him before. Zeus went down to earth, It’s pretty rude to look for more women when you already have a wife! Hera thought that Zeus was tricking her so she went down to earth. Zeus was with a beautiful young woman named Io. Zeus was too quick for her; he turned Io into a beautiful white cow. Zeus was petting the cow. Hera saw him but she was still very suspicious of him. She said “what a lovely cow you have, may I have her as a gift”. If Zeus said no, it would give away the truth, so he said yes.”

We are continuing on towards our goal of creating an anthology of Greek myths.

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 203

Three days this week, we met in our Greek expert groups. Morgan and I run the science and medicine group and it was great to have them back together! After a quick check-in, we got down to the business of deciding on exactly what our research topics would be. Using a special form we gave them, each student identified the following things: their research question, specifically how they will find out about it (what they will read, look at/listen to, draw, and write), and what materials they might need. They also indicated what the final product would be and the date it would be finished. Here the questions they came up with:

What is the significance of Olive Oil in Ancient Greek medicine?

What technology did the ancient

Greeks have?

How would they treat mental and physical problems?

What medicine had to do with food?

How did the Greeks experiment with lotions to make make-up?

What inventions were built by the Ancient Greeks?

I wonder how they invented shields?

How do you build a catapult?

-Jenerra Williams

Room 204

After the last major snowfall, students were unable to use the playground during recess. Instead they used the field and I watched as students slid and rolled down the hill, laughing and bumping into each other in glee! No one seemed to notice that they were getting soaked by the wet snow, except me of course! Joel and I marveled at the ingenuity students, grades 1 to 4, and how they would automatically pick up a chunk of snow and add to what looked like a wall curving into a circle like a wishing well. There were no rules. Students simply added to the wall as they ran by, helping those who remained diligently at the project. One after another, students would run by, stop, and turn back to add a chunk of snow to the structure. I simply smiled when I reflected on their creativity and sense of community.

-Cleata, Mayra, and Ryan

Room 207

On the Thursday before vacation I attended the North Dakota Study Group (NDSG). NDSG is a group of people including educators past and present, community activists, students, and other individuals who are invested in the education of our children and think about education



More fun in the snow for grades 1-4.

much like we do at MHS. NDSG participants are also firmly rooted in social justice.

To say I was excited to be back at NDSG (it had been three years) is an understatement! I was excited to reconnect with participants whom I met previously and I was looking forward to making new connections. I was also excited to participate in mind-provoking work during our time together. This year’s theme was “Dialogue for Action: Practices for Racial Equity, Justice and Community in Education”. In small “Home” groups, during large group conversations and through individual discussions we grappled with race, our schools and communities.

After four days, my notebook had many notes, my head was full of ideas and my heart was full of gratitude. One topic I have recommitted to explore is family engagement at MHS. What does it look like now? What has it looked like in the past? What changes do we want to see? I

am looking forward to working on this with various members of our community.

-Amina & Amanda

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

Here are a few samples from our End of the Week Reflections. Enjoy.

“Something that went well this week was playing with Giselle in the snow”

“Something that I think would improve the class is to make better choices and hold my friends accountable.

“Next week what I am really looking forward to is to not cry over dumb stuff.

“Something I want to get better at is getting better at paying attention to math when Abdi is teaching cause today was a test and I was not ready.”

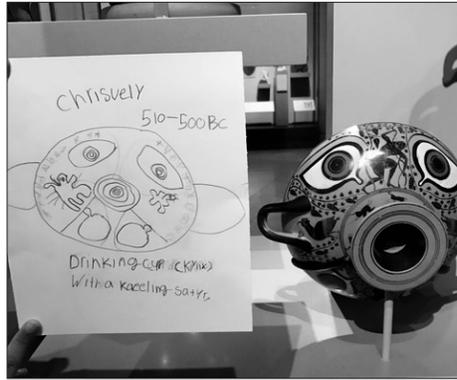
“Something that went well was Mix it Up day. I liked mix it up and I liked playing with shaving cream.”

“Next week I am really looking forward to doing the Greek mural with Carlos and Kat.”

-Nakia & Manny

Room 215

After the February break we have been going to the MFA (Museum of Fine Arts) for our Greek theme. Each city-state group, Corinth, Sparta, Ithaca and Athens gets to go to the MFA. The reason we have 4 groups is because we rotate in different teachers: Manny helps us with vocabulary; with Abdi, we do reading and drawings with it; with Nakia, we make our own myths; and with Carlos, we do Greek art. The first group was the Athens group. When we got there we had to wait outside because Abdi didn't bring us at the right time. The right time was at 11am and finally we



Grades 5 & 6 at the MFA, exploring Greek Art.

were able to go inside the Museum. We were looking for objects from the Homer's Odyssey, and we finally found them. So we looked at the Greek pottery and stories. We had

to draw what we enjoyed and write what was it to put it in our group drawing collection for family breakfast. The Athens group was the first to check out the MFA field trip and tell the rest of the groups how it went and reflect it to them. We went to the MFA so we can draw the pieces of what we found out in the book, the Odyssey, because there were sculptures that we found that were related. Most of us had fun and enjoyed it a lot. It was really fun. While we were at the MFA, we had to look at the carvings on top of the building and on the building there were the Greek gods and we had to figure out which gods were on the plates. Abdi had us count the columns of the MFA building. Experiencing the Ancient world makes you have lots of questions like Melissa saw a cup and said, "I wonder how do they drink out of that because it looked like a plate and it was broken?" Laylah said, "I saw a bowl that when you lift it up it looks like a mask. I was wondering how did they drink if it is so small and they used the handle."

-Melissa and Laylah (students), Room 215, DragonFlies

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

Despite the stormy weather and cancelled school, we were still able to go on our Farm School trip, but sadly shortened by a day. We packed an amazing amount of fun and work into our time there, and everyone made the best of a disappointing situation.

The Farm was absolutely beautiful covered with snow. The farmers had work projects for us that were engaging. The food, mostly prepared by the students, was delicious. The bunk-

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rooms were the scene of the silliness and bonding that are part of sleeping away from home. The students and farmers shared great stories and were grateful for each other's company. What more could we ask for, except more time together?

I love seeing kids engaged in activities very different from schoolwork. Who would have known that Bryan is very skilled using both power and hand tools to chop wood and build structures? And Giselle – how brave she was to enter the pigs' pen with milk and hay! Caleb and Anais made an excellent team – one ladling the batter, the other flipping the pancakes. The stories are endless, and so is our thanks to the Farm School.
-Ann Ruggiero, Elsa Batista & Letta Neely

Room 214

I am learning a lot from my students about ancient Greece. For our theme project, students are expected to research and become an "expert" on one of the Olympians. Their writings really capture the drama that surrounded the Olympians. Here are a couple of excerpts from their writing:
"The moment Hestia was born she was eaten by her father Cronus. (Cronus had heard a prophecy that his children would overthrow him, so he tried to cheat the prophecy. But as he would soon learn, you can't cheat prophecy). As she grew up inside Cronus's stomach more and more children were born then eaten. Eventually Rhea got tired of her kids being eaten, so she tricked Cronus into eating a rock instead of the child."

-Zack McLaughlin, Grade 7

"Leto became pregnant and Hera

found out and chased after Leto wherever she went throughout her pregnancy. Hera prevented her from finding a place to give birth. She managed to an island and it was the island of Delos. The island had nothing but a single palm tree. She gave birth to Artemis and a day after Artemis helped Leto birth Apollo."
-Jaylin Arias, Grade 8

SCHOOLWIDE 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



Giselle pours dried corn into a grinder to make cornmeal (top) and Caleb works on a woodburning project at Farm School.

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

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