



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

Thursday, September 26, 5:00-7:00pm  
**Governance Board Meeting - All invited to attend**

Friday, October 27, 9:45-10:15am  
**Friday Share (open to all)**

September 30 - October 11  
**Listening Conferences - Please check your classroom schedule for your family's time.**

September 20, 2019

Volume 23, Issue 3

## Ujima

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

*Ujima.* Ujima is a Swahili word that means collective work and responsibility. I learned this word when I worked at the John D. O'Bryant African-American Institute at Northeastern University. We held an annual Kwanzaa celebration and Ujima is one of the principles that is upheld and celebrated. I think of this word often, as so much of our work at Mission Hill is connected to the collective.

Mission Hill was founded *on* and *for* the work of the collective. Deborah Meier, our founder, is a firm believer in the power of collective minds, working together for the common good of students and families. It was her belief in democratically run schools that led to the creation of Central Park East, Central Park East II, River East (all in East Harlem, NYC) and Mission Hill School. Deborah says, "You can not prepare kids for a democracy unless they experience living in a democracy." Democracy is the foundation of our community and our collective work is how we live out that democracy every day.



At the Farm School, August Staff Retreat

In our classrooms you might see students working collectively to build a scale model of an Egyptian pyramid, write a play or present a portfolio together. Amongst our staff you might see teachers co-constructing a curriculum, discussing our budget for the upcoming year or setting up the school for a family event. You may see our families working together with staff to put on a fundraiser for the school, advocate for our school at a school committee meeting or help another family with pick up at the end of the day. You might see Geralyn and I working with staff on a new idea for meeting structures, with the Family Council on meeting topics or with students on what graduation garb will look like this year.

Then there is the collective work you don't see - the many classes taken and taught by our staff at local colleges and universities. The many organizations and boards our staff belong to. The many connections our families make that support our school. The ways students connect outside of school to foster and build relationships. The collective work we engage in not only gives us a taste of what it is like to be citizens in a democratic society but it also fosters, as Deboah says, "responsibility for one's own ideas, tolerance for the ideas of others, and a capacity to negotiate differences." It allows us to share what we know, but to also learn from others. None of us is as smart as all of us.

When we are allowed to not only shine and be our best selves, but to also fall and learn from our mistakes, it is the collective that will be there to pick us up and encourage us to keep moving forward.

So here is to the collaborative work of the past that founded and sustained this amazing place we call Mission Hill School and the collective work that lies ahead of us all for a productive and successful school year! Looking forward to collaborating with you all!

*Jenerra Williams*



**Danny and Felicia's 1st/2nd grade class collaborating at the Arboretum.**



## **KINDERGARTEN**

### **K0 Room 108**

**Liana, Quéla, Donna and Sarah**

Our first full week of school was a whirlwind of activity and joy! We spent lots of time getting to know each other and the classroom space, as well as the routines that will help us move through our days smoothly and safely. On Friday afternoon, we discussed some things that we remembered about the week. Here is a sample of what each student shared:

Jayce: "I played toys outside."

Raevonii: "I played cars."

Lorenzo: "I played trucks."

Rowan: "I played toys inside."

Liam: "I played outside."

Hezekiah: "I played cars."

Kai: "I played outside."

Jannatun: "I ate pizza."

Deusthcaelha: "I played outside."

Ana: "I played with trikes."

We have learned a variety of songs and dances this week and some fun games too! We learned about ways to be kind to each other and how to take care of classroom materials. We also began thinking about the tools that scientists use, starting with magnifying glasses. Next week, we will continue to learn about what scientists look like and sound like.

*-Liana, Quéla, Donna and Sarah*



### **K1/K2 Room 106**

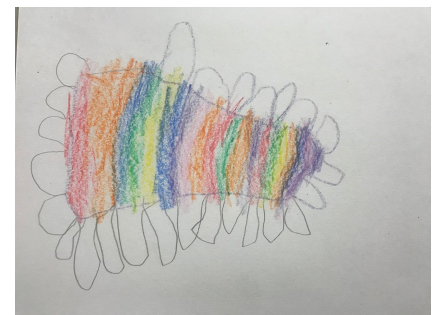
**Kathy & June**

It has been wonderful returning to the Mission Hill School this fall. We return with a class full of children who are curious about learning and full of grit. Each of them brings a special energy. My students from last year started the year ready to help the new students. It was wonderful to see them rise.

Our new students do not seem new at all. Some of them I have known for years while others have joined our community as if they have been here for years. We also have a student teacher, Yuliza. She will be with us until the end of October.

We started this year as we have many before, thinking of our hopes and dreams for the year. The children drew and wrote about their ideas. Leora wrote, "My hopes and dreams are to have rainbow shoes with feathers that tie on the top. The feathers are the shoelaces." Forest said, "My hopes and dreams are to be able to read a ninja book." Jayden said, "I wish to go to Disneyland in three or four years."

*-Kathy & June*



### **K1/K2 Room 107**

**Jada & Manny**

It has been an awesome two weeks back! Beginning with the potluck the night before the first day of school, our students have been brave in meeting new people, wide-eyed in exploring new spaces and have shown eagerness in sharing their ideas. We have enjoyed many project/choice times inside but when we are outside, it's an amplified experience. Per tradition, whenever the weather is nice, we open the back door and pull out our tables, chairs, dollhouse, easels, etc. We think

there's something pretty awesome and inspiring about playing/creating as birds fly above head, squirrels climb the fence and leaves/seeds fall from the sky. We have watched our students freely leave the water table to run (because their body needed it), engage in imaginative play (without worrying about how loud they were) and figure out the effects of happily splish-splashing too much with friends in the water table... all signs we might be ready for another great year.

*-Jada Brown & Emmanuel St. Vil*

## **K1/K2 Room 109**

**Katie & Courtney M.**

What an exciting first two weeks of school it has been for us! The children have been eager to share their ideas with each other through building, creating, drawing, talking, and play. Here are some of the big ideas they have been working on:

A zoo was built in the block area for all of the animals.

Spaghetti and meatballs were made out of play-dough, as well as dog-waffles.

Patterns were created with pattern blocks.

Animal stamps and free-hand drawings were done in the writing and drawing center.

"Intruder alert" and "fire at the police station" were dreamed up in blocks and acted out outside.

Stories of a silly cow, a cow named Ferdinand, a ghost, a monster, and a surfer were told and performed on stage.

We cannot wait to see what the children think about and explore next!

*-Katie & Courtney M.*



## **GRADES 1 & 2**

### **Room 210**

**Ashleigh, Alana & Stephanie**

This week we have looked closely at our school-wide kindness agreements. In addition to *Be Kind, Work Hard* (the Mission Hill Way), we also have 4 kindness agreements. They are: be kind to yourself, be kind to others, be kind to our materials, and be kind to our school. We have talked about each one and what we would see or hear if someone was following that agreement. Here is what we have thought about so far...

Be kind to yourself: eat healthy food, focus on work and learn new things, don't hurt your body, think good thoughts.

Be kind to others: be gentle, ask before you do something, if

someone is sad - check on them, help someone if they are hurt. Be kind to our materials: keep them in their place, put them back gently, use it the right way. Be kind to our school: clean up after yourself, flush when you use the bathroom, don't write on the walls.

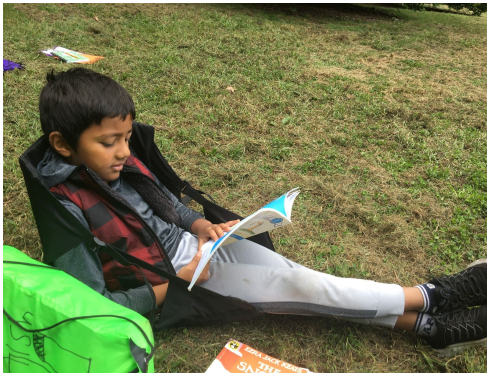
*-Ashleigh, Alana & Stephanie*

### **Room 216**

**Danny, Felicia & Destiny**

We are so excited to be back for another wonderful year at Mission Hill. This week we began our first theme, Earth and Space Science. As our class is studying the land in all its forms, we quickly realized that we will need to spend a lot of time learning outside for this theme. Following the lead of Ashleigh and Alana's "Think Outside Thursdays" from last year, we went to the Arboretum on Wednesday and Thursday of this week! The Arnold Arboretum is a nearby garden with a variety of trees, landforms, and water bodies for scientific study. While at the Arboretum, we spent a lot of time drawing the environment and thinking about everything within it. We also searched for living and non-living things to share with the class. We are reminded of Deborah Meier's frequently cited story of one of her students arguing that a rock is a living thing, and we are pleased to say that we had some spirited debate as well while coming to a consensus on what it means to be alive. We hope to work outside at least one day per

week this fall, so stay tuned for more Earth Science news!  
-Danny Flannery, Felicia Haynes, and Destiny Montrond



## GRADES 3 & 4

### Room 207

#### Amanda & Amina

Hello Room 207 Families. We have had a great start to the school year. Welcome to third grade - Ella, Isaac, Janee, Lola, Misael, Oscar, Parker, Raya, Rex, Saoirse, Shona, Simeon and Vidania. We are so excited that you have joined our classroom community. Welcome back to Room 207 for 4th grade - Abel, Kyle, Malia, Randolph and Théo. We are thrilled to have you back as members of our classroom community.

During the first seven days of school, we spent time getting to know our school building, our classroom routines and expectations and each other. During that time we discovered some connections:

**Abel** went to a water park in Pennsylvania.

**Ella** traveled to Connecticut to visit her uncle and rode horses.

**Isaac** traveled to Orlando Florida and went to a beach at the ocean.  
**Janee** went to camp and went to Six Flags.

**Kyle** traveled to Ogunquit, Maine and went to the ocean.

**Lola** went to the beach at the ocean.

**Malia** celebrated her brother's birthday at Castle Island.

**Misael** went to a water park called Water Wizz.

**Oscar** traveled to Vermont and visited with friends.

**Parker** spent time at her grandmother's house and went to Water Wizz, a water park.

**Randolph** went to the beach.

**Raya** celebrated her birthday at Dave and Buster's and played games.

**Rex** went to Canobie Lake with his family.

**Saoirse** slid down waterfalls at the Basin.

**Shona** traveled to Florida and went to a water park.

**Simeon** traveled to Canada and went swimming in a river.

**Théo** traveled to New Jersey and went to Six Flags during a heatwave.

**Vidania** went to Chuck E. Cheeses, played games and ate pizza.

**Ms. Amanda** traveled to Florida and went to the beach during a heatwave.

**Ms. Amina** traveled to Italy and climbed the Leaning Tower of Pisa during a heatwave.

It has been awesome getting to know new and returning friends. We are learning about each other as we set the stage for a wonderful year of learning and

exploration. Get ready for an AMAZING year!

- Ms. Amina and Ms. Amanda

### Room 212

#### Cleata & Ayan

Our first seven days of school have set us up for a successful year. The students in Room 212 are excited and already engaged in building a safe and welcoming classroom. They have discussed what they want to do to make their classroom welcoming and even created classroom agreements that reflected the importance of keeping each other safe and feeling welcome. As we begin our new theme, Earth and Space Science, students are thinking about who they are as scientists as well as what type of scientist they would like to be. We are considering in particular the disciplines of earth science (meteorology, ecology, oceanography, geology). Students are working on their self-portraits to depict how they view themselves as scientists. We look forward to more discussions and discovery as we get deeper into our new theme for this fall. We have much to look forward to in our exploration of water cycles, weather, climate and human influence on our planet. Please come by and check us out in Room 212.

-Cleata Brown and Ayan Osman



## **Room 215**

### **Leila & Kat**

In Room 215, we have been bending over backwards (often literally) to make new friends and build community. We read *The Day You Begin* by Jaqueline Woodson, and discussed how every one of us has some little things in common, along with many other things that are fabulously different. We agreed to embrace and celebrate differences.

Every student has worked hard to choose one or two personal goals to focus on this year, and their choices are impressive. They range from mastering multiplication facts, to gaining better control of bodies, to developing stronger leadership skills. Working on our individual goals will be a yearlong effort, but no one is doing it alone. We are checking in on one another and making plans to help each other reach our goals.

The level of teamwork in this class is truly amazing. If you want to see community in action, stop by Room 215!

*-Leila & Kat*



## **GRADES 5 & 6**

### **Room 203**

#### **Ms. Coleman & Frances**

Great news for Room 203's 5th and 6th graders! Science class has been about finding an organizing principle, observable phenomenon, or authentic context around the topic "Solar System." One of the greatest strengths of science class is the authentic integration of research, and this strength is multiplied when the performance expectations are taught in a context students find interesting or are familiar with. Every student has been engaged in making their own blueprint of the "Solar System" and discovering what type of relationship each planet has with the sun or each other. Every student has designed the "Solar System" and framed their work with a synopsis of every planet. Students will build their knowledge on the topics and later build their own model of the "Solar System" in class in several weeks.

*-Saadia Coleman & Frances Pearce*

### **Room 205**

#### **Nakia & David**

People who know me know that I make liberal use of sports metaphors and analogies. They truly help me to make sense of things, as well as to describe them. In that spirit, I liken the beginning of the school year to the beginning of a football game. The first few plays that you run have the potential to set the tone

for the entire game. To that end, coaches carefully craft, and oftentimes script, everything that they will do with the first few opportunities that they have the ball.

Likewise, the first six weeks of school are spent carefully and thoughtfully establishing the building blocks for the rest of the year. Teacher-created work groups are made so as to watch children interact with one another. Guided discoveries happen where kids learn everything from where and how pencils are returned, to what we do when we need to use the bathroom. Curated lunch groups are supported with "challenge" questions so as to share commonalities, as well as structure what can at times be a difficult time of day for children. During these early days and weeks, even recess to a certain degree is choreographed. Many adults watching, recognizing new friendships and struggles, assisting and modeling in sticky situations.

The intention is that all of this is effort and stage setting will lead to the tone and tenor of teamwork and success that will guide us through to the end of "the game" in June.

*-Nakia & David*

## GRADES 7 & 8

### Room 213

#### Jenna & Courtney D.

7th and 8th graders are hitting the ground running this school year. They completed their first project and presentation this week in which they investigated Mission Hill's Habits of Mind (evidence, connections, viewpoint, conjecture, relevance) and Habits of Work (forethought, production, perseverance, reflection). Students worked in groups to interview different members of our school community, ranging from kindergarteners to teachers. They concluded that some community members know their habits well but that some of us need to brush up on our knowledge! Additionally, they were assigned a habit to

research deeper and present to their peers. They created visuals to represent the habit and discussed how they can use this habit at school and in their personal lives. We hope that students will engage deeply with these habits this year and that they will bring them alive in their academic work as well as their lives outside of school.  
*-Jenna & Courtney D.*

### Room 214

#### Kathy B. & Ayanna

It's been a busy two weeks in Room 214! We've been getting to know one another, building community, and assessing academic knowledge. We started our year by sharing our understandings of the Mission Hill Habits of Mind and Work. Students worked in pairs to write questions to interview staff

and students about their understanding of the Habits. They created posters with their results then presented the findings during our weekly 7/8 community meeting. We will be talking about them in more depth as the year progresses.

In Humanities, students illustrated a coat of arms to share parts of their identity. They talked about their aspirations, a person they admired, described their favorite things, listed the characteristics that make them unique, and shared their life motto. They wrote speeches to present with their coat of arms last Friday. We are looking forward to a productive year together.  
*-Kathy B. & Ayanna*

## SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS

### Governance Board Meeting 9/26/19

On Thursday, September 26th we will have our first Governance Board meeting for this school year. All are welcome to come. It is a great way to learn about our school. Please see the agenda here and the flier attached.

AGENDA	
5:00pm	Supper and social gathering
5:30pm	Meeting called to order and Approval of the minutes
5:45pm	Review By-Laws and Robert's Rules of Order
6:00pm	Current Board Members identified
6:30pm	Co-Leaders Update: The State of the School
6:45pm	Committees selected: Plan for Spending committee Evaluation of Co-Leaders committee External communications committee
7:00pm	Meeting adjourned

Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin and  
Jenerra Williams, Co-Teacher Leaders  
Deborah Meier, Founder  
Dr. Brenda Cassellius, 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  
(Carolina Avenue entrance)  
T 617-635-6384  
F 617-635-6419



## It's Dinner and a Board Meeting!

Upcoming Meeting Dates: 11/21/19, 1/23/20, 3/26/20, 5/28/20



Hello Mission Hill families!

You are and have always been welcome to attend our Board Meetings. Please consider this your official invitation to come out and meet our board members, hear a little about important conversations in education, learn about ways to support our school and hopefully consider being a member in the near future. We consider your presence valuable so both dinner and childcare will be provided.

Please RSVP for childcare at 617-635-6384.

We hope to see you there!

When: September 26, 2019

Time: 5:00- 7:00 p.m.



## ¡Es comida y reunión de la Junta Directiva!

Próximas reuniones: 11/21/19, 1/23/20, 3/26/20, 5/28/20



¡Hola familias de Mission Hill!

Ustedes siempre son y han sido bienvenidas en las reuniones de la Junta Directiva.

Por favor considere que ésta es su invitación oficial para venir y conocer los miembros de nuestra junta. Venga a escuchar conversaciones importantes sobre educación, a conocer maneras de apoyar a nuestra escuela y a considerar ser un miembro de la junta en el futuro. Su presencia es muy valiosa, por lo tanto se proporcionarán comida y cuidado de niños. Por favor

RSVP para el cuidado de niño al 617-635-6384.

¡Esperamos verle allí!

Cuando: 26 de Septiembre de 2019

Hora: 5:00 - 7:00 p. m.





**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**SEPTEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>**

6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

# BACK TO SCHOOL FAIR

**40,000 FREE BOOKS AND ACTIVITIES FOR BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL FAMILIES!**  
Stop by between **1:00 and 4:00 PM** on  
**Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019**  
**Boston Teachers Union & Carson Beach**  
**180 Mt. Vernon St., Boston, MA 02125**  
(Entrance is off of Day Boulevard, before Carson Beach)

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP US SORT BOOKS ON WEDNESDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 TO 20 FROM 5-7 PM. CAN YOU HELP OUT? ALL ARE WELCOME TO PITCH IN, INCLUDING STUDENTS FULFILLING COMMUNITY SERVICE. Please contact Liliana at [lilianam@btu.org](mailto:lilianam@btu.org) or Brenda at [brenda@btu.org](mailto:brenda@btu.org) if you can volunteer any day!



**CLOSEST MBTA 1-STOP**  
**JFK/UMASS ON THE RED LINE**

[BTU.ORG/BACKTOSCHOOL](http://BTU.ORG/BACKTOSCHOOL)



**¡RESERVA LA FECHA!**  
**SÁBADO 21 DE SEPTIEMBRE**

6<sup>TA</sup> FERIA

# REGRESO A LA ESCUELA

**¡40,000 LIBROS GRATIS Y ACTIVIDADES PARA TODAS FAMILIAS DE LAS ESCUELAS PUBLICAS DE BOSTON!**  
Visítenos entre **1:00 y 4:00 PM** el  
**Sábado, 21 de Setiembre, 2019**  
**Boston Teachers Union & Carson Beach**  
**180 Mt. Vernon St., Boston, MA 02125**  
(Entrada cerca de la Day Blvd., antes del Carson Beach)

NECESITAMOS VOLUNTARIOS PARA AYUDARNOS A ORGANIZAR LOS LIBROS EL MIÉRCOLES HASTA VIERNES, DÍAS 18-20 DE SEPTIEMBRE DE LAS 5-7PM. ¿QUIERES AYUDAR? TODOS ESTÁN INVITADOS, INCLUIDO ESTUDIANTES NECESITANDO SERVICIO COMUNITARIO. ¡Por favor contacte a Liliana at [lilianam@btu.org](mailto:lilianam@btu.org) o Brenda at [brenda@btu.org](mailto:brenda@btu.org) si puedes ayudar en cualquier día!



**PARADA MAS CERCA DE LA MBTA**  
**JFK/UMASS EN LA LINEA ROJA**

[BTU.ORG/BACKTOSCHOOL](http://BTU.ORG/BACKTOSCHOOL)



**METE DAT SA SOU KOTE! 21 SEPTANM**

SEM KÏEM ANYÈL

# AKTIVITE RETOUREN LEKOL

**40,000 LIV GRATIS AK AKTIVITE POU TOUT FANMI NAN LEKOL PUBLIK BOSTON!**  
**VINI ANT 1:00 AK 4:00 PM NAN SAMDI, 21 SEPTANM, 2019**  
**BOSTON TEACHERS UNION & CARSON BEACH**  
**180 MT. VERNON ST., BOSTON, MA 02125**  
(ANTRÈ YA SE TOU PRE DAY BLVD., AVAN CARSON BEACH)

NOU AP BEZVEN VOLANTE POU EDE NOU RANJE LIV YO MÈKREDI A VANDREDI 18 A 20 SEPTANM, 3-7PM. ESKE OU KA EDE NOU? ELEY KAPAB SEVI KOM VOLONTÈ TOU! Tèlèfon kontakte Liliana [lilianam@btu.org](mailto:lilianam@btu.org) o Brenda [brenda@btu.org](mailto:brenda@btu.org) si ou ka sèvi kom yon volontè nan pou sa yo!



**TRANSPOTASYON RI PI PRE:**  
**JFK/UMASS ON THE RED LINE**

[BTU.ORG/BACKTOSCHOOL](http://BTU.ORG/BACKTOSCHOOL)