



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

Friday, December 20
Trimester 1 Report Cards Sent Home
Last day of school before break begins

Monday, January 6, 2020
Students return from Winter Recess
Ancient China Theme Begins

Thursday, January 9, 2020 5:00 – 6:00pm
Governance Board: Budget (tentative)

December 20, 2019

Volume 23, Issue 15

Friends of Mission Hill School

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

We are writing to introduce ourselves and the Friends of Mission Hill School (FoMHS), the community-run fundraising organization that supports the school's students, families and staff. Rachel has a sixth grader and second grader and Justin's son is in K2. We are on the FoMHS board.

In past years, FoMHS paid for everything from classroom supplies, field trips, transportation to Farm School, tadpoles for the K-Quad, *Wonder* books for the fifth graders, and software to organize the library. We support MHS by contributing to Family Council meetings, Field Day, Graduation, Teacher and Staff Appreciation Day, as well as school fees for the Scripps Spelling Bee, the National Geographic Bee, the middle school basketball league, and the Boston Debate League. We also support extracurricular programs such as Hands to Heart Yoga, a group that shares the healing power of yoga with kids affected by trauma and poverty and Beautiful Stuff, a creative reuse program that teaches kids to turn salvaged materials into art.

We raise money mostly through events and grants. We have bake sales throughout the year and host a spring party called Mission Get Down. In past years we held events such as Bertucci's Night, a Wake Up the Earth booth, a spring music concert flower sale, a puppet show and a cycling class. This winter we are hosting a Painting Night at St. John's church and a roller-skating party at Chez Vous, so watch the newsletter for more details!



We have also had some success writing grants and would love input from the MHS community on what kinds of grants you would like to see us go after! We are currently working on applications for extra math help and support for the music program. Please let us know if you have additional ideas for funds we can apply for or are interested in grant writing.

We work closely with Family Council in their mission of supporting families and building community at MHS. Our primary mission is to raise money for the school, but we aim to do this in a way that is consistent with the Mission Hill Way and our school's values. To this end, we try to give people lots of different opportunities to contribute and participate. Bake cookies, work the sale table, help with grant writing, set up for Mission Get Down, attend movie night, donate snacks, organize a fundraiser, help at Wake Up the Earth—there are many ways to get involved! *We are always open to new ideas and everyone is welcome to participate. If you have an idea for an event you would like to organize, please let us know!* Rachel can be reached at 617-905-4646 and Justin at 484-905-2916. Text or call!

Rachel Goldsmith and Justin Rice

SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS

Music

Cara

The last few weeks in the music room have been filled with movement, music and discovery! Our upper level students have been experimenting with their SoundTrap compositions, taking their work in a variety of directions. Some students reversed, re-tuned, or mixed existing recordings, while other students worked with their own beats. One student even created her own podcast episode!

Our 5th and 6th grade classes have been expressing elements of the solar system through movement and sound. They have created small group demonstrations and dances to Gustav Holst's *The Planets Suite*. Most recently, they worked together to apply movement and music to embody concepts like a lunar eclipse and tides.

Finally, our youngest grades have continued to work within our Science of Sound unit to discover the ways in which vibration creates sound across the three elements of matter: solids, liquids, and gas.

Art

Meg & Jeanne

As winter break is quickly approaching, students have been working hard on one last project before they leave school for a few weeks. They have been working

on creating portraits. A portrait is a piece of art that typically focuses on a subject's face.

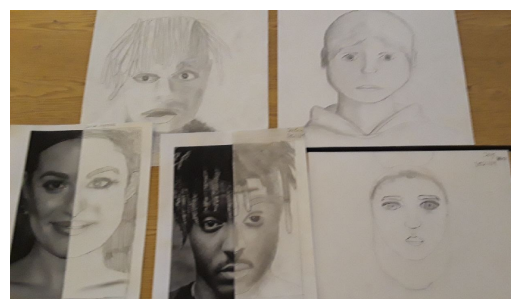
Students were given a few different choices with this project. First, they decided if they wanted to draw a portrait of themselves, or of someone else. Then they decided if they wanted to draw a whole face or half of the face.

The main artistic concepts we wanted the students to pay attention to were value and proportion. Value refers to the lightness or darkness of a color. Since the students were working in pencil, the value was limited to grayscale. With proportion, students were looking at the shape and size of the facial features and where they were located on the face.

Portraits or self-portraits are never easy. Trying to capture the essence of a face and features is truly a labor of love. And using just a pencil can capture the depth and character of a face...amazing.

We've been really pleased with the results!

-Meg & Jeanne



SPOT Groups

Alexia: Speech-Language

During *Friends to SPOT*, students who do not receive speech-language or occupational therapy are given the opportunity to experience activities we typically do during our therapy sessions. While Marion shared information about the kindergarten *Friends to SPOT* obstacle course, I decided to share about the one we completed with the elementary grade students. First to sixth graders had the opportunity to complete an obstacle course that challenged their ability to maneuver different types of equipment while controlling their body and problem solving in order to safely transition from one tool to the other. In addition, this

activity tested each student's ability to listen to orally presented directions and follow them accurately and in the right order. In order to complete the obstacle course, students are asked to maintain a Green Zone behavior; staying calm, and safe, while transitioning from one piece of equipment to the next and also while waiting for their turn. *Friends to SPOT* is a fun way to give every student the opportunity to use tools available in the Mission Hill motor room!



SPOT Groups

Marion: OT

(Occupational Therapy)

Similar to last month, Alexia and I are writing about the same topic, from the different perspectives of speech-language and OT. We are now in the midst of our twice annual *Friends to SPOT* groups during which we invite all students K0 to 6 to experience the type of activities we do in Speech and OT. Last week the K Quad had a

lower-case alphabet focused obstacle course. They learned about letters while also working on body in space and movement awareness, sequencing, upper body strength, controlled coordinated movement, visual-motor skills and tactile discrimination. Pairs of students found letter puzzle pieces in a bucket of beans, took them on a scooter board across the room to match them with letter cards and jump on a trampoline while singing the alphabet. Then they coordinated walking slowly in unison with their partner, spun on a wobble chair and placed the letters into the puzzle board. Some groups talked about the relative size and placement of the lower-case letters (tall, small, or go below). Everyone enjoyed learning or reviewing lower-case letters in this whole body activity.



Bilingual Speech-Language Lourdes Ramos-Heinrichs

In addressing the needs of ELL students at Mission Hill, adaptations are made to the academic materials to ensure students can access the curriculum. For example, this month of December, we have been reading the book "Good Night Moon" with K students. To

help students identify the rhyming words, they used picture symbols with the rhyming target words to experience the meaning and sounds of words in various multisensory contexts. For example, they used the magnet wand to find the matching pairs, they matched the card pictures to pair the words to the pictures in the book, and they made sentences using the pictures and then repeated sentences from adult model from the book text. The students are making progress as they enjoy exploring various communicative functions such as saying words to each other, producing speech sounds, and imitating grammatical sentences. See the picture below:



Learning Coach

Priya

Having recently come back from Thanksgiving break, I asked one of my students "How was your break?"

"Boring" was their reply.

Surprised by their answer, I asked "Why?" To which the student responded "We just

stayed at home, ate lots of food, hung out with family and my cousins.”

Reflecting upon the student’s response, I decided that this conversation was an opportunity for me to do a mini-lesson about gratitude. Gratitude can be defined as the feeling or quality of being grateful, having a strong feeling of appreciation to someone or something. People who practice gratitude consistently report having positive physical, psychological, and social outcomes.

How can we teach our kids gratitude and practice it ourselves? The *Raising Grateful Children* project at UNC Chapel Hill has identified gratitude as an experience that has four parts:

- What we **NOTICE** in our lives for which we can be grateful
- How we **THINK** about why we have been given those things
- How we **FEEL** about the things we have been given
- What we **DO** to express appreciation in turn.

As educators and parents, we can foster gratitude in children and ourselves by asking questions about our experiences. For example: What do you already have in your life for which you are grateful? Do you think the gift you received was something the giver *had* to give you? What about the gift makes

you feel happy? Is there a way you want to show how you feel about the gift you received?

By practicing these simple yet effective strategies, we can pay more attention to our emotions and truly appreciate the things we have instead of focusing on what we don’t have.

Learning Coach

Vanessa

Traditionally, when people imagine reading aloud to children, they picture reading to younger children. However, there are numerous benefits to reading aloud to middle schoolers at home and school.

[Research](#)

(<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1073207.pdf>) has

shown that read alouds improve comprehension, reduce stress, and expose students to texts they may not otherwise encounter. Mindful selection of read aloud texts can facilitate important discussions about topics that are critical to adolescents’ lives (e.g., diversity, relationships, identity, etc).

To boost comprehension skills when reading aloud, model to older readers questions that you are asking yourself as you read, tell them what you are visualizing, summarize what you have read after small chunks; then have them do the same. Not sure what book

to start with? There are plenty of websites that give you [lists of books to read aloud](#) to young adults.

Another great resource is the librarians at your local library branch; they have a wealth of knowledge to share about popular titles.

Learning Coach

Joel

In one of my groups we are studying astronomy as part of our Earth and Space Curriculum at Mission Hill. Using the FOSS Science curriculum as a guide, we started out with a grounding, hands-on activity. Students marked their shadows with chalk and then observed them again hours later. We noted how they moved. This exploration lead into an understanding of sundials, and later the rotation of the earth. The shadows, we learned, also change over the course of the year. This is evidence of our location on earth changing in relation to the sun and provides an explanation of seasons. We were able to use this basic information to launch into a study about the moon. The moon also rotates and orbits. We observed and studied the phases of the moon. At the moment, we are studying the atmosphere. We continue to use observable and relatable phenomena to understand much more abstract and larger ones. The students are enjoying it and I have to say, I’ve never been more in awe of our moon.

SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS

Thank you Friends of Mission Hill School!

Today we are able to send home new stickers with every student! Please make sure you have received your gift from the Friends of Mission Hill School. These stickers are a result of the work of the PR sub-committee of the MHS Governing Board. We hope to see the stickers around town. The stickers were designed by former parent, Brady Joaquim, who donated her talent.



Book Fair Update

Thanks to everyone who pitched in to help make our Book Fair a success! Our school raised over \$600 from this fundraiser and Porter Square Books was pleased to partner with us. Our goal was that every student received a book. If you know of a student who did not go home with a book, please let Geralyn know. Many classroom libraries also received books that were purchased as gifts from families, students, and the Friends of Mission Hill.



JAN
11

Little Voices, Big Change: What is Racism?

Public · Hosted by Wee the People and Codman Square Branch of the Boston Public Library

Wee the People Event on January 11th

Kids notice a LOT -- including skin color. They sense that it matters, and they have questions about how and why. Join Wee The People for a workshop that asks a question many parents struggle to answer: What Is Racism? Together we will explore how racism isn't just one thing, but a system with many parts working together. Through activities, kids will learn how they can help topple these systems. Best for kids 5 and up.

Little Voices, Big Change is presented by Wee The People, a Boston-based social justice project for kids, parents, and educators.

🕒 Saturday, January 11, 2020 at 11 AM – 12:30 PM

📍 Codman Square Branch of the Boston Public Library

January Auditions at Boston Children's Chorus

Winter auditions to join the 2019-2020 season for Boston Children's Chorus, are quickly approaching! We'd love to have your children come sing with us. There is a place for every child at BCC regardless of skill level or financial need.


Audition dates:

- Wednesday, January 8, 2020
- Thursday, January 9, 2020
- Saturday, January 11, 2020

At BCC, singers participate in one of thirteen choirs that rehearse in four Boston neighborhoods: Allston/Brighton, Dorchester, Roxbury, and South Boston. To learn more about our programs, visit our [website](https://www.bostonchildrenschorus.org/our-programs/our-choirs/rehearsal-schedule).

<https://www.bostonchildrenschorus.org/our-programs/our-choirs/rehearsal-schedule>

Sign up for an audition time. - Irene Idicheria | Chief Program Officer



King Boston Essay Contest
Open to Middle and High School Students

King Boston is pleased to announce an essay contest inspired by the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King and their commitment to economic justice. Boston students in grades 6 through 12 in participating District, Charter and Catholic schools—partners in the Boston Compact—are eligible. Staff from the Boston Public Schools and the Boston Compact will help select the top 12 essays (four from each type of school), which will be forwarded to the King Boston Essay Selection Committee. Writers of the top three essays selected from that group will receive a cash prize.

ESSAY QUESTION
Reflecting on Dr. King's quote below, what issue of "economic justice" would the Kings be working on in Boston today? Why?

"There is nothing new about poverty. What is new, however, is that we have the resources to get rid of it."

CONTEST RULES

- Essays should be no more than **500 words** in length. Submissions that exceed this limit will be disqualified. Winning essays (including honorable mentions) will become the property of King Boston and may be published in print, electronically or used at a future time to spur social justice.
- Essays will be judged on the basis of intellectual creativity, personal impact, coherence and connection to the theme.
- One entry (essay) per student. All entries must have the student's name, grade level, teacher's name, and school information.
- Top four essays from BPS, Charter and Catholic schools will be forwarded to King Boston.
- The decisions of the judges are final. Submission indicates acceptance of all contest rules. No submission will be returned.

CASH PRIZES
1st Prize \$1,000 2nd Prize \$500 3rd Prize \$250

SUBMISSION DEADLINE & DIRECTIONS
January 7th, 2020, by 5:00 p.m.
BPS students should submit essays via email to ntorres2@bostonpublicschools.org.
Top essay selections will be announced by Tuesday, January 14th, 2020.

KING Boston

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

20 Child Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
(Carolina Avenue entrance)
T 617-635-6384
F 617-635-6419

You can find this newsletter, and an archive of past newsletters, on our website at

<http://www.missionhillschool.org/resources/newsletter/>.