



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

Friday, April 10
No School - Good Friday*No Newsletter this week*

Thursday, April 16
Governance Board Virtual Meeting 5-6:30pm

Monday, April 20
No School - Patriots Day

Tues-Fri, April 21-24
No School - Spring Break

April 3, 2020

Volume 23, Issue 27

Acts of Kindness

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

There really has never been a better time for acts of kindness. All over the city of Boston volunteers have stepped up to help neighbors and strangers in need. This is true in many communities throughout our country and our globe. In some ways, being apart has given us new ways to come together.

Have you been wondering how to keep alive the Mission Hill School tradition of reading aloud our *Acts of Kindness* at Friday Share alive? We have, and so have some of our students. March 6th was the final Friday that we were together in the school building, and we had already made the decision to not gather together in the auditorium. On that morning, a third grader asked if we could read the Acts of Kindness over the loudspeaker. We thought it was a great idea, and that is what Jenerra did. Although not all classrooms actually heard the Acts of Kindness announcements that day, the intention was there. Last Friday, we received an email from Mira and Xander's mom. She wrote: *This week Xander and Mira decided that our house needed an Acts of Kindness box and proceeded to craft one from an old tissue box and place it in a central location with a pencil and cut up slips of paper. They decided that we will hold a family meeting on Fridays to read the acts of kindness. It was a bright spot in my week and I wanted to share it.*



Wow! What a fun idea that is! It made us wonder what other ways students have been thinking about Acts of Kindness. Would Xander and Mira's idea of a repurposed tissue box inspire other families? Knowing that rituals can be helpful and grounding during times of uncertainty, we encourage you to ask your student(s) about their ideas for keeping the Mission Hill Acts of Kindness ritual alive. There are countless ways we have witnessed kindness in our community over the past few weeks. In fact, it is one of the things that is helping us all get through this. Here are a few Acts of Kindness we would like to share:

Nakia offered to help Kathy D set up CLEVER for her class.

Georgie helped Leila find support for a family who needed it.

Meg and Jeanne have sent the staff inspiring art to lift our spirits.

There are so many more that we could share. So many acts of kindness are happening daily and those acts are like drops that create ripples of connectedness and joy that flow to all of us. Both are things we really need right now. So keep the acts of kindness flowing wherever you are and feel free to send them to us as well. Who will be the lucky recipient of your next act of kindness?

Jenerra Williams and Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin

KINDERGARTEN

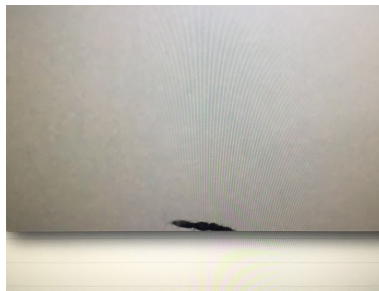
K0 Room 108

Quéla, Liana, Donna & Sarah

The other day, Quéla, Donna, Nelly and Liana were online together, connecting about how much we missed our K0 Burgers. We could never imagine how painful it would be to be suddenly separated from our students with very little warning. The only thing that was making us feel better was being able to connect with them online as much as possible. Each of us has spent time one-on-one or in small groups with our students, hearing from them and their families about this experience. Kai spent the whole half hour showing us his entire collection of dinosaurs. Raevonii kept closing her eyes and saying, "You can't see meeee!!" Ethan is eating a lot of chocolate. Liam runs around and around joyfully when we call. Anais fills the whole screen with her smile. Hezekiah and Nehemiah's mom told us that she had to hide their backpacks because every morning they would get dressed, grab their backpacks and wait at the window for the bus to pick them up. She had to keep telling them that the bus wasn't coming. Again. Jayce asks about going to school every day when he wakes up. Ana's shy smile says it all. Rowan and Jannatun like to share the camera with their little brothers. Lorenzo has introduced everyone to his dog. And then, there was Deusthcaelha. She was trusted by her parents to hold the phone as

we facetimes. Because she wasn't really used to aiming the phone, this was what we saw most of the call. Yes, that is a single, beautiful twist.

- The Burger Teachers



K1/K2 Room 106

Kathy & June

These past two weeks have had me feeling many different emotions. I struggle because I know so many people are losing loved ones, people are scared about their jobs, and people are fearful of the unknown. What will come next with Covid-19?

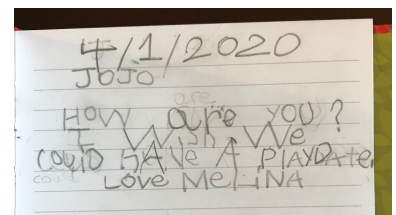
I find myself checking the news all the time and watching the numbers rise in Massachusetts. I am fortunate to have an amazing neighbor who also shares her struggles with info on social media. We decided to take a break from screens for a while. Once I stepped back I was able to see all the good that is happening around me. I am spending each day with my children. I am learning new things about them everyday. I am becoming more flexible and appreciating every little thing. I have two robins in my yard who

are either courting each other or fighting over turf. I watch each day to collect more data.

I am cooking a great deal. I have made tomato pie, Jamaican red peas soup, and a lot of pasta. I am figuring out how to cook and conserve food and make sure we waste nothing.

I am excited to stay connected with all of you through the newsletter.

The children in Room 106 are staying connected through Zoom. We share our favorite things to do at home, our favorite toys, and ways we are working our brains. We also continue to use class DOJO. Currently children are writing letters to each other and either mailing it or taking a picture of the letter and emailing it to the person. It is a fun project and it has been so wonderful finding ways to stay connected.



K1/K2 Room 107

Jada & Manny

For this week's newsletter, one of Lucy's moms took time out of her morning schedule to interview Lucy about one of their recent finds. Here is the conversation:

Allison: What did you find this week?

Lucy: A snake.

Allison: Where did you find it?

Lucy: On your rock.

Allison: How did it feel when you found the snake?

Lucy: Bumpy.

Allison: The snake felt bumpy? What kind of snake was it?

Lucy: A garden snake.

Allison: What are some things you know about snakes?

Lucy: Their tongue smells you and the snake we were holding lay itself on it. So now if you touch your hands they will get smelled and it has a tail that spray musk and you have to hold it flat.

Allison: Is it easier for you to find snakes on some days than on others?

Lucy: Yes

Allison: Why?

Lucy: Because they only come out when it's sunny.

Allison: Do you remember why snakes only come out when it's sunny?

Lucy: Because they like to lay in the sun.

Allison: That's where their bodies get energy from.

Lucy: Right!

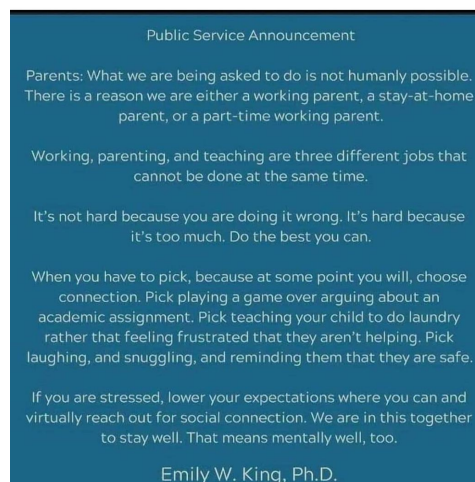
- Jada Brown and Emmanuel St. Vil



K1/K2 Room 109

Katie & Courtney M.

As I think about acts of kindness, I'm thinking about all the extra that parents and caregivers have taken on in this time. A community member shared what I thought was a poignant PSA on our *Mission Hill Families - Covid 19 Preparedness* Facebook page. Summarizing, the post said that what parents and caregivers are being asked to do is not normal, and that we can lower our expectations of ourselves in order to adjust. This is the act of kindness I hope you can find space to practice - self kindness and compassion. What we have all just been asked to do is different from any other experience in our lifetimes. Not one of us signed up for this - homeschooling, remote teaching, emergency work in a global pandemic. This is N E W. I encourage you to listen to your needs. I encourage you to honor that which is within your control and to give the rest of this the best response you can.



GRADES1&2

Room 210

Amy, Alana & Stephanie

Although the world is topsy-turvy right now, Cocoa Kindness students are finding fun adventures at home. Here's a snapshot of the extracurricular learning that is going on:

Asa: I made a cheesecake. It was yellow. The crust was the best part.

Kaleena: I'm having fun with my family's new bunkbeds. I'm on top!

Didi: I'm studying Vikings. Did you know that Vikings ate bread made from pine bark and peas. Also, Vikings that had colorful clothes were rich because it was expensive to dye cloth with bright colors.

Isaiah: I was helping my mom at her daycare. The baby Cecilia loves me!

Kayari: I'm reading a book about Brazil and playing the online math game "Prodigy."

Hannah: I'm reading "The Terrible Two," doing yoga, and learning fractions.

Rowan: I'm learning about coins and I love watching the red-tailed hawk sitting on her eggs on the Cornell webcam.

Danae: I made ricotta cheese with my mom and I'm doing a lot of Zoomba.

Alessandra: I'm making paintings of owls, playing nerf ball with my family and planting tomatoes, sunflowers, and carrots.

Jonathan: I'm playing hide-n-seek with my sister. I built a paper shield so she never found me!

Manny: I'm doing lots of scavenger hunts and sidewalk art. And I've been drawing jellybean people.

Stay tuned to read about the escapades of the other half of the class in a future newsletter!



Room 216

Danny, Felicia & Usra

What makes a community? We are in our third week of at-home learning, and it has been a struggle to adapt to this new reality. To suddenly stop seeing twenty-two students for six hours a day, five days a week was a big adjustment. That being said, there have been some positives to connecting in new ways with students and families. While on calls with families this week, Daniela shared her black cat Olive; Emerson shared drawings of Pokémon, and Wyatt shared his recipe for curry tuna casserole. I never knew that

Anish played the guitar, but yesterday I got to listen to him play during a video call. Max's Papa shared a video of his homemade volcanic eruption, complete with orange lava! Every time Reginald is on a call with me, he is inevitably joined by his two little brothers, who enthusiastically greet me over and over again. Last Friday, Airlie's mom sent me a video of Airlie performing "Be True to Your School" by the Beach Boys, complete with multiple confetti explosions. These moments of connection are so heartwarming, and though we are away from Mission Hill these connections are what our community is really all about.

- Danny Flannery, Felicia Haynes and Usra Ahmed



GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Amina & Ms. Hernandez

The 207 Wolves have been working on writing Personal Narratives. Below you will find Parker's story. Enjoy!

Parker's Trip To The TD Garden!

I am going to tell you about the time when I went to a Bruins game. The Bruins are the Boston hockey team.

They were playing against a team called the Jets. The Bruins play their games at a building called the TD Garden. I learned that there is another team that shares the building. They are the Boston basketball team. Their team name is the Celtics. They take turns using the arena. The Bruins play one night. The Celtics play the next night. When the Celtics play, they take big pieces of basketball court and they put it right over the ice.

When the game started, all the lights turned off and colorful spotlights turned on. Then they sang the National Anthem. Then the game started. The hockey players moved really fast. It looks easy when they ice skate but it's actually really hard. The place where we sat was really steep. The other team kept scoring goals and the Bruins kept catching up on the score. At the end of the game, the Bruins won 5-4. That is my story of when I went to a Bruins game.

Room 212

Cleata & Ayan

These past two weeks have brought many of us out of our comfort zone, though of course some of us are now *in* our comfort zone. There are students who have no problem adjusting to homeschooling and there are students who reach out to me daily with questions, concerns and ideas. William has been practicing his art, drawing and outlining models of cars. The first week he sent me a solo guitar performance and reached out to talk about his experience in homeschool. Jeremy has been sharing his ideas and thoughts about the pandemic and has taken on the role of updating us with news during our morning meetings. The Google hangout has been a place to find students chatting with their peers and where I had to remind a couple of students to take a break. The one thing we can all agree on is that homeschooling is nothing like being in the classroom, and finding a balance between work and downtime is still a struggle. As one parent told me, "We are all in this together."

- Cleata, Ayan and Eric

Room 215

Leila & Kat

"See you guys at 10 am (54 min)"
"cant wait to see you guys in 26 minutes so happy"
"so happy 3 minutes left"
"hello? Is anyone online its 10:08"

"that was a very nice morning meeting looking forward to another one on monday ;)"

These messages make a very difficult time feel so much more loving and familiar. The Wonders have been joining video morning meetings via Google Meet a few times every week. While our home schedules vary and we can't get everyone every day, we consistently see at least 10-15 members of our classroom. In addition to seeing each other, we also get to see beds, couches, siblings, pets, works of art and sometimes breakfast foods. This simple morning ritual brings us together.

Have you joined a video meeting with your classroom community? If you need a lift, I recommend you give it a try.

GRADES 5 & 6

Room 203

Ms. Coleman & Frances

The memories of a child that love sports and all that goes along with sports would never be forgotten. Jack Milstein is a 5th grader that loves different types of sports, but his favorite sport is baseball. Jack was given a chance of a lifetime, and that was to meet several people from the "Red Sox" franchise. He spoke with them and had the opportunity to hold the World Champs trophy.

Jack comments: "It was an amazing feeling to hold the

world series trophy, that the Red Sox had won; and was almost like I was a player myself. I felt as if I just won the world series myself. When I held the trophy I learned two things. One, the trophy was really heavy and two the trophy was really big. It was an awesome and amazing experience for me and will remember this for the rest of my life."



Room 205

Nakia & David

Here are a few reflections from students via homelife on our current situation:

"I thought that this month was going to be like any other month, but I was wrong. It all started in China when thousands of people started dying from this virus called COVID-19 also known as Coronavirus..."

“My opinion about this school lockdown. The school lockdown is a little extra. I think that six weeks is a lot of time but I get that the reason they closed for 6-weeks in important cuz we can’t have all these people with a very mad sickness.”

“For me, I was kind of expecting this to happen, and I knew in my mind that it was likely that it would, but I was not really processing in reality that it would happen. It feels like a lot. It’s kind of scary how quickly things can change. A week ago, I was in school, and it was just like any day, and three weeks ago, I wasn’t even thinking about what might happen out of the ordinary....”

“What are my thoughts? I’m feeling a bit annoyed because
It changes up my schedule. It’s also harder to work at home, Because I can’t focus as well. I also just miss going to school.
I am hoping we get to go back soon.”

“I feel as if this is some sort of plague and I also feel as if we are locked away in a tower like Rapunzel. At first, I loved the

idea of staying home for six whole weeks, now I’m not so sure. My idea of fun isn’t walking out in the arboretum no matter what the weather was like.”

- Nakia & David

GRADES 7 & 8

Room 213

Jenna & Courtney D.

As a teacher of teenagers, I am accustomed to hearing complaints throughout the school day like “Why do we have homework?” “When are we ever going to use this in the future?” “Why do we have to _____ (fill in the blank)?” However, since we have moved to virtual teaching in this new and strange reality, these complaints have been replaced. Instead, in my Zoom calls, the theme of my students’ comments has changed. In a recent call, Arianny said, “I said I don’t like being in school for the longest but now that I’m home, I miss it”. Elias said, “It’s hard for me to learn at home because I am a visual learner and I need someone to show me how to do it.” Mekhai said, “I miss my friends, I miss my teachers.” While it is easy to focus on what we have all lost in recent weeks, it is clear that my students have gained something as well: a new appreciation for their friends, teachers and Mission Hill community. As we continue to live through this “new normal”, I hope that we can learn from their example and find

appreciation for the things in life we typically take for granted. I hope that we will keep that appreciation alive even when this is over.

Room 214

Kathy B. & Ayanna



I will teach you in a room.
I will teach you how on Zoom.
I will teach you in your house.
I will teach you with a mouse.
I will teach you here and there.
I will teach you because I care.
So just do your very best.
And do not worry about the rest.

This was one of the best messages I got this week from a family friend, a former teacher. A true act of kindness, reading it brought a smile to my face, giving me a sense of relief. While we are working hard in this new environment to provide instruction and structure to our students, this reminds me of the ultimate message we’re sending in our daily Zoom meetings. Just showing up makes visible the fact that each of us is important and the sense of community we grew together in school is strong, even when we’re apart. Being able to come together through Zoom every morning has been a gift I’m grateful for so I won’t worry about the rest (for now).

SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS

Chromebook Distribution and Food Distribution Locations

We are continuing to work with the district to get Chromebooks to all families who need them. You can request a Chromebook, find the latest list of food distribution (school-based and citywide) locations and access the latest information related to coronavirus and school closure at <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus>.

At Home ~ Fun Ideas from our Community:



Circle Round Podcast

If families are looking for non-screen time ways to occupy their kids' imagination, the Circle Round podcast is a good one! First grader Max's dad Doug is in the stories called 'Song of the Horse' and 'The Search for Rain' and will be part of a few more coming soon. From WBUR's website: *Created and produced by parents of young children, WBUR's Circle Round adapts carefully-selected folktales from around the world into sound- and music-rich radio plays for kids ages 4 to 10. Each 10- to 20-minute episode explores important issues like kindness, persistence and generosity. And each episode ends with an activity that inspires a deeper conversation between children and grown-ups.*

<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/532788972/circle-round>

Getty Museum Challenge

And our own art teacher Meg Walker, sent us this idea from the Getty Museum in Los Angeles. The Getty Museum has been challenging people to recreate famous works of art using only what they had at home, and she convinced her youngest son to join the fun. If you decide to give this challenge a go, send your pictures to gmclaughlin@missionhillschool.org and I will add them to future newsletters.



Free Tutors from Harvard, MIT and more

With the shift to distance learning across nationwide school systems, college students from Harvard, MIT, UC Berkeley, and over 50 other top universities are giving free online tutoring (two hours per child so many students can benefit) to families coping with school closures! [GoPeer.org](https://www.gopeer.org) pairs vetted college students from top-tier universities with students between the ages of 5–18 for 1-to-1 tutoring lessons.

Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin and
Jenerra Williams, Co-Teacher Leaders

~
Deborah Meier, Founder
Ayla Gavins, Former Principal
Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent

Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School

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This newsletter, and an archive of past newsletters, is on our website.

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Fresh Truck Box Program

How It Works

About Fresh has partnered with [Katsiroubas Bros. Produce](#) to leverage their fleet of 65-refrigerated box trucks, 200-person labor force, and their international supply chain network to offer pre-packed '[Fresh Truck Boxes](#)' with a week's worth of healthy food and grocery staples to the Boston households vulnerable to food insecurity during the lockdown. Boxes will be provided to households at no cost.



'Fresh Truck Boxes' will be distributed to households through
1) hyper-local pickup sites and 2) direct-to-doorstep delivery.

LEARN MORE: <https://www.aboutfresh.org/fresh-truck-box-program-overview/>