



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

Mondays 3pm-4pm

Fridays 10am-11am

**Zoom Coffee Hour with Jeneralyn
for caregivers**

Wednesdays 12-12:30pm

**Zoom Lunch with Jeneralyn
for students**

Thursday, May 28, 5:00-7:00pm

Virtual Governance Board Meeting (open to all)

May 8, 2020

Volume 23, Issue 30

Screen-Free Week?

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

Those of you who have known me for a while know that I love the annual celebration of Screen-Free Week. Usually scheduled during the first week of May, this national event is an opportunity to remind ourselves of all the ways we can entertain ourselves without screens. To connect with the real world. To reflect on, or perhaps revise, our screen habits. This year, Screen-Free Week was cancelled. In its place we've had the launching of Phase 2 of remote learning for Boston Public Schools, which is bringing an increase of Zoom classes, Google Classroom offerings, and all kinds of apps into the lives of our children.



As we have rolled out Phase 2, some families read the letter from the Superintendent with great relief. These caregivers were looking for more structure to their child's remote learning experience and more "synchronous" time with teachers and classmates. Other families saw the new level of screen time expectations and attendance as stressful, unwanted and definitely not the right match for their child. Jenerra and I heard feedback all along this continuum, from parents of Kindergarten students up to our 7/8th Graders.

Across the district everyone is trying to figure this out. What is developmentally appropriate for the youngest students? How are students balancing screen time, academics, physical exercise, social-emotional needs, family responsibilities and more. My own son's high school is not even launching Phase 2 until next week as they work to figure out their best plan. We truly believe that caregivers know their child(ren) the best. Engagement can look many ways, and can include a screen or not.

There has never been a more important time to keep the lines of communication open. Truly no one size will fit all - this has never been more the case. Relationships are our strength, and this will help us figure this all out out in partnership with you. If you have a question or concern, please continue to reach out to your classroom teacher. Connect with Jenerra and myself if you need anything or have questions. Join us on Mondays 3-4pm and/or Fridays from 10-11am for a Coffee Hour where we can check in and support each other (see your email for the Zoom information or text Geralyn at (617) 906-1053).

For ideas about Screen-Free Saturdays, check out www.screenfree.org. Consider taking that day to turn off devices and play and explore during this time of social distancing. And a very special thanks to everyone during this Teacher Appreciation Week. Nowadays, that includes all of us!

-Geraldyn Bywater

McLaughlin

KINDERGARTEN

K0 Room 108

Quéla, Liana, Donna & Sarah

I was waiting in line to get into my local Trader Joe's today when the woman behind me started talking to me.

She: You know, it's never going to be the same as it was before. We can never go back to the way it was.

Me: Well, the way it was wasn't working for a lot of people so that's probably a good thing.

She: I agree. And schools are going to have to be so different too. Kids are probably going to need to go in shifts and continue online learning.

Me: Yes! I am a kindergarten teacher and it's been so tricky to learn how to teach three year olds online.

She: I love my grandsons' teachers. They are so devoted. They do read alouds all the time and are checking in with the kids and families every week.

Me: That's awesome. There are parts of this online teaching that have been pretty cool. Like I got to take my students outside with me the other day to look at the robin's nest in our yard and check out the eggs. I wouldn't have been able to do that before all this happened.

She: You sound like a great teacher! Where do you teach?

Me: Mission Hill school in Boston.

She: (freaking out) Oh my GOD. My grandsons Nehemiah and Hezekiah are IN YOUR CLASS!!!! (It was SO hard not to hug her!) How cool is that??? 45 minutes south of Boston and there she was, right behind me in line. The Universe at work.

- Liana, Donna, Quéla, Nelly, Alton

K1/K2 Room 106

Kathy & June

This week children in the Cats Class are working on independent studies.

They had steps to follow. Maybe you would like to work on an independent study. Here are the steps.

Think about something you would like to learn about, then

Step 1. Write a proposal. For example, you could write something like, "I would like to learn about _____."

Step 2. How are you going to learn about it? Do you have books about that at home? Are you going to have to look it up or phone a friend to ask them?

Step 3. Do some research. What did you learn?

Step 4. Record what you learned.

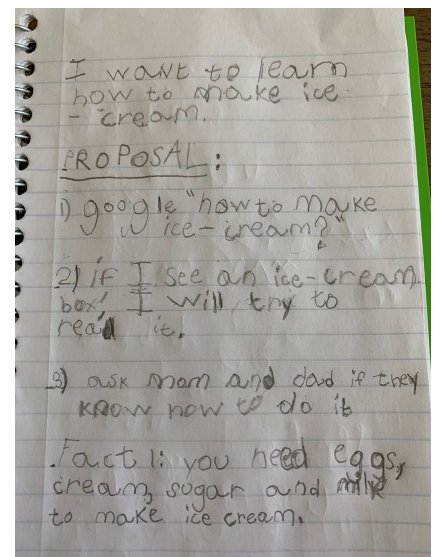
Step 5. Edit your work. Did you start with a capital? Are the uppercase and lowercase letters in the right place? Is there a word - you want to learn how to

spell - that you wrote how it sounds to you?

Step 6. Draw a picture.

Step 7 Ask someone to give you feedback on two ways you can make it better.

Step 8. Draw another draft. I hope you enjoy your new learning experience.



K1/K2 Room 107

Jada & Manny

Last week we began sharing moments of excitement, persistence and successes worth celebrating. Here are some more examples:

Gio shared his dog, cat, brother and his new baby sister.

Josue shared his Pokemon drawings.

Abubakar shared work he has been doing at home.

August shared about his pet birds and how at times when they are let out to fly around,

they sometimes land on his baby sister.

Alysha shared a bird and nest made out of paper and a lot of completed math work.

Giuliany shared rainbows and other drawings from her notebook.

Raven shared her sister and her mom.

Maeve shared about walks she has taken at the arboretum, about tadpoles she's watching grow, and about a tooth she lost!

We have also had some awesome Zoom classes this week. Here are a few highlights:

Gio said he liked stretching his leg up with Coach Rivera.

Jonathan drew a tiny cupcake scooting up a bigger cupcake with Meg.

Lucy shared how her thermos could become a musical instrument.

- Jada Brown and Emmanuel St. Vil

K1/K2 Room 109

Katie & Courtney M.

"What do you think would make our class Zoom calls more fun and interesting for everyone?" I asked Miles at a recent check-in. "Oh, I have a good idea for that. I think a theme would make it fun! And I think the theme should be dinosaurs, since everyone knows a thing or two about dinosaurs," Miles told me.

And just like that, our class themes were born. Before each Zoom, we ask a child to suggest a theme (we are using the alphabetical class list, so if you're

wondering when your child will get a turn, roughly count the number of Zooms to their name in the alphabet). We send out the theme to families ahead of time and children come prepared with stories, connections, books, and props related to the theme. For our dinosaur theme, two children had *the exact same* dinosaur book at home! They both rifled through to find their favorite pages. They pointed out details to each other and debated certain dinosaurs and what they were probably like in real life.

This was one of my favorite conversations I've ever witnessed kindergarteners have, and it was occurring through Zoom!

- Katie

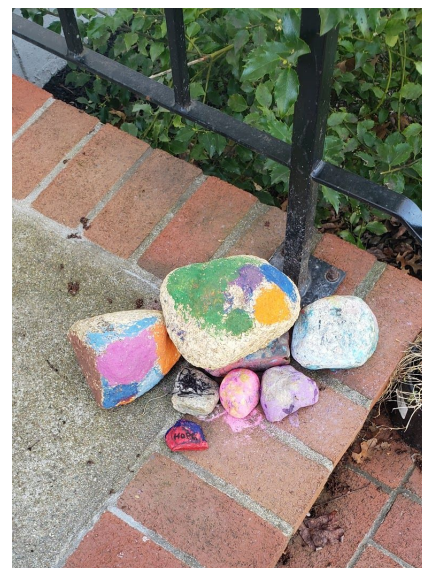
GRADES 1 & 2

Room 210

Amy, Alana & Stephanie

Cocoa Kindness is settling into Phase 2 of distance learning! We have been very busy with a little bit of reading, a little bit of writing, a little bit of math and a lot of ART! With Miss Jeanne we are studying Andy Goldsworthy. Using nature for his art, he is a perfect artist for springtime when we love to watch nature unfolding. His artwork is ephemeral, lasting only until it melts, blows away or disintegrates. The students have been inspired by his art and have produced their own ephemeral art. Please ask

them to share it with you or be inspired to create your own nature art and share it with us!



Room 216

Danny, Felicia & Usra

During our weekly check-in not long ago, Mira let me know about Geocaching, and I've been hooked ever since. Geocaching is an outdoor activity where you use a GPS and clues to find hidden containers - think a treasure hunt but with modern technology. Just a few days ago I was walking along a trail in the woods, seeing the distance

projected on my app reduce until it stayed constant at about 175 feet. Realizing I needed to go off the path, I took a hard left and walked through thickets until I started to go uphill. With the GPS feature becoming less helpful as you get closer to the Geocache, I started looking around for landmarks. There was a large cluster of rocks on my right side, and upon closer inspection I found a large Geocache within a crack in the rocks! I was so excited to share this discovery with Mira and her family as we've bonded over our love of Geocaching. They are Geocaching pros, and it's been nice to connect over this new hobby during our time apart. What's a new hobby you've taken up during this time at home?



GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Amina & Ms. Hernandez

One of the things I miss most from not being physically in school is SINGING together, of course. I recently asked the Wolves what songs they are missing most. The Bog Song was mentioned the most. I hope you enjoy this clip!

<https://youtu.be/7gQa1y3zr-c>

-Amina Michel-Lord

Room 212

Cleata & Ayan This week as we began Phase 2 of our remote learning, I was thrilled to see three-fourths of the Black Warriors in attendance during our face-to-face time. The remaining fourth who were unable to attend have shared some challenges around attending virtual classes. I thought I should use fractions to describe our attendance since 3rd Graders have been discussing, exploring and representing fractions in real life scenarios. We have compared fraction parts of different shapes and fractions on number lines. We began by making fraction sets using any paper we could find in our homes. We spent time identifying the numerator and denominator in a fraction and labeling fraction parts. Our third grade mathematicians have shown much enthusiasm sharing

their thinking and making the most of their virtual math time. One student wrote this message to the group in our Google Classroom: "It was nice seeing you all and being in Ms. Cleata's math class." As we continue remote learning I hope to see more students and families connecting to our virtual classroom community.
- Cleata and Ayan

Room 215

Leila & Kat

The Wonders are studying immigration as part of the Unafraid Educators Week of Action. We are reading books and articles about different immigration experiences, and we keep asking the same questions: Where did the main character's ancestors come from? How did they get to the United States? What were the main reasons why they came? How did they feel about the move? How were they treated in the new place? What were some surprises? What would they do differently? We began discussing how some people have a choice to immigrate, and some people don't have a choice. Students quickly brought up the terms "refugee" and "slave" for us to factor into our conversation. Now the Wonders are interviewing family members and friends to find out about personal immigration stories. What was your family's immigration experience like? Please let us know if you'd like to

share your story with the Wonders!



GRADES 5 & 6

Room 203 & Room 205 Ms. Coleman & Frances Nakia & David

It was super exciting to see many of you at our Coffee Hour on Monday and lunch with students on Wednesday. Some parents of good friends/classmates got to meet for the very first time. We learned that Josiah is the tech support in his house, and that Nathaniel's three-year-old sibling will be joining the K0 class when school opens again. Did you know that these are going to happen every week? Our Caregiver Coffee Hours are Mondays and Fridays. Lunch with students is noon on Wednesdays. Caregivers can check their email for the Zoom information - or text GERALYN at (617) 906-1053).
-Jenerra and GERALYN
(AKA Jeneralyn)



GRADES 7 & 8

Room 213 Jenna & Courtney D.

When all of our students look back on this time, they will think about this year and the many challenges and difficulties it brought. For 8th Graders, however, the view is going to look a bit different. The end of 8th grade, similar to the end of high school or college, should be a time of reflection, closure and fun. 8th Graders should get to experience all of their “last moments” of school together. Their last time walking through the school doors as a student. Their last time greeting their teachers and peers before morning meeting. Their last Friday Share. Their last lunch together in the cafeteria and so many more “lasts.” It is heartbreaking that they will not get these moments. They, like so many students across the country and world, have to figure out how to find this closure without the traditions that typically mark this time. As their community, we need to help them navigate these uncharted waters - with no prior experience ourselves. We welcome any input and ideas from the MHS community on how to do this in a way that honors our 8th Graders and helps them end their MHS careers in a positive way.

Room 214

Kathy B. & Ayanna

7th and 8th Grade Portfolio presentations are a rite of passage at Mission Hill. While this year is not ending as we anticipated, portfolio presentations are proceeding as planned. Students gather the best work from their classes including Theme, Humanities, Math, Art and Music. 7th Graders also write a “Beyond the Classroom” essay, highlighting a skill they’ve learned and developed outside of the school. Then they reflect on what they’ve learned about themselves through the process. Finally, they create a work tag for each piece to reflect on its strengths and weaknesses as well as the habit of mind or work they used to create it. Each student creates a 45 minute presentation of this work which their teachers, advisor, family members, and other interested parties attend. Jenna and Courtney are working with 8th Graders, while Ms. Ayanna and Kathy B. are working with 7th Graders to complete their portfolios.



Help Hotline is Open!

There is a BPS hotline where you can get many answers to your questions related to the coronavirus school closure. The hotline is 617-635-8837. You can also check out <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus> for a ton of resources available to you on the BPS coronavirus website. You can report a damaged 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>.

Urban Improv has Gone Virtual!

Rehearsal for Life: Our *Urban Improv* program has gone virtual! New, short [Urban Improv Care Packages](https://rehearsalforlife.org/educator-resources/) (<https://rehearsalforlife.org/educator-resources/>)

incorporate memorable songs, entertaining scenes, and thought-provoking prompt questions to engage remote

learners and to remind us all to practice our Social-Emotional Learning skills during this time at home. We would love parent & student feedback on our Care Packages. You can email thoughts to Jamie Ullrich, Senior Program Manager at jullrich@rehearsalforlife.org.



REHEARSAL FOR LIFE®

Update on support from Alyssa Alvarado, our School Psychologist

Alyssa Alvarado, our school psychologist, is available to any of our students that are having a difficult time during the school closure. In addition to support for the students, she is able to consult with parents regarding their child's behavior or mental health. If you are interested in support please contact her via email at aarpino@bostonpublicschools.org or Google voice: 781-613-3292.

Zooming with Jenerra and Geralyn (Jeneralyn)

As part of Phase 2, families are welcome to join Geralyn and Jenerra for a Zoom Coffee Hour on Mondays from 3:00pm - 4:00pm and Fridays from 10:00am - 11:00 am. Drop in for a few minutes or stay as long as you like. This will be a chance to connect, ask general questions, share ideas, and support each other. Students are invited to lunch with Jeneralyn on Wednesdays at noon. Again, these are optional and all students are invited. Check your email for the Zoom details, or write to us at gmclaughlin@missionhillschool.org or jwilliams@missionhillschool.org. You can also text Geralyn at 617-906-1053.

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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