

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Mission Hill

Do Good Work

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

This week's title is borrowed from the words of Garrison Keillor. He signs off with the same phrase on one of my favorite radio shows, *The Writer's Almanac*. I heard the following excerpt the other morning and thought of our newly graduated students.

Excerpts from "**How to be Perfect**" by Ron Padgett

Get some sleep.

Eat an orange every morning.

Be friendly. It will help make you happy.

Hope for everything. Expect nothing.

Take care of things close to home first.

Straighten up your room before you save the world. Then save the world.

Be nice to people before they have a chance to behave badly. Don't stay angry about anything for more than a week, but don't forget what made you angry. Hold your anger out at arm's length and look at it, as if it were a glass ball. Then add it to your glass ball collection.

Wear comfortable shoes.

Do not spend too much time with large groups of people.

Plan your day so you never have to rush.

Show your appreciation to people who do things for you, even if you have paid them, even if they do favors you don't want.

After dinner, wash the dishes.

Calm down.

The growing and going of our oldest students is upon us. The growth of each one of them is clear. As students have presented their collection of work to a committee, each child and his or her accomplishments are in the spotlight. Explaining and defending one's work requires a combination of skills; knowing the work and the context of it, academic vocabulary, articulation, and engaging an audience. Congratulations to you, graduates. You are ready to leave our nest. As Garrison Keillor says, "Be well, do good work, and keep in touch."

~Ayla Gavins

REMINDERS

June

Wed. 6/20: Early Dismissal, 1:30

Thu. 6/21: Early dismissal, 1:30

NO FOOD SERVICE

From the Classrooms

5 to 7 year-olds

Room 203

The last few weeks have been busy for Room 203. Not only have we been reflecting on visiting family workplaces, we have been working hard and thinking deeply about how to make the idea of an ice cream shop a reality. After doing our research at JP Licks a few weeks ago, we answered the following questions.

How did you feel and what did we need to make the ice cream?

Daniel: It was fun. I made vanilla and mint oreo.

Amishai: I made chocolate chip and vanilla.

Omar: We use condensed milk, frosting a spoon and a bowl.

What jobs will we need for our shop?

Ice cream makers

Cashiers- They collect money and give you the ice cream.

People- They eat the ice cream.

Flavor makers

Scoopers- They scoop the ice cream.

Fillers- They fill buckets with ice cream.

Welcome people (greeters)

What should our ice cream shop be called?

Justin: JP Licks, because I like the ice cream there.

Ceva: 203's Ice Cream, because we made it.

Kelise: Chocolate and Vanilla Shop.

Yarieli and Jessica: Room 203's Ice Cream Shop.

Daniel: Eat-a-bite-a-ice-cream.

Amishai: I think it should be called Ice Cream Shop.

Laudys: Big Chill

So, we have come up with the following slogan based on all our names:

“Come Eat-a-bite-a-ice-cream at 203's BIG CHILL Vanilla and Chocolate ice cream shop!”

~Jada Brown,
& Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 204

Being metacognitively aware of one's own learning can be hard. Thinking about your thinking isn't always easy. Even though it is challenging it is something that I expect. Before our bakery doors opened I shared with the students that after their shift was finished they would need to spend time drawing and writing about their experience. They did this after each shift.

Jolie shared: *Day 1:* My dad came to the bakery. He got a brownie pop, a jam, a banana bread, and a red thing. *Day 2:* I was the ticket giver. It was kind of fun. It was kind of fun cause I had to wait a lot. *Day 3:* I had fun. I saw all the cake got sold out.

I also interviewed the children asking them, “How did it feel to work in the bakery?”

Dalia shared, “I got to work and it feels like I had a job. I was good because I got to help people. I looked at all my friends and they were happy.”

Arianny shared that she was nervous because she was worried when she was passing out the cupcakes she would mess up the frosting.

Rafael said, “At the bakery I gave food to the people.” He went on to share how he felt. “It was so much fun to me because I love going to

the bakery.”

We also kept a count of how many visitors we had to the bakery each day. One the first day we had 45 people. On the second we had 55. And on the third day we had 75 people. Each day we wondered about how many visitors we'd had the day before and if more people would come, fewer people would come, or the same number of people would come. Our predications were very close.

~Kathy Chunis D'Andrea

Room 205

Tom and Amy have again packed up their camera and microphones after three weeks of filming. Their company this year has been much more than a project they are doing; they provide us a mirror, a magnifier, a prism through which to see the work we are all doing, children and adults together. The conversations they both capture and provoke push us to think more carefully about what is happening as it's happening and to consider what we might do next. It has been fascinating to watch the children register the presence of the camera and then go about their work; what happens in the moment in between?

I know that the camera has caught extraordinary moments of hard work, of playfulness, of problem solving, of joy. It is the end of the school year when we look at how each child has grown and what each has produced. We are looking through artwork and writing and images of block buildings, we are thinking about the children who greeted us on the first day of school last fall and the

children who are now helping us pack up the classroom. They carry themselves with more confidence, greater skill, a deep sense of each other's strengths and challenges. They readily give voice to their expectations and desires.

Thank you, families, for sharing your young children with us, for supporting them as they learn and supporting our efforts to be their teachers. It has been a dramatic, exciting, challenging, joyful year. Finally, too, I offer a public appreciation for all the work and heart and energy and thought Leia has dedicated to our classroom (and to Mission Hill School) this year. Without her? Unimaginable.

~Melissa Tonachel
& Leia Baylor

7 to 9 Year-Olds

Room 201

Packing up both my apartment (for a move to Allston) and my classroom (for the move to JP) has helped to unearth a treasure trove of mementos. The photos have been my favorite finds. Snapshots of Jada's kindergarteners and first graders wearing "olive branch" crowns, training and participating in their Red Cheetah Puppy Olympics four years ago. One of my parents on their first visit to Mission Hill, helping some K/1st graders make a family recipe, letting little hands scoop jam from jars.

On my desk I found a basket of photos from last year. There is our first class photo, taken in the apple orchard, with Ms. Donna and me sitting on either side of our tiny

kindergarteners and first graders. A later picture shows them all slightly bigger, bundled in snow gear for our Winter Field Day in the backyard.

Most poignant, perhaps, was the small laminated book found as we packed up the books. *The Koalas Struggle for Justice Dolls 2007*, the cover read. Inside were photos of little Maurice, Sela and Cora, smiling and holding dolls they had sewn. Yesterday, all three graduated from Mission Hill. As Mission Hill moves, I hope we continue to uncover these small, bright memories that we can carry with us wherever we go.

~Emily Schubin
& Donna Winder

Room 207

Last Friday we held our annual Exhibition celebration. On this morning, Lightning Bolts share reflective speeches about the school year. Below are excerpts from each speech.

Axel- I struggled with reading and writing. I have gotten better at writing.

Dario- I got better at writing. I now write bigger and neater.

Anaïs- I have gotten better at writing.

Devin- I found out that I like Ancient China and that people are nice.

Nora- It is still a challenge trying to do new things outside because it is hard to do new things.

Didi- It was a struggle finding friends. I have gotten better at spelling.

Malehk- At the beginning of the year I was afraid of the bees.

Jaylin- I connected with others because I like the same books as

other people.

Caleb- I got better at work I never did before and taking a breath when I am very mad.

Theo- I have gotten better at reading. Thinking of what to write is still a challenge.

Amara- I have gotten better at spelling some words correct. Math is still my challenge.

Chantal- I have gotten better at making friends. Solving problems is still a challenge.

Zachary- I have gotten better at writing, reading and making friends. Reading chapter books is still a challenge.

Javier- I have gotten better at math. I know how to tell time. Writing is still a challenge.

Dylan- I think my teachers and parents would say I have gotten better at returning my homework.

Angel- I have gotten better at writing because I was looking at the words I use when I write.

Ebony- At the beginning of the year I was afraid my teachers were going to be mean.

Giselle- Doing my classroom job, fixing books, has been a challenge.

Mintou- I struggled with learning fractions because it was hard remembering what 1/3 looked like in shapes.

This year has been a year of tremendous growth, good times and challenges. Jenerra and I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you and your children. We hope you all have a safe summer and we look forward to seeing you in the fall.

~Amina Michel-Lord
& Jenerra Williams

9 to 11 Year-Olds

Room 202

Writing a final newsletter is always a challenging task. There are so many moments worth mentioning; moments of discovery, of growth, of sharing. There have also been many moments of struggle, of turmoil, even sadness. There have been times of surpassing achievements and times when we have fallen short of our goals. We have shared lots of laughter, and a few tears. We have spent time locked together in close quarters, filling time with reading, and with telling and writing stories. We spent time studying Life Science together by learning about animal habitats. We explored the dynasties of Ancient China with timelines, proverbs, art, and literature. We learned about inventors and inventions – and built some things of our own – while investigating the World of Work. Both the fourth and fifth grades developed their mathematical thinking and problem solving skills collaboratively with Nakia’s class. We had the pleasure of enjoying another Farm School trip!

We have had many discussions; discussions about community, about mindfulness, about wisdom and responsibility. I have truly enjoyed watching students develop their voices and opinions as the year has progressed. I am well aware that not all of what we discuss will stay with every student – how much does on any given occasion is open to debate.

But I cannot count the number of times a student referred to some point that was made during one of these discussions that I had forgotten or how many times they connected something that had been discussed previously to some new idea or thought. Now, having reached the end of this year, we have completed this year’s journey as a community that has cared for each other and worked together. Good luck and best wishes, Wolf Pack!

~James McGovern

Room 206

As we wind down another school year it feels like the first day of school was just yesterday. The pacing of the end of the school year combined with all of the things that are happening make it feel hurried. When you factor in the move to a new building, it just adds another layer of hecticness. As we prepare to say goodbye to the old building, while families are fighting to delay the move for a year, I can’t help but be a bit mournful. In fact, I am fighting back tears as I write this.

Long ago when I was an 8th grade student I visited this building as a prospective high school. My best friend Darrick and I came to Mission Church High to see if it would be a good fit. We spent the day in classes, had lunch and were treated really well by all of the students. While I had friends that already attended, I decided to go a different route. Shortly thereafter the building was closed and all of the students, including some close friends, all had to find another home... away from each

other. Eggie McCrae, Jahmal Galloway, Khari Roulhac, Roxanne Noseworthy, Frankie Patton, all went their separate ways.

Fast forward thirteen years later and I walked back into the building as a potential learner again, this time, as a student teacher. I learned a lot during that time and look back with fond memories.

Eleven years later I am saying goodbye again to Mission, as I knew it. Much has changed and some has remained. The mural outside the cafeteria painted by Richard Horsely in the late ‘80s, early ‘90s. The half gym that Jamal and Eggie used to lead Mission to state championships. It seems like just yesterday I could hear the Hip-Hop song *We’re on a Mission*, blasting through speakers on the day of big games in the gym of Mass College of Art. In fact they had such a culture established that the new high school had to use “New” Mission in order to create their own identity.

For me personally, this will be a place I sat and ate lunch as a thirteen-year-old kid. Where I learned from a master middle school teacher, Roberta Logan, as a graduate student. And where I have learned and grown as a professional ever since. This has been home. I have been happy teaching in Roxbury, a neighborhood I know well. I am sure things will come together in Jamaica Plain, but alas, JP is no Roxbury. I’ll miss you “Mission.”

~Nakia Keizer

Grades 6, 7 8

Room 211

I can't believe my first year at Mission Hill is coming to a close. It feels like it was only a few months ago that I walked into the art room and was being interviewed by the whole staff. I was nervous about going from being a humanities teacher to a teacher generalist, who covers all subjects, but I enjoyed having the 6th graders and working with them in all subjects gave me a fuller picture of them as learners and thinkers. Through our class meetings I felt like I also got to know them as individuals. Having them all day allowed me to see real growth academically and I watched them begin to mature. Some of my favorite parts of this year were: doing human body labs, writing Chinese myths, reading *We Beat the Street*, going to Farm School and rowing on the Boston Harbor.

~Sarah DeCruz

Room 209

"Look!" Kavon said excitedly. "I'm taller than Ann." He stood beside me and cast an eye at the top of my head as his hand slid from the top of his head to slightly above mine. "And I'll be even taller next year."

Kavon's growth in height was perceptible; he had not been taller than me at the start of the school year. I celebrated that fact with him but as his teacher I want him to have more than an increase in height to celebrate. That time came a day later when we sat for

his 7th Grade Portfolio presentation.

"Look at me," Kavon said, when his presentation was over. "I can't stop smiling." The source of the smiles was the 7th grade work that had earned him a pass. So, yes, Kavon, you did get taller this year but you also grew your brain, which isn't quite as easy to measure. You can count on getting taller each year for several more years before your height levels off. But your brain is yours to keep growing, as your learning years will never end.

As this school year ends, I say to all families: Thank you so very much! I have had a wonderful year learning along with your children. As individuals and as a class, they are amazing. Each child has grown, academically and socially (and, I suppose, height-wise!). In addition to acquiring more knowledge, they are more confident and have developed a broader worldview. With summer vacation, I lose my daily time with your children and I'll miss them. But I know they are in a good place to move forward and to be successful in eighth grade or high school.

To our graduates, I say this. Please remember that the Mission Hill Habits of Mind and Work, and the Mission Hill Way (Be kind; work hard), are intended to be guides for life not slogans for school. They will travel with you to new contexts. You can trust these habits and mindsets to steer you in a good direction. As you move on, you remain a part of our community. Represent us well, and stay in touch.

I hope school vacation will give you a chance for more family time. Enjoy, and have a wonderful summer!

~Ann Ruggiero

Room 208

The Class of '12 has graduated, and has begun the process of leaving MHS for new schools and new chapters in their stories. Here are a few words from the seven/eight teachers, spoken as the students walked across the assembled families, fellow students and MHS staff:

Isak Bergquist, High School: Boston Latin Academy

Although only at Mission Hill School for two years, it didn't take Ike long to feel right at home. Ike has deep and wide ranging interests – he is as likely to be buried in a book about playing lacrosse as one about the design of skyscrapers. Ike is more than ready to take on the new challenges of high school.

Maurice Bouchard, High School: Boston Arts Academy

It has been a distinct pleasure to watch Maurice develop not only as a student, but also as an artist. When he is not teaching himself a new computer programming language, or serving on the MHS governing board, Maurice is prolifically producing new songs and videos. I'll miss hearing his daily morning updates about what new amazing thing he has just read, seen, or listened to and chosen to share...

Paul Brown, High School: still choosing

This young man has grown tremendously during his time at Mission Hill. A hard worker on the court, Paul has learned to bring the confidence, strength, and effort he shows in his game into the classroom, and into his character. He has

learned to love to see himself grow as a student and community member as well as an athlete. Paul is also a true animal lover, who was as comfortable milking cows or working with oxen at the farm school as he is reading about the different animals of the world or interviewing a veterinarian.

**Cora Burwell, High School:
Fenway High**

I can't think of a time when my day has not been brightened in some way by Cora's smile. Her kind and caring nature embody that part of our mission statement about dealing with each other in ways that make us "feel stronger and more loved, not weaker and less loveable". We thank Cora for serving as one of our student representatives on the MHS governing board. Her positive outlook and thoughtful questions and comments enriched many meetings over the past two years.

**Amber Dawson, High School:
Fenway High**

It seems like every piece of work Amber produces shows evidence of her incredibly sharp sense of style, design, (and humor) and careful attention to detail. Her craftsmanship and unique flair show up in everything she produces, from cupcakes to calculations, self-portraits to poems. Amber is a careful and disciplined independent worker who is always up for a challenge. Amber also brought these attributes to the 826 editorial board to help make our recently released book a reality.

**Treyvaughn Jacks, High
School: Community Academy**

of Science and Health

A gentle and loving brother, Treyvaughn often wears the serious look of a scholar deep in thought. But he also loves fun, a good laugh, and sports. Treyvaughn has the wisdom to know that it is important to feel deeply about important issues in life. Trey is a much loved and respected member of the Mission Hill community. He is an amazing mathematician and also served on the editorial board for our 826 World of Work book project.

**Jazmin Jiles, High School:
Snowden International**

Jazmin has only been at Mission Hill for two years, but we are so happy that she joined us. She brought a much-needed vitality to the Class of 2012. Her patience, keen observational skills, and unique perspective make her a naturally strong scientist. Her self-choreographed ballet piece in the Art Show gave us a glimpse of the strength, grace, elegance, and balance that she carries within herself.

**Malick Niane, High School:
Fenway High**

Malick is really thoughtful about the world – he thinks on a deep level whether solving a math problem, doing a scientific inquiry, analyzing a current event, or preparing a reading response. Malick has a wonderful sense of humor and recently demonstrated that he is a great teacher as he led James' class through a math exploration. Malick has a range of skills and abilities. For the last two years, Malick has been a student

representative on the Mission Hill School Governing Board.

**Foday Sesay, High School:
Boston Community Leadership
Academy**

As a scholar, Foday has good scientific and math habits. As a community member, Foday has developed expertise engaging our youngest students. At his recent portfolio presentation, Foday's committee recognized that he is a wonderful young man, poised to take responsibility for all that he can offer to his community, school, and family.

**Sela Winder, High School:
Boston Community Leadership
Academy**

As graduation approached, Sela earned a new nickname – "the organizer." Sela has shown a long-standing passion for the brain and psychology. Her science fair experimental design impressed a visiting university psychology professor from the Netherlands, who asked to take Sela's work back to share with her graduate students. Sela also interviewed Mayor Menino for our World of Work book project.

Congratulations to our graduates and their families! We look forward to visits from the members of this class, and to news of their further adventures.

~Jacob Wheeler

Hot Topics

Courtney's Corner

FREE Memberships @ YMCA
The YMCA of Greater Boston will offer free summer memberships to teens between 13

years old and 17 years old at all of its 13 branches, including the Waltham branch. Teens can visit any YMCA of Greater Boston branch starting June 23rd to enroll with a valid state or student ID, or with a parent present.

http://www.boston.com/yourtown/news/waltham/2012/06/ymca_of_greater_boston_to_offe.html

Check your coats!

Before you pack away your winter clothes, please take a moment to check the name in your coat. Many Mission Hill kids have similar looking coats and some have walked away be mistake– if the name in the coat isn't yours, please bring it back so we can give it to its owner. Also check the lost and found if you're missing any items.

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.

Box Tops

Don't forget to collect Box Tops for Education all summer long. You can drop them off at the start of the school year to Courtney.

Summer Support

Courtney works all summer long and can be best reached at courtney.bruno@bc.edu. Feel free to contact her with any of your family's needs or if you have questions about the camps your child is attending. You can also get a jump start and talk to her about programs you're seeking for the fall.

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