

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

Spring Calendar at MHS

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

As I looked at the calendar a familiar sense of panic came over me. Spring is here. For people who work in or connected to schools that means there isn't much time to do all the things we hope to do with students and other children in our lives. It's a season of events shared with the school community and the time just seems to fly.

Listed below are some of the Mission Hill events on the spring horizon:

May 16 Ecoteer Day (all day): Our environment will get some much needed love and attention from MHS. This is a whole school event during the school day involving clean up, review of ways to restore and prevent harm to the environment as well as beautifying spaces. All are welcome to participate.

May 31 Teacher Appreciation Day (noon to 2:00): Send in a dish and/or come in to the school during the lunch/recess hour. This is one of the staff's favorite days of the year. Why? Volunteers come in to cover lunch and recess duty so everyone on staff can have lunch together. It's the one day of the year that we get to do that and it's awesome.

June 3-June 14 Portfolio Reviews (schedule to come): Students in grades 7 and 8 will present their work to committees for feedback and assessment. These committees are predetermined and open only by invitation. Artwork produced by grade 8 students as part of the portfolio reviews will be on display outside the auditorium. All are welcome to view.

June 5-7 Promotion and ELD (to be scheduled): Families will be informed by invitation if such a meeting is needed.

June 7 Exhibitions (9:30 to 10:30): Students in K0 to grade 4 will present reflections on the year's work and learning. Family representation is expected.

Governance Board (date TBD): This June is the last meeting of the year. At this meeting new board members will be announced. If you've never been to a board meeting, this promises to be a great one. All are welcome. Childcare is available.

June 13 Roller Skating (10:30 to 12:30): We love whole school trips. This spring we are all headed to Chez Vous for roller-skating. We hope you can join us. The more the merrier.

June 14 Playground Renovation Groundbreaking (9:40- 10:15): Please come to this event to launch the redesign of the current orchard, tot lot and fenced in concrete space in the back of the school.

REMINDERS

May

5/6-7 - MCAS for grades 3 & 4: Math

5/9-10 - MCAS for grades 5 & 6:

Math

5/13-14 - MCAS for grade 8:

Math

5/16-17 - MCAS for grades 5 & 8:

Science and grade 7 Math

Thu. 5/16 - Family Council mtg. 5:45

5/20-21 - MCAS make-up days for all grades

Fri. 5/31 - Teacher Appreciation

Day

June 17 We have school! The BPS calendar says no school because it's Bunker Hill Day, but it is a make-up day for Mission Hill.

June 19 Middle School Art Show (5:45 to 7:00pm): A requirement for graduation from MHS is presentation of artwork and performance. Family representation for middle school students only is expected at this event. Bring applause and hearty congratulations to all the artists.

June 21 Coffee House (5:45- 7:00pm): The first Coffee House was such a success; the door is open for more talent. Children and adults should sign up quickly. Spots are sure to fill up soon.

June 25 MHS Graduation (10:00 to 11:30): All students will attend our school graduation, but only families of graduates are welcome to join. Photos and a listing of which high schools our graduates have selected will be in a future newsletter.

June 26 Field Day (10:00- 1:30) is a family event. Games and events begin in the morning. A picnic lunch happens after the games and activities. There are lots of ways to pitch in and have a great time.

All the things listed above will happen while our students are learning about elements of physical science, electives are moving along, teachers are writing end of year reports and we all begin to prepare our school . Yowza!

~Ayla Gavins

From the Classrooms

3 and 4 year-olds

Room 108

Hello Parents, Family, and Friends! I have not had the opportunity to meet all of you, but I want to introduce myself briefly. My name is Claudia Ontaneda and I am a senior at Wheelock College, majoring in Early Childhood Education. I am delighted to be a student teacher in your child's classroom, The Rocks. As you know, we have been studying Physical Science and this week during my Leadership Week I planned lessons and fun activities using the book *Gilberto and the Wind* by Marie Hall Ets. It's a great book to learn about the functions and properties of the wind. First, I read the story and as a class. Then we talked about the wonderful things Gilberto was able to do with the wind by playing outside such as flying kites, blowing bubbles, sailing paper sailboats, and racing the wind through the meadow. This gave us wonderful ideas as to what we could do to explore with the wind. So we made and decorated pinwheels, blew big amazing bubbles, and made our very own sailboats! These activities were all perfect for Screen-Free Week as we used our imaginations and creativity.

~Claudia Ontaneda

Kindergarten

Room 106

The Butterflies class has been

working on our physical science theme of Construction. The children have faced three challenges; to build a building as tall as they are, to build a building as tall as they are using 12 blocks or fewer, and to build a building as tall as they are that fits into a 1 X 1 square.

They have been excited about completing this task. They are using a great deal of math and science to construct these buildings. I recently observed Amos standing next to another student's building. He was comparing his height to that building. He said, "This is a tall building. This has to be Gianna's or Anna's." He was right—it was Gianna's building.

The children are also being very creative with the structures. Even though it is a challenge, they have not left out the artistic aspect of their buildings. They are architects and engineers in the classroom.

An important part of being an architect is being able to read and design plans. Using Lego Simple Structures children are building from a design. This is important because they look at a design and have to figure out the steps to solve and recreate. These are crucial skills for their work now and in the future.

Their next step will be to design something for someone else to build. We will be making How To design books for structures. They will be taking their ideas and figuring out how to make them so others understand and can recreate them. No easy task.

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

Room 107

After showing a slideshow of compiled Olympic photos and video from the Mission Hill community at last week's Friday Share, we began talking more in depth about our physical science topic: Air. We started by answering the following questions verbally and through art and made some collective statements.

What things need air?

Michelle: "Flowers need air but does the sun need air?"

Noah: "I drew me. I need air."

Rui: "My family needs air."

Lucas: "A bubble needs air."

Peter: "A kid named Calvin that is a book character needs air but Calvin's stuffed animal does not need air."

Jizaiah: "A ball needs air."

Miles: "A plane landing needs air."

Shirley: "Your body needs air.

Plants need air. Flowers need air. Trees need air and outside has a whole bunch of air!"

Euan: "Boats and persons need air."

Liam: "Airplanes need air.

Helicopters need air. A ball needs air. A bubble needs air. Does a javelin need air to make it fly?"

Braxton: "The soccer ball needs air. There is a flower under it that needs air."

Diany: "A balloon needs air."

Brian: "Wind is air and a flower needs air."

Anand: "You can use air to pump up balls, throw balls, blow up balloons, blow bubbles and kite surf."

Statements: "We need air to

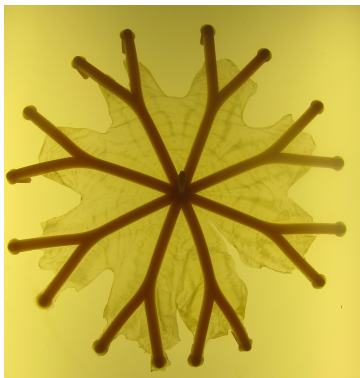
breathe, for asthma pumps, for squeezing and to blow up footballs and basketballs.”
 “Air is powerful.”

~Jada Brown
 & JoAnn Hawksworth

Room 109

What are they?

When Jenny came back from Italy, she brought three strange looking, identical objects. It had eight "legs" that split in two "talons" in the end. There is a thin transparent fleece shaped like a leaf between the "legs." It was squishy, and floppy. You can crumple it up and spread it out.



Xavier thought it was a fish. Dashawn noticed that it had a "glove."

"It is not alive," Olivia remarked.

"I think it comes from the ocean," Zora postulated.

"Well, it can't be an octopus, because it has sixteen arms," Dillon reasoned.

Luki put it on his head like a hat.

Sophia: "**It a spiderweb**, but it also looks like a snowflake."

"You can make a little umbrella with it," said Maya while she demonstrated her idea.

We still haven't figured it out. What do you think?

~Marietje Halbertsma

Grades One & Two

Room 204

In 204, we just started our physical science theme, which we are excited about. When the students were asked, "What is a scientist?" There were many ideas. One child explained it is, "someone who studies stuff that can and cannot help the environment." Another idea we had of a scientist was someone who cures viruses. Many children also expressed that a scientist was someone who built stuff. A classmate also said, "someone who wears a suit and can make a volcano." We looked at examples of scientists and we found some of the ideas we had were true. To my and some of other children's surprise, none of the scientists were wearing suits. We found out that there were different names for different kinds of scientists. For example, a scientist who studies bugs is called an entomologist.

We also did "minute to win it" challenges — physical science challenges such as balancing dice on the end of a popsicle stick that they held with their mouths and bouncing a ball into a container with only one bounce. These were not easy challenges, even for Jenerra and me. We had to think about what we would do differently on the next try of the challenge to make it more successful. We turned on our scientist brains and we used different strategies to complete the challenges with the help of our multiple trials.

~Missy Anderson
 & Jenerra Williams

Room 205

For two weeks Mission Hill had the awesome opportunity to ride bikes, thanks to the **Bike Boston** program.

Once we got our bikes and strapped our helmets on, we ventured over to the tennis courts across from school. There, we broke into two groups: those who were learning how to ride a two-wheeler bike without training wheels and those who already knew how. Experienced riders spent time with the instructor learning about bike and riding safety. New riders practiced pedaling, steering and using the breaks. It was so exciting watching everyone work hard at controlling their bike. Each of them fell numerous times and each time bravely got back on.

Enter Kelise. At first she was apprehensive about riding and falling off of her bike. With help from the adults, she soon became more confident and before our eyes she was transforming into a proud and confident rider. "Look, Ms. Amina! I am riding!" she exclaimed numerous times. And when she fell (which she did many times) she jumped up and exclaimed "Falling down is about life!" She also shouted this to encourage her friends when they fell.

On our first day, five Wonderful Wonderers successfully mastered riding their bikes and all the Wonderful Wonderers created lasting memories of their first MHS Bike Week.

~Amina Michel-Lord

Room 217

"I've got it! I know where it goes!"

Four children are huddled over bicycle parts. There's a bike close by, and they shift their focus from it to the parts in their hands. They exchange wheel for chain for chain ring, the parts changing hands and positions in constant motion. The children seek wire and tools, trying to get the parts to connect and make sense. They are most fascinated by the parts that offer movement and by parts that have openings where something else might also fit. It's a puzzle they are determined to solve, and they don't want to put the parts down; later in the day, it's the first place they go with a moment to chart their own work.

At the same time, another child has picked up one of my bike shoes, having noticed the metal on the bottom and the difference between one set of pedals on one bike and the pedals on another. "How do you think these shoes and these pedals go together?" She spends many long moments trying to fit one to the other, her face twisting with effort and the muscles in her arms straining. I offer help and she says, "Not yet."

Bicycles have captured our imaginations and spurred our best habits of work.

~Melissa Tonachel

Grades Three & Four**Room 207**

Last week, room 207 participated in the annual

Mission Hill School Bike Week. The bike program was created by Mayor Menio's office to help foster bike training and habits to children in urban communities.

This program occurs over a two-week span for MHS students. Each classroom will participate in a 4-5 hour session over the two weeks.



Before students begin their bike experience, the following must occur: 1) All students must fill out a waiver form to participate in the program and 2) All students must participate in a one-hour bike training before physically riding. Once these two steps are completed students will physically ride bikes on and around the school property. This program provides all the bikes and helmets for all students and teachers. Room 207 had a great time and we are proud to announce that all students whether they were beginners, non-riders, and experts in riding all gained new skills and have become better bike riders.



The program did a great job at teaching safety bike habits while allowing the children to have an enjoyable experience. Enjoy our pictures!

~Robert Baez

Room 216

The new physics theme began in room 216 this week. We started our week virtually riding roller coasters. We watched several media clips on roller coasters around the world and how they make those rides excitingly scary yet safe. By speeding down hills, around loops and over turns we are able to really wonder about force, gravity and motion. As a class, we began thinking about our own roller coaster construction. Keeping in mind our marble car will have to safely make it around our loops, turns and drops, we started our construction with a sketch. Excitement was in the air as everyone became both creator and scientist. This week, our class will be planning, constructing and testing our marble roller coasters. We invite you to stop by to watch out creative scientists in progress!

~Erica Switzer & Juan Cortes

Grades Five & Six**Room 210**

Every Monday the Cinco Seis share highlights from their weekend during our morning meeting. Mondays after vacation the shares are longer. More detailed. The Monday after the this past April vacation was different. The students' vacation memories centered around the

marathon bombing and the chaos that ensued. Here are a few excerpts from our share that day.

"I was near the bomb that day"

"Me and my friend were going to bike along side the runners"

"My dad was going to take pics of the early runners..."

"Well, I wouldn't say that I didn't care, but I just tried to stay chill. Everybody was screaming, including the TV."

"I was riding my bike down to the area near Fenway but then my father called me and told me to go the other way"

"I was running through a list of people in my head of who had gone..."(started tearing up and couldn't finish commenting)

~Nakia Keizer, Cady Hrasky
Kyle Ford Withrow

Room 215

By the time you read this newsletter two things will have happened in our class. We will have had our Poetry Reading to celebrate the end of National Poetry Month and we will have completed Bike Week. Our class' participation in both these events has helped us individually and as a group.

All April, we've been reading and dissecting poetry. Before spring break, each student was given a packet of poems to digest. After reading over each poem, your child was asked to choose one to memorize, analyze and use as a springboard to her/his own poem. The selection from which to choose was varied but each had deeper levels of meaning when your

child chose to dive in for closer inspection. One result I've noticed is that when your children take a poem in—they own it and they hold it forever. I've had the pleasure of overhearing a child say, *"that's just like in that line in that poem, 'Change' 'Everything keeps going like it does, regular you know in life but then something in me changes....like I know something different about what I'm doing in math or like I'm not the same person as I was this time last year. Yeah, that's what that poem is saying. I get it now."* And while it has been wonderful to experience your children's hunger for poetry, equally exciting is the way that they've been encouraging and helping each other memorize the poem in time for our reading.

This encouragement spilled over into Bike Week. When we started there were a few 5/6th graders who either did not yet know how to ride a bike or who were fairly inexperienced. As you may know, this age group is notorious for teasing each other into oblivion and sometimes tears. However, I'm proud to tell you this has not been the case. Each and every time that someone has struggled while biking, someone else has been their verbal and/or physical support...egging them on to keep trying. "Come on, dude.", I heard, "Everybody falls. You just gotta get up. Try again." As you know, "Be Kind. Work Hard." is the Mission Hill mantra. This week your kids have been doing just that! Ask

them about the biking and about the poetry when you have a moment. We hope they'll share how moving their minds and moving their bodies has felt.

~Letta Neely

Grades Seven & Eight

Room 213

A sure sign of spring has arrived at Mission Hill – electives have started! For one hour once a week, classroom doors open and students spill out with one thing on their minds: Where's my elective? For the next six weeks, staff and students will gather weekly in multi-age groupings to focus on an activity of shared interest.

The visual arts are well represented: water color painting with Marietje, painting and drawing with Melissa, and outdoor sketching with Betsy. Making things appealed to many kids who chose to join purses and pockets with Ayla, beats with Jacob, cooking with Kadian, cards with Jenerra, gardening with Gina, crafts with Shaina, and beading with Jeanne. Those interested in movement had plenty of electives to choose from: playing at the park with Amina, Joann, and Jada, Frisbee with Joel, basketball with Nakia, running with Anne T, and movement with Jenny. Builders joined Geralyn and Kathy, while those interested in a variety of activities joined Brenda and Juan. Physical scientists are exploring sports with Erica, Robert, Elsa, and June. And many 7th and 8th grade girls joined me to watch coming of age movies.

Here are some facts about electives at Mission Hill. 219 students, from three year olds to 15 year olds, were

placed in 20 electives led by 26 adults with four to 26 students in each group. With so many choices, more than 65% of students received their first choice, and another 25% their second choice.

Perhaps next year, you'll join us. Do you have a passion, hobby, or skill you'd like to share with others? We'd love families and other community members to join in electives.

~Ann Ruggiero

Room 214

I have been feeling really good about our meetings in Room 214 over the past week. The 7th and 8th graders have had a lot to process from the sad and disturbing events which happened over the April vacation. They have had a lot of questions, a lot to get off of their chests, and a lot of profound ideas and opinions to share. I have been struck by how many students I have seen change their mind about something they believed strongly as a result of having their peers question them.

The conversations about difficult topics like the definition of terrorism, the morality of the death penalty, and the motivation of people to hurt others were respectful, and we heard many insightful comments. Here are just a few:

"You can never really know how another person is feeling or how they see something. It's really hard to judge someone's actions even if they are really bad."

"I don't know why the shootings in Connecticut were not called terrorism. I guess it's because terrorism is usually when you use a bomb or maybe it has to do with why someone does it."

"I understand why some people believe in the death penalty, but it's still killing a person and that is always wrong."

~Jacob Wheeler & Chris Barnes

Hot Topics

Courtney's Corner

Check out Courtney's Corner for information on various programs and resources for you and your family.

Rincón de Courtney

Mira la información que esta fuera en el "Rincón de Courtney" para información sobre varios programas y recursos para ti y tu familia.

Join the Mission Hill School Family Forum! The Mission Hill School Family Forum is an initiative by school parents and caregivers FOR school parents and caregivers, a place to forge connections in and across classroom communities. Staff is welcome, too.

To join the group:

(1) Request to join by sending an email to MHS Family Forum moderators Naama or Neathery (mizzgee@yahoo.com or neathery99@gmail.com)

Or,

(2) Visit the Mission Hill School Family Forum site, take a look at the homepage, and click the

"Join This Group" link to submit a request that way:

<http://tinyurl.com/MHSconnects>

Please help to grow the forum as a community asset by bringing this invitation to the attention of your MHS friends. It's always a good time to be in touch!



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