

THE LP BULLETIN

NOTES, QUOTES, AND LOST COATS

Revised LP Bulletin #23
February 2nd, 2017

UPCOMING LP EVENTS

Friday, 3rd February - Kindergarten Conference Day and 3rd/6th to Frog Pond Ice Skating.

Monday, 6th February - 6th Grade Conferences

Tuesday, 7th February - 4th Grade Conferences

Wednesday, 8th February - 3rd Grade Conferences/6th Grade Science Festival.

Thursday, 9th February - 1st Grade Conferences/3rd Grade Play

Saturday, 11th February - Ski Trip

Tuesday, 14th February - Girl Scouts and 6th Grade Bake Sale

Wednesday, 15th February - 5th Grade Conferences

Thursday, 16th February - 10:30 Performance Fest

Friday, 17th February - Half Day - Professional Development

Monday, 20th February - Friday, 24th February - February Break

Monday, 27th February - School Resumes

Tuesday, 28th February - 7:45 Class Parent Meeting/3rd Grade to Peabody Museum/Girl Scouts.

HEADLINES

Discerning Truth

When perspectives are different--as they frequently are because *we* all are different and 'see' reality from different locations (various emotional states, life-stages, family and personal histories and so forth)--the determination of 'truth' is a complicated task. And it is a *particularly* complicated task when children are involved, precisely because they are children and often see situations differently than we do as adults. It is not that their perceptions are 'wrong' or 'untruthful;' children's perceptions and perspectives are what they are--their reality. And the same can be said for the perspectives of adults.

When everyone more or less agrees on what happened, discerning the relevant truth of a situation is fairly easy. But when there are different perspectives, the process flips quickly from the simple to the hugely complex and the job of helping children sort through this complexity invariably falls to us. Most parents, and especially teachers because they have numerous children in their daily care, are quite familiar with this responsibility and discharge it well. 'Helping children' is part of our 'job description' as grown-

CURRENT 'HABIT OF THE HEAD, THE HEART, AND THE HAND'

Stewardship

WORD OF THE WEEK

Kerfuffle
Demonstrate
Farewell
Affirm
Curtail
Advocate
Flourish
Compromise
Apply
Concede
Responsibility
Indulge
Predicament
Dawdle
Germinate
Tarnish
Flounder
Maneuver
Artifact
Prompt

ATTACHMENTS

[Science Afternoons - Sign Up](#)

[Spring Hill House Registration](#)

WHAT'S DUE?

ups.

Attempting to discern the truth in problematic situations that arise in school--interpersonal conflicts, apparent violations of school rules, failures to perform up to ability, allegedly unkind words or deeds--these are all difficult tasks on which we spend, in aggregate, considerable time. And why? Because we are interested in using real childhood experiences--their ups and downs, their disappointments and successes, their conflicts and their friendships--as the raw material for helping children grow emotionally and socially, and for helping them to embrace the values of character that our school believes are critical.

Here is an example, one that actually didn't require too much of my time, which illustrates how the *discernment of the truth* of a situation unfolded, and how and why the perception of a child and of an adult might be at wide variance. Details and a few facts in this example have been altered to protect the (not seriously) guilty.

Several weeks ago, I was sent a child to talk with because her classroom conduct that particular morning fell short of our expectations. Her errors of conduct were not a 'huge deal,' but they couldn't be ignored. She also got three math problems wrong and misspelled "because" that day--which is why she comes to school: to learn from her mistakes. And so she was sent to see me to learn from her mistaken behavior.

"Why were you sent down to me," I asked.

"Because I was talking . . . but I was helping someone with their work," she replied with a touch of indignation.

"Hmmm," I thought. "I think this perhaps requires some clarification."

Already the situation had the possibility of being complicated because it is part of our pedagogical approach to encourage children to help one another and to talk about their work. But, at the same time, we have some rules that govern that practice. For one, we draw a bright line between 'social conversations' and 'academic conversations.' There is a proper time and place for each. Another rule, one which seems to come as a perpetual surprise to some children, is that *the teacher* will decide, not the children, when talking in the classroom is permitted.

Often we encourage talking because it is a major tool of learning--and that encouragement may, inadvertently, contribute to the challenges some children have knowing when to stop. This is a challenge they simply need to overcome. While there are many times in the day when helping one another or talking about a book or collaborating on a project is the norm, there are also periods each day when work times are declared 'Silent Work Times,' and children are expected to complete their work independently without talking. That's a different norm.

Are 'Silent Work Times' fully embraced by all the children all the time? They are often, but not always. Children, like all of us, are imperfect human beings, and it is characteristic of children, in comparison to (most) adults, to be more egocentric; to be more impulsive; to be less able to defer gratification; to be more socially oriented than task oriented; and to be less strongly guided by abstract concepts such as being considerate of others or complying with class rules. Young children are still learning the importance and power of abstract ideas ('rules,' 'the general welfare,' etc.) and they are still acquiring the social and emotional skill set needed to incorporate these abstract ideas into their conduct. And they still need us as teachers and guides.

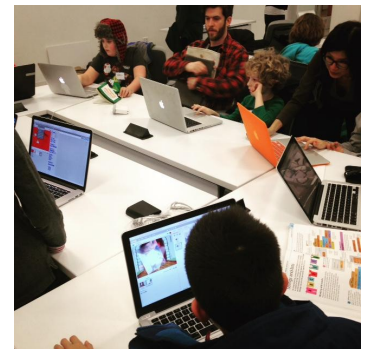
Lunch Week Forms -Due Friday, February 3rd.

2017-2018 Enrollment Contracts - Due February 6th.

Science Afternoon Sign Up - Due February

GIRL SCOUTS SCHEDULE

February 14th
February 28th
March 14th
March 28th
April 11th
April 25th
May 9th
May 23rd
June 6th



Last Saturday, students from multiple grades visited CoderDojo, a free coding community, workshop and club focused on Computer Science. Students worked with mentors and other kids in Boston to create programs and games in Scratch, a coding language developed at MIT. (More below in announcements)



So, back to the situation presented to me several weeks ago: A quick conversation with the teacher who had sent the child down to see me revealed a fuller picture of what had occurred. The child had twice been out of her chair during a Silent Work Time--once to get an unneeded pencil, once to get a tissue. Both times she stopped to make brief comments to friends, interrupting their work, and delaying her own. When, soon after her last 'wander about,' she turned around to 'help' a friend who hadn't requested help, she was told to leave the room and report to me.

Is that a different 'reality' or 'perspective' than the one relayed to me by the child? Indeed so. Is it more 'objective' or 'trustworthy' than the child's version? Yes, I believe so. Adults at this school are quite careful about these matters because we understand how vitally important it is to a child's growth and learning that he or she feel we have been fair. That doesn't mean that we grasp every detail of every event perfectly. Sometimes we have to go back for more information. Sometimes we seek corroborating perceptions or evidence. In general, however, we are far more correct than wrong, which isn't to say we always get it *completely* right, but we only take action when we are very close to certain about what occurred.

And, so what did I do with the child in this 'story.' I presented her with the teacher's version of what had occurred as reported to me. She listened, tapped her cheek in that gesture that looks like the person is pushing some secret button to activate the brain, and she said, "Oh, yes; that is what happened.

"Well, I replied, "what's the lesson here?"

"I guess I should listen to the teacher better," she replied.

Bingo.

Because I believe that we are accountable for our choices, and that bad choices often have unhappy consequences, (good choices the opposite), she missed her next recess. Missing the most prized moment of the school day (even for LP children who love what happens in their classrooms!) is in my experience an incentive that helps them to become mindful of future choices. She was not happy about this, but she took her medicine in good stride. And, like other children who sometimes miss a recess, she elected to do a little exercise to burn off the energy that recess often is helpful for.

So why had my student represented the story to me in the first place? Was she deliberately lying?

I tend to think that 'lying' is not a useful term for describing the full complexity of what often happens in these situations. Yes, children sometimes shade the truth deliberately to their advantage and that process can edge close to deliberate lying. But part of that shading stems from another source -- the difficulty children have understanding and accepting boundaries. In this instance, the girl sent down to talk to me contended that she was not 'the only one talking' since one of the children with whom she had initiated conversation responded. Her attempt (more habitual than self-aware) to dissolve the boundary line between her own initiation of conversation and the other child's response--thereby implicating the other child in her own poor choice --was clearly doomed. That particular response, however, is not uncommon, particularly among children.

Was she trying to avoid responsibility for her poor choices? Yes. Finding someone else to blame is one common approach; and, absent that opportunity, offering a variety of excuses for simply ducking personal



responsibility is another. So, we hold children closely accountable for their personal choices and are fairly cautious about accepting excuses--which can be abundantly available. Our premise is that if we want to enjoy the benefits of good choices, we need also to take responsibility for our poor ones-- and our 'mantra' at this school about 'learning from mistakes' speaks to accepting responsibility and moving on wiser for the lesson learned.

Children may also misrepresent or under-represent the facts of what happened because 'getting in trouble' can have an unpleasant consequence. Most of us quicken our pace to get to the parking meter in time to avoid a ticket. Similarly, children are mindful of what might happen and also adopt the avoidance strategies available to them. And because children spend a large portion of their days in an environment dealing with people--adults--who are far more powerful than they are, they are hyper-sensitive to the ability of adults to impose consequences. Such a 'power imbalance' would put many adults a bit on edge if they had done something they knew was wrong and would likely put them, also, in a 'self-protective mode' when it came time to have a conversation.

Another attribute of children that helps explain the incomplete answers we routinely get is that they often just don't remember. And that is because they don't yet have fully matured short term memories. In a long sequence of related events building up to 'critical moment,' they might only remember the very last thing that happened and not everything preceding. In the case discussed here, the child remembered wanting to give help, and could well have forgotten about the two times that she was out of her chair chatting.

Children often will excuse themselves by saying, "I forgot." Likely they have, but we may never know for sure. Where it is reasonable to expect them to learn to remember and do better the next time, the helpful adult response is, "It is your job *not* to forget. Is there something you could do to complete that job more reliably?"

This essay turned out longer than I originally anticipated and if you've gotten this far, I hope it's been helpful in clarifying several ideas: the complexity of getting to the truth or as close as possible; understanding that there will be different descriptions of the truth because of different perspectives; and the fact that the developmental differences between children and adults explains part of the variance in descriptions of the same incident. Moreover, I hope the discussion about why children might present their reality in their uniquely childish ways will help all of us to be respectful of what they 'see' while continuing to move them to understand the more complex 'truth' of the lives they lead.

A Poem

Love recognizes
no barriers.
It jumps hurdles,
leaps fences,
penetrates walls
to arrive at its
destination
full of hope.

-Maya Angelou

Word of the Week: Kerfuffle

- A commotion or fuss, especially one caused by conflicting views.

"There was a kerfuffle over the chairmanship."

- Michael

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Read-a-Thon

Thanks to your support to our community of readers, this year's Read-a-Thon raised a whopping \$8,407! We'll keep you posted on how we apportion this generous sum.

Hill House Spring Registration

Spring Registration for Hill House opens next Tuesday, 2/7, for members and Thursday, 2/9, for non-members. We will be offering walks to a limited number of programs this spring due to scheduling and coverage needs in our in-house After School program. If you are interested in having your child participate in our Hill House "walking program," you must complete the following steps:

*Register for the program separately with Hill House.

*Once you've registered, fill out the attached form (found in the attachments box) and turn it into Claire.

We do not receive any information from Hill House, so this form is the only way we will know that your child needs to be walked.

6th Grade Bake Sale

The annual 6th Grade Bake Sale will take place on Tuesday, February 14th, in the LP Lobby. Smaller items will be sold to students at three for \$1.00 and larger items like cakes and pies can be purchased by parents throughout the day. All funds go towards the 6th Graders trip to D.C. Thank you for your support!



Science Afternoons For Grades 3, 4, and 5


Due to a fuller-than-usual calendar (our AISNE preparation and our work on the coding curriculum), this year's Science Team will be offered in an abbreviated version. Instead of the 6 dates of prior years, this year we will hold meetings on 3 Tuesday afternoons in March and April. The dates are: **March 7th, March 21st, and April 4th**. Science Afternoons will run from 3:15 pm (dismissal) until 5:00 pm. All 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students who are interested should return the form found in the attachments box to Laura Mellen by **February 17th**.

The activities we will do are Chemistry, featuring crystal-making, and Engineering Challenges with


recyclables and paper. The finale will be the ever-popular Egg Drop out of The LP 5th Grade windows, weather permitting, or from a tall ladder in the science room.

In addition to looking for participants, any parent volunteers would also be welcomed!

Kingsley Speaker Series



KINGSLEY MONTESSORI SCHOOL



Erika Christakis
Thursday,
February 23
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.
26 Exeter Street
Boston, MA

KINGSLEY SPEAKER SERIES

Early childhood expert Erika Christakis offers a bold challenge to the conventional wisdom about early childhood, with a pragmatic program to encourage parents and teachers to rethink how and where young children learn best by taking the child's eye view of the learning environment. Join us for this free event, open to the community.

Educator, journalist, and New York Times best-selling author of *The Importance of Being Little*, Erika Christakis has spent her career as an advocate for children and families. With extensive experience from years as a lecturer at Yale's esteemed Child Study Center, she has written widely about child development from preschool through the college years, drawing on her hands-on experiences as a former teacher, preschool director, school consultant, and college administrator. For two years, Erika wrote a *TIME* Ideas column and her work has been featured in *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, *CNN.com*, *Nightline*, and *The Financial Times*. An honors graduate of Harvard College, she holds advanced degrees in public health, communication, and early childhood education and is a Massachusetts-certified early childhood teacher.

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
REGISTER AT WWW.KINGSLEY.ORG

Coding Workshop Update

This past Saturday, nine LP students joined dozens of other students across Boston at LogMeIn in the Seaport area for a session with CoderDojo. CoderDojo is a computer science and coding organization that provides free, community-based programming clubs for young people. Students worked on laptops with the MIT based language called Scratch, and received help, instruction, and encouragement from CoderDojo mentors, parents, and volunteers. After a wonderful hour and a half, coders could project their projects for the entire room, and we had two wonderful shares from LP students James Redekkop, and Caden Walker! To find out more information, or see how to attend a Coder Dojo Session, follow the links below. Thanks to our wonderful students for attending, and special thanks to parents and guardians for driving and chaperoning!



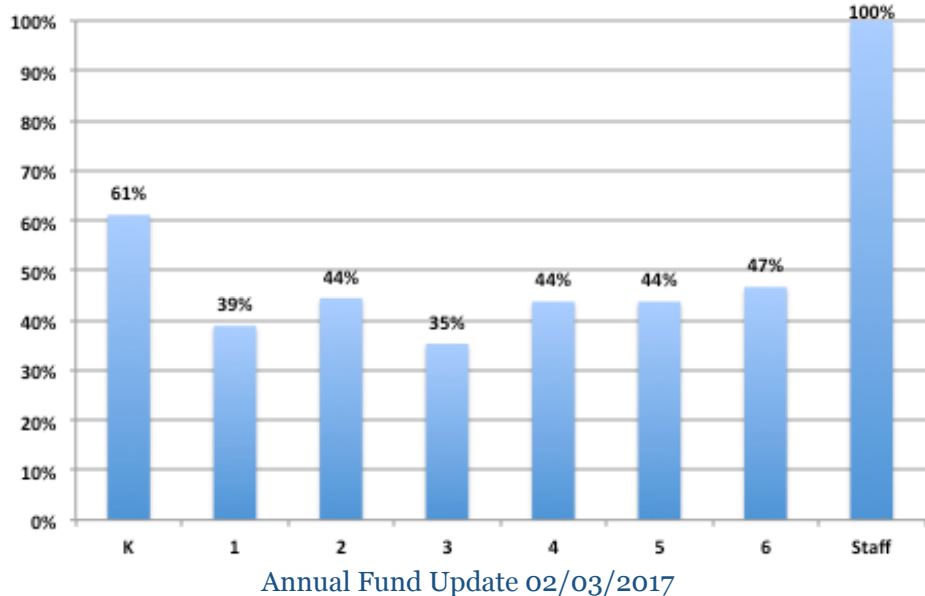
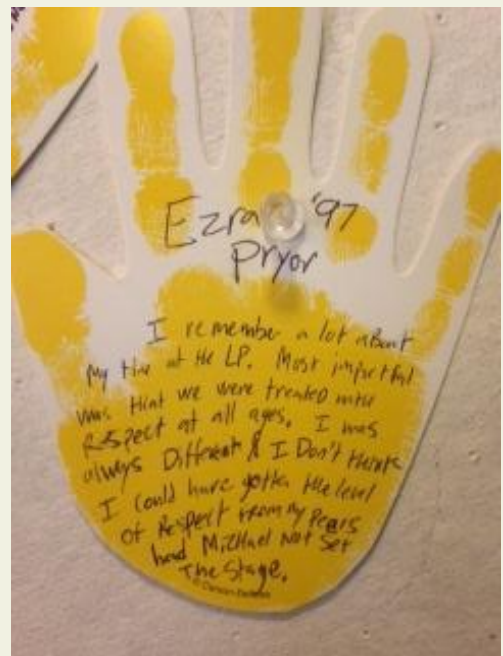
<https://zen.coderdojo.com/dojo/776>

<https://scratch.mit.edu>

"Join Hands" Campaign Update

Thank you to everybody who has donated to our "Join Hands" Annual Fund campaign thus far. We are on our way toward our goal of 100% participation by Graduation Day! Please remember that only donations made directly to the Annual Fund count toward this participation rate. For more information on the Annual Fund, other LP fundraisers, and reporting, please see the Parent Handbook, page 43. Thank you for supporting the school, and we hope that you'll be able to lend in your own "hand" to display in our lobby. With each Annual Fund update in this Bulletin, we'll also include one hand to share with the community. Today's hand is from Ezra Pryor, an LP alum from the class of 1997!

"I remember a lot about my time at the LP. Most important was that we were treated with respect at all ages. I was always different & I don't think I could have gotten the level of respect from my peers had Michael not set the stage."



Valentines Day Party - Thursday, February 9th 3:00-5:30pm

Kids' Valentine's Day Party

Thursday, February 9

3.00-5.30 pm

The Firehouse
127 Mount Vernon Street



Take part in our
CELTICS tickets
raffle!

Come celebrate Valentine's Day with your
friends & neighbors!

Kids are invited to join us for
face-painting, snacks, and festive crafts!

We will be collecting unused, unopened
toiletries for Boston ABCD West/North End.



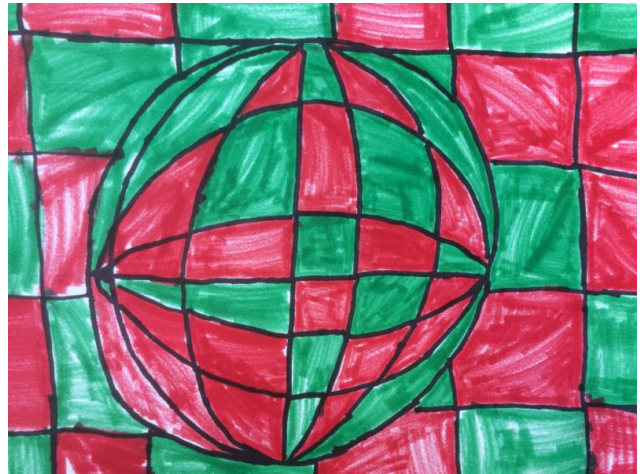
127 Mount Vernon Street
(617) 227-5838
www.hillhouseboston.org



ARTISTS OF THE WEEK

Op Art Color Theory

To continue their study of the color wheel, the First Graders studied the work of Victor Vasserly, and his use of color to create optical illusions. Dubbed "Op Art", his work utilized shape formations and complementary colors to play tricks with the viewer's eyes. Inspired by this idea, the students used rulers and compasses to create shape formations and tried to create an optical illusion by filling in their work with vibrant color combinations.



Essey Tesfalem, First Grade

Andy Warhol-Inspired Portraits

For this project, the students were introduced to the Pop Art movement and the work of Andy Warhol. We

discussed how Pop artists used their work to address the ideas of mass culture, advertising, and consumerism during the 1960s. We also examined Warhol's printing technique, and learned that one image can be printed over and over again in many different ways and put together to make a single composition. To create their pieces, the students carved their self-portraits into foam and printed them multiple times on painted paper. They then put them all together to resemble the work of Andy Warhol.



Amelie Kassabian, Third Grade

Ancient Greek Papier Mache Pottery

Coinciding with their study of Ancient Greece, the fifth graders examined ancient Greek pottery, and described the elaborate, narrative decoration found on the art form. Inspired by this, the students used a mixed-media papier mache process to create a structured vase. They then referenced images of ancient Greek vases to create intricate, decorative designs.



Logan Marshall, Fifth Grade

The Value of Value

For the project, the sixth grade students observed the intense contrast between light and dark in famous works of art, and learned that this contrast is called

"value". Using a graphite pencil, the students first created a value scale displaying gradations between the lightest and darkest values. They then used blending techniques and tools to create a sphere with a three-dimensional effect. The students then chose an animal or object and rendered its value using various graphite pencils, chalk pastels, conte crayon, and charcoal pencils.



Elsa Bain, Sixth Grade

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