

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter!



TEAM NEWS

Paragon had a fun day the Friday before the December break. We had activities, cupcake decorating, funny teacher Jib Jab clips, and a snowperson fashion show! We were also treated to a fantastic lip synch of Frozen's *Let it Go* by one of our students! We also had our first Paragon sponsored dance on January 25th. The proceeds help us to have special activities. Paragon students enjoyed career day when they got to interact with local professionals and hear about potential career interests.

The Ohana Team was happy to have Middlebury College senior, Jack Parker as a J-term intern. Jack is a math and education major who plans to pursue a career as a middle school math teacher. He enjoyed helping tutor students in mathematics, observing a variety of teachers and teaching a lesson to all Ohana students that challenged them to **prove** the Pythagorean Theorem. A "Jack" of all trades (pun intended), his hobbies include jiu-jitsu, singing a cappella, and watching Duke basketball.

The Phoenix team continues to celebrate aspects of the learner profile through our weekly recognitions during our Friday morning community meetings. This month's attribute, BALANCED, inspired a lot of discussion in our TAs. How do you maintain physical, intellectual, and emotional balance as a middle schooler, making sure you're taking care of yourself and meeting the many expectations from those around you (and from yourself)? At one of our meetings, our health teacher, Liz Cronin, reminded us of the strategies for achieving and maintaining balance that the students are learning about in health class, and students have shared various tips about how they do this. Our next learner attribute, being an inquirer, will be the focus of late February and March, and we hope to continue the conversations we've been starting in both our small and large groups in order to help the students become more aware of themselves and of others in order to live positively and productively.

On Mosaic, before the winter vacation, Mrs. Broderson's TA collected gifts for HOPE. They started by researching the most requested items, then wrote a script to describe the collection to the whole Mosaic team. Students went in pairs to each TA on Mosaic and read the script. Over the following two weeks, they collected two boxes of gifts ranging from warm socks to books to action figures. Thank you to all families who donated. The day before vacation students did community service choosing to either make cookies to donate to people living at the Lodge at Otter Creek or decorating ornaments to donate to people in the community.

In upcoming news, the Mosaic team will start delving deeper into the IB Learner Profiles, focusing on one or two per month. We will create bulletin boards in the hallway to emphasize the traits and point them out across classes. Finally, students will be starting the Stock Market Game. Mrs. Billings will introduce different concepts to each math class - discussing companies, industries, stocks, and investing. Pairs of students will be given \$100,000 of "money" to invest in real companies, diversifying into at least 5 different industries to compete against other teams across the state. Ask at home about which stocks they chose to invest!



Individuals and Societies

In Individuals and Societies, students completed their final geography assessment for the year. The students created Public Service Announcements as either a Podcast or Wevideo, using their geographical knowledge to persuade people to move to a region within a country of their choice in order to survive post-zombie apocalypse. The students researched multiple facets of the region, including natural resources and how those could be used as energy, culture, natural hazards and climate. They then used these as a means to prove why it would be a sustainable environment to survive. As a wrap, the students shared their projects and the 8th grade students shared food from their country to enjoy while watching/listening. Currently, students are in the midst of a personal finance unit to learn about economics.

Science

In 8th grade science, students are learning about Photosynthesis and Cellular Respiration. Students will use this knowledge and apply it to their Ecozones they built in their Design Unit. They will reflect on their designs and come up with ways to improve them. Also, they will use this knowledge as well as interpreting and analyzing data to decide which competing designs for Biosphere III would be more successful for the colonization of Mars.

In 7th grade science, students are working on a Force and Motion unit that explores our statement of inquiry "Models of systems are used to generate evidence of interacting forces, which allow for scientific innovation." Students will be using the new PASCO track and car systems to design investigation, analyze the data collected, and evaluate their method. Next, students will use their new knowledge and skills to revise their wind turbine blades before starting the following 7th grade unit, Mechanical Energy.

Language and Literature

In grade seven Language and Literature, students are beginning a unit entitled “Learners as Problems Solvers.” Within this inquiry, students will examine multiple informational sources, including articles, interviews, documentaries, and podcasts. In addition, Erin Davis, local filmmaker of *The Land*, joined us at MUMS in early February to discuss the ideas behind her documentary. Through these experiences, students will explore traditional and adventure playspaces and how these two different environments contribute to one’s development and well-being. Using newly acquired information and evidence collected in this study, students will craft a rationale paper in which they discuss their goals for an original playspace and explain how their design meets the physical, social, and psychological needs of children and adolescents. Embedded within every unit is a continuous study of language. Specifically, we are currently focusing on sentence structure and vocabulary acquisition.

In 8th grade, Language and Literature students just completed the unit “Finding the BIG in Small Spaces,” which examined how parameters require writers (and other artists) to make precise, intentional craft decisions to convey their ideas. The unit culminated in a coffee house reading of an original short piece of writing and the publication of our team-based booklets of flash fiction.

Students enjoyed each other’s works immensely and learned how to articulate what they admire about the intentional devices their fellow writers utilized in the stories. They also practiced analyzing works of flash fiction using cognitive verbs to explain how the craft decision impacted the reader. The flash fiction pieces and analysis tasks were both summative assessments.



Health &
Wellness

Physical Education

In Physical Education, students wrapped up the invasion unit and continue their daily fitness training. Students learned about brain activity and movement, specifically what activity goes on in the brain when learning a skill, and what brain activity goes on when mastering a skill. There is mindful review of the benefits of physical activity like; bringing fresh oxygen to the brain, release of dopamine, serotonin and endorphins which are all beneficial for sleep. Exercise increases the ability to handle and manage stress and keep the body, mind and spirit balanced. More movement, more new learning all increase cell growth in the hippocampus the area of the brain responsible for learning and memory. Activities coming up include yoga, tumbling and Tabata (High Intensity Interval Training).

Health

In Health Education, we have started trimester 2 with our Interpersonal Communication unit in both 7th and 8th grade Health classes. This includes verbal and non-verbal communication skills, refusal skills and how to avoid misunderstandings.



Visual Arts

Trimester 2 brings new students to the visual art classes. We are well under way in creating new pieces of art and learning about a plethora of historical and contemporary art works. Students are now finishing their self-portraits, done in the styles of Renaissance artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo (7th grade) and contemporary graphic design styles of expressing who they are as individuals through the letters of their names (8th grade). Starting this month, students will begin to create new pieces of art: from Monster Bust Sculptures in plaster, to a 10' Transformer sculpture to grace the halls of MUMS!

Music: Band, Choir and General Music

In General Music, students are exploring composition and arranging through the use of GarageBand. Students have created compositions with pre-made loops in the app, and are currently adding to them with samples both recorded in class, and taken from external sources. Next, students will continue to explore digital sound design to manipulate and create their own sound effects to accompany a short movie clip that has been edited to be silent.

Students are working hard to prepare some challenging repertoire in preparation for the March concert. Choir and band students have reflected on their performance at the first concert in December, and are using their reflections as a guide to improve their rehearsal habits.

Design

Eighth graders are beginning trimester 2 in design with a bridge building unit. After exploring different bridges, they designed their own, and are currently building them with toothpicks. Our 7th graders are learning about web literacy and are being introduced to the design cycle through a hat design unit.

Clubs and Activities



...a fun place to
play and learn!

The final GeoBee competition was held on January 8. Nathan Bingham was the school winner. He will go on to take a qualifying test through National Geographic. If he is one of the top 100 scorers in the state, he will compete in the state competition held the end of March.

Our Student Ambassadors organized a school-wide assembly, which took place on Dec. 21. They recognized groups of people for sports and activities and also played fun team competition games. Members also planned a Winter Extravaganza event that took place prior to February vacation, that included a different school-spirit activity each day.

Art Club students were excited to receive their completed pottery projects from their visit to Middlebury Studio. We are planning a digital photography class with a presenter sponsored through the Teen Center and Middlebury Studio. Demetrius will be teaching an after school class for any students interested in trying out some new picture editing software.

Compost Club students are doing a great job picking up and emptying classroom compost buckets. They recently proposed a switch from traditional plastic utensils to sporks in order to reduce waste. It was a well thought out proposal and supported by students, unfortunately our food service providers were not able order them. Students are continuing to look for new ideas to teach others about the importance of taking care of our planet.

MUMS is excited to welcome the Social Justice Club, which is another student-led initiative. This group is self-directed and seeks to learn about and explore current social issues. The group recently held an organizational meeting on January 18th and has already established a schedule and agenda based upon the interests of its new members.

Our other clubs such as Creative Writing, Tiger TV, Memory Book, Math Counts, Gaming Club and Drama have also kept students actively engaged. Drama Club members have reinvented the spring performance. This exceptionally creative group has decided to shift from their original idea of performing *Little Women* in order to write their own script. The group is now in planning to perform four fairy tales, each one with its own unique twist. The script is complete and the tech crew is already designing the set and making props.

The winter sports season is drawing to a close in the next couple weeks. The new combined basketball has been a success. We worked with Dustin Hunt at Middlebury Recreation to develop and provide this new opportunity for our students. There will be another round of intramural basketball following the close of the regular season to allow all students another opportunity to play before the spring sports season sign-ups begin. Almost 90 students participated in winter athletics this season, which includes basketball, extreme winter running and gymnastics.

Guest Speakers

MUMS recently hosted some guest speakers. We welcomed two presenters named Tom Murphy and Rick Yarosh from Sweethearts and Heroes for a school-wide assembly on January 30th. They bring messages of bystander empowerment, empathy, and leadership because everyone has the potential to be someone's Sweetheart and the power to be a Hero. Rick Yarosh, a retired sergeant with the U.S. Army injured in Iraq with burns over most of his body, talked about overcoming adversity and turning a negative situation into a positive one. Tom Murphy's teaching focuses on empowering others to make a difference.

Guidance News

There are several important events that will be coming up in the guidance office in the next several weeks. Wednesday, February 27th at MUHS, Ninth Grade Parent Information Night. Parents should have received an invitation from MUHS giving details of this meeting as well as the registration process for 9th grade. This meeting is hosted by the MUHS Guidance Department and administration. This will be followed up by MUHS counselors visiting MUMS on Tuesday, March 5th to give an overview for students of MUHS programs and graduation requirements. They will then help students to sign up for elective courses for 9th grade.

NAEP Testing - On Thursday, February 28th, 8th graders will be participating in NAEP testing. Parents have received a letter explaining this testing. Both teams will test that day, the Phoenix Team will test in the morning and the Ohana Team will test in the afternoon.

SBAC Testing will occur for seventh graders on March 19th - 22nd and for eighth graders on April 2nd - 5th. Please do your best to not schedule appointments during these days since all testing that is missed will need to be rescheduled.



Upcoming Events/Dates to Remember

February 18 - February 22: Winter Recess
Thursday, February 28 - 8th Grade NAEP Testing
Friday, March 1st: Cookie Delivery and Pick-up
Tuesday, March 5 - French Class Mardi Gras Celebration
March 7th: Youth Risk Behavior Survey/ Early Release (Raffle Fundraiser Begins)
Friday, March 8 - No School for Students (Teacher Work Day)
March 8th - March 29th: 7th Grade Parent Conferences with TA Teachers
Wednesday, March 20th: 7th Grade SBAC Testing Begins (Raffle Fundraiser Ends)
Thursday, March 28th: Drama Production at MUHS