



# The Manhattan Country School Parent Newsletter

VOLUME 42, ISSUE 4

Spring 2010

## SPRING CALENDAR

*Save the Date!*

### APRIL

**TUES., APRIL 20**

8-9s Farm Trip.

**TUES., APRIL 20TH, 1 P.M.**

7th/8th grade Science Fair.  
Parents are invited.

**FRI., APRIL 23, 9 A.M.**

U.S. Assembly on Mountain Top Removal.  
Parents are invited.

**WED., APRIL 28, 6:30 P.M.**

Board of Trustees Meeting.

### MAY

**SAT., MAY 1, 7 P.M.**

*Big Night Out!* at Prince George Ballroom.

**MON., MAY 3**

8th Grade Farm Trip.

**THURS., MAY 6, 6 P.M.**

Parents' Council Meeting

**FRI., MAY 7, 9:15 A.M.**

Lower School *Tertulia*. Parents are invited.

**WED., MAY 12, 9:15 A.M.**

Sing-a-Long for 4-5s through 7-8s.  
Parents are invited.

**WED., MAY 12, 6 P.M.**

New Parents' Reception.

**SAT., MAY 15, 2 P.M.**

Alumni Reunion.

**MON., MAY 17TH, 8:45 A.M.**

7th grade Autobiography Share.

**WED., MAY 19, 9 A.M.**

U.S. Assembly. Parents are invited.

**THURS., MAY 20, 9 A.M.**

Spring Concert for 8-9s through 8th grade.  
Parents are invited.

**\*\*PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE\*\***

***Continued on page 2***

## MAIYA JACKSON NAMED NEW UPPER SCHOOL DIRECTOR

Michèle Solá, Director

**M**aiya Jackson will become Upper School Director beginning July 1, 2010. Her appointment to the role will make her the fourth Upper School Director in 40 years. Each has put their indelible stamp on the program and left a legacy that remains influential yet open to the evolving influence of new perspectives, energy, and ideas. Maiya has already shown the capacity to be the kind of leader that cherishes what is uniquely good about an institution while challenging herself and others to embrace change as one way to make it even better.

As a Klingenstein intern in 2004-2005, Maiya showed a keen interest in MCS' multiple commitments: a strong progressive academic program, enrolling a broadly diverse student body, and the economic model that had been developed to support it. She was familiar with other model programs operating as public, charter, parochial, and independent schools. Her sharp intellect lent a critical eye to all of them, including MCS. She talked to everyone, accepted mentoring herself and mentored others, and organized discussions of *Good to Great* (Jim Collins), and *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (Bolman & Deal).

*continued on page 2*

*Carol O'Donnell will be leaving as MCS Upper School Director in June. She will relocate with her family to Tennessee where her partner has been appointed to the law school faculty at UT Knoxville. Two years ago, Carol articulated a comprehensive vision for the Upper School as she transitioned from Fifth Floor English teacher to Upper School Director. She fully intended to make fulfilling this vision another extended chapter in her MCS career and set out a course for achieving her goals. It has been an energetic two years. Much has been accomplished with a team of teachers inspired by her leadership. Later this spring there will be occasion to thank Carol for all she has contributed to MCS and wish her well.*

# CALENDAR

## MAY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- FRI., MAY 21**  
Parent Teacher Conference Day.  
School closed for students.
- SAT. MAY 22 – THURS. MAY 27**  
Activism Trip.
- TUES., MAY 25, 6:30 P.M.**  
Board of Trustees Meeting.
- THURS., MAY 27**  
School Closes at 3 p.m. for Spring Weekend.  
Last Day of After School.
- FRI., MAY 28**  
School Closed for Founders' Day.
- MON., MAY 31**  
School Closed for Memorial Day.

## JUNE

- TUES., JUNE 1**  
6th Grade Farm Trip.
- THURS., JUNE 3, 6 P.M.**  
Parents' Council Meeting.
- THURS., JUNE 3, 7 P.M.**  
Parents' Association Meeting.
- FRI., JUNE 4**  
9-105 Roxbury Pen-Pals visit.
- MON., JUNE 7**  
7-8s Farm Trip (3 days).
- WED., JUNE 9**  
Graduation Ceremony.
- THURS. JUNE 10, 10:30 A.M.**  
Closing Assembly; School Closes at noon  
for summer vacation.
- FRI., JUNE 12**  
Student Information & Transportation  
Forms Due for 2010-2011.
- SAT., JUNE 12**  
Farm Outing Day. All families are invited.



## Maiya Jackson Named New Upper School Director *continued from page 1*

It was easy to see that Maiya would be an asset on the administrative team. I was thrilled when she accepted a job as Director of High School Placement and External Relations (2005-2008). She sought creative solutions to persistent challenges encountered by 8th graders applying to high school. She revised MCS' transcripts to a format that translates more easily to a wider range of schools, and initiated conversations about perceptions and realities of race and class at MCS compared to high schools students were visiting. Maiya hosted many visitors, most of them educators, and realized the benefits for MCS of having a formal write-up of the curriculum, in print and on-line. She wrote the recently published Curriculum Guide, and worked tirelessly to help design a new MCS Web site that featured the academic program prominently. Maiya also played a key role in producing the school-wide self-evaluation for our NYSAIS accreditation. She has been a leader on faculty council and has served two terms as faculty rep on the Board of Trustees.

In 2008, Maiya was eager to immerse herself in the classroom and for the last two years she has been the 6th grade teacher. She is a curriculum innovator with a striking capacity for collaboration, research, and hard work. As a member of the Upper School faculty, Maiya became familiar with 5th through 8th grade curricula. She demonstrated as much passion for book clubs and 5-paragraph essays as for expanding adolescent horizons through a cheerleading elective. She invited speakers – Gus Trowbridge (MCS Founder), Debo Adegbile (alumnus and NAACPLDF Director of Litigation), Sabrina Hawkins (researcher for a book and film on Little Rock), and her uncle Harold Jackson who grew up in Birmingham. She was awarded an MCS Fellowship to develop curriculum on “convivencia” in Medieval Spain, stretching conversations about race, culture, and power relations to comparative religions in earlier times. She embraced technology and invented countless excuses to bake cookies as enticement, process, and reward for hard work. She never tired of perfecting her teaching techniques, seeking to become a better math teacher and volunteering to serve as a pioneer integrating a SmartBoard to her classroom.

Maiya has continued to champion efforts by the faculty to share what MCS does with others. She helped to organize a presentation by a team of teachers at the national Progressive Educators' Network conference and at the NYSAIS Diversity Conference. After PEN, she wrote an e-mail, “I already knew we had a strong faculty before the conference, but watching everyone speak at our workshop and participating in our

*continued on page 11*

# 2009-10 ACTIVISM PROJECT: MOUNTAIN TOP REMOVAL (MTR)

Flannery Denny, Co-Coordinator Activism Project

**The Manhattan Country School Activism Project** is an annual and year-long initiative that is based around student inquiry and leadership on issues of crucial impact in the local and global communities. This year's seventh and eighth graders decided to focus their activism project on the environmental justice issue of mountaintop removal coal mining.

Mountain Top Removal (MTR) is a process employed in the Appalachian region, which involves blasting off the tops of mountains to gain access to the coal that is buried inside of them. By clear cutting, removing top soil, filling in valleys and streams, and polluting water & air, this process is irreversibly devastating huge areas of the most-biodiverse forests in North America. Surrounding communities experience changed landscapes, polluted water, decreased property values and increases in asthma and cancer rates.

Our project begins with education around the complexities of this issue, focusing not only on the effects of the mountain top removal process, but also the economic challenges facing these communities and the community tensions which arise during discussions of mining, employment and the environment.

Some highlights from this year's activism curriculum include:

- Screening "Coal Country" with student and guest panelists
- Conversations with activist Ted Glick, who tipped us off to the proposed coal-fired power plant just south of Newark
- Viewing Appalachia through the eyes of photographer Builder Levy, whose powerful book of photographs of Appalachia is on view in the entryway
- Receiving and responding to a letter from coal company rep Randy Maggard in response to the fact that we were hosting a screening of "Coal Country"
- A day of classes with Dea Goblirsch, who works with Coal River Mountain Watch & Climate Ground Zero. She presented the pro-coal coloring book widely distributed to small children in Appalachia, complete with cartoon lumps of coal scrubbing themselves "clean" in the tub. Dea also shared photographs of recent black-water spills in WV and answered students' questions about the communities that we will be working with.
- A presentation by Beehive Collective members of their 11 foot graphic narrative "The True Cost of Coal", highlighting historical elements which led to present-day exploitation of Appalachia and the myriad of systems which are connected to the mining and burning of coal.
- Student leadership development around grant writing, presenting to large & small audiences, logo design, written reflections, auditioning for panelists & moderator positions of our film event, voting, etc.

Our project will culminate with a trip to West Virginia May 22-27 for a week of programming including community service projects, community and cultural connections, outdoor activities and a full-day activism/lobbying "Teach-In" with community activists.

Learn more about this year's activism project and how you can get involved at our blog, <http://mcsactivism.blogspot.com>.

## TAKE ACTION

- To help us reach our fundraising goals, please donate through the Network for Good button on the MCS Web site
- Contact your representatives and encourage them to co-sponsor the Appalachia Restoration Act (Senate) and Clean Water Protection Act (House)
- Contact the Administration and encourage them to use their authority to end Mountain Top Removal mining by removing loopholes created in clean water and air legislation.
- Contact your electric company and ask them to stop buying power produced with coal from MTR
- Limit your use of electricity
- Turn off the lights when you're not using them
- Unplug appliances when they're not in use! Studies show that appliances which are plugged in, but turned off, account for nearly 1/4 of the electricity consumed by appliances.

# LOWER SCHOOL SPANISH: MCS Celebra las Matemáticas

Maria-Tere Tapias-Avery, Lower School Spanish Teacher

On March 12th, MCS celebrated Pi day. (See p. 9.) In *español*, the 4-5s joined the circle festivities by sorting recycled bottle caps by color and then organizing them into a graph on the rug. This supported their ability to count, compare quantity and size, “3 verdes. ¡Mucho azul! Círculo grande.” Another sadly noted, “No rosado.” Later, the 4-5s moved to tables and used buttons to create and share their own *grande/pequeño* patterns.



The 5-6s vote on the smoothie: *Me gusta, no me gusta...*

The following week, the 5-6s were busy measuring and pouring, “10 tazas leche” for their blueberry shake when someone exclaimed, “Wow I bet there are 100 blueberries!” There was a great range in estimates and students wanted to know exactly how many there were. After carefully counting out *diez* at a time, and keeping track on paper, students figured out there were 350 *moriños* in their drink. As usual, the 5-6s ended their cooking and tasting by providing feedback on a survey at the rug.

If you stopped by the MCS post office, you may have seen “shape and pattern” stamps and postcards for sale at 1¢ and 5¢. The 6-7s began the year by identifying shapes throughout the school. On our walks to the Guggenheim museum students remained observant, pointing to the sidewalk, “un hexágono” or at a window, “un cuadrado.” The first group returned eager to report back how many blocks there were between 96th and 89th street. Inspired by Kandinsky’s use of shape and color, the 6-7s have been extending, designing and sharing their own patterns and art.

The 7-8s have a new classroom job, *el tiempo*. Every morning, a student is responsible for recording the weather on the calendar and then reporting back to the class. This allows them to reflect back as necessary. For example, when students wanted to know what day it snowed last week, it became a useful tool. Recently, the 7-8s took a survey about their favorite animal in *El Yunque* rainforest. As the graph came together, students were surprised to learn which animals were *más popular, menos popular o igual*.

In the 8-9s, students have been tracking and comparing morning temperatures, “Hoy 30 grados. Ayer 42 grados. Más frío hoy.” They also described what weather they would expect and clothing they would wear during different seasons, “Invierno. Está nevando. Yo llevo abrigo, botas y bufanda.”

Fluent with telling time and their weekly schedule, the 9-10s recently designed their *horario ideal*. Students balanced work time and free time, whole and half group, sitting and moving, as well as their personal interests, in planning their ideal schedule. Later, students shared their schedules with a partner, noticing similarities and asking questions such as, “¿A qué hora termina parque? ¿Cuántos minutos dura literatura?” If you’re curious, schedules will be posted throughout May on a staircase bulletin board near the 6-7s. Lastly, if you ever need help figuring out the current time in Bolivia or Venezuela, don’t hesitate to ask a 9-10!



The 5-6s mix a smoothie with 350 *moriños*.

# REFLECTIONS ON HAITI: “WHAT NOW!”

Sophia Goring-Piard, PA Co-President

On Tuesday evening, March 23rd, the MCS Parents Association and Board of Trustees cosponsored a “teach-in” at MCS to foster community awareness on the island nation of Haiti after the magnitude 7.0 earthquake that devastated the nation in January. Our topic: “Haiti, What Now? Celebrating the Life, Culture and Heritage of the People of Haiti and Exploring the Socio-Political, Economic, Environmental and Immigration Challenges that Lay Ahead,” was well-received by MCS community members, friends and guests, as well as a panel of distinguished speakers. Panelists included Yolaine Milfort, the Cultural and Community Liaison at the Haitian Consulate of New York, as well as coordinator for the Earthquake Relief Program at the Haitian Consulate; Michael Ralph, Assistant Professor, NYU Dept. of Social and Cultural Analysis; and Evens Lamour, a Haitian born photographer who lives in NYC.

The evening truly represented the quintessential “eye-opening and mouth-watering experience.” We were welcomed by a gigantic Haitian flag hanging in the courtyard (compliments of the Haitian Consulate) and began the evening with a reception in the Living Room featuring a sampling of Haitian cuisine such as Griot (deep fried chunks of pork), Legumes Maison (stew made with mixed vegetables), Diri Djon Djon (mushroom rice), and Fried Plantains, all provided by Krik Krak restaurant. Mr. Lemour also shared photographs from his last visit to Haiti several months prior to the earthquake documenting daily life in Haiti’s capital city Port-au-Prince. His photographs captivated the hearts and emotions of all who listened to his passionate reflections on challenging aspects of life in Haiti even before the quake. All helped to create a context for our discussion.

During the discussion, we gained a new sense of awareness and appreciation for the island nation and its history as the first Black republic in the Western hemisphere, as well as its present, as the nation and its people begin to recover from the devastating earthquake. In contemplating how the country’s nationals felt when the earthquake hit, and why the Haitian government seemed ill-equipped to handle a human catastrophe of such gigantic proportions, Mrs. Milfort explained, “the country was in shock; we didn’t know



what to do.” As onlookers from miles away, we all remembered being glued to the TV as the media’s 24/7 coverage documented the damage – over 200,000 lives lost. However, we also learned about the many miracle survivors rescued even days after. We saw images of orphaned children, lifeless victims

on the streets of Port-au-Prince, schools demolished, supermarkets down, and most of all, the presidential palace in ruins. But, we also saw the resilience of the Haitian people as they helped one another, prayed for help and vowed to rebuild. As international aid was mobilized, an unprecedented outpouring of monetary, medical and food relief followed.

Dr. Ralph continued the discussion by comparing the situation in Haiti to our own Hurricane Katrina. People in the United States who were shocked by our government’s slow response to aid the stranded victims in New Orleans and remarked, “why don’t they just leave?” Dr. Ralph conveyed to us the paralyzing impact that poverty and lack of resources have on a displaced population. We began to understand why similarly the Haitian nationals could not just easily leave the overpopulated and demolished city of Port-au-Prince – they did not have adequate resources to do so, and they often had nowhere to go. Dr. Ralph also contextualized Port-au-Prince not only the epicenter of the quake but the central operating system and lifeblood of the country. People flocked to Port-au-Prince because that is where most thought they could make a living, which led to overcrowding. We learned about how the island’s disproportionately high population of school-aged children required schools to operate separate sessions in the morning and afternoon, which explained why so many children became victims as they were in school during the time of the quake. Finally, we talked about temporary immigration status relief that the U.S. has made available to undocumented Haitian nationals here until the situation in Haiti ameliorates.

The event truly was awareness building. While not a fundraising endeavor, our aim was to provide a more balanced approach to learn about Haiti, its rich history, socio-economic and political struggles and understand its needs to successfully rebuild and move forward. We accomplished all of that through dialogue. Thanks to all who attended to make the event a huge success!



### 4-5S' CLASS NOTES

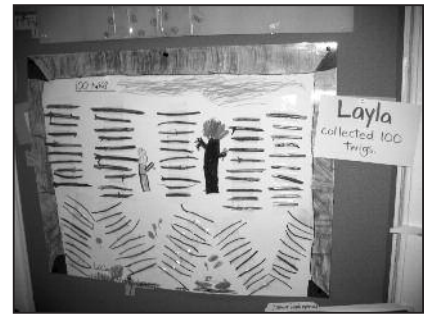
The 4-5s have been busy all winter learning about how babies grow and change through observing babies/toddlers. Pictured here is Julie Carino and her son Karsten who visited as part of this study. We have also been writing photographic stories about our own baby/ toddler experiences. Now, we have begun embarking on our Home Visit

Curriculum and have had our first two visits on the Upper East and Upper West sides. The children are loving learning about NYC's different neighborhoods and about each other's homes and families.



### 5-6S' CLASS NOTES

After the exciting 100 Day of School celebration (projects pictured here), the 5-6s' attentions turned to spring. Lindsay has been leading the children in planting many herbs and produce that will be repotted in the rooftop garden in the spring; they are looking forward to seeing whether the lettuce, radishes, sugar snap peas, scarlet runner beans and potatoes will continue to grow over the next few weeks. We have already had a "taste test" of some of the herbs the children had planted in the rooftop



100 twigs.

garden earlier in the year. We made individual pizzas, then put sage, thyme and tarragon on different sections to try.



100 socks.

The 6-7s' post office has inspired the children to write letters to one another, to their families and to other members of our school community. The children were inspired by a book we read called "Scranimals", which are creatures made of an animal combined with something else. (A "broccolion" is a lion with a broccoli head, an "ostricheetah" is half ostrich, half cheetah, and a "radishark" is part radish, part shark!). Stop by the classroom to check out the original 5-6s "Scranimals."

### 6-7S' CLASS NOTES

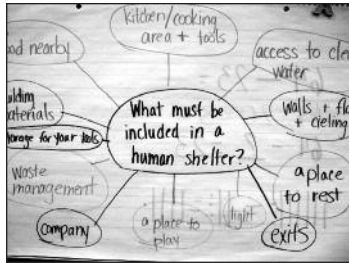
The 6-7s ran a successful post office in March and April. They processed hundreds of letters and cards from families, students, and MCS staff members. We felt very official with our handmade mailbags and our uniforms. For the post office to be successful, each 6-7 had to do their job carefully, whether it is selling stamps, canceling stamps, sorting letters, or delivering the mail. The 6-7s are also busy preparing for the



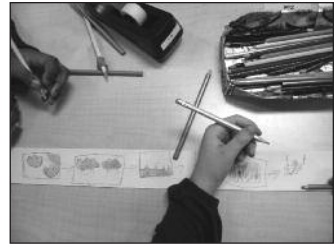
upcoming arrival of chicken eggs. We will incubate and care for the eggs for 21 days. Feel free to stop by the 6-7s room to catch a glimpse when the chicks begin to hatch.

## 7-8S' CLASS NOTES

This month, our social studies work has been focused on habitats. We began by thinking about what squirrels, pigeons and other local wild animals need to survive. We asked ourselves: Where do these animals get their food, water, shelter and space? What sources do they need to create or acquire these elements? This week we turned our attention to our human habitat. We are investigating the



same four elements of habitat, but thinking about our own needs and the city environment. We've also made flow charts of the water cycle (pictured here), built shelters, and a landfill. Ask one of the 7-8s to tell you about the journey of water. If you are lucky, you will get a re-enactment with arm movements! Students and teachers in the 7-8s will be having our Spring Tree Festival. In the morning, we will spend some time in the Meadow, observing, creating and celebrating with games, art, dance and reflection. In the afternoon, we will celebrate trees with food, activities and a tree museum in the classroom.



## 8-9S' CLASS NOTES

The 8-9s have already made \$846.74 at La Tienda! We are going to take a break for a while and have one final La Tienda in May. We also raised \$430.44 through our donation box to send to help earthquake victims in Haiti. In social studies, we are



finishing our first ever research papers about history. We each wrote a paper about a European explorer. In thinking about exploration, we have also been talking about modern explorers, specifically focusing on the work of astronauts. We made models of the solar system and learned new vocabulary, like rotation, orbit, and axis. We have also been working hard to master the multiplication tables through 12. Go to [brainormous.com](http://brainormous.com) and check out Multiflyer, a multiplication game that we love.

## 9-10S' CLASS NOTES

In the 9-10s, we are learning about Chinese immigration to America. We are researching why many Americans discriminated against Chinese immigrants. People made fun of the queues (long braids) and the shape of their eyes. Some Americans were afraid that the Chinese immigrants would take all jobs and didn't want them here. In 1882 the U.S. government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act that banned most Chinese immigrants from coming to America. Some of us think that it was very unfair and rude. Others think that it is okay to limit the number of people who come to the U.S. but you can't say that just one group of people can't come.

We are also writing persuasive letters about how we think the world should be changed or what we like that should stay the same. Our letters are about cleaning up the subway stations, having more bike paths in New York City, how delicious and healthy MCS lunches are, and many other topics. We are going to the farm on April 12th! On this trip we will be there for five days and we've earned new privileges like taking showers and playing in the rec room. We will also get to meet our pen pals!





### FIFTH GRADE CLASS NOTES

The 5th grade is gearing up for the Egyptian Market with a study of ancient civilizations. Our preliminary study of Sumer included a look at how the Sumerians used the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to form the cornerstone of their civilization. We also learned about daily life in Sumer, including religious rituals and myths, early forms of writing, and laws, creating our own "Code of Law for the 5th Grade."

The 5th grade is also nearing the selection of the winner for this year's MLK Book Award. We have narrowed the choices to two extraordinary books: *Wangari's*

*Trees of Peace* by Jeannette Winter and *Most Loved in All the World* by Tonya Hegamin. The award is collaboration with two public schools, Children's Workshop School and Central Park East II. In April, all three schools will be meeting to discuss, debate, and choose a final winner for 2010.

### SIXTH GRADE CLASS NOTES

*Special Thanks to Emma and Kai for their help with 6th grade class notes*

In Language Arts, we are finishing up book club presentations. We learned about multiple intelligences – verbal, mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, etc. – and took a quiz to find out which intelligences were our strengths. Students are incorporating two intelligences into their presentations about the central themes in their book club books. In library, the 6th grade is beginning a study of graphic novels. We will compare them to picture books, comic books, as well as chapter books. The study will conclude with small groups of students collaborating on writing and illustrating their own.



Our most recent project in math was the pentomino project, where we solved all kinds of puzzles using pentominoes (shapes made from five connected squares). Students tried folded topless boxes to fitting all the pentominoes together to make a rectangle. In addition to the pentominoes, we have been adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing decimals. In Spanish, we have just finished AR verbs and have now moved on to our in-depth country study. We will make presentations about the history and culture of our country in April.

### FIFTH FLOOR CLASS NOTES



7th and 8th grade literature classes have been steeped in Shakespeare this spring, reading sonnets and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. We've enjoyed the playfulness and humor in Shakespeare's language and enacted some of the scenes on the Fifth Floor. 7th graders are plumbing the depths of their experiences and writing autobiographies that are equal parts honest, moving, and hilarious, and writing autobiographical poems in Spanish that complement their work in writing class. In science, students are taking the helm, following in the footsteps of Albert Einstein and Marie Curie, creating their own projects

that will be on display in the Music Room in April. In addition to all of this school work, 8th graders have been making high school decisions and are already beginning to plan their graduation play. We look forward to June and their theatrical reflections.

# MCS CELEBRATES PI DAY!

Flannery Denny, Math Specialist

## A History of Pi Day

This year MCS joined in the international celebration of Pi Day. Originally conceived of by the Exploratorium in San Francisco, Pi Day is a mathematical cause for celebration based on the convergence of the first three digits of pi in a date (3.14 = March 14th) and Albert Einstein's birthday. Pi is a number that is a never ending string of numbers that is the constant ratio between the circumference (outside) of a circle and its diameter (the distance across the circle through its center). As far back as 2000 BC, the Egyptians had calculated pi far beyond the level of precision that was actually useful to them and finding more digits of pi continues to intrigue mathematicians the world over.



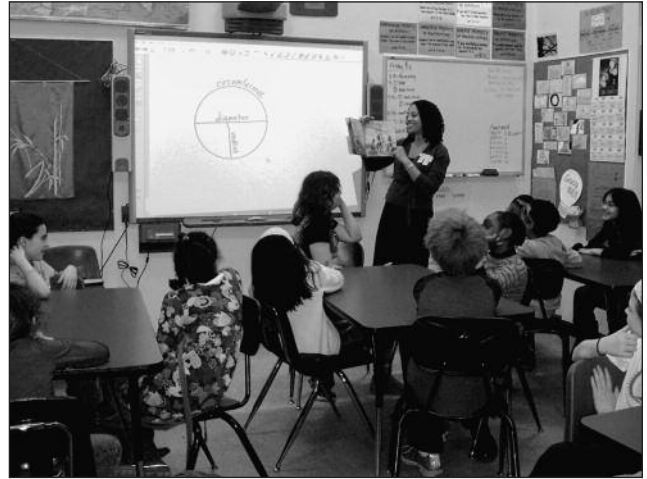
7th graders and 4-5s hunt for circles in children's books.

## 2010 Celebrations

Across the school, grades paired up for circular activities.

The 7th graders and the 4-5s paired up for 3 stations of activities...they played circle games such as duck, duck, goose in the courtyard, made collages of circles that they found in magazines and read children's books selected by the 7th graders as a CD assignment in search of circles in our world.

The 8th graders paired with the 5-6s and wrote pikus (like haikus, but 3 syllables, followed by one syllable, and then four syllables), broke into teams to



Maiya reads a book about pi to 8-9s and 6th graders.

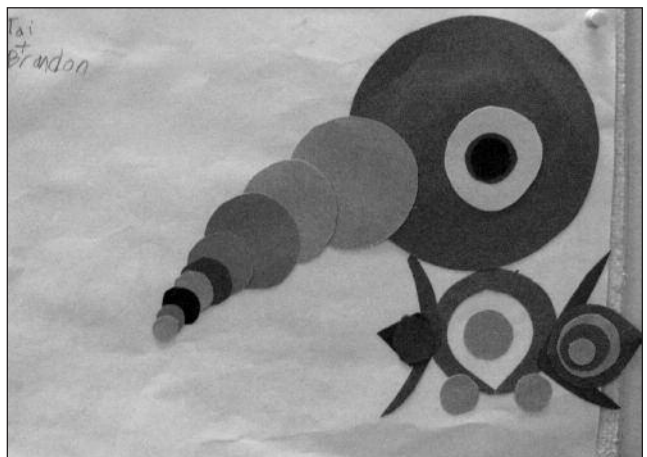
look for examples of circles around our school, and completed venn diagrams comparing the letters used to write their names.

8-9s and 6th grade had a pie eating extravaganza and read "The Dragon of Pi".

6-7s and 9-10s read books selected by the 9-10s and made circle collages.

7-8s and 5th grade made Sol Lewitt and Kandinsky inspired collages.

The 6th grade also held a contest to see who could memorize the most digits of pi. The prize went to William Wei, holding the first school record of memorizing pi to 22 digits! Students are already challenging William to another contest next year.



6-7s and 9-10s made collages out of circles.

# STUFF FROM THE STACKS

Jay Fung, Librarian

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*“Digital natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to ‘serious’ work.”*

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I heard a buzz word/ phrase the other day that caught my attention – digital native. I will admit that I had no idea what it meant. So I looked it up, or rather, I googled it.

According to Marc Prensky, who coined the phrase, it is an analogy of native speakers and immigrants to describe the generation gap separating today’s students (the digital natives) from their teachers (the digital immigrants). In his essay, “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants” (2001), he asserts that, “Digital natives are used to receiving information really fast. They like to parallel process and multi-task. They thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards. They prefer games to ‘serious’ work.” He goes on to talk about that “digital immigrants” have an “accent” that manifests itself in a number of ways – printing out a digital document to edit it rather than editing online, for example.

Without getting into lots of detail, I will try and keep this brief by saying that, while I agree with his thinking in part, I also believe that he is selling both sides short. Each day I am with my students I witness a definite divide between what children know almost instinctively about technology and a fairly consistent learning curve for those teachers and adults who work with them. However, I also see each day children who are willing to sit and listen and/or read a book patiently, participate in critical discussions about books, and retell each and every step of the plot of book in glorious detail. On the other hand, I utilize many facets of technology in the library such as helping students with research and finding information on the web and almost more importantly, how to navigate searching on the Internet.



History shows us that there have always been gaps between students and teachers – cultural, musical, racial, economic, political, just to name a few. My experience at MCS has also shown me that while I continue to struggle at times to keep up with the “natives,” that both students and teachers will take the time, both rapid and measured, to listen, discuss, and ultimately, learn.

My plan is to address this issue with more detail at a future date. If you have thoughts or questions about any of this, please feel free to drop by the library.

I have also been teaching two electives for 7th and 8th graders – Introduction to Film and a Mock Printz Award. For the film elective, we have been viewing several movies, both popular and lesser-known films, and examining the various aspects that make up what one sees on the big screen. In the Mock Printz Award elective, students have been reading Young Adult novels published in the last year and discussing their opinions in an effort to decide which book is the “best” book of the bunch. I must give a shout-out of thanks to my students, but a big one to Carol O’Donnell who has supported me in developing and teaching the classes.

Finally, as we are nearing the end of the year, I would like let parents know a couple of things. First, please look around your home for books that haven’t been returned. We had a major computer snafu and have had trouble tracking down some books. It would be so helpful. Secondly, there will be a list of books that we would love to have in the library available at Amazon. You can see the list if you go to Wish Lists at the site and type in my name – Jay Fung. Then you can click on MCS Wish List 2010. We so appreciate all of your support.

# WINTER FARM TRIP

## THE 7TH GRADERS COLLECT SAP AT THE FARM

Photos by John McDaniel, Farm Program Director



### ***Maiya Jackson Named New Upper School Director, continued from page 2***

discussion of education issues, curriculum, and MCS' position in the progressive school community confirmed that our staff is our great strength."

Prior to joining the faculty at MCS, Maiya completed a B.A. in English Literature at Brown University and an M.A. in Education Leadership from the Klingenstein Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. She also taught 9th and 10th graders

at Friends Academy and served as Director of Breakthrough Long Island.

Demonstrated administrative skills, a keen critical perspective, and an appreciation for the school's mission, make Maiya an admired teacher, a respected colleague, and a strong leader. I believe that in her new capacity, Maiya will be a defining influence on another era of strength in the Upper School.



# Big Night Out

*Benefit to  
support racial  
and economic  
diversity at  
Manhattan  
Country School*

For more information contact:

Jess Blake  
Special Events  
Coordinator

Manhattan Country School  
7 East 96th Street  
New York, NY 10128

Phone:  
212-348-0952 Ext. 280

Fax:  
212-534-6124

Email:  
[jblake@manhattancountryschool.org](mailto:jblake@manhattancountryschool.org)



**Saturday May 1, 2010  
6:00pm-10:00pm  
Prince George Ballroom  
15 East 27th Street, New York, NY**

**Annual spring benefit honoring  
excellence and leadership  
in progressive education, social and  
environmental justice, and  
community activism.**

***This year MCS will honor  
Chorus Director Clint Ingram  
with the “Living the Dream”  
Mentor Award.***

**Evening includes the “Living the Dream” Mentor  
Award Ceremony, live music by Colombian folk  
and jazz ensemble Foklore Urbano, and dancing.  
Food and drinks are included in the ticket price.**

**Cocktail Reception • Hors d'oeuvres  
Awards Ceremony • Live Music • Dancing**

**We hope to see you there!  
Special ticket price available to MCS parents on  
the MCS website!**

# ALUMNI BREAKFAST

Viviana Benitez, '94, Alumni Coordinator

In the fall of 2009 an alumna and prospective parent toured the school and poignantly reflected that the school and curriculum had evolved. Curious what other alumni might say after touring the school during school hours, Lois and Viviana worked to organize an alumni breakfast. Alumni in the NY area were invited to the event which included a continental breakfast, welcoming remarks from Lois, Michèle and Debo, a school tour and a Q+A with founder Gus Trowbridge. The event was the first of its kind for alumni and attracted alumni from 1971, the first graduating class, to graduates from the class of 1998. Every generation of alumni was represented and even non-grads, who hadn't been back since they left, returned. The feelings of nostalgia and pride were strong and the seeds to host yet another breakfast and tour were sown.



Director Michèle Solá with Debo Adegbile '80, David Wilcox '71, and Gisele Shorter '91

## THROUGH THE DOOR OF OUR PAST: An Alumna's Perspective on the Alumni Breakfast

Emma Dryden, '79

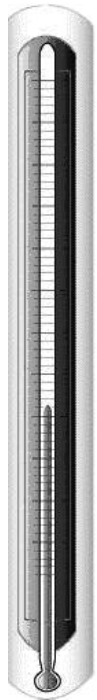
New York City in the late 1960s and early 1970s was a hard place to live – it was a volatile city reacting to the dynamics of the Civil Rights movement, the Women's movement, and the Vietnam War; it was a city crippled by social disorder, struggling to merge its diverse and divisive populations; it was a city rife with crime, economic stagnation, and palpable unrest. It was an ugly, crumbling city. And at the same time, it was a city of artists, actors, musicians, and writers. It was a city of activists, passionate in their dreams for a better future. It was a city receptive to new ideas. I was born and grew up in this city and I attended elementary school at the Manhattan Country School – a school founded in 1966 upon the principals of Martin Luther King, Jr and reflecting the vision of the Civil Rights Movement. The school set out to teach students in a community with no racial majority and broad economic diversity, and to instill in students a desire to champion justice, compassion, and peace, and the rights of all people to equity.

I left MCS thirty-five years ago. This morning, I returned for the first time. I went back not only to see what's changed over the past three decades, but to see what hasn't changed. I walked through the big green doors of the converted 1904 townhouse, into the courtyard, and up the spiral staircase to attend an Alumni breakfast and take a tour of the school. There's a computer room there now, but that room used to be a terrace, and suddenly reverberating over the tapping of keyboards was the *smack* of my pink rubber handball hitting the brick wall and bouncing to Derrick. From the kitchen, I was sure I could smell Consuela's chili and rice. In the library, my face suddenly flushed at the embarrassment of being made fun of by David, just there, at that table by the window. In the round classroom, I tasted the sweet dust from the sugar cubes we'd pasted together to make igloos. As I walked down the back staircase, I heard my own voice calling

to my friends – Nicole! Nina! Betsy! Maria! Leslie! – in a race to see who could line up the fastest to go to the park with Doc. In the glorious wood-paneled music room, morning light streaming in the tall windows, I was six-years-old again, singing "We Shall Overcome Someday." And in a corner of a small classroom with a blue rug, surrounded by fabric and glue and cardboard and pencils and crayons, I smelled the Elmer's and felt the textured brown fabric that were to become my first hand-made book – *Magic Moon and Magic Sun*.

I walked the halls of my past this morning, and as if being jolted from sleep by a vivid dream, I realized how much of *me* was nurtured and brought to fruition during those years at MCS – an interest in and respect for other people; a passion for books, writing, and drawing; a desire to help others; a sense of hope; a trust in people; a trust in dreams; and a profound belief that what's right will prevail. Out of the corner of my adult eyes, I saw my younger self becoming a citizen of the world, and for just for a moment I was that girl again – that Emma all gangly limbs, scraped knees, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches with the crusts cut off, Danskin pants, songs off-key, and make-believe – and I was overcome by the endless possibilities and promise and resilience that can envelope and inspire our childhoods.

It was a precious gift my parents gave me, sending me to MCS and thereby opening my heart and spirit to the world. I never thanked them for that; I thank them now. It's a precious gift to be given an opportunity to revisit one's past and experience ones adult self within the perspective of ones childhood. It was as though I was meeting myself on a road, two travelers headed in the same direction, suddenly striking up a friendship, recognizing ourselves in one another, one and the same. I walked the halls of my past this morning and right through the door to myself.



\$600,000

\$223,683

\$0

## **ANNUAL FUND UPDATE**

Thank you parents for your generous contributions to the 2009-2010 Annual Fund! So far, the Annual Fund has earned \$223,683 and thirty percent of MCS parents have already made a contribution. We hope that you will consider making a tax-deductible gift to the Annual Fund and help us reach our goal of 100% parent participation by June 30th 2010!

If you have any questions please contact Akemi Kochiyama in the Office of Development by calling 212-348-0952 ext 283 or by emailing [akochiyama@manhattancountryschool.org](mailto:akochiyama@manhattancountryschool.org).

To make your Annual Fund contribution online, please follow the simple steps below:

1. Go to the MCS Website
2. Click on **“Support Us”** at the top of the screen
3. Click on the **“Network for Good – Donate Now”** button
4. Make your contribution

*Thank you for your support!*

## **CHECKMATE!**

Susan Harris, After School Director



Feelings were running high on March 18 and 25, when the two After School chess classes engaged in a tournament. The rules were challenging: absolute silence, if you touch a piece, you must move it, and competitive scoring. Over 20 students participated in the round-robin tournament, which was overseen by our after school chess instructors, father-son team Enrique and Marcus Mairena. Their high-level teaching has earned the respect and admiration of MCS students and parents.

The Winner's Circle included First Place: Fred Halbhuber (8-9s), Second Place: Cal Gelernt (7-8s), Third Place: Kenji Williams (7-8s), and Fourth Place: Zackary Lee (8-9s). All participants received medals. Congratulations!

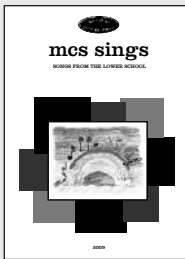
# BULLETIN BOARD

## RECYCLE!

There is a box in the front lobby for recycling bottle caps. Please help us collect bottle caps. Aveda recycles them, creating new packaging for its products.



## Get Your Copy of MCS Sings: Songs from the Lower School



With the help of an MCS Fellowship Grant this summer, Sarah Leibowits de Luna and Susan Harris collaborated on the making of a CD of songs from the Lower School. Accompanied by MCS parents Steve Tarshis and Michael Ulmer and recorded by Kenien Spann, '98, the CD and songbook includes such favorites as *What Can One Little*

*Person Do?* and *Dinosaur Song*. CDs and songbooks are available for purchase at MCS assemblies and in the 4-5s' classroom. Makes a great gift for your child.

## MCS ON YouTube!



In March, two doctoral students from Teachers College designed and shot a 6-minute youtube film about Manhattan Country School for a course titled, "Cinema & Sustainability." The film identifies MCS as a model of sustainability and civics education, and includes interviews with teachers and students, a cooking lesson, the life cycle of plastic with the 7-8s, a conversation with 5th graders about sustainability and footage of 7th graders at the Farm. The final version of the film will be released in April. Check out [www.manhattancountyschool.org](http://www.manhattancountyschool.org) for details when they become available.

## ACTIVITIES WEEK

From June 1-3, after formal after school classes are over, child care with sports, games, and crafts will be available from 3:00 to 5:30 pm. More information regarding Activities Week will come from Susan Harris in May.

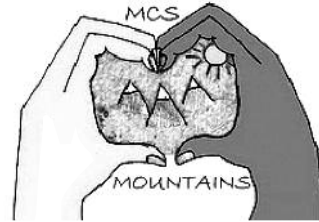
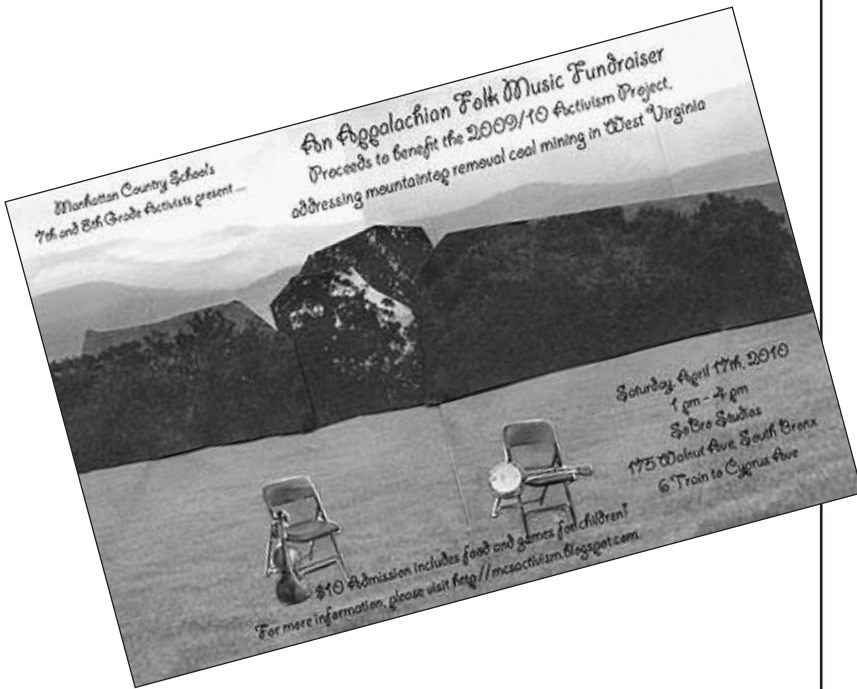


## NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN FOR 2010-2011 PARENT REPRESENTATIVES AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS



Strong parent leadership is essential for a successful school year. If you are interested in becoming more involved with the Parents' Association, please consider taking a position as a Class Representative or Committee Chair for the 2010-2011 school year.

The Parents' Council is also looking to fill several Parent Council leadership positions (Treasurer, Secretary, and Co-Chair of Child Care Committee) as well as a Co-President to partner with Sophia Goring-Piard for the 2010-2011 school year. If you are interested in any of the above positions, please contact Lee deLahunta at [leedelahunta@aol.com](mailto:leedelahunta@aol.com).



## **UPCOMING ACTIVISM EVENT**

**April 17:** Appalachian Folk Music Concert & fundraiser for our trip 1-4pm

**Where:** Digital Lounge - 175 Walnut Ave (Cypress Ave 6 Train stop – only 25 minutes from MCS)

**When:** 1pm- 4pm, Saturday, April 17th

**Cost:** \$10 donation includes games/crafts for kids & snacks



**Manhattan Country School**  
7 East 96th Street  
New York, NY 10128

*Please Rush \* Dated Material*