

## Home of the Braves

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## Homeschool vs. Public School

By: Allie Martin, Grade 6

Have you ever had a bad day at school and wished that you were homeschooled? Have you ever just plain out wondered what it's like to be homeschooled? If you answered yes to either of the questions above then you're probably already interested in this article, so it most likely doesn't need to be said that you should keep reading.

Lizzy Yarger is a sixth grader who is homeschooled. She loves art, animals, and participates in Girl Scouts and other activities. She's really no different from the rest of us, except when it comes to school. "Sometimes," Lizzy replied when asked if she enjoyed being homeschooled. "But it gets lonely. I like being able to choose my own activities though."

Kendall Pierce is another sixth grader who likes animals and reading, but unlike Lizzy, she goes to school here at Miscoe. "I love being in public school because I get to socialize and be in classes with my friends." Kendall said about her enjoyment of middle school. "I like to go to different classes and switch teachers, and the electives are really fun."



Mrs. Frary, a sixth grade social studies teacher, also shared her thoughts. "I'm not at all against homeschooling; I think it's great to get to spend the day with your kids. I do think it would be hard to do that, and it would get sort of tiring to be with your kids that much."

Think about it; it would get boring, lonely, and more challenging than necessary to have your mom or dad teach you instead of a teacher who hardly knows you. You would probably get mad at them more frequently, too. Yet if you go to public school you have teachers who, as said before, barely know you. Do you like having your teachers think of you as a normal student, or would you want to be with someone who knows your secrets?

Lizzy likes being homeschooled, though, and

Kendall is happy with public school, but both seem to have more downsides. "I wish I could get snow days when it snows," Lizzy remarked. As a homeschooled student, she does sometimes get days off, but since she doesn't have to go anywhere she can't get snow days. "But I like being able to learn at my own pace." She decided.

"School buses are loud and noisy and cafeterias are crammed, but I love socializing with friends and electives." Kendall says. Both girls are happy with their lives but sometimes wish they had a different type of school. What do you think? Did this article provide more facts for you to add to your "please homeschool me" list for your parents or did you decide that you should be glad that you're in middle school with all your friends?



# What's happening around Miscoe

## IXL around Miscoe

By: Charlotte St. Pierre, Grade 5

What is IXL? You might just think of it as homework, but it goes farther back. It was first founded in 1998 created to help students learn certain subjects with practice online. It started being used in MURSD in 2011 as your average learning website until teachers noticed how it started to quickly increase student's MCAS scores in a way that Mrs. Kadra, a 7th grade math teacher, was quote "dumbfounded" with their change. It was even enough to put MURSD in top ten for MCAS improvement. However, not a lot of students agree with the way that a teacher would feel about IXL. Here two opinions are fighting against each other and in some way the students' is winning.

Almost everyday I walk into my classroom overhearing people talking to each other all about their IXL they had the night earlier. Normally I wouldn't hear much about it but all of the sudden, I started hearing strange comments where students started to feel like they aren't smart enough or even saying that they went to bed crying because of IXL. When it came to this point I started to wonder whether it is healthy for students to be doing this or not. I know that one of the

hardships with IXL I commonly face is when you get an answer wrong. For example, you could be all the way at 90 and then for the slightest unimportant scenario it brings you far back leaving it so that you have to go all the way back up even if you don't understand what you did wrong. I found out that getting a question wrong is one of the main reasons why one would be to the point of crying about homework.

I did a quick survey with my team and homeroom and it turns out that only 7/50 of the students like IXL! Another thing that caught my eye was the fact that it just simply makes students make them feel like they are just not good enough, or not smart enough. After thinking about this, it really made me feel like this truly just isn't something that really anyone should have to feel over a simple homework website.

What do you think, should we continue to use IXL?



## Lights! Camera! DRAMA!

By: Hannah Le, Grade 5

Do you like acting? Do you like performing in front of people? Well, if you chose "all of the above", then you should check out our awesome drama department!

We have a wonderful auditorium here at Miscoe that we use for school plays and assemblies. We also have an amazing director named Mrs. Appleby, who chooses, and directs, our plays. Our most recent play was "Stuart Little", which was super fun to perform, and we'll soon be doing "Alice in Wonderland Jr.!"

Drama is an amazing way for kids to make new friends, improve acting, and public speaking. Students seem to really feel their parts, as they progress in the acting.

Mrs. Appleby picks the most wonderful plays, and it's really hard to choose a favorite! Some students who just finished "Stuart Little" are likely to say that that's their favorite play, but we've also preformed "Cinderella", "Fame Jr.", soon to be "Alice in Wonderland Jr." and so many more! Mrs. Appleby chooses plays that are fun for all ages, and have a lot of parts. Also, it's important for students to have fun, because it's a lot of work!

Mrs. Appleby started in 2008 mainly just sewing costumes, and started directing plays in 2010 when the previous director lost her job due to budget cuts. Either way, we're lucky to have such a great director!

If you like acting, and you want take part in a play, you have to be prepared for auditions. Also, be ready to do things that, might be crazy!

Drama is a great opportunity for not only improving acting, but making new friends too. If you like drama, then join the Miscoe Hill Youth Theater!



## Miscoe's Past

By: Ella Halnon, Grade 5

Mr. Oldfield is one fountain of knowledge! He has been here for about 34 years so he had some pretty good facts about Miscoe's past. Did you know that in 1960 Miscoe actually was a high school and Mr. Milligan was the principal. That's right, once upon a time long ago there was only the front to Miscoe and the front was actually Nipmuc Regional High School. Then around 1980 they added on to the building so the hallway in front of the library and everywhere behind that became Miscoe. Eventually Miscoe and Nipmuc moved into another building and the elementary school came here. After that the slowly grades came back to the elementary school. So every few years a new grade would come back to the elementary school, eventually the principal and the district decided to just have the elementary school and the high schools go to there present buildings and Miscoe stayed here. Which I think is pretty cool. After that grades didn't invade Miscoe anymore and Miscoe stayed a middle school. After that sports and other activities were added to Miscoe. I hope this article helped you learn some cool facts about Miscoe past! Maybe you could use it for Miscoe Hill trivia one day!



# What's happening around Miscoe

## The Musical Life

**By: Juliet Alexander, Grade 5**

I interviewed Mrs. Amitrano about band, and about her experiences teaching. I am one of her fifth grade students, and have been playing the flute for about five months. I asked her what it is like being a band teacher. She said "I think being a band teacher is unique and exciting. I get to work creatively with so many different students throughout the day with the common goals of learning and making music." After hearing that, I realized how much fun she has as a band teacher.

I also asked if it is hard to be a band teacher? She replied saying "I bet there are aspects of any teacher's job that can be hard. One of the hard things about being a band teacher is that there are a lot of things going on at once. While working on a skill, a piece of music, individual students may have problems with notes or rhythms or a student might have trouble with a broken instrument." In saying this she recapped on how hard being any sort of teacher can be sometimes.

When I asked her why she became a band teacher, she told me "I wanted to become a band teacher so I could show students how to learn something new, fun, and exciting. I love seeing and hearing everyone's individual parts come together. Learning a new instrument opens up a lot of opportunities, whether it's meeting new friends, investing in a new hobby or, for some of our serious musicians, becoming a career." After saying this, I understood why she wanted to become a band teacher.

I finished our interview by asking what her students are like. She told me that "I have a lot of great students in 5th and 6th grade bands. There are so many kids willing to work hard at what they do and are always looking to learn more and improve themselves." In saying this, we learn how hard her students work.



**The band at practice**  
Photo by Juliet Alexander.

## Getting to know the library

**By: Kayla Vallecillo, Grade 5**

Do you need a book for a class project or maybe a book to read? If so, you should go to the Miscoe Hill Library. If you think that you can only get a book there you are wrong; there's so much more to do. For example, you can do research, study, take tests, participate in Book Clubs, or help out the library by putting away books. Book Club is a place for fifth and sixth graders to talk all about books they have read. We have every Book Club meeting on Day 1 during lunch. (Please ask Mrs. Arnold before coming.) If you are looking for a great fiction book, make sure to look for the authors last name. Did you know there are 8,640 books to choose from? The library hasn't always had the same books to read all the time. There are new arrivals of books in the middle of the library named, "NEW & HOT". You can also find new books on Destiny, our library database. Destiny is a database that you use to look up books that the library has. The library has different sections to make finding books a lot easier. It is split into five main sections. The fiction section, the nonfiction section, biographies, and reference for multi-volume sets or very large books that cannot leave the library. When interviewing Mrs. Arnold, she says, "I am always looking for suggestions on what to purchase for the library. The library has lots of resources for projects and reports, more than just books. Please ask for help." As you can see, the library is open for anyone to come. It is by the fifth and sixth grade technology room, or across from guidance. Mrs. Arnold has a lot of classes and may not be available when you need her. It is best to come in the morning or after school. As a reminder, remember to return your library books! You will get a letter from the library for turning them in late. You will have two weeks to return it. If you are not finished with your book, you can renew it instead of returning it. As you can see, the library is open for anyone to come and has many books to choose from. Is your next trip going to be to the library?

**Do you ever need a book for a research project?**

**Or just want a good read?**

**Visit the Miscoe Hill School Library!**

**Or... Visit the Library's Website!**

**<http://miscoehillschoollibrary.weebly.com>**





# Behind the Classroom

## Mrs. Maloney

**By: Maggie Lewinsky, Grade 5**

You might have seen Mrs. Maloney around the school but do you really know what her job is? Mrs. Maloney is an ABA technician. That means that she has different strategies to help kids learn.

Have you ever wondered where a teacher like Mrs. Maloney takes kids when they're not in the classroom? When I asked her about it she said that sometimes the kids just need a break, so they take

a quick walk around the school, and then they're ready to learn. Also different kids learn in different ways, and some kids may just need a place that is a little bit quieter than the classroom, (I know I do!) so

Mrs. Maloney would take them to the library or another quiet room.

I have always wondered what the hardest part of a teacher's job is. When I asked Mrs. Maloney about it she said, "I get to know and enjoy you guys, and then June comes around and it's the end of the year and I won't see you guys as much." I think that if I was a teacher this would be

the worst part of my job too. But the end of the year is hard on all sides. As a student I hate leaving the teachers that I have gotten to know during the year and then not seeing them anymore.

Did you know that Mrs. Maloney was once a stay-at-home mom? When I asked her if she planned on going into education she replied, "Well, when I finished college and later had a family of my own, I became a stay-a-home mom. I was able to spend a lot of time volunteering in their classrooms. And when I saw what it was all about, that made me



**Mrs. Maloney**

**Photo by Maggie Lewinsky**

really want to get into the field. Then as my kids got older I was able to have more time, so I was able to take lots of training and programs to teach me more on how to help kids learn all types of things in all types of ways."

Finally, I wanted to ask Mrs. Maloney what the best part of her job is. She said, "I think the best part is seeing kids understand, and learn new things. I love it when I see their faces shine because they think 'oh yeah, I get it now.'" I think that we should really appreciate all of the teachers in our school, especially the teachers that are behind the scenes.

## Mrs. Checkoway

**By: Connor Gleason, Grade 5**

Have you ever felt sick and had to go to the nurse? Our school nurse here at Miscoe is Mrs. Checkoway, who has been a nurse for twenty nine years, but what do we actually know about her? She was going to graduate school because she wanted to teach nursing in a college. To be a nurse, she had to do an internship in community nursing. She had to have a job out in the community to learn the differences in between community nursing and working at a hospital.

She worked with a school nurse and she let her take care of children, talk to parents and teachers, etc. The nurse also taught her how to recognize an ear infection, strep throat, and concussions. Mrs. Checkoway chose to start out at Henry P. Clough Elementary School and worked alongside Mrs. Stienstra, who used to be the elementary school nurse. Mrs. Checkoway loved the job from the very first day she was there. Mrs.

Checkoway knew that it was what she was meant to be so she changed her focus to community health and became a school nurse.

Mrs. Checkoway's favorite part of her job is the kids. She loves kids! She thinks that nursing is a wonderful career. She says, "You feel good helping people." She also reminds us that there are many jobs you can do in nursing. Her advice to you if you want to be a nurse is to study hard,



**Mrs. Checkoway**  
**Photo by Connor Gleason**

you need good grades to get into nursing school. She also suggests to work as a nurse's aid for a summer to see how you

like it.

She told her parents she wanted to be a nurse when she was 10 years old. She tries to walk at least three mornings a week. She eats healthy during the week and she has some treats during the weekend. She also does the Babysitting enrichment. Maggie Lewinsky says, "It is really fun and you learn about skills that will be useful in babysitting." She rates it 10/10.

## Mr. Jandrow

**By: Jacob Selby, Grade 5**

Mr. Ryan Jandrow is head of maintenance at Miscoe Hill. Mr. Jandrow is only 27 years old and would like to be at this job for a long time. He has taken his previous job as a construction worker experiences, skills and work habits into Miscoe Maintenance. I asked Mr. Jandrow what skills you need in maintenance for anyone who is reading this and thinks that they want to be a maintenance worker. Mr. Jandrow said, "Knowing what tools to use on the job whether it's cleaning up, or fixing something, can make the task very simple.

I asked him how he is never grossed out by the things he sees in places like the bathrooms and the lunch room. "I don't think I'll ever be grossed out believe it or not," said Mr. Jandrow "you can get use to anything in time".

I asked him if it is hard to clean the lunch room because of all the food that gets thrown on the floor. Mr. Jandrow said, "No, the lunch room

is one of the easiest to clean once the tables are moved, so it's never too bad, but it would certainly help if more of the trash made it into the trash instead of on the floor."

Mr. Jandrow really enjoys spending his days working around the school and interacting with the students, teachers, and administration.

During your school hours of 8:30 am to 2:30 pm, do you ever see trash just lying around? If yes, please pick it up even if it's not your trash. Maintenance does work for you every school day by cleaning out the gym, bathrooms, lunchroom, and classrooms. So do them a favor and help keep the school looking terrific. If you already have, thank you very much!



**Mr. Jandrow hard at work**  
**Photo by Jacob Selby**

# Behind the Classroom

## Mrs. Schwartz

**By: Aila Francis, Grade 5**

Mrs. Schwartz is a teacher and has worked at Miscoe Hill in every grade except eighth helping students with their math skills. She got a masters degree in business administration with a concentration in management science from the honors program at the University of Miami. When she was a student in graduate school she had the opportunity to teach college students, and she found that she loved helping students share her enthusiasm for computers and technology. She helps kids at lunch by teaching different ways to learn math. She told me, "Three years ago Miscoe Hill received a grant from the federal government to hire classroom tutors to help middle school students in mathematics." Mrs. Schwartz is so excited to be able to work with middle school students to encourage them to love math and to feel confident with math. She told me that "There are many adults who do not feel comfortable or confident in math, and our country needs more citizens to work in areas of the STEM programs." Some of the things we learn in math class are fundamental building blocks for becoming scientists, doctors, professors and even in our everyday lives. This is why we need teachers like Mrs. Schwartz to help us with our math struggles!



**Mrs. Schwartz**  
Photo by Mrs. Arnold

## Snow Day or Snow Delay?

**By: Susan Barrows, Grade 5**

Wahoo! You wake up and look outside to see piles and piles of snow. You walk downstairs to see your mom sitting on the couch to tell you that school was canceled and it is a snow day! But then you stop to think how are snow days called? Well, Dr. Maruszczak, the Superintendent of the Mendon-Upton Regional School District, is behind the snow day magic.

Depending on the weather forecast he decides whether it is going to be a snow day or a delay. "For starters if there is going to be a snowstorm the first thing I do is touch base with the police department's, Chief Bradley in Upton and Chief Curzy in Mendon. I'll also talk to the Department of Public Works directors in both towns" said Dr. Maruszczak.

When I asked how he determines when we get snow days he said, "All the superintendents in the surrounding towns are pretty good friends. So let's use January 17 as an example and realize every storm is different. You know when you are looking on the news days before, there's going to be a massive storm 12-16 inches. Those are actually pretty easy because it's like you know it's happening at this time. I don't have to do a lot of consulting with the other superintendents. What I will do is I will call both towns police departments and DPW's and give them the heads up hey I'm going to cancel school tomorrow so you don't have to worry about busses for the classes."

So are snow days good or bad? Because each snow day school gets extended by a day. Snow delays on the other hand do not because its only a two hours of school missed. So which one would you choose snow day or snow delay?

Now go outside and enjoy the snow. It won't be here for long!



## Math... For Breakfast ?

**By: Kendall Pierce, Grade 6**

Have you hated math class because of the lesson you were learning? Have you ever not wanted to go to school over a math problem? If you are struggling in math and want help, than this article might help.

Mrs. Kadra, a 7th grade math teacher, and Mrs. McCourt, a 6th grade math teacher, run a free yearly program called "Math for Breakfast". You are probably wondering what Math for Breakfast is? It is a before school program for 6th and 7th grade math students who need help with anything math related. I talked to Mrs. Kadra about Math for Breakfast and she said "The 7th grade students who have Mrs. Kadra can enjoy weekly Thursday morning breakfast and review of lessons and practice skills in Room 431 at 7:30 in the morning and goes until 8:15. It is highly informal and students can "let their hair down" so to speak with freely moving around the room helping to solve problems and celebrate further understanding and reinforcement of math skills." Mrs. Kadra provides food and students also bring items such as: orange juice, hot chocolate, bagels, muffins, apples, oranges, breakfast bars, and granola bars. Mrs. Kadra and Mrs. McCourt help students who are struggling in math.

I asked Mrs. Kadra about the history of this program and how students can join if they want help. Mrs. Kadra started math for breakfast over 10 years ago. If students want to join they can come in at 7:30 and put their backpacks away and come into Room 431. If you are wondering what you do in Math for Breakfast Mrs. Kadra said "Students grab a whiteboard, expo marker, eraser, and grab a seat anywhere they are comfortable sitting. Then we begin by opening the floor up for whatever problems or lessons they want to talk about and try to do together. Then if we are having a test or quiz, we review together and discuss aspects of the problems and how we go about solving them. Students leave with a feeling of confidence and a positive sensation from being amongst friends and a teacher who cares deeply for them and their abilities to solve math problems." So hopefully the next time you get frustrated at math you will go to Math for Breakfast.



**Eating up math**  
Photo by Mrs. Kadra



# Creative Corner at Miscoe

## The Locked Diary

By: Ishani Saha—Grade 6

Light filled the town of Millville as Jesse blinked his way into the waking world. He let out a long, exaggerated yawn, memories slowly flooding his empty mind. Suddenly, the plans he had the last night filled his brain and he hopped out of bed, pulling on his clothes and brushing his teeth before heading down for breakfast.

"Dad!" Jesse called cheerily. "I'm going to Elijah's place!" Jesse's dad frowned unhappily, then told him to come back in an hour. Jesse stuffed some oatmeal down his throat before heading towards Elijah's (his friend's) house. As he walked up the driveway, it occurred to him that he would have to explain why he was trying to open a diary with a lock.

He shrugged, deciding that it wouldn't take much time to describe his situation. Still, Jesse hesitated at the door, wondering if he really was willing to open the diary. His uncle had dabbled in some of his great grandfather's stuff, but ended up going to a cave he never returned from. But curiosity got the better of him. He jabbed at the door

bell.

Elijah opened the door. He was a dark skinned boy with jet black hair, which was odd since both his parents were blond. "I've got a lock for you to break," Jesse announced. Elijah grinned mischievously. "Come on, let me take a look at it!" He invited. Jesse stepped inside and held out the journal. Elijah raised his eyebrow. "You want me to open somebody's locked diary," Jesse nodded. "Jesse, there are reasons people lock things. Things like this diary we have here." He took a deep breath. It would take a lot of explaining for Elijah to fully understand why he wanted to open it, so he gave him the short version.

"Elijah. That diary isn't a random nobody's diary. It's the CCGF's diary." That's what Jesse and Elijah abbreviated his name to. "His real name is Andrew Fletcher." Elijah's eyes found the golden letters. He smacked his forehead with his palm. "I definitely knew that."

Two minutes later, Elijah had handed him back the journal. "Can you call me if you find anything interesting?" He asked. Jesse nodded, with a smile on his face. He checked the clock. He had time before he

had to leave. "Hey, how about we go through it right now? I still have a couple minutes." He suggested.

"Sure, of course!"

They opened the diary, expecting more adventures that the Fletcher family had never known about before. But, what they found was far less exciting than that. Or so they thought. "There's just one entry." Jesse declared disappointedly. "Maybe..... Maybe it's in invisible ink?" But, when they held it up to a light bulb, nothing showed up.

"Well, let's just read what's there, then." Elijah told him. It was a simple seven word sentence, written mysteriously, emboldened in random spots. In careful calligraphy, they read:

**The creatures of the forest wake tonight.**  
11/23

They stared at it for awhile. It didn't make any sense. But something was familiar about it. "The date!" Jesse shrieked. "It's the same as today's!" Elijah's eyes widened with realization. They exchanged a silent message: Let's meet at the forest. Tonight. Finally, Jesse's hour was up.

**To Be Continued....**

## Nightmare Town: New School, New Life, New Horror

By: Rachatawan Greenwald—Grade 7

I felt many emotions like fear, anger, and annoyance. I slipped my phone out of my back pocket and dialed 911 while standing in front of my mom to block her from any harm the old man is planning on doing to her. "Josh, what on Earth are you doing?" My mother asked me, sounding very concerned. The dispatcher picked up on the other end of the line. "911, what's your emergency?" Said the dispatcher. "Yes, there is a murderer in my house. Please send help as fast as you can." I told them. The dispatcher also asked me what my address was so I told them where I lived. I could feel two drops of sweat running down the back of my neck. As I was looking around for something to threaten the old man with, I had caught a glimpse of my mother's face. I looked into her eyes for a quick second, only to find fear in her eyes. My mother stood up and demanded me to explain to her what's going on. I looked at the old man for a minute and studied his face. I turned back to face mother and explained everything. "I was just at the park while you and dad were packing up a bit" I began, "then, I heard the sound of a shovel being scrapped on rocks. I also heard

a man mumbling to himself about how he must get paid more than normal to bury some smelly object, or thing. I didn't know what to think about it honestly, but all I knew was that I had to get a good look at the guy's face, and run away as fast as I could. So I peered over a bush to get a closer look at his face, and there he was. The old man." I pointed my pointer finger across my living room. "The same man who is in our living room right now, was the same person as the one I saw standing over a hole that was a few feet deep. I got even more curious so I moved closer to the hole after I had waited behind the bush until the old man was out of sight, and that's when I saw it. I saw, the bloody hand poking out of the ground. The dead body had maggots crawling on it's finger nails and into it's skin. I felt as if someone were watching me, so I ran home and tried to forget about everything". My eyes were now filled with nothing but anger. I was angry at the fact that a killer had the guts to come into my house and talk to my mother. Mom's eyes were now filled with tears. "Oh honey, I'm so sorry that you had to see that". She said. She then looked past me, and over to the old man and said "As for you, stay away from me and my family. While we're at it, I'm not selling this house to you". As if on cue, the sound of police sirens wailed throughout the neighborhood. The old man stood up and said "That's alright. But just know, this isn't the end of me". Police

officers came rushing into the house and put handcuffs on the old man and sent him to jail. Two officers stayed behind to ask my mother and I some questions about the situation. Days passed by after that, and my family and I were ready for a new beginning. My father quit his current job and got a new one in Iowa. The flight from LA to Iowa was very smooth, and all the weight on my shoulders, from seeing someone get buried, finally lifted off. I had posted a photo of our new house on Instagram. My family and I were finally living a normal and happy life again. Every now and then, I would Skype my friends from LA and rarely I would get to call Zoey. After dinner one night, we decided to watch to the news after dinner. The news reporter had shown a picture of a jail cell that had been broken, and the inmate was missing. The reporter had also shown a picture of what the criminal or inmate looked like, and it matched the face of that creepy old man. My mother and I looked each other dead in the face while our jaws dropped to the floor. The reporter also said "the police officers heard the inmate yelling the sentence, "I'm coming for you Josh Mitsvern". Everything in that room starting spinning and my forehead was now dripping from sweat. To snap me back to reality, I heard the doorbell rang and the strange sound of a shovel scraping across our driveway made my heart race faster than ever.

# Extracurricular Activities

## National Junior Honor Society

By: Luke Venable—Grade 7

The National Junior Honors Society, also known as NJHS, is an important part of Miscoe Hill. Unfortunately most students don't know anything about it. That is why I went to Mr. Labarre, one of the teachers that runs NJHS, to see if he could tell us what NJHS is about.

When asked what the National Junior Honors Society is Mr. Labarre gives a detailed answer saying, "The National Junior Honors Society is an organization that recognizes hard working middle school students. Students in the National Junior Honors Society generally reflect excellence in the areas of Scholarship, Leadership, Service, Character and Citizenship." He went on to explain that the National Junior Honors Society is not only made to help improve Miscoe, it creates opportunities to help the entire school district.

National Junior Honor Society is a great opportunity for all students. Mr. Labarre says, "Our goal is to provide an opportunity for students to serve their school community as well as develop passions for giving service to others." It is a great place for hard workers and high achievers who want to make a difference in their school community.



## Miscoe Hill basketball

By: Ethan Porciello, Grade 6

The Miscoe Hill boys and girls basketball teams play during the Miscoe winter sports session. They practice everyday after school in the gym, and play games across Massachusetts. It is a tryout sport, so you should probably practice beforehand so you have a chance of making the team. About 40 kids tryout, but only 18 kids make it onto each team.

Jamie Henderson is the coach of the Miscoe boys basketball team. He loves coaching because it allows him to give back and share his knowledge to his players. Also, he just loves the game. He is from Texas and went to college at Framingham State where he played basketball. He is a strong believer in teamwork because, "without teamwork there is no team." Jamie believes that the "defense sets the tone for the offense." Coach Henderson's advice to children who want to play basketball is "if you want to get good at basketball you need to practice for at least an hour a day after homework."

I also interviewed Evan Laughlin, an eighth grader who plays center for the boys team. He has played basketball for four years. He is good at communicating to his teammates on the court. He also believes that teamwork is the key. Evan believes that defense is extremely important. Evan's advice to younger players is that "Practice a lot and be a good role model and teammate." I believe that joining one of the Miscoe Hill Basketball teams is a great idea if you want to get some exercise and learn this great game.



Coach Henderson talking to the Braves before a game.  
Photo by Melanie Laughlin

Sign up for spring sports  
now with this QR code!



# Fun ideas to try

## Camping for April Vacation

By: Quin Black, Grade 6

If you are looking for something fun, challenging, and engaging to do over April vacation, then a night camping might be the thing for you. National Geographic says that the happiest people in the world spend about an hour outside in nature. Just look up at the stars for five minutes at night or spend some time in your yard with a book and some sunshine, you'll see what I mean. When you camp you get exercise, get closer to nature, learn survival skills, and you learn how to cook food.

There are two types of camping, back-country and front-country camping. Back-country is when you carry your supplies and front-country is when you're close to your car and you can leave anytime you want. In back-country camping you get exercise by carrying your stuff and doing activities where your camping. My scoutmaster Mr. Kuter says "Camping is also a great way raise your heart rate and get your steps in." In front country camping you get exercise by doing things around your campsite like hiking.

You get closer to nature in camping by exploring around your campsite, looking at everything, touching everything, bringing in all their smells, and how they look and everything and in that way you are learning about

nature. You learn survival skills by trying (or failing) to start fires. Mr. Kuter also says that "Staying somewhere other than home exercises your survival skill if you look at it even going to the store exercises your skills." You can set up lean-tos and mess around in nature. You learn how to cook small foods because that is all you can really pack and you need to cook those foods somehow trial and error is a good way to learn.

There are some other really important things like how to set a up a tent how to pick a good campsite how to deal with bugs and rain. How to set up a tent first, you take out all the poles and spread out the tent and rainfly that is the thing that keeps out the rain. Then you take the poles and there should be fabrics loops and you put the poles in the loops all the way around. There should also be something near the corner of the tent put the pole in there or attach it to that or something to fasten the poles to the tent. Now you should be able to get into your tent. Then you need to fasten on the rainfly, there should be clips on where you fit your poles in and you clip it on there and there might be some other security measures to keep the rainfly on. There should be stakes and rope you normally put the stakes on the rope and the rope on the rainfly but you tent might be different.

Your tent should be good to go here



Smokey Pines campground in Massachusetts.

Photo by Quin Black.

is some advice about getting a good spot to put your tent you don't want to put it at the bottom of a hill because then rain will trickle down into your tent area. You don't want to put it on a root or a rock because then you will be uncomfortable during the night, put it in a clearing so you will have space to set up your stuff.

You can deal with bugs by putting on bug spray or getting a bug zapper, and deal with rain by wearing raincoats and setting up your rainfly. If your stuff gets wet don't bring it in your tent unless your tent is very big. Keep your stuff inside in case of rain.

Think about going camping the next time you have nothing planned on a couple weekends, and don't be scared of camping. If you have nothing to do on a summer night or you have nothing to do on a fall afternoon go outside enjoy nature and have experiences. Thanks for reading now go enjoy nature!

## King Bundt Cake

By: Daniel Fransen—Grade 7

Yield: 12 to 16 servings

Prep: 4 hours

Cook: 30 minutes

Total: 6 hours 30 minutes

A festive King Cake for Mardi Gras.

### Ingredients

The Dough:

1 cup whole milk  
3 eggs  
8 tablespoons salted butter, melted  
4½ cups all-purpose flour  
½ cup granulated sugar  
2¼ teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast  
1/2 teaspoon salt

### The Filling:

1/4 cup light brown sugar  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
2 teaspoons ground

cinnamon

3 tablespoons melted butter

### The Topping:

2 cups powdered sugar  
3 tablespoons milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 tablespoon each yellow, green, and purple colored decorating sugars

### Directions:

Make the Dough: Whisk the milk, eggs, and melted butter together in the bowl of a stand mixer. With a wooden spoon, stir in the flour, granulated sugar, yeast and salt until just combined (the mixture will be fairly dry and shaggy). Use a dough hook and mix on medium-low speed for 10 minutes (the dough will be soft and slightly tacky). Transfer the dough to a greased bowl, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and let rise at room temperature until doubled in size, 1½ to 2 hours.

Assemble the Cake: Grease a 12-cup nonstick Bundt pan. In a medium bowl, combine the brown sugar, white sugar, and cinnamon. Roll out the dough into an 18 by 14-inch rectangle on a lightly floured surface. Spread melted butter all over dough, and sprinkle evenly with the cinnamon mixture. Roll the dough (on the long side) into a log and pinch along seam to seal it up. Form into a ring and seal the ends together. Place seam side up into the prepared Bundt pan, cover loosely with plastic wrap, and let rise at room temperature until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees.

Bake until deep golden brown and cake registers 190 degrees in the center on an instant read digital thermometer for 30 to 35 minutes,

rotating halfway through baking. Let the cake cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then remove the cake from the pan and transfer to a wire rack, seam side down, and let cool completely, about 2 hours.

Make the Topping: Whisk powdered sugar, milk, and vanilla extract together in a bowl until smooth. Pour over the top of the cooled cake. Sprinkle one-sixth of the top with half of the yellow sugar, then repeat on opposite side. Repeat with green and purple sugars to form alternating bands of color. Serve at room temperature. Leftovers should be wrapped tightly or stored in an airtight container for up to 3 days.





# April Vacation Tips

## April Vacation - International Travels

By: Ishani Saha, Grade 6

If you are traveling internationally this spring vacation, you have to be prepared. It is much more difficult than travelling within the United States. There are many needs that you should be aware of. Unlike domestic travel, you need a lot of things.

You need your passport, and you need to make sure it's valid. If you don't have one, apply for one immediately, because they take months to get. Some countries have visa requirements too, which are special passes for that specific country. Depending on the country you're going to, you may need a vaccination also. Make sure you are up to date with all of them. Better be safe than sorry!

You also need to check the currency — you might be confused if a souvenir costs 600 rupees, only to learn that's \$10! You also need to know where to go,

and plan your vacation ahead of time. One week isn't a lot of time to see all the attractions in one country, so know which ones are best so you don't miss out on anything amazing.

If you're bringing your iPad, phone or anything with a plug with you, make sure that you have an adapter. An adapter is an attachment for your charger so that it fits the outlet shape.

Unless you're in England or Australia, it shouldn't be expected for there to be English speakers. It's great to learn a new language, too, so learn some phrases beforehand in the native language, and possibly put your learning to use!

Climates differ depending on location, so pack accordingly. Extreme monsoon seasons are things you'd want to know about. (Monsoon season is when there is lots of rain.)

While traveling internationally, there's a limit of what your suitcase's weight can be. During packing, keep a

scale nearby so you can measure the weight as you go along.

Prioritize your stuff while packing. Only get things you need, since you could lose things, and there's no getting them back!

Safety, safety, safety! Unfortunately, nobody's perfect. Robbers, thieves and pickpockets all roam the streets, so think twice before you bring anything too important.

Your destination could be reachable with a road trip, but, with all transportation, the trip will be long. Keep a book, or electronic device if you feel queasy while reading in a moving vehicle, so you don't get too bored! Some people might bring journals on their trip too, which is good to keep track of your adventures.

Last but not least, make sure you know you'll have fun on your trip. Don't make your trip a waste of money.

I hope these tips were helpful to you!

## MCAS DATES

Subject	Dates	Make Up Dates	Grade Levels
ELA	April 10, 2018	April 12, 2018	5th through 8th
	April 11, 2018	April 13, 2018	5th through 8th
Math	May 8, 2018	May 10, 2018	5th through 8th
	May 9, 2018	May 11, 2018	5th through 8th
Science	May 16, 2018	May 18, 2018	5th and 8th
	May 17, 2018	May 21, 2018	5th and 8th

**MISCOE HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**MISCOE HILL EXPO**

**P.E. ART LIBRARY WELLNESS TECHNOLOGY FRENCH & SPANISH**

One night only!  
Tuesday, April 10<sup>TH</sup>  
6-8pm

Miscoe Hill Middle School, 148 North Ave., Mendon

# Feeling Good



## Minding your mind

By Kate Watchmaker, Grade 7

On Thursday January 11, the seventh and eighth graders saw the Minding Your Mind presentation in the auditorium. Drew Bergman presented to the students about mental health issues and described his story. Home life was rough for Drew due to his parents getting divorced after Drew's father almost got into a drunk driving accident with his sister in the back of the car. This family always looked like a perfect family but it never was. After the divorce the children of the family began doing things they didn't look so brightly on in their future. Drew's sister began developing eating disorders and his brother began drinking. After the divorce in seventh grade Drew began cutting himself to ease the emotional pain. He suffered from depression, and covered it all up, and he eventually attempted his first suicide. After a while with no help and bad thoughts, in Drew's sophomore year at high school, he decided life isn't worth living anymore and attempted his second suicide. After his recovery, he slowly made his way to being successful and made it out of high school. Before leaving his high school years he got up the courage to go up in front of all the people in his high school and shared his story. This was a big step for him because getting to school every morning feeling ten times worse than other students isn't exactly what you aim for. Drew's story has inspired many other people to get help and be more open about mental health disorders. Mrs. Higgins, our wellness

teacher, set the whole presentation up for the students and found out about Minding Your Mind when she attended a wellness conference in October. As Mrs. Higgins told me more about Minding Your Mind, she told me about why he had Drew come. "I had Drew come to Miscoe because I thought it would be beneficial to our 7th and 8th graders. There is great rise in stress, anxiety, and depression among adolescents today. According the National Alliance of Mental Health 1 in 5 youths (13-18 years old), 21% experience mental health issues during these years. This was also a great way to reach a large population of students in a short amount of time." What Drew Bergman recommended for healthy mental health was that you need a toolbox: 1-3 trusted adults that you can confide in, and 3-5 helpful coping skills. You also need to evaluate your sleep, stress, diet, and exercise. One of the points Drew was trying to get across was that mental health isn't something to be ashamed of, and that having mental health issues doesn't mean you're insane. Mrs. Higgins also described to me, "Mental health awareness is so important because the education of the signs, symptoms, how to ask for help, and treatments are good things for students to look for and learn about. Students also need to know that it is ok to ask for help when you are having these signs and symptoms." A lot of people during the presentation were deeply affected by this presentation, and each and every person that left that room educated.

## Time management

By Samantha Driver, Grade 5

Time management is an important skill you will need in the future and a important part of life. You use it every day, making sure you pay bills time not being late for work. You have to get up on time or otherwise you will miss the bus. You have to get ready if your a walker. You can't go to the wrong elective or otherwise you will confuse a lot of people. Those are just a few examples but there are a lot more. One of the most important thing is to set realistic goals don't set something that is to hard like you have to write a five page article in ten minutes. You can't really do that . That seems pretty impossible right? Be organized most of time management problems happen when you

don't have you things were they need to be. Like your books were in your locker but then you shoved them in there because elective was next and then the next day you can't find it and then your late. Being prepared , if you don't have all the things you need you will need to go back and get what you need and then get to class that would make you late. You should always learn these skills at a early age it helps you in later life and it is never too early to learn that skill. Another thing is never get stressed out near report cards like if your going to get a bad grade that is why time management is so important. Mrs. Beauregarde said "It is never too early to learn time management." And if your that stressed then go see the guidance counselor they will be happy to help.



**Come see...**

**ALICE IN WONDERLAND Jr!**

**Performance dates:**  
**Friday, May, 11 7pm**  
**Saturday, May, 12 7pm**

**Costs: \$5 for students**  
**\$7 for adults**

# Miscoe Creative Corner

## Wings of Fire

**By: Jacob Jiang, Grade 5**

If you need something to read consider this great fantasy series by Tui T. Sutherland!

The Wings of Fire series includes 10 books organized into two sections, 1-5 and 6-10. The book series is about dragons. There are seven types of dragons, Mudwings, Seawings, Rainwings, Nightwings, Sandwings, Skywings, and Icewings. Mudwings are naturally strong, can breathe fire if warm enough, can be slightly healed with mud, and are brown in color. Seawings can breathe under water, have lights on the side of their body, made a special language that is talked through flashing the lights in different sequences, the royalty have similar light designs on their body, and they cannot breathe fire. Rainwings can change color like chameleons, spit venom that can only melt living things, and neutralize if a relative's venom is also spat on it. Nightwings can read minds if born under 1 full moon, see the future if born under 2 full moons, and can possibly do both if born under all 3 full moons, and can blend into shadows. Sandwings have a venomous scorpion tail and can go a long time without water. Skywings can fly the best out of all dragons and are your typical dragons. Icewings can breathe a frost breath and withstand bright light and cold temperatures.

The first half of the series, books 1-5,



are about five dragonets trying to stop a war raging on between the dragon tribes (Mudwings, Seawings, Icewings, Sandwings, Skywings, which are part of the war but Rainwings and Nightwings, are not part of the war) because of the three Sandwing princess sisters fighting for the throne after Queen Oasis was killed by scavengers. There are 5 dragonets; Clay the Mudwing who is very protective, Tsunami the Seawing who is very ferocious, Glory the Rainwing who is very bossy, Starflight the Nightwing who is very smart, and Sunny the Sandwing is very positive about everything. The dragonets are trained by the Talons of Peace, a large group of dragons trying to stop the war.

Another thing to note is that there were only queens on the continent of Pyrrhia. After the war, in books 6-10, the dragonets build Jade Mountain Academy, a place where the dragonets from different tribes can learn together and keep the peace.

Books 6-10 feature the Jade Winglet group (basically a class): Peril the Skywing that has very hot and fiery scales, Turtle the Seawing animus. (Animus magic can do whatever it's owner wants to do but eats away at its owner's soul turning them evil), Winter the Icewing prince, Moonwatcher the Nightwing that can read minds, and Qibli the Sandwing who is one of queen.

Thorn's the most trusted dragon (those are the ones featured in the books). After a bit Peril (he can also read minds and see the future) accidentally releases a ancient dragon named Darkstalker by burning the scroll that took away his animus magic, who is a Nightwing that tries to take over Pyrrhia. They succeed in stopping Darkstalker. In the end, the Jade winglet plan to go to the lost continent, a rumored continent said to be on the other side of the planet. As of right now, it is my personal favorite series.

It is a long series with more books coming such as book 11 The Lost Continent coming out in June. Tui T. Sutherland is the author of the series and writes great fantasy books. The book series is great for 4th grade and up because it has some violence such as a background war and one and one fights with blood but I think 4th grade could handle it. Personally, I think it is a great fantasy series and people who like fantasy should try reading it.

## Spring Attractions

- \*Field Day!
- \*Lego Robotics!
- \*Wax Museum !
- \*Renaissance

# FIELD DAY



## Sign Up For Enrichment!

LOOKOUT FOR NEW REGISTRATION IN APRIL!

**Clubs!**  
**Robotics!**  
**Crafts!**  
**Baking!**





By: Thomas Evans—Grade 5



### Check out Home of The Braves on the Miscoe Hill website!

<http://miscoehillschoollibrary.weebly.com/home-of-the-braves-newspaper.html>



Printing: This program is supported in part by a grant from the Upton and Mendon Cultural Councils, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Smartfish Group, Waltham

Questions or comments?

Contact us!  
[karnold@mursd.org](mailto:karnold@mursd.org)

### Want to be part of our staff?

An email will be sent with information about our next issue.

## 6th and 7th Grade Social

Friday, January 26th



Pictures by STUCO

## Having Fun!!

Everything you need to know about..

## The 2017-2018 Yearbook!

The yearbook displays all activities that go on throughout the school year!

Costs: \$35

Coming Out: 1 week before school gets out  
For more information, ask Mrs. Tinio in the office!



