

The Lotus Lowdown

March 10, 2023



Maria Francisco, Principal

Renaissance Celebrates Women's History Month

March is Women's History Month, an annual celebration in the United States that recognizes and celebrates the contributions of women throughout the nation's history. Although gender is a socially constructed concept that changes and evolves personally throughout our lives, there is no shortage of nuanced and dynamic conversations about women, gender, inequality, and injustice. Throughout history, women have been erased and excluded, and women of color, transgender women, and queer women have been subjected to even more harmful oppression than their white, cisgender sisters. To truly embrace and understand the value of Women's History Month, we must approach our celebrations with intersectionality and intention. With that in mind, Women's History Month is both a time to confront the ongoing injustices that plague women worldwide — and an invitation to celebrate and rejoice in our shared humanity as women and girls.

To this end, we are hosting an assembly event. We will be holding three separate assemblies over the next three Fridays, and each day, we'll host a different grade level, starting with 8th grade on March 17th. The assembly focuses on connecting with students in a safe space to discuss issues faced by women and girls today. It will include engagement activities and a discussion panel with teachers, staff, alumni, and community members.

Women's History Assembly Event Schedule

March 17th - 8th Grade

March 24th - 7th Grade

March 31st - 6th Grade

This is a combined Restorative Justice and Renaissance Counseling event. Therefore, we will engage in icebreakers, develop relationships, and provide supportive words. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at cpastor@montclair.k12.nj.us.

Renaissance wins \$1,000 from MFEE after Kristin Wald, Renaissance parent's donation:

Donations made to MFEE's Annual Appeal made in the last month in honor of a school were entered into a drawing to win a \$1,000 grant for that school.

Thanks to Kristin Wald's donation, Renaissance will be receiving a \$1,000 check! Here is the video: <https://fb.watch/j5Oqu16bJq/>

From MFEE, "Kristin has been such a long time MFEE and Montclair Public School supporter and Renaissance was such a huge supporter with last year's toast and this year's Annual Appeal, so this is such an exciting one to award!!!"

Thanks to all who donated to MFEE on behalf of Renaissance. We truly do have the best parent support in town!!

MFEE Grant received by Ms. Babu-8th Grade Science

[Breakout EDU](#) is a learning game where students have to work together in teams to solve clues (curriculum based) to actually break different types of physical locks. **MFEE has awarded a grant to Renaissance this year to the science department.**

Restorative Justice Rock, Paper Scissor March Madness Tournament:

In the spirit of the NCAA March Madness, RJ @ Ren has organized a school-wide three-week-long activity where homerooms go head to head in a rock paper scissors tournament (during advisories). Winners will move through the bracket ending in a final championship match between two homerooms on Friday, March 24th. The winning team will have a Short Ice Pop Party at the end of the day on 3/24/23. This fun event engages all students but allows those who do not want to participate to be spectators! This is an excellent opportunity to chat with your students about winning and losing with grace, and how to positively cheer on peers. [Pictures: RPS Tournament](#)

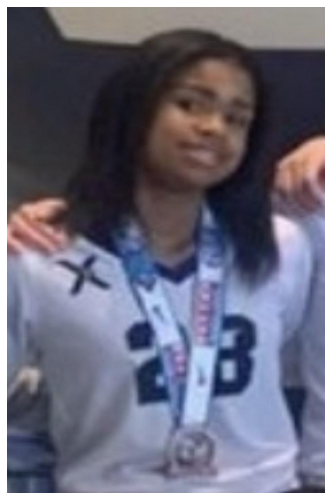
Caregiver Restorative Justice Night: March 14, 2023

Please join us Tuesday, March 14, from 6 pm - 8 pm, for dinner and an opportunity to learn more about Restorative Justice and experience what your students experience when they sit RJ Circles. To RSVP, please click the link below to access the link to register. We are hoping to have as many families as possible - please consider joining us.

[Caregiver Restorative Justice Night 2023 Registration](#)

Renaissance Student Lea Gittens Receives Bronze Metal:

7th Grade student Lea Gittens and her volleyball team received a Bronze medal for their win at the Boston Volleyball Festival last weekend. Lea's team ranked third out of 66 teams! Congratulations to Lea and her teammates.



Renaissance Staff Completes February Fitness Month:

As you know, during the month of February, most of the staff at Renaissance was embattled in a very competitive Fitness Challenge. Staff participated in daily fitness activities independently, and then once a week a fitness challenge was held and led by our students once per week for bonus points. We had a great time participating and all feel great as a result. It was wonderful to share our love of fitness with students as well. Congratulations to members of the **ALPHA WOLF SQUADRON** for winning the challenge.



Family Red Bulls Game: Calling all soccer fans

We are so excited to announce our first soccer game of the year! We will be attending the New York Red Bulls home game on Saturday, April 15th at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are purchased at the link below for \$27 a ticket. Students must be accompanied by a chaperone to attend the event. All students and chaperones in attendance must purchase a ticket. Please note that this is not a Renaissance school function. All transportation and supervision will be the responsibility of parents and guardians.

<https://fevo.me/montclairrenaissance23>

If we have enough participants in the event, we may be invited down to the field to meet some of the soccer players. As of now, we will meet outside the stadium at Gate C to walk in as a group at 7:00, 30 minutes prior to the game.

A Message from SEPAC: Jada Roman

Autism Acceptance Week April 10-14.

Montclair SEPAC & SEPAC Liaisons have created an amazing portfolio of ideas and resources that Hillside will be using during this important week. In doing so, they have put together the attached resources to share within our building. In that, Watchung Booksellers are also teaming up to help highlight the week and have pulled their recommended reading list.

Make SPP

MakeSPP — a **free** in-person Hack-a-thon for students in **7th-12th grade** from the NJ/NY area and will take place on **April 1st, 2023**, in the O’Keefe Commons at **St. Peter’s Prep in Jersey City. This is not a school sponsored event but I wanted to share as I know many of our students expressed interest. Please note that I am passing on the information that I have. All inquiries must be directed to MakeSPP. Additional information can be found by clicking on this [link](#).**

Health Office: (Nurse Kaplan):

March 3rd was World Hearing Day. The 7th graders were screened and if you did not receive a notification, the hearing is perfect. Please check interesting information about everyday noise and hearing loss. [HowLoudIsTooLoud.pdf](#) Medical Forms - 8th grade to Washington and 7th grade to Philadelphia. Please submit every page. Please complete the expiration date, which should be the date after the trip. The section for your child’s health condition and allergies. The date of the tetanus vaccine is the Tdap, which most all of them received in 6th grade. Please let the nurse know if you need the record. Medication - Friday is a day for Field Trip and community services at Renaissance. Students trained to carry/administer their medication need to have their medication with them. If they do not bring their backpacks, please remind them to bring the medication with them. If the student has medication in the nurse’s office and is not attending a field trip, please notify the nurse to keep the medication in the health office.

Dance: (Ms. Lorusso)

Students in 6th, 7th, and 8th have been creating movement inspired by events, people, poems, and songs about Black History and Black Lives Matter. Students are looking forward to performing for the school in celebration of Black History Month.

The assembly will be held on March 22nd @2:00pm-Students and staff walk over to the HS auditorium to watch a 30-40 min presentation.

6th Grade Dance Company, "Rise Up" by Andra Day

7th Grade Dance Company, "Stand Up" from the movie, *Harriet*.

8th Grade Dance Company, "Pray For Me" by The Weeknd, Kendrick Lamar

7th elective, "DNA" and "Humble" by Kendrick Lamar

8th Grade Dance Elective, "This is America" by Childish Gambino

Music: (Ms. Spagnoulo)

This Thursday the Montclair High School music department came to visit the Renaissance 8th Grade Band. The MHS students performed for our 8th graders and shared insight on what it's like to be a part of the music department. After their performance, Renaissance students had a chance to ask their future peers questions about what it's like to be a part of the Montclair HS Marching Band, Concert Band, Symphony Orchestra or Jazz Band. It was a great open panel discussion filled with energy and excitement.

[MHS Music Visits Ren](#)

STEM Fair Update: March 30, 2023

STEM Fair Update: Renaissance Middle School Stem Fair: March 30, 2023 6-8pm

7th Grade Homework: Students should be in the middle or near the end of their data collection. Please use the [STEM Fair Packet](#) if you or your student has any questions.

A huge Thank You to all who have contributed to making our raffle baskets incredible. If you would like to contribute to the STEM Fair baskets we created an [Amazon Wishlist](#). Please contact Ms. Cullen with any questions or suggestions for our list.

6th Grade:

Students should bring their own water bottles and headphones to school regularly. Students should also charge their Chromebooks every night.

Our 6th grade students visited Hillside Food bank on March 3, 2023. Students helped kids and families by packing bags of healthy meals to be disseminated to those in need.

[6th Grade Hillside Food Bank](#)

Science Update: Sixth grade students in science are currently learning about physical vs. chemical reactions. We are also starting Women's History Month with a mini-bio on Rosalind Franklin.

Woman's History Month Activities:

In Math we discussed and explored the work of Ada Lovelace, the world's first computer programmer.

In Social Studies, students have been playing Women Pioneers Blooket games to learn about important women in history. Next week, students will complete a Choice Board project where they will have options to research notable female figures.

In **Science**, students will be doing mini-bios on women in science. We've already started with Rosalind Franklin.

In **ELA**, the students will read and analyze Nonfiction books and articles about influential women (e.g., Misty Copeland and the first female pilots that fought in WWII: WASPs, WAVES, and The Night Witches). Students will also complete activities that require them to write shorter pieces and essays displaying their analysis of articles, books, and videos on influential women.

Parent Chaperones Needed:

Gazzillo and Hittel Homerooms need Chaperones for our upcoming Field Trip to Iselin (3/17).

Dunn and Jordan Homerooms need Chaperones for our upcoming Field Trip to Iselin (3/24).

Please email rgazzillo@montclair.k12.nj.us if you are interested.

Ms. Dunn-Financial Literacy

Scholarship Opportunity!!

A majority of Ms. Dunn's students completed the FutureSmart Program and have been offered the opportunity to apply for the scholarship that is offered as well. Please see the details below.

The FutureSmart Scholarship Contest is open to any U.S. student in grades 6-8 who has completed at least three of the FutureSmart digital lessons. The contest will be open throughout the 2022-2023 academic year and available in English and Spanish.

**Spring semester entries must be received by May 14, 2023.
Prize: \$2,000 - \$5,000 529 college savings gift card.**

Use the link below to apply!

<https://futuresmart.massmutual.com/en/scholarship/>

6th Grade Environmental Science: (Ms. Babu)

In our project-led class, 6th graders are taking on passion projects/topics that they want to know more about like "What will our country look like if there is no change in environmental policy 100 years from now? We have a student working on extinct shark species, a student working on the Mariana Trench, and another group asking more questions about what they want to learn about pollution. We also have students working on

Earth's history with this question for our elective class: Does learning about the events in Earth's history provide patterns for what is going on with our environment today?

This past week we also had two guest presenters from Montclair State University come to our class and share a lesson on Aquatic MacroInvertebrates. Melissa- an Aquatic Ecologist and Colleen a graduate student showed our students how to use a Macroinvertebrate Identification Key. Students then classified real insects that our presenters brought in glass vials. Students learned how these organisms help us learn about the water quality of the Passaic River, Rockaway River and Saddle River in NJ.

7th Grade:

Science:

7th Grade Homework: Students should be in the middle or near the end of their data collection. Please use the [STEM Fair Packet](#) if you or your student has any questions.

Language Arts:

We have finished up a unit on Genres. Students are starting to read the poems of the great Emily Dickinson and her ahead-of-its-time 19th century artistry. While doing this, we will also start the Poetry Unit and the new novel, Ghost, by Jason Reynolds.

7th Grade Overnight trip to Philadelphia June 8-9

We will be sending home a letter regarding the overnight trip to Philadelphia this Friday with your student. It is a packet with tons of information and gobs of forms. Please read everything carefully, complete the forms, save the cover letter and return the packet. It is not available digitally so it needs to be completed using the packet.

Trip to Paley Center for Media on March 17

Please remind your student there should be no contact with strangers, including asking strangers for a high five. No one should be using their phones to take photos or videos without the explicit permission of a staff member. Anyone caught doing so will be kept back from the next trip and receive an office referral.

Social Studies

The homework due next Monday and Tuesday relates to the overlap between the Transatlantic slave trade and the production of sugar in the Americas.

8th Grade:

8th Grade parent night at Montclair High School will take place on March 21, 2023 at 6:30pm in the Main Auditorium. [Additional Information](#)

Special Thank you to **Azie Shelhorse, 8th Grade Parent** for donating a **LEATH** indoor garden kit. Students will use the garden kit to grow herbs and more to be donated to the various food pantries we work with.



Washington D.C. forms - Please sign and return all forms as soon as possible.

Payment plan schedule;

3/17 - \$100

4/14 - \$100

Math League:

We are ecstatic to announce that the students listed below have been invited to participate in the New Jersey Middle School State Championship on March 25, 2023. Congratulations and good luck to the following students:

Xavier Adebona

Oz Axelrod

Zaid Mifan

Rayan Nasir

Oliver Brackenbury

Quinn Fechner

Jack Levine

Victoria Luna

Sarah Mifan and....

Connor Sherwin!

Math

The students will have a math test on Monday, March 20 covering operations with polynomials.

Science

8th Grade Science: Guiding question of the week: How do substances move in and out of the cell? Our focus questions have been on concepts like Why exactly can't a freshwater fish live in a saltwater tank? Or what would a healthcare provider do if there is too much fluid in a brain injury? Why exactly is it not good to drink excessive salt water? What happens when a patient gets hooked up to an IV drip? Why can't it just be pure water? We are observing diffusion/osmosis in our eggs as our guiding lab for the week. The chicken egg is a wonderful model of the cell membrane as we study the osmosis of water and diagram changes in our egg!

8th Grade Human Biology: Expert jigsaw groups (medical specialties) have been working with their "fellows" on preparing their presentations for their medical clinics. Most groups are almost done with the 2D/3D models of their assigned body systems, and are preparing for their "board exams, and physiology tests". Students will be learning from each other's groups as we work towards group presentations soon after spring break.

ELA

We are continuing with our class novel, To Kill a Mockingbird, and students are analyzing the characters and events to better understand the plot. As we move further along, students will be assigned a Literary Analysis essay, which will prompt them to identify a common theme and connect it to a paired text. In addition, we are currently working on a Women's History Month project in small groups. Students collaborate to research a notable woman who has made an impact or change in society. Towards the end of the month, groups will be able to share their knowledge by presenting their research to the class.

Important Upcoming Dates:

- March 1, 2023-March 31 Beginning of Women's History Month
- March 23, 2023 Curriculum Thursday, 1:25 pm Dismissal
- March 30, 2023 STEM FAIR 6-8pm

