Dear Peaks Island Families & Friends:

Thanks to our large Community Mural Collage to be mounted in our entryway (and in the above masthead), our newsletter has a new look in honor of our 150 years as a continuous public elementary school. In addition to bringing alumni and the community together, our 150th celebration brought out the best of our students' creativity and collaboration through the following physical theater performances with artist-in-residence Gretchen Berg: “Birthday Party!” (PreK & K class), “Let’s Play! Games from Long Ago & Today” (Grade 1-2 class) and “Innovation: Inventions through the Years” (Grade 3-4-5 class). The sense of history was palpable at our celebration when alumni stood up representing one decade at a time as our students lifted signs from 2019 all the way back to the 1930's.

On a personal note, having my dad as the most senior alumnus present was a highlight for me - and I was grateful he kept his promise not mention his schoolboy antics lest our students garnered any new ideas! Of course, learning about days of yore at PIES was shocking enough to some students: “Walking home for lunch?” “No specials?” “Girls had to wear dresses?” EGAD!

Those Good 'Ol Days on Peaks! 😊

Camilla, Tabitha, Avery, Anjali and Abbott with signs from the later decades!

PHYSICAL THEATER: Students performed during our 150th celebration how inventions have impacted life on Peaks Island throughout the years. Blessing, Avery, Josh and Chance perform a group selfie “down front on Peaks” – a very familiar island scene!

150th Photos: Island photographer Arthur Fink
We were honored to have Portland Mayor Kate Snyder read her very first proclamation on behalf of the Portland City Council at our 150th celebration!

A few excerpts from the Proclamation:

"Whereas, the Peaks Island Elementary School is the heart of the Peaks Island Community, and Whereas, the Peaks Island School promotes kindness, safety and respect among its students so they may become productive and responsible global citizens, and Whereas, Peaks Island Elementary School prepares students to be stewards of their natural island environment, and Whereas, the Peaks Island Elementary School remains vital to the strength and sustainability of the year round island community: Now, therefore, be it resolved, that I, Kathleen M. Snyder, Mayor of the City of Portland, Maine and members of the Portland City Council do hereby wish to offer our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to all the students, staff and alumni of Peaks Island Elementary School on the occasion of its 150th birthday."

Please be sure to read the full Proclamation with Mayor Snyder’s signature that hangs proudly in our entryway!

150th PROJECTS from work with Artist-in-Residence

Sarah Boyden

INVENTIONS THEN & NOW: Ms. Thompson’s grade 3-4-5 class researched inventions that have had an impact on school and island life, and contrasted their intricate illustrations using black and white drawing pens. By the way, “What was a rotary phone?” and “What did people use before computers?”

Continuing their research on inventions, Ms. Thompson’s grade 3-4-5 students took a deep dive into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) interdisciplinary learning. They developed multimedia projects based on their research and presented them during an “Invention Breakfast” celebration of learning this week for families, staff and younger students.

Lydia showcases her project on animal prosthetics, including the complex artificial limb she designed, and built to replace her horse’s leg. A compassionate future veterinarian?

Ms. Soule’s PreK & Kindergarten Birthdays:

“We are 4, 5 and 6 years old, but our school is 150 years old!”

GAMES WE PLAY! From interviews with alumni including Rita Morrill and Amanda Flynn O’Brien, Mr. Robinson’s grade 1-2 class learned that many of the games played at PIES long ago still endure – as illustrated above and performed with Gretchen Berg in the image below.
GRADE 3-4-5 INVENTION

BREAKFAST SCENES

Abe has become our expert on Alexander Graham Bell. Through the detailed slideshow he created from his extensive research, we learned about very early communication devices. Would Mr. Bell ever have imagined the capacity and functions of today's iPhone???

Kami explains the history of the hot air balloon and how she created her well-designed model. It also took flight after school so watch for it!

Lea highlights fun facts about the typewriter she researched. She built her amazing replica below using recyclable materials. Students were stunned to learn about the laptop computer's rudimentary predecessor!

Sajan discusses the beginnings and advancements of the motor car, highlighted by his detailed diagrams.

Avery shares her extensive knowledge about the invention of Braille. Her project included biographical information about Louis Braille, a detailed timeline, Braille alphabet, Lego Braille bricks and an interactive activity for people to decipher messages in Braille.

SNAPSHOTS OF GRADE 1-2

LITERACY LEARNING

Theo reads a nonfiction book from his 'browsing box.” He reads for meaning and accuracy, self-correcting if something doesn’t make sense, and integrating his knowledge of letters, sounds, sight words and context clues.

Zoe, Abbott and Phoenix work in a group with whiteboards to read and write as many words as possible using spelling patterns from familiar “power words” on their classroom word wall.

Students in Mr. Robinson’s grade 1-2 class are immersed in literacy learning throughout the school day – reading “good fit” books that match their instructional and independent reading levels, expanding their phonics understanding and vocabulary development through daily word work, and writing nonfiction “teaching” books on high interest topics they each have selected. We are very proud of our young readers and writers!
PreK & KINDERGARTEN COMMUNITY LEARNING

An essential component of early childhood education includes building a community of learners who engage in fun, cooperative experiences each day as they navigate their world among peers and within their wider community. We feel fortunate to have the dynamic team of PreK & kindergarten teacher Julie Soule and Ed Tech Celeste Bridgford to lead our youngest learners.

During our weekly schoolwide morning meeting Cooper shares with the entire school what his class recently reviewed to help everyone be ready for learning and playing each day.

In addition to learning at school, Julie and Celeste truly leverage our island community to the fullest by taking walking field trips each week. There are few places like Peaks Island where young children can visit a fire station, the public library, a greenhouse, the beach, the Senior Center and a horse farm all within walking distance of the school (and this is a partial list)! Such authentic experiences help our children understand concretely the purpose and value of their community resources and the many important jobs that people do. Moreover, our students’ conceptual understandings are strengthened as they learn about seasonal changes in nature with outdoor sensory experiences throughout the school year. We are grateful to be a part of an island community that welcomes our young visitors each week and plays such a vital part of their early experiential learning.

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CLAUDE MONTGOMERY MURAL

TWO BEAUTIES: How lucky are we to have two new stunning pieces of art - both so different, yet both so meaningful to Peaks Island and our beloved school.

While much has already been shared about the gorgeous mural of Casco Bay painted by late artist and PIES alumnus, Claude Montgomery, please click on the link below if you did not have an opportunity to read the article in the Portland Press Herald about its history and the amazing odyssey it has taken to finally make its way to Peaks Island and, ultimately, to our school:

PPH Article on Claude Montgomery Mural at PIES

WITH HEARTFELT THANKS!

Our hearts are pretty full at Peaks Island Elementary School for the tremendous outpouring of engagement and support we have received from families and the community that helped to make our 150th Birthday Celebration such a success. Very special thanks, again, to the Peaks Island Fund and the PIES PTO for providing funding for our artists-in-residence Gretchen Berg and Sarah Boyden to lead our students in physical theater pieces and visual arts projects. Huge thanks to the many community members who took the time to come to the school and create a puzzle piece that contributed to our Community Puzzle Collage mural led by Sarah Boyden. Knowing that our stunning mural was a true community arts collaboration made its surprise unveiling all the more meaningful and we look forward to it holding its place of honor in our entryway for many years to come (and having past alumni featured in the windows keeping an eye on all of us!)

We are incredibly grateful to Claude Montgomery’s daughter and Peaks summer resident Nancy Montgomery Beebe for her generous support and efforts to have her father’s mural make its new home with us here at PIES. We are honored to have such an extraordinary piece of art in our midst for all to enjoy.

Very special thanks to parents who helped behind-the-scenes, especially to Scott Kelley for his expertise with framing and moving the Claude Montgomery mural.

Additional thanks to islander and gifted photographer Arthur Fink who generously took photos throughout our 150th celebration. More photos will be featured soon!

Finally, tremendous thanks go to our students and staff for their passion and tireless efforts to learn about our school’s rich and unique history, and to devote quality time to integrate teaching and present their learnings across the curriculum.

Beyond our 150th celebration highlights, I hope the current images and information of student learning provides you with a lens into classroom experiences now underway as we have kicked off the new year. Your children are making much progress in their academic, social and emotional learning. We adore our students and look forward to continuing strong home-school partnerships that support your children’s successes. Here’s to a happy and healthy 2020 filled with new discoveries, relevance and rigor that keeps your children on a path to continuous learning.

Warm Regards,
Kelly
Kelly Hasson, Teacher Leader

PLEASE BE SURE YOUR CHILDREN BUNDLE UP!

While temperatures outside are not as seasonably cold on many recent days, the wind chill factor still can be quite cold. Please be sure your child comes to school with a warm hat, mittens or gloves, warm winter jacket, boots and, if snow ever arrives again, snowpants! We have had many generous donations of beautiful handknit hats and mittens, but they’re going fast! As always, please let us know if we can help your growing families access warm winter clothing. Our support is always confidential and we are always here to help.
Guidelines for Keeping Sick Children Home from School

Each day many parents are faced with a decision: should they keep their sick children at home or send them off to school? Often the way a child looks and acts can make the decision an obvious one. The following guidelines should be considered when making the decision:

- **Fever.** The child should remain at home with a fever greater than 100°F. The child can return to school after he/she has been fever free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medicine such as Tylenol or Motrin).

- **Diarrhea/Vomiting.** A child with diarrhea and/or vomiting should stay at home and return to school only after being symptom-free for 24 hours.

- **Strep and Bacterial Infections.** Following a diagnosis of strep throat or other bacterial infections, the child can return to school 24 hours after the first dose of prescribed meds. Please let the school know if your child has this type of infection as we try to look for any patterns.

- **Conjunctivitis.** Following a diagnosis of conjunctivitis, the child may return to school 24 hours after the first dose of prescribed medication.

- **Rashes.** Common infectious diseases with rashes are most contagious in the early stages. A child with a suspicious rash should return to school only after a health care provider has made a diagnosis and authorized the child’s return to school.

- **Colds.** A child with thick or constant nasal discharge should remain home. Very few younger children can effectively blow their noses and wash their hands afterwards. A child with the above symptoms will quickly spread the illness to other children.

A sick child cannot learn effectively and is unable to participate in classes in a meaningful way. Keeping a sick child home prevents the spread of illness in the school community and allows the child opportunity to rest and recover.