MLK and Black History Month Celebrations at the Middle School and Primary School!

On January 24th the Middle School hosted another successful MLK dance assembly. The assembly participants included administration, teachers and students. They paid tribute to a variety of civil rights activists who had a significant influence in their communities. Some of the individuals honored included Dr. Martin Luther King, Misty Copeland, Aesha Ash, Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks, Celia Cruz, Katherine Dunham, Whitman Sisters, Cesar Chavez, Duke Ellington, Mei Lanfang and Mahatma Gandhi. In addition, to the variety of dances that were performed, the students and teachers gave heartfelt speeches to honor these individuals.

Read more

Calendar of Events

Director's Update

In April 2012, a group of parents asked Mr. Nammack and our Diversity and Inclusion team to create an opportunity for parents of students of color to get together in an affinity group and discuss their children's experiences. Our first Parents of Students of Color meeting occurred in the Middle School Dining Hall this past January with over fifty parents attending. Those parents were invited personally based on their children's self-reported racial and ethnic identification that they provided through the Admissions Office. As developed by a smaller parent group and approved by the Diversity and Inclusion Parent Committee, the POSOC affinity group's goals are to:

- **Build Community** - Create an inclusive, affirming environment where families can build community with others who share common interest in supporting a diverse and inclusive environment for students of color.
- **Affirm Identity** - Provide a safe space for participants to identify common concerns and opportunities that arise as a result of our differences - realizing that recognizing differences will foster a more stimulating educational environment.
In addition to the variety of programming, presentations and speakers we host throughout the school day on all three campuses, MKA has committed to developing programming for parents, guardians and families to share in the conversations we have regarding Diversity and Inclusion. Please mark your calendars with the following evening and weekend events. All events are located in the Middle School Dining Hall unless otherwise noted. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Community Discussion Night: Embracing Adversity**
How do we see others' abilities or disabilities? How does that affect our ability to overcome adversity in our own lives? Come join other MKA parents for lively and thoughtful discussion on this year's theme of Ability.

Thursday, April 3
7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Parents of Students of Color Meeting**
See the Director's Update for more information.

Tuesday, April 8
7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Night of Noise Student Concert**
The Upper School Gay-Straight Alliance celebrates after their annual Day of Silence at this fun night of student performances. From rock bands to the Unaccompanied Minors acappella group, anything can happen and probably will! Proceeds from the $5.00 per person admission go to GLSEN NJ.

Friday, April 25
7:00-10:30 p.m.
Upper School Dining Hall

**D&I Resources**

- **Develop Perspective** - Provide the School with valuable insights into the experiences of students of color with the MKA culture and curriculum in terms of their positive identity development.

Read more

### Coming in April: The Fearless Project

The MKA Upper and Middle Schools are very proud to welcome "The Fearless Project" to their campuses in April. "The Fearless Project" is a photo exhibit by Jeff Sheng, who decided in 2003 to start to photograph lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender high school and college sports athletes. Inspired by his own experience as a closeted gay athlete, he wanted to chronicle these brave young athletes who have chosen to live their lives openly and honestly with their peers, families, and teammates. Since 2003, Mr. Sheng has taken over 150 athletes’ portraits. "The Fearless Project" has been exhibited at over 50 high schools and colleges, ESPN Headquarters, Nike World Headquarters, the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, and the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

Read more

### Chinese New Year!

On January 19th, the Middle School celebrated the Chinese New Year with a fun-filled assembly. The assembly started with music that was played by the Middle School Mandarin students and a visit from two Chinese dragons that graced us with their presence. In addition to the wonderful dragon dance, the students performed an energetic ribbon dance. The ribbons were in different colors, which represented the richness and beauty of the Chinese culture.

Historically, Chinese New Year means "Lunar New Year". Some of the foods that are associated with the Chinese New Year include dumplings, oranges and fish (which represent wealth and good fortune). Gifts in red envelopes and paper cuttings are also part of the New Year celebration. Hong bao, which means red package, is a red envelope that is decorated with lucky symbols or wishes of good luck to the person who receives it. The significance of the color red means prosperity and blessings in the Chinese culture and is only given to love ones. Firecrackers are also used during the
Teenager with a Stutter Speaks to His Class - Try Not to Cry Too Hard.

Shubham Banerjee turned a Lego set and thumbtacks into a machine that could help millions...and he's giving away the plans.

You watched the Coca-Cola Super Bowl commercial - now hear the behind-the-scenes stories.

When Minority Students Attend Private Schools - Atlantic Monthly:

A day at work doesn't look like this - why should a day at school?

Because Who Is Perfect?: Mannequins for Physical Difference.

Boy Gets Prosthetic Hand Made By 3-D Printer.

NYT - Colorblind Notion Aside, Colleges Grapple With Racial Tension

Check out Diversity & Inclusion at mka.org
Be sure to visit the NEW AND IMPROVED Diversity & Inclusion section of the MKA website! Please take a look around to learn more about all the great discussions we're having and work we're doing.

Thank You PAMKA

Our thanks to PAMKA for facilitating an extraordinary Academy Forum event on Wednesday, February 26th with acclaimed writer, lecturer and Pulitzer Prize nominee Andrew Solomon. A huge crowd from the community gathered to hear from Solomon on his best-selling book Far From the Tree: Parents, Children & the Chinese New Year to drive away evil spirits and negativity.

Two dances that are associated with the Chinese New Year are the dragon dance and the fan dance. The dragon dance represents wisdom, wealth and power. The fan dance communicates stories, which helps to preserve the Chinese culture and customs. Ms. Zhang performed a spectacular fan dance, which left the audience in awe. Her dance told a story about a "lily pond" and was intricate and detailed.

The assembly ended with a lovely musician by the name of Amanda Chu who played a solo on the Gu Zheng (which is a harp that has been in the Chinese culture for over 500 years). Overall the assembly was heart felt and makes me proud to be in a community that celebrates different cultures from around the world.

Student Diversity Learning Conference

Follow links to read student reflections from the SDLC!

"SDLC sparked so many controversial opinions and conversations, but it most importantly provided an environment that allowed everyone to speak on these opinions without the fear of being judged."

Read more from Evin Henriquez-Groves

"Even though the conference was only over a couple of day, I feel like I came back to MKA refreshed and more accepting."

Read more from Isaiah Thompson

"I was able to participate in a wide range of activities that broadened my perspectives." .

Read more from Monty Nelson

"Before the Student Diversity Leadership Conference I thought that "life-changing" experiences were little more than myths and hyperboles."

Read more from Will Zaubler
Tuesday Talks at the Upper School

by Dennis Hu

In addition to our weekly assemblies, the Upper School schedule includes a number of "Tuesday Talks" that give an opportunity for outside presenters to share their experiences with the Upper School community. This year, there have been several presenters that have visited the Upper School whose presentations have been closely linked with this year’s community theme of ability. Thanks to these speakers, the Upper School community has gained a new range of perspectives on some of the ways that differences in ability exist in our world.

Read more