



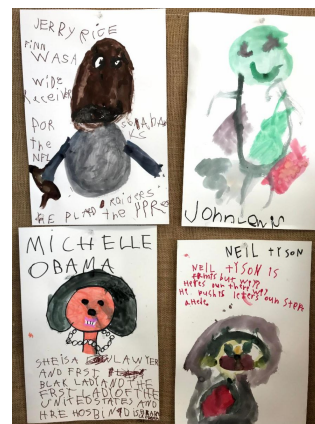
At TCS, Black History is American History

At The Children's School, Black history is not only "more than a month," we are continually working to desegregate Black history and history-makers from the silo narrative of oppression and "other-ness." Instead, we work to present Black history as an exciting and normal part of learning year-round in all academic areas, so that every child can be empowered by it.

February, as Black History Month, is a chance to spotlight the contributions of Black Americans and their individual and collective journeys as both a lens for understanding current events, and a celebration of hope for the future.

Here is how that looks in some of our classrooms:

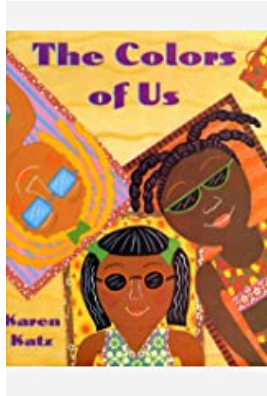
Claw of Lion 1st Graders explore Black History through biography cards, as well as celebrating the year-round theme: "We are all alike - We are all different!"



"We read a variety of age-appropriate books on several inspiring Black leaders. In our classroom, we have short biography cards that are available for children to look at and read during the Workshop period.

Children are invited to pick out a Black history biography card to study. This

sparks a conversation and leads us to read more about the amazing contributions made by these Black leaders such as Mae Jemison, Maya Angelou, Misty Copeland, and Barack Obama to name a few. After the child has chosen and read the biography, they can paint a portrait of their person and pick a different person to study the next day. The Black history biography cards will continue to live on our shelves all year round.



We feel it is important to provide books that contain mirrors and windows. Mirrors include a reflection of identity and experiences. Windows include experiences of people who are not like themselves.

This week we read *"All The Colors We Are: The story of how we get our skin color"* by Katie Kissinger and *"The Colors of Us"* by Karen Katz. After reading *"The Color of Us"* the children talked about different shades of color.

"My skin is cinnamon."

"My skin is a tan color with some peach."

"My skin is kinda peach and brown."



We laid out our hands and realized that we all have our own unique and beautiful color of skin.

After our conversation, it was time to start painting. The children started their portraits by looking in the mirror. Then they made a blackline sketch of their face with a permanent marker. To make their skin tone, children choose a couple of paint colors that they thought would best match their skin tone. During this process, children go back and forth adding colors and looking at their reflection.



Here are some of our self-portraits to enjoy!



Embarking on a favorite annual project, the 3rd Grade Paddle of Platypuses and their teacher Ms. Danielle Cruz see parallels in history to today's current events.

"We spent time this week discussing Black History Month. This led us to a discussion on, "What is Black History Month?" and "Why do we celebrate it?" The children shared what they knew of some prominent figures in the Civil Rights Movement like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and John Lewis.

As we continued talking, they began to realize that there is a similar movement happening today - the Black Lives Matter Movement – and that this moment in time will be written about in history books, and they are living it. We've decided to use our upcoming Justice Card project as a way to learn about and celebrate Black leaders and contributors in our country. We will be spending the next couple of weeks reading and researching notable Black people of the past and of today as each student decides whom they would like to study."

Here are the student's choices for this year's cards:

Kamala Harris
Garrett Morgan

Audrey Faye Hendricks
Phillis Wheatley

Misty Copeland
Janet Collins
Thurgood Marshall

Jackie Robinson
Arthur Ashe

Smack of Jellyfish 6th-7th Graders and their teacher, Mr. Will Hudson, are focusing on the triumph of Black lives and culture through films and documentaries that center Black stories, protagonists, and directors.



"Just like American history, like any life for that matter, there are struggles, but there are also triumphs. It is important to recognize and honor struggle, but we must also elevate and celebrate triumph," says Mr. Hudson.

"We began the week by watching [this TED talk](#) with the founders of Black Lives Matter - Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometti. If you haven't seen it, take a moment to listen to these powerful women talk about their ideas and vision on leadership, liberation, and the importance of getting involved.

On Friday, we finished the documentary, ["Tell Them We Are Rising"](#). This film explored the history, rise, and influence of America's Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). On Monday, we will begin watching the movie ["Drumline"](#), a film highly recommended for its positive messages and the Black college experience and culture that is prevalent throughout.

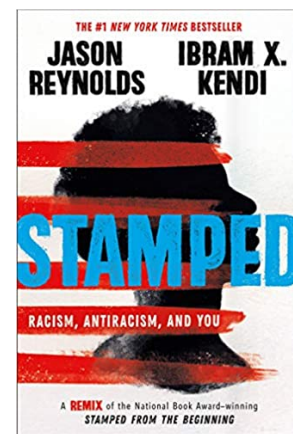
As a class, we also discussed the notion of using different frames or lenses to think and talk about the world. Frames and lenses help bring experiences or perspectives into focus or highlight things we feel are important or are proud of. As we are enjoying these films, we will utilize the Middle / High School version of the [Black Lives Matter 13 Guiding Principles](#) as a lens for class discussions and writing prompts."

Murder of Crows 8th Graders and their teacher Ms. Gloria Mitchell are learning about the juxtaposition of racism vs. democratic ideals in the 18th Century.



"Students reviewed and refined their knowledge about the British colonies in North America and the events leading up to the Revolutionary War before diving into a reading of the Declaration of Independence. They learned about [Prince Hall](#), a free Black abolitionist living in Boston who drew on the language of the Declaration to petition the Massachusetts legislature for emancipation," says Ms. Gloria Mitchell. "We are asking: What does it mean to assert that people are born free and equal in rights?"

"Students' reading of [Stamped](#) earlier this year helps provide important context for understanding these and other events of U.S. history. I am eager for students to return to its themes and further explore ways in which the realization of democratic ideals has depended on, and continues to depend on, the work of Black activists and leaders in our country. Next week, students will be choosing an activist, politician, writer, artist, scientist, or other notable American of African descent to research."



Why the name "Kite and Leaf?"



So why did we name our "good news" newsletter "Kite and Leaf? It is inspired by our logo, which we affectionately call the "Kleaf."

Our logo designer, Kathy Hauser's original idea in creating the "Kleaf" was to represent childhood and growth in a playful way so that it also captured joy. We hope our *Kite and Leaf* online publication does the same!

