

Dinner of Thanks was a Big Success!

On the evening of Thursday November 15, 2012, the Fletcher-Maynard Academy held its 13th Annual Dinner of Thanks celebration in the Fletcher-Maynard Academy gym. The event brought together faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members to dine and commune. Staff and family members worked together to plan, staff, and provide food and decorations for the event.

As usual we had a fabulous turnout that overflowed our school gym. There were two food lines managed by staff, parents, and community volunteers. Reflecting the diverse and international nature of our student (42 nations represented in our student body) and community population the food being served went beyond the traditional turkey and stuffing. There was jerk chicken; different types of rice from the Caribbean, the Middle East, and beyond; different types of bread; and other food from the countries and cultures our students come from. Because of the potluck contributions from families and staff, there was more than enough food for everyone, many even went back for seconds and a few for thirds! Thanks to the generosity of our families and staff members in donating food there was more than enough food for everyone-many even went back for seconds and a few for thirds!

This year the school is committed to linking all fun, festive, family events with an educational component. The Fletcher-Maynard has always been successful in getting parents and family members into the building for big events. We are now working on a strategy to leverage the relationships from that success to construct, nurture and grow a 360 degree "learning bubble" around each child that reaches across space and time. Start early + Support

learning everywhere = Success.

This year we added a special component to the festivities. Before we opened the food lines, Pamela Mason, director of the Language and Literacy Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and lecturer on Education spoke to parents about the importance of reading out loud to their young children. The Fletcher-Maynard faculty and staff have been working diligently on increasing our scholars' language literacy--indeed professor Mason has been working with the school's vocabulary committee on ways to identify, target and support our students' language and literacy strengths and weaknesses. We are confident that within our school walls we can help our students succeed.

However, we acknowledge that a) all learning does not occur within the school walls and the skills and b) knowledge that children bring with them into kindergarten and junior kindergarten can have an outsized impact on their academic performance throughout their academic career and beyond. To address both challenges we must 1) team up with stakeholders outside the school walls and 2) start focusing on literacy and its precursors as early as possible. Professor Mason's presentation to parents and much of the communications our teachers have with our parents are part of our efforts to reach outward. We're proud of our fabulous learning team of faculty, staff, and families; confident that together we can help all of our children succeed. Our **Baby U** programming--part of the Fletcher-Maynard's Full Circle initiative is part of our attempt to backwards (into pre-school and even before). The Fletcher-Maynard has always been successful in getting parents and family members into the building for big events. We are now working on a strategy to leverage the

relationships from that success to construct, nurture and grow a 360 degree "learning bubble" around each child that reaches across space and time. Start early + Support learning everywhere = Success. We're proud of our fabulous learning team of faculty, staff, and families; confident that together we can help all of our children succeed.