Testimony Shows Mock Trials were a Hit

By Shelley Harker and Cindy Bielke
Assistant Dean of Programs
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Was Mike Jacobs guilty of spray painting racist statements on a fellow student’s locker? That was the central question that 80 fifth graders from Hancock Elementary School explored as part of three “mini-mock” trials in the Annette K. Levine Moot Courtroom at Hamline University School of Law on Friday, February 24. The case, State of Minnesota v. Mike Jacobs, involved a fictional student Mike Jacobs who was charged with the crime of Damage to Property in the third degree and fourth degree, a violation of Minnesota Statutes 609.595, subd. 2.

The students were well prepared for the mini-mock trial by their teachers, Diane Bigger, Priscilla Saari and Dan Bergthold.

Law School Dean Jon Garon warmly welcomed the students and told them he hoped to see them back at Hamline “in about ten years when you’re deciding where to go to law school.” First-year students Bridget Landry and Shauna Holt volunteered to help the budding lawyers during the mini-mock trial, along with alumni Jack DeWalt and Jody Thronson. Attorney Pattali Ramakrishnan from Kerala, India, also took time out from pursuing his LL.M. at Hamline to meet with the Hancock students.

Assistant Dean of Programs Shelley Harker, who serves as the Law School’s representative to the Hancock/Hamline Advisory Committee, recommended that Hamline partner with the elementary school’s fifth graders on an important project four years ago and the mini-mock trials were born. Harker, who also helps to keep the busy day on track, noted, “That was quite something for these fifth graders to get their arms around. It’s particularly impressive when you realize that English is not the first language for many of the students.”

The mini-mock trials were developed in 1978 at the Minnesota Center for Community Legal Education with the help of Debra Berghoff, Program Administrator for the Dispute Resolution Institute at Hamline Law School. Her expertise has made the mini-mock trial a highlight of the year for many.

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Hancock Fifth Graders’ Take on the Mock Trials

By PaNah Vang and Dominique Thompson
Hancock student editors

Fifth grade students from Hancock Elementary participated in a mock trial at the Hamline Law School on Friday, February 24. We asked students and teachers about their reactions and the impact of the mock trials.

Fifth grader, Xi Yang, said, “I was so happy I almost screamed. My side, the prosecution, won! I learned that attorneys always have to say, your honor, while talking to the judge. I liked the food that was served. I also like the people at Hamline. They’re so cool!”

Lindsey Anderson, fifth grader, said, “What I liked about being the judge was I got to bang the gavel and sit up in a high, high chair.” Lindsey also commented on how beneficial it was to have a Hamline friend at the Mock Trials. “My mentor supported me by being there and watching me and she made me not be nervous or laugh or make a mistake.”

Fifth grade teacher, Diane Bigger, said, “The mock trials were the best ever. The students in two of the classes had an outcome of innocent. One class found the defendant guilty. The case involved a student being accused of damage to property and a hate crime. The attorneys, witnesses, judges, bailiffs, and jury did a fabulous job with their roles. The students learned about the trial process. They had to act out their assigned roles. They had to read and understand the case.”

Bria Johnson, fifth grader, said, “At first I thought it was going to be easy, but then it was kind of hard because when everyone was looking at you, you’d get really, really nervous. Also, when you had a good question to ask, the other side would cover it first.”

Fifth grader Adam Thompson said, “It was fun because it seemed so real but you were doing a fake trial. It seemed real because you were in a real court room and there were lawyers and a judge and a jury.”

Pa Chai Vang, fifth grader, said, “Being a jury member was fun. We had to go to a room where all the jury members were and we had to decide and make the other jury members think that Mike Jacobs was not guilty.”

Pa Chai Vang,
Bria Johnson,
Adam Thompson

Fifth grader, Mai Dee Xiong, said, “I enjoyed it because it was fun to sit on the witness stand. I was nervous because there were people looking at me and I’m shy of being in front of a lot of people.”
Hancock's Knowledge Fair Full of Bright Ideas

By Phoua Thao
Hancock student editor

Hancock School hosted a SEM (Schoolwide Enrichment Model)/Math/Science/Technology night on February 21st for family and staff members of the Hancock/Hamline University community.

Over three-hundred attended the Knowledge Fair.

Over three hundred adults and children attended the “Knowledge Fair” and participated in many activities. The Hancock Orchestra kicked off the event by playing nine musical pieces with beginning and experienced fourth, fifth, and sixth grade orchestra members.

Inside the gym, SEM students showcased their Geographer’s Fair projects, and SEM NASA fifth and sixth grade students offered activities about space such as the “Travel to the Solar System Game,” the “Star Game,” a flight simulator, and a Planetarium. Other SEM, math, and science activities included Sudoku, Science Face Painting, Crazy Puzzles, Picture Shapes, and a static electricity activity.

The evening also included numerous, very creative Science Fair projects. Many found that the projects were better this year than in the past. Mary Hedenstrom, a science teacher at Hancock, said, “The projects were better because the Hamline students helped our students. The Hancock students were happy the Hamline students came to help them.” The Hamline students were from Jodi Goldberg’s Biology class.

And, as if this weren’t enough, the computer lab teachers from Hancock, Mrs. Muench and Ms. Wilson, showed “Native Americans” and “Ancient Mesopotamia,” Hyperstudio shows made by the fifth and sixth grade classes.

The first, second, and third graders sang songs about bubbles and hibernation (“Time To Go To Sleep”) with Science Teacher Mrs. Hedenstrom, and Physical Education Teacher Ron Woodbury, who accompanied the students on the guitar.

Staff from the Bakken Museum topped off the evening with their demonstration of lightning using a “thunder house,” lightning rods, and static electricity.

The presentation, along with the rest of the night, was “electrifying”.

Over three-hundred attended the Knowledge Fair.
From the Desk of:

Sovanary Ho:

Hi, my name is Sovanary Ho. I like being an editor for the Snelling Connection. We take pictures and interview people. We get different articles to write. We work with Whitney Klein, a student from Hamline.

I like having a Hand-in-Hand buddy from Hamline. Having a Hand-in-Hand buddy is really fun. We get to play games from the game board and go to Hamline.

I like going to Hamline to swim and for the annual Earth Day Festival. Fourth, fifth, and sixth graders from Hancock get to go swimming at Hamline. The Earth Day Festival is during the spring, on May 5th. We play games and try to find ways to save the Earth.

John Phan:

Hi! I’m John Phan. I like to go swimming at Hamline and play football with my friends.

“I want to be seen in the paper and tell what is going on”

I’m excited to be an editor for the Snelling Connection because I want to be seen in the paper and tell what is going on. Being in the Snelling Collection is really cool.

My favorite thing to do is run, especially when I am hyper. When I was in HOSTS I had a lot of fun. I like going over to Hamline for the Earth Day Festival because we like being outside and having fun and learning about the Earth.

Speak OUT!

Chong Yang and Phillip Vang ask:

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR SPRING BREAK?

“I’m going to the Gulf Coast to help rebuild and clean up,” Andreas Stewart-Finkenstaedt, Hamline student.

“I’m going to Seattle, Washington to see my husband’s father,” Ms. Susan, 6th grade teacher at Hancock.

“I’m going to Madeline Island,” Thomas Hare, 2nd grader.

“Going to a hotel”, Vanessa, 3rd grader.

“Go wrestle, ride my bike, swim, do fireworks,” Emmanuel, 5th grader.

“Going to Hawaii,” Marcueus, 5th grader.

“I’m going fishing,” Sarina, 5th grader.

“Going to Florida with the Hamline Tennis Team,” Stephanie England, Hamline student.

“Going to San Francisco”, Casey, Hamline student.

“I’m going to Nebraska to visit a friend”, Ashley Schultz, Hamline student.
Hancock Students on their Way to Hamline University

By Samantha Henningson
Hancock/Hamline Advisory Committee Member

The Hancock/Hamline Collaboration is moving one step closer to making the idea that “College Begins in Kindergarten” a reality for Hancock students. The Hancock/Hamline Collaboration Scholarship Fund officially started in Spring 2005 when the Hamline University Board of Trustees gave the Wesley Award for Faculty to Rita Johnson, professor of Management and Economics, and Hamline liaison to the Collaboration. This award for community leadership and service came with a $5,000 cash prize, which Rita donated to start the Hancock/Hamline Collaboration Scholarship Fund. When fully funded, it will provide scholarships to one or more Hamline students who attended Hancock-Hamline University Collaborative Magnet School.

Surveys of Hancock’s 4th, 5th and 6th graders show that 94% want to go to college! Thanks to the relationship between Hamline and Hancock, and collaborative activities taking place on both sides of Snelling, Hancock students think a lot about college.

When asked about the scholarship fund, Dominique Thompson, Hancock 5th grader, says, “It sounds like a wonderful idea. It would be an honor for a Hancock student to attend Hamline University because it is a great school.” The Collaboration becomes even more exciting when considering that Hancock alumni could attend Hamline and work with Hancock students as part of their college experience. The scholarship fund will help bring the mission of building and strengthening the collaborative community full circle.

Friends of Hamline and the Collaboration, as well as alumni of both schools are invited to contribute towards the scholarship fund to ensure that for those who commit to the hard work of study there will be a way to achieve their dream of a college education.

To find out more about the scholarship fund, please contact Samantha Henningson at shenningsson01@hamline.edu or 651-523-2483.

Students Prepare to Celebrate Earth Day Every Day

By Clover Eckert and Jesse Sanchez
Hancock student editors

Everybody hopes that May 5th will be a warm and dry day for the ninth annual collaborative Earth Day Festival, which will be held on Hamline’s Old Main Lawn.

Students and staff at both Hancock and Hamline work together to provide this service-learning event to educate our community about protecting our environment and the five R’s: Reduce, Reuse, React, Reject, and Recycle. Last year, the event included face painting, tattoos, and numerous other activities, as well as many fun treats for snacking! The activities, provided by the Center for Global and Environmental Education and other Hamline Departments, always seem to be enjoyable for the Earth Day festival-goers.

“My favorite game at the Earth Day Festival last year was ‘Empty the Landfill,’” said former Hancock student Qur’an Henry. This game involved students emptying a monster-looking landfill by sorting and recycling its contents.

Earth Day activities are also planned and constructed by the Hancock Earth Saver students and members of Hancock’s Student Council. This year, they acquired many ideas for the festival activities from The Community Power Grant and Saint Paul Public Schools Service-Learning Department, who provided speakers about toxicity, reducing paper waste, household hazardous waste, food waste, and a field trip to

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Dear Xia,
I have someone who’s really annoying that I see every day. What should I do about it?
--Anonymous

Xia says: This is a tough question, so I decided to ask a few adults at Hancock School for their advice.

“What I would do is stay away from the person as much as I could.” (Ms. Washburne, ELL Teacher)

“I would try to find a way to be their friend so they won’t be quite as annoying anymore.” (Mary Verdeja, Secretary)

“The first thing I would do is tell that person how they are annoying me. Tell him/her what they are doing that is annoying you. Like ‘Please stop ____ to me.’ The second thing you should do is walk away. If the person doesn’t stop, tell an adult.” (Ms. Lehmann, Assistant Principal)

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the Newport Resource Recovery Facility. This promises some great activities from this year’s Hancock students for their fellow students to enjoy.

New to this year’s Earth Day Festival is the addition of more students. Battle Creek Elementary and Randolph Heights Elementary students will be joining Hancock’s Earth Savers at the Earth Day Festival.

We hope that many of the Hancock and Hamline students, faculty, staff, and community members will make it out to the festival. Hamline students and staff can also volunteer to help during the Earth Day Festival. Sign up at the Volunteer Tent. Hope to see you there!

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Hancock students during the past four years. Berghoff plays a pivotal role in preparing students and alumni volunteers, as well as helping Hancock teachers prepare their students.

“I love the ‘light bulb moment,’” Berghoff said with a smile. “You can just see when, all of sudden, they get it! It’s so fun to see how excited they get when suddenly they’ve put all the pieces together. Very rewarding!”

Assistant Dean of Programs Shelley Harker agrees.

“For me it’s especially exciting to see students I’ve worked with through the HOSTS reading mentorship program come to Hamline for a mini-mock trial,” she said. “This year one of my former HOSTS students was a judge in the third trial. He did a phenomenal job!” In fact, all of the participants in the mock trial did an exceptional job and should be very proud.