

DOUGLAS DIGEST

office: 978.266.2560
principal: Dr. Christopher Whitbeck
school: <http://douglas.ab.mec.edu>
PTO: <http://www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org>

December 3, 2012

Douglas Digest

Editors:
Sharon Metzger
Lori Fassman
Distributors:
Jill Maxwell
Michele Walsh

The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest every six weeks during the school year. Next issue: January 7.

We welcome article ideas and feedback. Please email Lori at lori@fassman.com.

From the PTO

Late November–December is a quieter period for the PTO. The Fall flurry of activities has ended, and people are focused on family, friends, and the holidays. The main focuses of the PTO right now are:

- ◆ Wrapping up our Annual Giving Campaign, stretching toward our 90% family participation goal.
- ◆ Ramping up for the Spring Social & Auction, Douglas' largest fundraiser, coming up March 9. (See Spotlight on page 2.)
- ◆ Helping our community take advantage of holiday shopping opportunities that let you earn money for Douglas while completing your shopping list.
- ◆ Recruiting for PTO positions that are open or will open up soon.

By now, you have heard about the Annual Giving Campaign, our second largest PTO fundraiser. More than 40% of you have already donated; we are excited to be getting close to our goal! If you haven't made a tax-deductible donation of *any amount* yet, please do by December 31. Each donation goes 100% toward enriching our children's education. Click on the purple "Donate" button on the PTO web site.

As we enter the holiday shopping season, there are many other ways you can help raise money for Douglas. Opportunities—found via the

Use-By Date

Agree or disagree?

1. You shouldn't eat any food after it's dropped on the floor or after five seconds!
2. You shouldn't eat food with mold on it.
3. And you shouldn't eat any food after the use-by date posted on it.

These are common household rules, usually enforced by mothers. But really, it all depends on what it is and who is around. If you are alone, the only real rule is to pick it up and eat it before the dog beats you to it.

Most of us have eaten dropped food most of our lives and lived on. While you might not pick up and eat a dropped cookie while you are at someone else's dinner party, if you are alone at home and the cookie gets dropped... and the dog is slow...it's still a good cookie.

As to the mold rule, it's just fungus—so are mushrooms—no big deal. In the case of cheese and bread the roots of the mold spores are in there already—the existence of the bread and the cheese depends on yeast spores. You eat mold all the time in cheese and other food—you just can't see it.

Ah, but what about the use-by date? Most packaged food has a calendar reference on it. Use By, Sell By, Best Before, Expiration Date are most common.

There are those who take the date seriously and literally, as if it was illegal or unhealthy to consume food beyond the date on the package. Because you will get sick or die if you do.

"Shopping" tab on the PTO home page—include:

- ◆ Scholastic Book Fair, which runs through this Friday, December 7, in the Douglas cafetorium. Shop with your child's class or come another time to get great prices on a wide range of books and other gift items.
- ◆ Spiritwear Holiday Sale: a 10% discount on all purchases through December 10. Shop the expanded list of Douglas logo clothing and accessories, including several new items.
- ◆ Scrip Gift Cards can be purchased and received in time for the holidays, if you get your order in by December 10. Buy gift cards at local and national retail outlets and restaurants. Participating

Wrong.

In fact, it's just fine to exceed the use-by date. The truth is that the use-by date is not mandated by the FDA except in the case of baby formula and some prescription drugs. The dating is not about food safety. The dates are a marketing function—a manufacturer reference for the retailer—to keep products moving. Nothing bad will happen if you exceed the use-by date. You will not die. You will not be arrested by the food police. Your intelligence, eyes, nose, and taste buds are the best guides for judging food reliability. The use-by date is only a concept—a working hypothesis.

All this made me wonder...What is my own use-by date? When am I Best-Before, and what is my Expiration Date?

There are several questionnaires readily available on the web. I filled in the blanks on five of them. I'm 47, normal blood pressure, no heart trouble, in pretty good shape. And I've eaten a lot of food off the floor in my time.

When all the statistics were churned, my use-by date is calculated to be somewhere around 90 years of age, plus or minus 3 years. (When I gave the news to my wife, she just lifted her eyebrows. Whether in surprise, dismay, or delight, I could not tell, and did not ask.)

So. My use-by date is somewhere around 15,695 days away. How about you?

Every day matters. If the cookie drops to the floor, go for it.

C. Whitbeck

stores donate a percentage of each sale directly to Douglas.

- ◆ Target REDcard holders can register Douglas to receive cash equivalent to 1% of each purchase. Customers who use this card also get 5% off purchases.

These opportunities could not be available without our parent volunteers. Hundreds of Douglas parents participate in PTO programs and activities each year, supporting Douglas while meeting and getting to know other parents. No matter how much spare time you have, what your expertise is, or whether you have young children at home, there is a PTO opportunity that is perfect for you. On the "Get Involved" tab on the PTO web site, you

(Continued on page 2)

Dates to Remember

Tuesday, December 4

Regionalization Forum, 7:30 PM
Gates School

December 5-7

Book Fair

Sunday, December 9

Regionalization Forum, 2:15 PM
Acton Chinese School (RJ Grey)

Wednesday, December 12

Regionalization Forum, 7:15 PM
McCarthy-Towne School

Thursday, December 13

Regionalization Forum, 10 AM
Acton Town Hall

Thursday, December 20

APS School Committee Meeting, 7 PM
RJ Grey Library

Friday, December 21

EARLY DISMISSAL

December 24-January 1

NO SCHOOL (winter recess)

Wednesday, January 2

School Reopens

Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.

December 6 Pretzel Day, Grade 2
December 13 Grade 5, ADK
December 20 Popcorn Day, Grade 6
January 3 Grades 3 and 4



Douglas Spring Social and Auction, March 9, 2013

The Douglas Spring Social and Auction is the PTO's largest fundraising event, raising funds to support full and part-time teaching assistants for all classrooms in grades K-6 and staff for "specials," including library, music, gym, and computer classes.

The success of the auction depends on over 30 volunteers and the attendance of Douglas parents. The volunteers solicit over 200 auction and raffle items and also solicit businesses for sponsorship. Last year the auction raised close to \$40,000 with over \$2,000 from direct solicitation business sponsorships.

Last year the auction chairs made several process improvements including auction management via a web site (www.DouglasSchoolAuction.com), online registration and bidding, automatic check-out with the acceptance of credit cards, and general improved flow of the event.

The auction is always in need of volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, if you can provide printing services for our auction materials, or if you have sporting event tickets, vacation rental or some other item you would like to donate please contact Heather Lammey (hblammey@yahoo.com).

Don't miss out on the excitement of the auction. Sign up today and receive Douglas' Black Friday deal of \$5 off per ticket. Hurry as this deal expires on Sunday, December 9.

You can purchase tickets at the auction web site (www.DouglasSchoolAuction.com).

You may decide to work on the auction or simply attend—either way, this is a great opportunity to be part of a *terrific auction* that benefits our *awesome teachers* and your *awesome kids*! See you at the auction!

Top Ten Reasons to Join Our Team

10. Work with great, funny co-chairs who have nothing better to do than make up top ten lists.
9. Impress your friends with your new-found credit card swiping skills.
8. First dibs on cool auction items.
7. Last dibs on cool auction items.
6. Open invitation to exclusive auction planning meetings.
5. Let your spouse put the kids to bed while you sip wine at those meetings.
4. Backstage passes to meet the Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (autographs included).
3. Input into the band's playlist
2. Make new friends, because—let's face it—who doesn't want to hang around with the movers and shakers of the Douglas community.
1. Work on a *terrific auction* that benefits our *awesome school* and your *awesome kids*.

Kate Bones, Heather Lammey,
Jennifer Patenaude, and Megan Pesce

(Continued from page 1)

will see a list of current openings. Click the "Volunteer Roles" tab to search volunteer roles based on various parameters. Please consider joining us—we welcome new talent and look forward to meeting you!

This is the season to give thanks. We are thankful to all who have helped during this busy fall. We are fortunate to have such an involved community. Hope you have a wonderful holiday season!

Martha Papalia and Eileen Matarese
PTO Co-chairs

What's on the Web?

There are many ways to help Douglas when doing the shopping you do anyway. See the Shopping tab on the PTO web site (www.DouglasSchoolPTO.org) for holiday links.

The Douglas school web site has a new look! See <http://douglas.ab.mec.edu>.

Thanks from the PTO

In the last Digest, we thanked volunteers who helped with a range of Fall programs; just the beginning of a season packed with volunteer activity and events. Please read the latest thank you articles on the PTO web site for the stories behind the abridged thanks below and the names of all volunteers, not just the chairs.

The PTO would like to especially thank:

Amy Kierce: chairing this year's successful Ice Cream Social, along with **Eileen Matarese** (ice cream/kitchen chair), **Cheryl Witty** (cakes), **Jen Aufiero** (pizza), and **Naomi Martins** (tickets).

Paula Conquest, Hayley Reynolds: running the Purposeful Change collection, earning \$1,063 toward clean water for our adopted town, Osenetoi, Kenya.

Mira Greenland, our baking coordinator: rallying her team of volunteers to provide delectable treats for various PTO events, including the unforgettable Thanksgiving smorgasbord for Douglas staff.

Hayley Reynolds: gathering Douglas parents and kids on a brisk Saturday morning to clean the Douglas campus.

Jen Aufiero, Valerie Gore, Sharon Kautz: managing our beloved Veterans Day celebration; Douglas music teacher **Peter Broggi** for producing a moving fifth grade program of patriotic songs and readings.

Sheri Palazzo, Paulette Stout: running the Spiritwear program, and retooling it online to make Spiritwear buying and order fulfilling more efficient.

Stephanie Margolien, Sue Cudmore, Kathy McCullen: running our Cultural Enrichment Program and organizing the performances so far this year.

Maria Parodos, Diane O'Hara: running the Donelan's Register Tapes program with creativity and enthusiasm.

Linda Gower: managing the Box Tops and the Campbell's Labels program, with a range of promotions to encourage participation.

Martha Papalia and Eileen Matarese