

DOUGLAS DIGEST

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Douglas Digest

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The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest every six weeks during the school year.
Next issue: June 5.

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

From the PTO

Mark Twain once said that “Kindness is seen by the blind and heard by the deaf.” After the recent marathon tragedy, the Douglas community banded together for a “One Fund Run” to prove that kindness, generosity, and selflessness win. Together, with inspiration from Kim Shamah and Linda Ahern, we raised over \$6,000. What a wonderful tribute to our school community!

Other notable events this past

month included:

- ◆ Our 15th Annual Festival of Cultures where families travelled the world experiencing the sights, sounds, and scents of far away lands.
- ◆ Author and storyteller James Bruchac enhanced the fourth grade Native American curriculum. The program was paid for with the proceeds from Snack Cart.
- ◆ This year’s Talent Shows did not disappoint! Our talented music teacher Mr. Broggi and parent Mira Greenland organized these fabulous shows on April 25 and May 2 to showcase the amazing and diverse talents of dozens of students.

The month of May is bursting with many worthy PTO events.

- ◆ Thursday, May 23, Poetry in Motion: This all-school event will feature a performer creatively putting poetry to rap music, bringing curriculum to life.
- ◆ That same afternoon we are hosting the Douglas Alumni Reception, where Douglas graduates gather with teachers, reminisce about their elementary school days, and enjoy light refreshments.
- ◆ The Douglas Memorial Day celebration is scheduled for Friday, May 24, 9 AM. Parents are welcome. The event includes a performance by the Douglas Band, a guest speaker, and a patriotic sing-along.
- ◆ While it seems far off, the Lowell Spinners tickets are on sale now for the evening of Saturday, June 22. **Deadline to order tickets is May 9**—hurry, space is limited!

Alas, Douglas Day is fast approaching on Monday, June 3. This annual tradition brings the whole school—students, staff, and families—together. Don’t miss out on this special day. See the spotlight on page 2 for more details. Just like Uncle Sam said, “We want you!”

Thank you!

Martha Papalia and Eileen Matarese

Talent Shows

I learned a bunch of hamster jokes at this year’s 4–6 grade talent show. But the one that I remember the best is:

Which hamster freed the slaves? *Abra-hamster Lincoln!*

Cue the rim shot!

I also had the pleasure of listening to students play the piano, guitar, and cups! They sang, danced, bounced on pogo sticks, solved Rubik’s Cubes, and generally had a lot of fun.

If you are unfamiliar with our talent shows, you might be struck by the loose definition that we use for “talent.” One year a grandmother actually said to me, “You need better standards for your talent show! Not everyone should be performing.” I strongly disagreed with her. But it wasn’t until this summer when I read a book by Yong Zhao, a professor of education who will be speaking in Acton this summer, that I really understood the importance of the Douglas talent show.

If you attended our talent show you would have seen young performers taking the show very seriously and working very hard to please the audience. There were no awards, no assessment of talent, but they were all rewarded with loud applause for their efforts. It was very heartwarming!

Zhao proposes that in the lack of talent show standards we see one of the greatest values of American culture expressed: the value of individuals. Within that value, there are four other traits that we teach at the talent show that are the benchmarks of education at Douglas—benchmarks that are the most important things we teach and that could never be assessed on a standardized test.

First, the talent show is inclusive. It teaches us to respect each other, to embrace diversity, and to value our differences.

Second, the talent show teaches initiative and responsibility. Students have to take the initiative to enter, to learn their performance, and to carry through with it. Each and every participant learned that and shined!

Third, the talent show teaches the students, parents, and even teachers that Douglas school values different talents and that in our school there is a broad definition of success. You don’t have to fit into one mold to be a successful member of our community.

Finally, the talent show teaches children to be proud of their strengths. We all have different strengths. The talent show is a time to forget our weaknesses—we face those everyday—it is a time to embrace our strengths, share them with one another, and be recognized.

As I say to prospective kindergarten parents, school is a place where children *have* to go. I want it to be a place where they *want* to go. I want it to be a place that ignites passion in students—a morning of hamster jokes certainly did that for one student, her friends, and her principal!

C. Whitbeck

Dates to Remember

Week of May 6

MCAS testing (Grades 3–6)

Wednesday, May 8

Grade 1 Field Trip, Drumlin Farm

Sunday, May 12

Mother's Day

Week of May 13

MCAS testing (Grade 5)

Friday, May 17

Grade 2 Field Trip, Old School Day

Wednesday, May 22

Grade 3 Field Trip, Lowell Mills

Thursday, May 23

Grade 4 Field Trip, Play
Poetry in Motion (all-school event)
Alumni Reception, 12:30 PM

Friday, May 24

Memorial Day Celebration, 9 AM
Grade 6 Cultural Program

Monday, May 27

Memorial Day, No School

Thursday, May 30

Grade 4 Ethnic Luncheon

Friday, May 31

Grade 4 Field Trip, Mashantucket Pequot Museum

Monday, June 3

Douglas Day (rain date, June 5)

Tuesday, June 4

PTO General Meeting, Cafetorium, 7:30 PM

Thursday, June 6

Douglas We Day

Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.

May 9	Grades K and 6
May 16	Popcorn Day; Grade 5
May 23	Grades 3 and 4
May 30	Grades 1 and 2
June 6	Pretzel Day

Save These Dates

Thursday, June 13

Mrs. Christensen's Class Play

Friday, June 21

Sixth Grade Graduation, 9:15 AM

Saturday, June 22

Lowell Spinners, 7:05 PM

Monday, June 24

Last Day of School
Thursday Dismissal Schedule



Douglas Day

What's special about Douglas Day? It's the one day each year when the whole school community—teachers, staff, students, and parents—come out to play! What kid wouldn't want to dunk Dr. Whitbeck in the dunk tank, race with classmates, and eat a picnic lunch outside with friends and with Mom, Dad, Grandma, and/or

other favorite guests? Douglas Day is a tradition that signals the approaching end of another school year, and the beginning of summertime fun.

Each class divides into teams for the field events, and the kids have a blast racing on scooters, operating catapults, forming a bucket brigade, running in a three-legged race, and dunking teachers and parents in the dunk tank! After the field events, classes buy their picnic lunch and head outside to sit on blankets with their teacher, classmates, and guests. (Note that volunteers *and* lunch guests need to have a valid CORI form on file.) Finally, thanks to our Cultural Enrichment Committee, students enjoy an entertaining show in the gym. This year the kids will be treated to a fun show called Bubbleology!

We have had a lot of fun planning Douglas Day the past two years, but it's time for us to seek out a few parents who would like to coordinate next year's Douglas Day. The responsibilities include communicating Douglas Day details to parents and staff, renting the dunk tank, coordinating the field events with our terrific new PE teacher, Nicole Emby, and scheduling parent volunteers to run the field events. (Online sign-up makes it easy!) Spend some time with us this year, and we'll show you the ropes!

This year Douglas Day is **Monday, June 3**, with a **rain date of Wednesday, June 5**. Within the next few weeks we'll post the online sign-up for parent/grandparent volunteers. We hope you will consider helping, as we need many parents to run the field events! Volunteers are needed from approximately 8:30 AM–12:30 PM (including time to eat with your child/children). If a four-hour commitment is too much, please consider splitting a shift with a friend! Contact either of us for more information:

Jill Buonomo (jill.buonomo@gmail.com)

Amy Krishnamurthy (amy_krishnamurthy@hotmail.com)

Thanks from the PTO

Since the last Digest, Douglas families have travelled around the world and back thanks to the generosity and commitment of **Maria Rivero** and **Kristan Smith-Park**. This year's Festival of Cultures had record numbers of attendees (nearly 400), a 40-piece Filipino orchestra, Japanese dancing, 3rd–4th graders leading the Lion Dance, amazing food, and our own students representing Kenya and Free the Children. If you missed it this year, please make it a priority next spring. It's a sight to behold and we are so lucky to embrace so many cultures and traditions under one roof.

If you've notice the grounds looking crisp and clean, give **Hayley Reynolds** and her "Green Team" a thumbs up for a job well done. The icing on the cake is the mulch spread

by nearly two dozen ABRHS students who donate time to Douglas for their annual Senior Service Day.

We know the Douglas kids are amazing but did you know they could pogo-stick and jump rope at the same time, play complex and beautiful musical pieces, sing, dance, and even solve a Rubik's Cube? Thanks to **Mira Greenland** and **Mr. Broggi** for another spectacular Talent Show. Props to our Masters of Ceremonies, **Gregg Poulin** and **John Greenland** for keeping with the entertaining spirit of the event!

Finally, a thanks to **Linda Gower** for another successful season of Box Tops for Education and Campbell's labels and to **Maria Parodos** for the creative marketing which resulted in a record breaking \$169,297 receipts.

Martha Papalia and Eileen Matarese