

Summer 2023

Higashi Highlights



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*Helping children with autism
exceed expectations since 1987*

(781) 961-0800

Program Director's Perspective



Dr. John Maina

Highlights

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WE HAD A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR!!

The 2022/23 school year was a great one in many respects. It was the year that saw our full return to pre-Covid routines and activities. We are able to have the Higashi Road Race, Annual Celebration Event, the Emergence Program Formal Dance, Graduation and the famous Bon Dance ceremonies. All these events were fun filled and we are not only excited but grateful that we are on a great trajectory as a school. As a program we take pride in the fact that we are thriving in the area of curriculum and instruction. Through professional development programs, including job-embedded training, we are raising the bar to consistently great students' learning outcomes. Moreover, we are crossing to the 2023/24 School Year while fully staffed. In this regard, I sincerely thank all our staff for commitment and dedication to the mission of Boston Higashi and maximizing our students' potential. Moreover, our supervisors have continued to play a great role in ensuring the effective curriculum implementation and instructional delivery for the benefit of the students. The Emergence Program, under the leadership of Mr. Jamie Marshal have returned to their pre-covid off campus job sites. This return to normalcy portends significant positive outcomes for our students as they prepare for adult services.

Our former students were also able to return on campus for the summer session of CAEP. They enjoyed a variety of fun activities including swimming, jazzband, waterslides, and gardening, among others. In this regard, I would like to thank our BHS Continuing Adult Education Program (CAEP) Committee and our staff for the outstanding job that they continue to do in ensuring that we continue staying connected and supporting our alumni. To promote professional development of our staff we continue to collaborate with Adelphi University of New York. In this regard, our current cohort has fourteen staff members under the tutelage of the renowned Professor Stephen Shore.

It will be in order for me to congratulate several staff; Chris Stanbrook for being promoted to become a Division Director for Middle School Division, Jennifer Wolan, Master Teacher for Elementary Division, John Kolwaite, Master Teacher for Younger High School Division, Kariuki Muriithi, Residential Program Director, Henry Njoroge, Residential Academic Director, and Joram Kamau, Emergence Residence Program Director. Also, I congratulate Naoko Tagami, Heather Ogden and Jalia Nakaiza upon their recent graduation with a Master of Education in Special Needs Education at Bridgewater State University!

I look forward to seeing us all sustaining the current momentum into the new 2023/24 school year guided by the schoolwide theme of "BE A LEADER." Indeed, leadership influences learning!

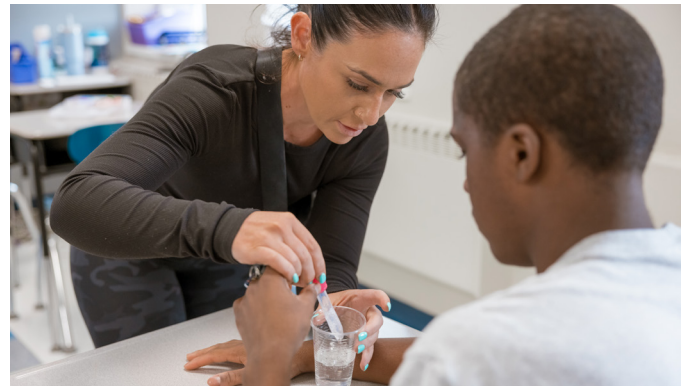
Summer Fun

This summer has been a fun and productive one for our students! In addition to enjoying field trips and the nice weather, students have also been working hard academically. To showcase their learning in math and science, divisions held end-of-summer mini events.

Elementary students set up a lemonade stand, giving them the opportunity to practice their counting and customer service skills. They also learned about the importance of teamwork and cooperation as they worked together to make and sell lemonade.

Middle school students held a bake sale, where they sold cookies, brownies, and other baked goods. They spent several days preparing the baked goods, learning about measurement and kitchen safety along the way.

The younger high school students held their annual science fair. This event gave students the opportunity to explore a variety of scientific concepts. They rotated through different stations, each of which featured a different experiment. Students tested theories about sink or float, kinetic energy, and chemical reactions. They also had the chance to create their own artwork using glue and dish soap!





Fun and Busy Residential Summer

Over the course of the Summer, residential divisions have been holding their own parent nights, where families were invited to join us on campus for meals, games, and sometimes swimming!

This of course all led to the annual Family Day for our Residential Program. The event was full of fun activities, including giant water slides, horse riding, hay rides, and a reptile meet and greet. Everyone enjoyed a day of relaxation, smiles, and laughter! With so many fun things to do, nobody wanted the morning to end!

That's not all the residential students have been up to though! It's been a very busy season full of fun activities. Students could be spotted out in the community shopping as they prepared to cook their own meals as part of our vocational program.

We also had the wonderful opportunity to bring students to the Fishing with a Mission event where they were invited on boat rides. They had so much fun zooming around and trying to look for fish in the water.



Big Wave Surfing

This past year, we have been fortunate to partner with Gnome Surf, a non-profit organization that provides surf therapy to individuals with special needs. Gnome Surf's team of dedicated staff and volunteers are passionate about helping people overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

In July, our Younger High School students had the incredible opportunity to try surfing on real waves at Horseneck Beach. The waves were perfect, the weather was beautiful, and the company was even better! We had so much fun laughing, learning, and catching waves together.

The Gnome Surf staff worked tirelessly to help our students feel comfortable on the surfboards and in the water. They were patient, encouraging, and always willing to go the extra mile. As a result, our students were able to overcome their fears and achieve something truly amazing.

We are so grateful to Gnome Surf for providing our students with this opportunity. It was an experience that they will never forget.



Annual Celebration

A Memorable Return





This year we held two Annual Celebration show dates for families to join, this being our first live audience in three years. For anyone there in person, these are memories that will last a lifetime.

Students who had been working hard for months in an empty gym, were finally able to share their progress as a crowd cheered them on! The excitement in the air was palpable, and the students delivered performances that were nothing short of amazing.

Each performance was outstanding and so much so that the first day of the event, the crowd was shocked to silence and tears of joy. That silence didn't last long as parents and family members could see the smiles on their child's face as they cheered loudly for them and their friends! Students took to the stage with a renewed sense of pride that had been missing in previous years in the empty gymnasium.

From music and dance to stilts and gymnastics, the students showed off their skills and talents in ways that we never could have imagined. They were clearly having a great time, and their joy was contagious. We had audience members that could barely be contained as they jumped for joy no matter who was performing! The musical performances were nothing short of something magical. The physical performances were an excellent showcase of how hard each and every student had been working to achieve their goals.

The Annual Celebration shows from this year will be forever remembered as something special to everyone involved. Not only was it the first time that many of our newer parents were able to see the show in person, but it also showed a once in a lifetime behind the scenes look at the staff working so hard. With no true stage and no curtains to close between acts, parents had the opportunity to witness firsthand how each performance is prepared for by our incredible Higashi staff.

We are so grateful to everyone who came out to support our students and staff. It was an unforgettable experience that we will cherish forever.



Graduation



In June, we celebrated the graduating class of 2023! It was a day of great joy and accomplishment, as our students mark the end of their Higashi school journey and the beginning of a new chapter in their lives.

The ceremony was wonderful in so many ways. The graduates looked radiant in their caps and gowns, and the smiles on their faces were a testament to their hard work and dedication. The speeches were inspiring, and the music was uplifting. But nothing could beat the sense of pride that our graduates carried with them all day.

As we welcomed parents and families

to this beautiful day, we were reminded of the many people who have helped our students along the way. We are grateful to the teachers, staff, and mentors who have invested in our graduates and helped them to reach this milestone.

We are also grateful to the graduates themselves. They have shown us what it means to be resilient, dedicated, and hardworking. They have overcome challenges and obstacles, and they have never given up on their dreams.

To the Class of 2023, congratulations! We are so proud of you. We wish you all the best in your future endeavors.





Bon Dance



Wasshoi! Higashi's Annual Bon Dance Festival Was a Blast!

The morning kicked off with a lively performance of bon odori, a traditional Japanese dance that celebrates the spirits of ancestors. The students, dressed in colorful kimonos, invited their parents to join the dance. The crowd cheered and clapped along, and the energy was electric!

After the dance, students and families had the opportunity to explore police and fire vehicles. They got to sit in the driver's seat, learn about the different equipment, and ask the officers questions about their work. They also took a hay ride around campus, which was a lot of fun for all ages.

Families moved between activity stations all morning. Trying their hand at different yard games or creating beautiful artworks. There was something to enjoy for everyone!

The festival ended with a delicious treat from the ice cream truck. Everyone enjoyed a cold and refreshing ice cream of their choice on a hot summer day.

We were so happy to see so many people come out and enjoy our festival. It was a great way to celebrate Japanese culture and community! We hope to see you all again next year!



Summer Vacation

Our two summer vacation programs were both huge successes this year. We were lucky to have some great weather, which allowed most activities to take place outside on our beautiful campus. These relaxing and fun days were much needed for both students and staff after a very busy end of school year season.

Each camp has creative things to do thanks to our Residential Activity Leaders. The staff in these roles create fun and engaging stations for each division to enjoy during the day. Some activities include making chalk art on the sidewalks for everyone to enjoy, or playing musical instruments along with favorite tunes! On the hotter days, students were taught how to make their own snow cones in the culinary arts kitchen while others were on the turf field playing relay games.

Of course, no summer vacation is complete without some water play! During our Sizzling Summer vacation program in August, the pools and sprinklers came out, getting everyone soaked! No matter where you were on our campus, there was something fun happening and you could always find a smiling face!





BOSTON HIGASHI SCHOOL
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Randolph, MA 02368

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Upcoming Events

Events

9.5 **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

9.27 **PARENT NIGHT**

10.6 **OPEN HOUSE**

10am - 12pm

10.12 **9TH ANNUAL GALA**

@ Granite Links

10.14 **SPORTS DAY**

8:30am - 2:30pm

10.25 **COSTUME PARTY**

Residential Dance



9th Annual Gala

Last year we got together for the first time in three years, and what was supposed to be a Gala, turned into one big celebration and party. There is no reason why we can't do it again! The school continues to forge ahead with multiple projects on the horizon. Our staff is the fullest it's been in years and the talent level is off the charts. We have so much to be grateful for. Our enrollment is up and the school continues to expand and grow, creating more and more opportunities for our students. Please join us again as we share some stories, have some laughs and enjoy one another's company at the most beautiful venue Greater Boston has to offer.

THURSDAY, 7 PM

10.12.23

GRANITE LINKS

100 Quarry Hills Dr, Quincy, MA