

Fall 2024

Higashi Highlights



(781) 961-0800

800 North Main Street
Randolph, MA

*Helping children with autism
exceed expectations since 1987*



www.bostonhigashi.org

Program Director's Perspective



Dr. John Maina

Our School Continues to Soar High!

Our school is flourishing, and I am incredibly proud of the progress our students are making in a wide range of areas. The academic advancements we've observed across all divisions are particularly impressive. These positive outcomes are a direct result of our staff's exceptional work in implementing curriculum and instruction, guided by the expertise of Susan, our Director of Curriculum.

This year's Sports Day and Annual Higashi Road Race were not only fantastic displays of our students' athletic abilities but also served as powerful reminders of the importance of physical activity within our Daily Life Therapy® philosophy. The students' inspiring performances truly exemplify Dr. Kiyo Kitahara's unwavering belief in the immense potential of students with autism. Her vision continues to be the guiding light for our school, and we are eternally grateful for her leadership.

We are also making significant strides in our vocational program and are eager to expand its offerings at the high school level. In collaboration with Paul Fanning, our Chief Development Officer, we are launching an exciting T-Shirt making program in the Older High School Division. This program will be centered on skill development, providing our students with valuable opportunities to learn and grow.

The level of collaboration across our school's teams is truly inspiring. I am fully committed to fostering and nurturing this collaborative spirit as we work together to elevate our programs to even greater heights. We have a dedicated and talented team, and I am confident that we will continue to achieve remarkable outcomes for our students.

In addition to these highlights, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the ongoing support of our broader Higashi family that includes parents, community partners, among others. Your involvement and partnership are essential to our success. We are deeply grateful for your continued commitment to our mission.

Moving forward, we will remain focused on our core values of excellence, innovation, and inclusivity. We will continue to explore new and innovative ways to support our students and help them reach their full potential. We are excited about the future and the opportunities that lie ahead.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication and support. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of our students and their families.

Highlights

FEATURES



4. RESIDENTIAL NEWS

6-7. 10TH ANNUAL GALA

8-9. SPORTS DAY

11. FALL FESTIVITIES

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Back to School

Our fall semester has gotten off to a flying start! While the summer fun is now behind us, Higashi is buzzing with anticipation for the year ahead. Our students returned with an eagerness to meet their new teachers and classmates, demonstrating their wonderful ability to adapt. We are excited to see the creative and engaging experiences that our teachers have planned for us this year.

The first day of school was even more exciting this year due to the presence of so many new faces. With the school year theme, "Returning to Our Roots," students and teachers gathered for our traditional assembly to mark the beginning of the year. Singing the school song and welcoming new friends is always a refreshing way to start the school year.

This new school year also brought an exciting addition to our ranks: our Elementary Division has continued to grow, and we took the opportunity to establish the Primary and Intermediate divisions. With these additions, we have also welcomed many new staff members, symbolizing the cooperation of our Higashi Family. It's wonderful to see Higashi develop in so many positive ways.

We have ambitious plans for the academic year, including events, trainings, and more. We look forward to creating new shared memories with everyone.



Higashi Parent Social

Save the Date:
Thursday, January 16th

Where:
Gym/Pool Complex

What to Expect:

- Light Appetizers
- Refreshments
- Good Company

Join us for a relaxing evening with fellow Higashi parents. It's the perfect opportunity to unwind after the holiday hustle and bustle, reconnect with old friends, and make new ones.



Residence

The new school year has started with a burst of energy, and we've been enjoying the mild weather by participating in so many exciting activities. We picked apples and pumpkins, explored a corn maze, and watched movies at the theatre!

Students learned about setting up tents, making fires, and participating in a flag retiring ceremony with Troop 13 Avon. This fun experience allowed our students to interact with other kids and teach them new things!

The EP Girls led by Arika have made a significant impact on their community. They participated in a walk for Autism in Boston and ran a trunk or treat booth to sponsor an event for kids in the Holbrook School System's Arts Program. Our Middle School students also made a donation and participated in trick or treating at the same event.

We had the opportunity to visit Logan Airport with Wings for Autism on November 2nd, where our students experienced the process of going through the ticket counter, security, boarding, and disembarking! A special thank you to Mrs. Littlejohn for her assistance.

Our annual Costume Party and dance at the residence and trick-or-treating in the community allowed our students to dress up, dance, and interact with others. With the help of the Speech and Language team, our students used communication devices to express themselves!

The littlest firefighters had a great time visiting the Randolph Fire Department, learning about fire safety, and exploring the equipment.

We've also focused on parent training by bringing parents into the residence or conducting training during field trips. Our students continue to enjoy swimming, art classes, music lessons, and cooking dinners once a week.

We are committed to living life to the fullest, giving back to our community, and accomplishing our school's mission. Our roots continue to run deep, and we are excited for the adventures that lie ahead.



Community Partners

Higashi Food Pantry

The Higashi Food Pantry's outreach is expanding significantly, thanks to a growing collaboration with CAEP, Emergence, and Older High School. This has enabled us to build partnerships with organizations such as Weymouth Food Pantry, Friendly Food Pantry in Randolph, Quincy Community Action Program (QCAP), Rockland Senior Center, and the Simon C. Fireman Community in Randolph. Additionally, we're partnering with the South Shore Food Pantry to deliver 30 Thanksgiving meals to homebound individuals. The chance for our students and alumni to make a difference in the lives of others is a truly remarkable development. We're deeply grateful for your continued support, and we encourage you to donate to the Pantry – your contributions are vital to our success!



Higashi Dads Group

Around 20 dads gathered at Trillium Brewery in Canton on the evening of Thursday, November 14th. Over beers, they engaged in lively discussions about how fathers can actively support the school's mission. Following a brief meeting to explore potential projects at the school, the dads enjoyed a social atmosphere, sharing stories and laughter while strengthening their connection to both the school and each other. The event was a success, with everyone anticipating the next gathering and opportunities for hands-on involvement at the school. If you missed this one, keep an eye out for announcements about future events!

Quirk Automotive

The Boston Higashi School is thrilled to announce a generous donation from Mr. Daniel Quirk, owner of the Quirk Auto Group. Mr. Quirk has donated a 2024 - 12 Passenger Ford Transit 350 Van to support the newly established Higashi Food Pantry Program.

This act of generosity further strengthens the relationship between Mr. Quirk and the Boston Higashi School. Since 2018, Mr. Quirk has been a valued supporter, providing invaluable training opportunities for students in our Emergence Program at his parts distribution center in Quincy, MA.

The Boston Higashi School extends its deepest gratitude to Mr. Quirk for his continued support and commitment to our community.



10th Annual Gala

Classrooms to Careers





A Heartfelt Thank You

We extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of this year's Gala. Your support enabled us to raise over \$300,000, funding crucial vocational and educational opportunities for our students.

The event was a resounding triumph, drawing a crowd of over 300 enthusiastic supporters, including families, friends, staff, and generous corporate and business donors. The energy was palpable as we celebrated the heart of Higashi through captivating videos, a mesmerizing performance by the Jazz Band, and a spellbinding solo keyboard performance by student Thomas Bernard. His rendition of Prelude No. 1 and Vals Poetic left the audience breathless.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Higashi Unsung Hero Award to Hideyuki Nishizawa, Director of Recreation and Leisure Development, by State Senator Walter F. Timilty. The standing ovation that followed was a testament to Mr. Nishizawa's invaluable contributions.

We are eternally grateful to our talented emcees, Brittany Johnson, Investigative Reporter for WCVB5, and Kyle Brooks, a gifted Older High School student. Their engaging personalities and captivating presence elevated the event to new heights.

A special thank you to Steven South, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 25, for his inspiring speech and incredibly generous donation. The unwavering support of the Teamsters is truly unparalleled.

Thank you once again for your continued dedication to our mission.



Sports Day 2024



Sports Day was an absolute triumph! Thanks to months of dedicated training and the unwavering support of their families and our amazing staff, our students truly outdid themselves. As the first major event of this school year, Sports Day was a wonderful opportunity for students to connect with their parents and loved ones. The atmosphere was electric, with parents, siblings, and even staff members stepping in to support students whose families couldn't attend. It was truly heartwarming

to witness such a strong sense of community.

The competition itself was nothing short of spectacular. Teams Green and Yellow battled fiercely, remaining neck-and-neck until the very last event. The final result? An exhilarating tie, with both teams emerging as victorious champions! The level of sportsmanship and camaraderie on display was truly inspiring. We're already counting down the days until next year's Sports Day!





Annual Road Race

The Annual Higashi Road Race, despite the uncooperative weather, turned out to be a resounding success. Our students, with an unmatched determination and resilience, stepped out to conquer the races, showcasing their remarkable progress since the start of the school year. Despite the persistent downpour, their spirits remained high, fueled by the unwavering support from the families in attendance.

The races kicked off with resounding cheers from the crowd, the energy palpable as our students lined up at the starting line. As the starting whistle blew, they bolted off, their eagerness evident in their every stride. The rain, far from being a deterrent, seemed to invigorate them, adding an element of challenge and excitement to their endeavor.

As they crossed the finish line, their faces beamed with pride, their hearts filled with accomplishment. The applause of the crowd echoed around them, proof of their perseverance and remarkable achievements. The rain, which had once challenged them, now seemed to applaud their resilience, adding a touch of drama and triumph to the day. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all those who came out to support our amazing athletes, their presence of support and encouragement is what makes Higashi a truly special place.



Fall Festivities

This Fall has been a whirlwind of fun and excitement for our students, with a calendar packed with activities that make it hard to believe we've fit it all in! One of our most beloved weeks is when the entire school community embraces the spooky spirit, transforming our campus into a hub of spirited festivities.

Our week kicks off with an electrifying evening dance party, where students unleash their creativity in their favorite costumes. Older students gather in the gym for an unforgettable night of dancing, while younger ones join the fun in Marble Hall, where they sing, dance, and play spooky-themed games. The night culminates in a Trunk or Treat event, organized and hosted by our dedicated parent volunteers.

Later in the week, the younger students headed outside to showcase their spirit in a festive costume parade. After two spirited laps around the track in front of their cheering families, everyone gathers for a thrilling adventure through our Haunted Nature Trail. Emerging from the woods, students are greeted by another group of enthusiastic parent volunteers, who have transformed the area into a wonderland with spooky decorations and an abundance of candy!





BOSTON HIGASHI SCHOOL
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Upcoming Events

Events

12.7 **SIBLING DAY**

9:30am - 12pm

12.11 **WINTER PARTY**

6:30pm - 7:30pm

12.20 **WINTER MUSIC FESTIVAL**

10am - 12pm

12.23 **WINTER VACATION**

Dec 23rd - Jan 1st



Thanksgiving at Higashi

Thanksgiving is a special time of year, and at Higashi, it's no different. With many of our students living in the Residential Program, our dedicated kitchen staff goes above and beyond to make them feel loved and cared for on this holiday.

This year, we returned to our tradition of hosting one large gathering for a big, delicious meal. Over 13 families joined our students, creating a heartwarming atmosphere. It's one of the most anticipated meals of the year, thanks to our talented kitchen staff.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our staff for their hard work and dedication. They truly make Higashi a home away from home for our students, especially on holidays like Thanksgiving.