

Higashi Highlights



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800 North Main Street
Randolph, MA

*Helping children with autism
exceed expectations since 1987*



www.bostonhigashi.org

Executive Director's Perspective



Michael Kelly

Highlights

FEATURES

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Where does the time go? It has been incredibly busy here at the Boston Higashi School this Fall. Our School continues to do well. Our enrollment continues to increase, we are well staffed and we started off the school year with great enthusiasm.

Our special events, Sports Day and the Higashi Road Race, were amazing and well attended. In addition, for the Halloween festivities the school was brilliantly decorated and the students and staff had some very creative, and scary costumes and scenery.

We congratulate our students and staff for exceeding expectations once again. We thank all of the family members and friends who came to support and cheer our students.

Our 11th Annual GALA was our most successful ever. The funds raised will go towards building a brand-new playground to replace the Albert Hung Playground built 25 years ago. The Hung Family kicked off our fundraising efforts with a generous donation earlier this year and we had a truly wonderful response from our donors at the GALA, which will make the building of the playground a reality. We anticipate construction will commence in the springtime. We thank all of our generous donors and participants and as well as Paul Fanning, our Chief Development Officer, who does incredible work to make the GALA the very special event that it is every year.

Our Higashi Community Adult Program continues to grow stronger and we are adding staff and alumni on a regular basis. Of special note during this season of giving, the Food Pantry component of the program is out five days a week delivering food to homebound individuals. We are partnering with Food Pantries in the surrounding areas including Randolph, Quincy, Weymouth, Hanover, and Avon to ensure that those peoples needs are fulfilled. We all know there was an even greater need this Fall with the Government shutdown. We can all take pride in our alumni, students and their job coaches that they are contributing to their community in such a positive way.

On another note, our great ambassador and Board Member, Dr. Stephen Shore, is in India for a visit at the Higashi Autism School New Delhi from November 17th to the 23rd. This is Dr. Shore's second visit to the school. Dr. Shore speaks at autism conferences around the world and is a professor for Adelphi University. He also operates and teaches in our on-campus Autism Certificate Program here in Randolph.

Please enjoy the articles in this edition of the Fall Higashi Newsletter. I think the articles highlight that our staff are tremendously committed and dedicated to our students and mission.

On a more personal note, Dr. John Maina is out on a Medical Leave and we all wish him the very best.

I wish the entire Higashi Community a safe and healthy holiday season filled with joy and special memories.

Back to School

The Fall semester is off to an energetic start! We began the new school year by welcoming eight new students to the Higashi community. Integrating a class of this size kept our halls buzzing for the first few weeks, but both our incoming and returning students quickly mastered their schedules, establishing productive new routines.

We are already seeing remarkable academic achievements driven by a collective enthusiasm in every classroom. Our guiding principle for the year is the Japanese theme 'Mainichi kotsukotsu,' meaning "A little each day." This powerful concept is being actively used by staff to build the structure, environment, and foundational skills necessary for student success. Already, this focused approach is working: we are witnessing extraordinary progress, together, day by day.

Beyond the classroom, our students are vibrant and happy, demonstrating wonderful engagement as they prepared for two major upcoming school traditions. The halls were filled with anticipation as preparations ramped up for Sports Day and the annual Road Race. Students worked together, cheering each other on, and actively enjoyed all rehearsal days!



Jazz Band

Our Jazz Band has had a busy fall season already, highlighted by performances at our Annual Gala and a memorable appearance in November at the Edward Kennedy Institute (EKI). At the EKI, we were privileged to play before a large audience as part of the celebration marking the MAAPS 50th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—a truly significant milestone. The band opened the program by performing the National Anthem and then welcomed guests in the lobby with music as the event ended.





Residence

The holiday season is here, and while the pace is fast, we are pausing to reflect on a wonderful year of progress at the Residence as 2025 closes. We have much to be proud of!

September saw students and staff settling into a productive rhythm, welcoming 12 new teachers to the Residence and transitioning 8 others to new roles at the school. This intense period of learning included new culinary arts skills and therapeutic community outings like apple picking.

October was a time for celebration! We hosted our third successful year of outdoor movie nights for parents, enjoyed local pumpkin picking, and held our well-attended annual Open House and Costume Party Dance, which was a huge hit for both students and staff. The month ended with our Middle School students successfully going Trick-or-Treating in Holbrook, going door to door with their voices, visuals and talkers to say those three magical words to get something sweet, "Trick or Treat".

November brought annual traditions like trips to Plymouth Plantation and Ryan's Arcade. Most importantly, our residential students demonstrated the core of our mission by going out into the community to collect non-perishable food for our food pantry—growing, receiving, and giving back.

As the year rapidly winds down, we encourage everyone to take time to slow down and appreciate the progress and community we share. Our students, staff, and families have worked incredibly hard.

Wishing all of you a happy and healthy Holiday season!

Love,

The Boston Higashi School Residence

Community Partners

A Blossoming Partnership

The Boston Higashi School has found a wonderful new partner in the Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation, thanks to an introduction this past March by Bob Sweeney, Executive Director of the Boston Bruins Charitable Foundation. Little did we know how quickly this connection would blossom, making the Boston Higashi School the proud beneficiary of Ocean State's incredible kindness and generosity.

In just over eight months, the OSJL, led by Executive Director David Sarlitto, has made a profound impact through the following generous donations:

- **Programmatic Equipment:** 20 brand new bicycles, plus \$2,500 worth of farm equipment and supplies to enhance our vocational programs.
- **Essential Supplies:** Critical donations for maintaining our facilities, including two pallets of chlorine and \$2,500 in pool supplies.
- **Student and Family Support:** 100 backpacks, countless seeds and Amaryllis bulbs for horticulture projects, and \$500 in gift cards to support families in need.

We are profoundly grateful for our new friends at Ocean State Job Lot. The sheer volume and variety of these gifts have significantly enriched our students' daily lives, therapeutic programs, and school resources.

As the holidays approach, our partnership with David Sarlitto is continuing to grow, and we are currently working together on a major toy project that will bring extra cheer to our community.

Thank you, Ocean State Jobbers Charitable Foundation, for your incredible friendship and all you do for the Boston Higashi School!



Iron Workers

We want to send a massive thank you to the Retired Local #7 Ironworkers for hosting their annual Golf Tournament at Presidents Golf Club in Quincy on September 10th.

This year's event marked a spectacular milestone, raising an impressive \$12,000! This total represents the largest single-event donation in the tournament's 11-year history.

Since 2014, the Retired Ironworkers have demonstrated unwavering dedication to the Boston Higashi School, thanks to the tremendous leadership of Jim Lawlor, grandfather of former Higashi student Austin Linnehan. Jim and his crew's commitment has been vital to our community for over a decade.

During a special check presentation ceremony at the Local #7 hall in Dorchester, Jim Lawlor and his team reaffirmed their long-term dedication and support to the school.

We are incredibly grateful for the Retired Local #7 Ironworkers and their continued support of our students and mission!

11th Annual Gala

Classrooms to Careers



Annual Gala Smashes Fundraising Record

This year's 11th Annual Gala, themed "Time to Play," was far and away the most successful event in the school's history, raising an incredible amount over \$520,000 to fund the construction of a new state-of-the-art playground. With over 300 sponsors, families, and staff in attendance, the energy for the evening was palpable, and the event, emceed by WBZ TV Award Winning reporter Logan Hall, was packed with highlights.

The night was beautifully kicked off by the always amazing performance of the Higashi Jazz Band, led by Director Yoshino Stanbrook, whose 20-minute set created a festive and celebratory mood that lasted all evening. Following the band, fellow member Thomas Bernard ushered the audience into dinner with a jaw-dropping piano performance.

A true highlight was Elementary School student Xavion—all four feet of him, standing on a milk crate—who co-emceed with Logan, once again displaying the poise and confidence of a young man well beyond his years; his enduring smile and laughter captivated the room and demonstrated the remarkable work of our staff.

Special awards were presented to parent Christine Walker (Higashi Community Hero Award) and teacher Ai Shiino (Higashi Unsung Hero Award), both of whom delivered inspiring and heartfelt words that resonated with all in attendance.

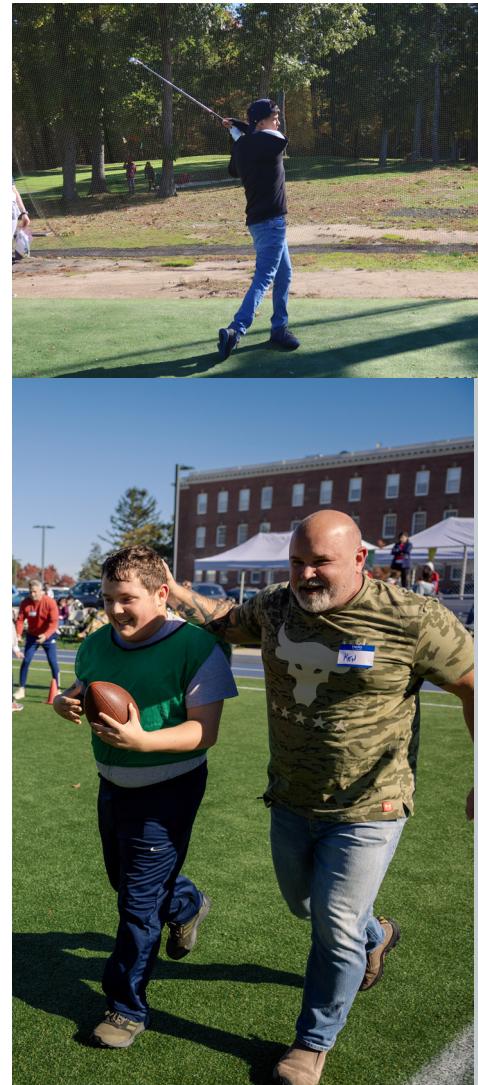
Video presentations by parents Brooke Odiete, Ashley Wilson, and Eric Leeds reinforced the importance of our mission, while staff members Ai Shiino, Alex Conley, and Sarah McGlory highlighted Daily Life Therapy® and the significance of play.

Last but not least, a huge thanks must go to our three monumental \$100,000 donors: the Teamsters Local 25, the Boston Bruins Charitable Foundation, and Higashi parents Jeff and Jane Crouth. Their combined generosity and support will serve to brighten the lives of our current students and the many who will be with us for years to come.

Heartfelt thanks go to everyone who participated; beyond raising record-breaking dollars, it is always most important that we are able to tell our story and inspire all our participants.



Sports Day 2025



What an incredible run of major school events! We recently celebrated two signature fall traditions—the dynamic Sports Day and the competitive Emergence Program Annual Golf Tournament—both showcasing the energy and talent of the Higashi community.

Sports Day: A Burst of Color & Team Spirit

Our first big school event of the year, Sports Day, was a huge success thanks to the incredible Higashi Family! We couldn't have asked for a more perfect fall morning as families gathered, ready

to cheer on their child. With everyone dressed in bright, vibrant colors, the team spirit was electric and contagious. The competition was fierce, with students giving their absolute best to show off the physical and social skills they've been learning and practicing. The incredible turnout and enthusiasm have us all excited for the events yet to come!

Emergence Program: Taking Skills to the Green

The energy continued with the Emergence Program officially on the clock! Our oldest students kicked off their year with their signature event,

the Annual Golf Tournament. This isn't just a friendly round; it's a true test as our EP students take their skills out of the school and into the community. Drawing on lessons from their younger years, they participated in a safe, fun, and intensely competitive showdown on the green. Every team fiercely pursued the win, resulting in a morning filled with thrilling shots and high-stakes fun. In a tournament to remember, the EP students not only showcased their golf talent but also their incredible energy and outstanding readiness to engage with the world around them!



Annual Road Race

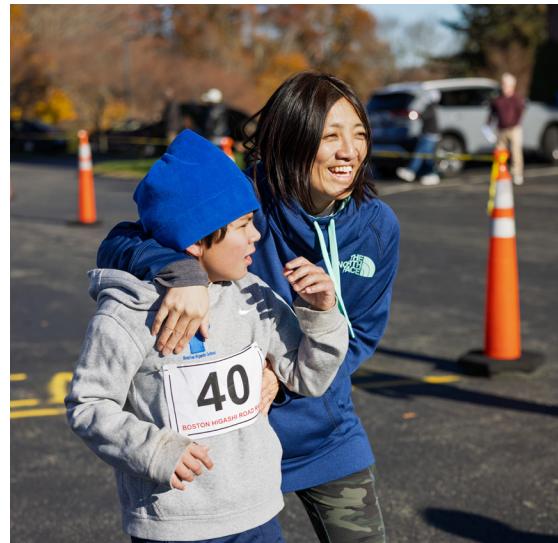
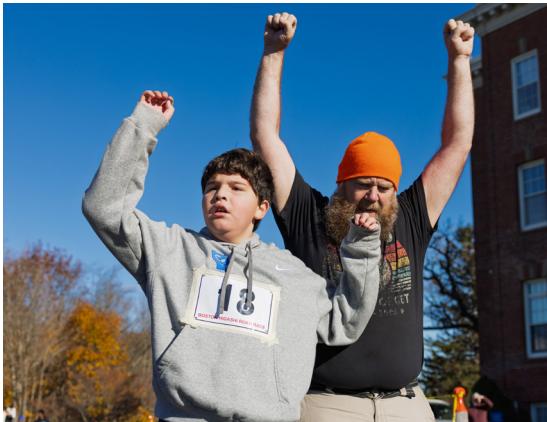


Every morning at Higashi, our students jog to help regulate themselves and prepare their minds and bodies for a day of learning. In November, they had the exciting opportunity to showcase all that dedication and practice in front of family and friends during our Annual Road Race.



The Higashi Campus came alive on that cold November morning as students, fueled by fierce determination, lined up to demonstrate their hard work. Bursting with inspiration, each student pushed their limits, displaying incredible heart and grit as they ran. The cheers of family and friends lined the route, celebrating every single finish line crosser—from the newest runners to our returning champions who proudly stepped onto the podium.

A massive thank you to all the families who filled the campus! Your unwavering support and presence are the essential ingredient that transforms our daily rehearsals into a truly unforgettable, high-energy community event.



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



12.6 **SIBLING DAY**

9:30am - 12pm

12.17 **WINTER PARTY**

6:30pm - 7:30pm

12.23 **WINTER MUSIC FESTIVAL**

10am - 12pm

12.24 **WINTER VACATION**

Dec 24 - Jan 2



Food Pantry Updates

As the holidays approach, our thoughts turn to our community members and families. Unfortunately, for many of our neighbors, the holiday season brings stress as they struggle to put a simple meal together.

To help ease food insecurity among our neighbors, our Higashi Food Pantry helps to deliver food in 6 surrounding towns and to approximately 120 individuals and families a month.

We are reaching out to our Higashi families to help us restock our shelves. Your generous contributions can truly make a significant impact for those families in need.

- Pasta
- Canned tuna
- Cereal/Oatmeal
- Cans of soup
- Cans of beans
- Jelly
- Can of fruit
- Cooking oil
- bags/boxes of rice
- peanut butter jars
- Cans of vegetables
- Pasta sauce
- Rolls of paper towels
- Rolls of toilet paper

We kindly ask you to consider dropping off your donations with the day or residential receptionist. If you are unable to deliver donations in person, please think about purchasing from our wishlists so that the items can be shipped directly to the school.



← Amazon Wishlist

Walmart Wishlist →

