

Summer 2026

Higashi Highlights



www.bostonhigashi.org

*Helping children with autism
exceed expectations since 1987*

(781) 961-0800

Executive Director's Perspective



Mike Kelly

Celebrations, Connections, and New Beginnings

At the Boston Higashi School the summer season is a time of year filled with many special events and activities for students, staff and families and a time to come together in celebration.

On June 11th our graduation ceremony was held for the 12 graduates in the Class of 2026. It was wonderful to celebrate with our students and their families all the accomplishments and significant growth of this fine group of students on a beautiful sunny day. After the ceremony everyone enjoyed a catered luncheon and many parents shared personal reflections that were very moving for everyone in attendance.

We wish each of our graduates continued growth and success as they enter the adult world. Of course, we encourage all of our graduates and alumni to stay connected with Higashi and their fellow alumni by joining the Boston Higashi School Continuing Adult Education Program.

Our International Festival, held on Saturday, July 25th, marked not only the culmination of events for the school year, but also showcased the cultural diversity of the Boston Higashi School. As a highlight of this event, we always begin with a "Mikoshi Parade," (reminiscent of our former Bon Dance Festival), signifying the school's Japanese roots, where students and staff wore yukatas and chanted "Wasshoi." We were honored to have each of the student's divisions play a role in the parade. This was followed by other cultural displays and dances that take note all of the countries represented at Higashi. Afterwards, students and their families enjoyed a picnic lunch with their divisions.

By now I hope you heard that we welcomed our new Principal of the Boston Higashi School on July 15th. Mr. Aaron (Ari) King joins us with extensive educational experience having just completed three years in his role as Assistant Principal at Medway Public Schools, three years as Special Education Department Head at Northeast Metropolitan Vocational Technical High School, two years as Assistant Principal in Stoughton and 17 years as a Special Education classroom teacher at Framingham Public Schools and Dearborn Academy. He holds Masters Degrees in Education and Organizational Management, Special Education and Teaching. He has also served as a Track and Field Coach for 17 years, which seems particularly appropriate for our school. Please join me in giving Ari a warm welcome. Ari has made a smooth transition into his new role as you will see.

Highlights

FEATURES

- 4. **RESIDENTIAL NEWS**
- 6-7. **INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**
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- 10. **VACATION PROGRAM**

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Sibling Day was held on August 7th with 45 siblings in attendance! For the first time we brought in a Dunk Tank as one of the fun activities and our new Principal, Ari King, showed his sportsmanship and took his place on the Dunk Tank Seat. Good job Ari! Of course, I am sorry that, due to a family commitment, I could not be there that day to share being a Dunk Tank Target.

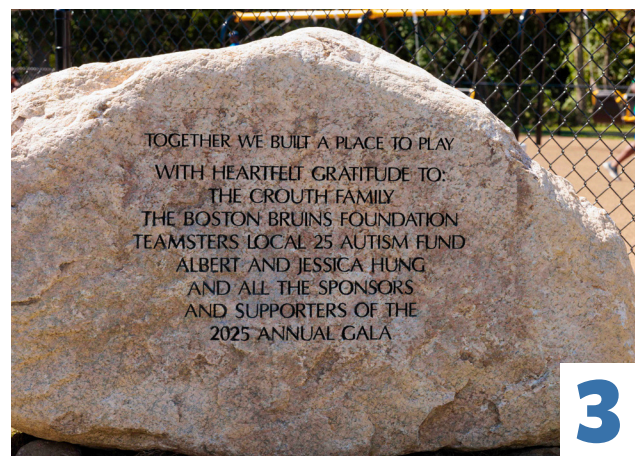
Another successful event that day was the Annual Emergence Division Bike Race. Again, our new Principal, joined in for a lap around the Holbrook campus! The event ended with a BBQ luncheon for all participants and their families.

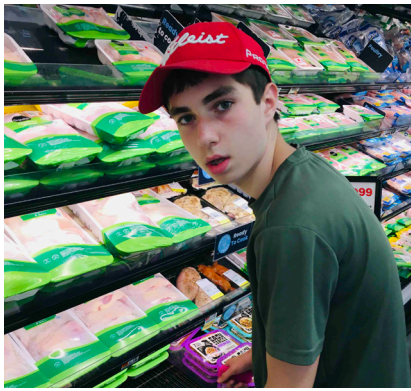
Summertime also lends itself to not one but two Vacation Program sessions, with many amazing activities going on around campus and field trips into the community. Students enjoyed swimming, going to the beach, music, art and cooking classes, among many other activities.

As we countdown the remaining days of the 2025-26 school year, I hope that students and their families will take the time to reflect upon their achievements this year, spend time with family, and get to relax and enjoy their brief summer break. To our families, thank you for partnering with us throughout the school year.

Finally, to our staff, we are forever grateful for the commitment and dedication continuously shown this year and every year. We are blessed to have so many wonderful people work for the Boston Higashi School.

May you all enjoy a restful, joyful and safe summer break.





Where Courage Feels Like Home

Home is not just a physical address or a set of four walls—it is a feeling of safety, belonging, and unconditional support. Across the Boston Higashi School Residential Divisions, we are profoundly proud to call ourselves the Home of the Brave. Here, “home” is constructed day by day through shared experiences, gentle encouragement, and an unwavering belief in every student’s potential.

Looking back, this year has been defined by countless unforgettable moments of extraordinary courage, personal growth, boundless laughter, and genuine affection. Our incredible students have stepped outside their comfort zones time and again, taking on new challenges with determination, uplifting their peers, and continually showing us just how much they are capable of achieving when given the space to shine.

Every daily routine and new activity serves as a vital stepping stone toward independence and self-expression. Whether gathering in the kitchen to prepare meals during culinary arts, building physical confidence in the pool, creating expressive artwork, or discovering new pathways of self-expression in music and communication classes, every setting becomes a catalyst for discovery. Our students have worked diligently on mastering practical vocational tasks and essential daily living routines, taking genuine pride in fundamental skills like folding laundry and managing personal spaces. Beyond our residential walls, field trips to local parks, museums, bowling alleys, and golf courses offer rich, real-world opportunities to practice social independence, navigate new environments, and build lifelong friendships.

Our students remind us each day that true bravery isn’t about the absence of challenges or frustration. It means showing up with a willing heart, finding the grit to try again after a setback, enthusiastically celebrating every single victory—no matter how small—and holding an unshakeable belief in one another’s abilities.

The photos in these pages capture far more than structured schedules or daily routines; they capture a living, breathing family that laughs, learns, celebrates, and grows together. We are immensely proud of every single student, whose resilience, kindness, and quiet determination continue to inspire our staff, families, and community every single day. They are the true heart of our residential divisions, turning our residences into a genuine home and reminding us that the bravest, most rewarding journeys are always the ones we walk together.

Emergence Program Bike Race

Over in Holbrook, our parking lot transformed into an exciting racecourse for the annual Emergence Program Bike Race! This event is always a community favorite, with families gathering to cheer on students as they zipped around the track for class glory. Of course, the festivities wouldn't be complete without our fiercely competitive staff and parent races—where, for the first time ever, our veteran staff claimed ultimate victory over the “young whippersnappers!”

We capped off the fun with a delicious family cookout. A huge shoutout to Lucy, Peter, and Tommy for braving the heat at the grills, and a cool thank-you to J.P. Licks for the sweet ice cream treat!



International Festival

Celebrating Culture, Community,
and Student Voices





Our 2nd Annual International Festival was a vibrant celebration filled with bright colors, joyful music, and laughter across campus. It was a wonderful day dedicated to honoring the unique cultures and backgrounds that make our school community so special.

Highlights of the Day

Cultural Exploration: Interactive booths showcased countries from around the world, giving attendees a chance to play traditional games and learn about different cultures.

The Mikoshi Parade & Dancing: The festivities kicked off with the fan-favorite Japanese Mikoshi Parade. Students looked fantastic in traditional Yukata, following up the procession with traditional Japanese dancing.

Fun & Festivities: Families enjoyed classic festival treats—popcorn, cotton candy, and snow cones—along with face painting and a fan-making craft hosted by our Art teachers.

Touch-a-Truck: A special thank you to the Randolph Fire and Police Departments for bringing emergency vehicles to campus for our Touch-a-Truck activity!

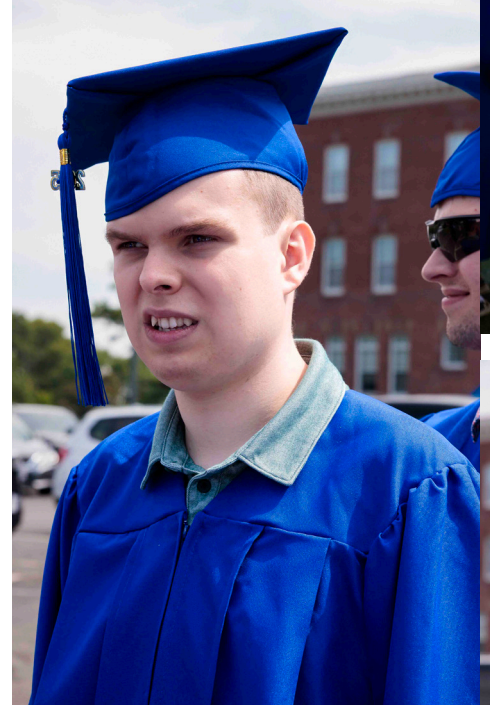
Music & Movement: Everyone got moving with a Salsa lesson led by our music teacher, Alex, followed by a wonderful live musical performance by Paulo Teixeira.

Spotlight: Student Voices

The highlight of the event was undoubtedly our Student Voices stage. Students bravely took the microphone—using their spoken voices and AAC devices—to share what makes them unique. They spoke proudly about their family heritage, favorite foods, and traditions. Seeing our students share their stories with such confidence was the perfect end to a unforgettable day.

Thank you to all of our incredible volunteers, staff, and families who made this event such a success!

Graduation

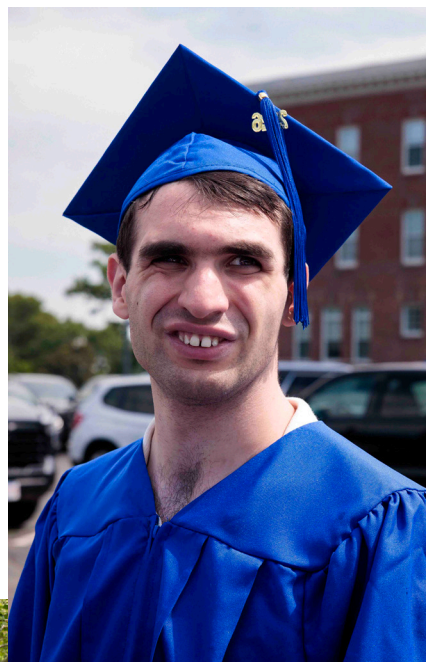


Another year, another phenomenal group of Boston Higashi School graduates! The Class of 2026 has officially crossed the stage, marking a deeply meaningful milestone defined by perseverance, inspiration, and shared joy. Throughout their time with us, these extraordinary students have paved new paths, conquered challenges, and left an inspiring legacy for future generations. We could not be more proud of who they are and who they are becoming.

A milestone like graduation is never a solo achievement; it is a collective triumph. Deepest gratitude goes to the families, friends, teachers, and peers who have supported, guided, and loved our graduates throughout their journey. In working so hard to prepare for this new beginning, each graduate has profoundly touched the lives of everyone in our school community.

Armed with confidence, curiosity, and the wisdom gained from conquering past challenges, our graduates are ready to step fearlessly into the world. As they set off to try new things, embrace new places, and touch the hearts of others, our support for them remains steadfast.

Congratulations to the Class of 2026—you did it!





Stars & Stripes

Our first vacation program of the season was an absolute blast! The Stars & Stripes program officially kicked off summer in the best way possible—packed with sunshine, big smiles, and non-stop action.

We made sure everyone stayed cool and energized all week long with plenty of water play both in and out of the pools. The ultimate highlight of the week was our giant water slide, which was a massive hit with everyone looking to make a splash!

When campers weren't cooling off, the backyard was buzzing with activity. We had a wide variety of yard games set up for friendly outdoor competition, and with World Cup fever in full swing, the soccer nets were constantly packed with energetic players showing off their best moves.

We were also thrilled to welcome several new Activity Leaders to camp this session, bringing fresh energy and exciting new approaches to our music and communication lessons.

There was nothing quite like seeing everyone outside, soaking up the beautiful weather, and singing along to songs together. On top of that, our communication lessons were thoughtfully broken down over the course of the program, giving students the chance to dive into fresh, engaging concepts every single day.

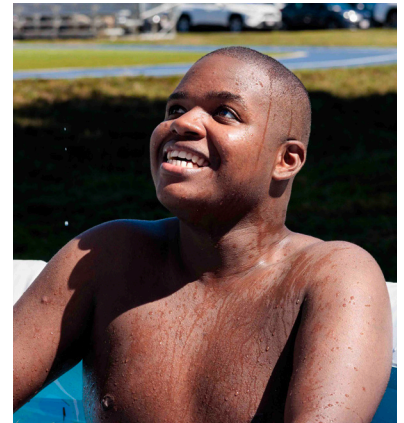


Summer Sizzler

Our Summer Sizzler program wrapped up the season with an unforgettable lineup of activities! Students made the most of the warm weather on our brand-new playground and cooled off with campus-wide water play, including the crowd-pleasing water slide on the front hill. Over at the campus farm, students explored the flourishing summer garden and harvested fresh crops.

Classrooms were just as lively. Communication classes turned up the energy with games like “Granny Pants,” where students tossed balls into oversized pants worn by their favorite teachers—a hilarious new favorite. Carrying that spirited energy forward, students in our Emergence Program Division faced off in a friendly charcuterie board competition. Teams of students and staff collaborated on creative, delicious presentations before enjoying their tasty creations together.

Summer may be winding down, but we’re wrapping it up with fantastic memories and plenty of smiles!





BOSTON HIGASHI SCHOOL
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Upcoming Events

Events

9.3 **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

10.15 **ANNUAL GALA**

6pm - 9pm

10.17 **SPORTS DAY**

8:30am - 12pm

10.28 **COSTUME DANCE PARTY**

10.30 **SCHOOL COSTUME PARTY**



12th Annual Gala

CELEBRATING OUR DIFFERENCES

Diversity is at the heart of the Boston Higashi School. With staff and students hailing from over 20 countries, our community's greatest strength lies in the rich tapestry of our background and experiences. We are united by the vision of our founder, Dr. Kiyo Kitahara, and our shared commitment to her revolutionary methodology, Daily Life Therapy®—a truly singular educational approach.

By embracing diverse cultures, we foster an environment overflowing with fresh ideas, profound compassion, and boundless respect. This creates a caring atmosphere that radiates directly to our students—embodying the true spirit of “Heart to Heart” education.

Join us at this year's Gala to hear inspiring, firsthand stories from our staff and families about the real-world impact of our mission. Come break bread, share a toast, and celebrate the extraordinary community we've built together. It is time to celebrate!



Buy Tickets Today!