



# Douglas Digest

News of the C.T. Douglas School

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## Honestly

“Your drawing is the worst in this collection.”

This is true—a parent said this to a child, and the drawing was the worst!

I wondered, “Should we always be honest with children?” They will find out the truth one day. When they do, do we want them to wonder why we didn’t tell them? Why did we lie or mislead them? Why should we tell children that something is good when it obviously is not?

Truth is certainly not a standard for everything. We mislead our children all of the time. What about the truths that we don’t tell around holidays? Parents know what I’m talking about...yes...I’m going to say it...you may not want your child to read this...What about the key chain or clay sculpture that you just don’t know what to do with!

Is it okay to mislead our children into believing that these gifts are our favorite thing ever? And, by doing so, do we ruin our children for life? Should we say, “Wow, this sculpture doesn’t look anything like a duck, try harder next time.” Will our child then spend hours perfecting a duck sculpture, searching out the best sculpting mentors, comparing their techniques to others in their class, asking classmates, “How did you carve that wing in such a graceful arch?” Or, will they avoid sculpting and define themselves as a non-sculptor? The answer probably lies somewhere in the middle—somewhere around sadness.

If you have older children, isn’t it interesting when they discover these childhood gifts? “You kept that?” “I can’t believe I gave you that piece of junk.” Their perceptions change, they learn to do better, their skills improve as their bodies mature—and it probably has nothing to do with the false praise that we might have given them. In fact, that praise probably kept them going, kept them making key chains, or sculptures, or writing poetry, improving their skills a little bit, probably at random, and being willing to show us what they’ve tried each time. When they discover that we’ve accepted their poor products, they don’t question all that we ever told them. They don’t question whether we honestly love them, and they don’t question their current skills. They see that they’ve improved and might be touched by our sentimentality. Their growth has nothing to do with us. They would grow and improve to some point with or without brutally honest feedback.

The best answer lies in setting a good example. Do we want our child to say to their classmate, “Your drawing is the worst in the class!” Of course we don’t—so we shouldn’t say it to our children. They will speak with others the way that we speak with them. If we want our children to improve we should be honest. “I like the eyes on your duck. They really look like duck eyes. Thank you for making that. If you make another one, I notice that this one doesn’t have a beak, maybe you could make one of those.” You may or may not get another duck, there may or may not be any immediate improvement, but everyone would feel better at the end.

Honestly.

*C. Whitbeck*

## **May PTO News**

I think that we can safely say spring is officially here, and Douglas looks better than ever! The Douglas gardens are flourishing thanks to our Gardening Committee led by Phoebe Conant and Lisa Munson. There were lots of volunteers to help clean up the gardens! Parents, students, and pets had a great time making it look beautiful! Not only is the outside looking spring-like, but the inside is sparkling thanks to our wonderful custodians, John Pacelli and Tuey Guarnieri. We thank you all for your continued effort and dedication in helping to make Douglas a cheerful place for our children to learn and play.

On April 29, over 20 seniors from the high school, some of them Douglas alumni, helped out around Douglas during **Community Service Day**. Once again, with many hands to make work light, they spread a lot of mulch, spruced up our lobby and completed several small projects for our teachers. Thank you to those students for their help, providing a wonderful example of volunteerism and showing how students can make a difference in our community!

Congratulations to all of the Douglas students for meeting their individual, grade-wide and school-wide reading challenge goals as they “Read their Way to Africa” in the **March reading challenge**. Dr. Whitbeck faced his own personal challenge once again, by looking two snakes and an alligator in the face! Dr. Whitbeck held a small snake and then held a python, who started to greet him with a hug! He ended the event holding a Florida alligator. The students were excited and entertained by both human and reptile! We are especially proud to announce that because of the generosity of the Douglas families, the Reading Challenge raised almost \$800 for Free the Children. Thank you to Sue Stewart, Sasha DeMello, Stacey Smith, and Lee-Ann Layton for coordinating this wonderful event.

Thanks to Kathy McCullen for organizing a **Douglas Playdate** on April 28. All Douglas families from K–6 were invited! Fun was had by all!

The **Festival of Cultures** event is almost here! Come enjoy a trip around the world with your children on Saturday, May 14 from 5:30–8:30 PM at the junior high school. This event is growing each year in popularity! There are even more ambassadors and performers than ever before who will be sharing their heritage with you. We are looking forward to an evening of mouthwatering food, outstanding entertainment, and informative and interactive displays by our ambassadors. Thank you to Maria Albarran and her committee for organizing an event that highlights the Douglas motto of diversity, inquiry, growth, and caring. There are still some volunteer opportunities. Please contact Maria at rivero\_albarran@yahoo.com or 978-263-6807 if you would like to help this year.

We are looking forward to our **Teacher’s Appreciation Luncheon** coordinated by Erica Cannarozzi and Candace Doncaster. This is a great opportunity for parents to be able to thank our wonderful, hardworking Douglas staff. Please look for future information regarding the need for volunteers.

The **Memorial Day Celebration** is scheduled for Friday, May 27. This is a special occasion featuring a guest speaker, the music of the Douglas School Band, and the audience singing along with Mr. Broggi. Thank you to Mr. Broggi for coordinating this event.

**Douglas Day** is scheduled for Monday, June 6 (rain date June 8). Douglas Day is a great day of fun and games for the kids. If you would like to help out this year, please contact Erika Cormier at erika.cormier@comcast.net.

We would also like to thank again Anya Fillion, Naomi Martin, and their amazing committee for organizing another fun and successful **Spring Social and Auction**. After the delicious dinner, socializing, and exciting auctions, the Acton Music Project (formerly the Douglas All-Star Band) helped us dance the night away. What a great way to raise money for our students while providing a lovely venue for socializing among the parents!

Finally, our next **General PTO Meeting** will be held on Tuesday, May 10, 7:30 PM, at Douglas. At this meeting, the Board nominations will be voted on, and the Budget will be presented for the 2011–2012 school year. Our final PTO General Meeting will be Tuesday, June 7, 7:30 PM, when we will vote in the 2011–2012 budget and welcome the new board members to the PTO board. Please join us!

*Kristan Smith-Park, ksmith068@gmail.com,  
Deanne O’Sullivan, deannewos@gmail.com  
2010–2011 PTO Co-Chairs*

## ***Douglas Around the World—Festival of Cultures***

Join us on Saturday, May 14, 5:30–8:30 PM at the R.J. Grey Junior High School for a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our rich ethnic and cultural backgrounds, socialize with friends and meet new ones, learn about various cultures and watch our talented children perform.

Some highlights of the evening:

- ◆ Obtain a world map, travel to various countries, get your map stamped, and answer trivia questions.
- ◆ Visit all countries and win a prize!
- ◆ Visit activity tables representing Argentina, China, El Salvador, England, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Korea, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Russia. Ambassadors will share the culture and history of their countries with you.
- ◆ Savor our “International Potluck Meal” (5:30–6:45) in the cafeteria. We will serve an array of mouth-watering foods contributed by attending families as well as local merchants.
- ◆ Enjoy a multi-cultural show (7:15–8:30) featuring dances and music from around the world performed by students from Conant and Douglas and friends.
- ◆ Douglas’s Japanese classes and a choral group led by Mr. Broggi and Dr. Whitbeck will perform. We have a rich and full night of performances!



In an effort to defray some of the costs of running this event, a small entry fee of \$3 per person or \$10 per family will be charged at the entrance.

As there will be many people to feed, each family is requested to bring a main dish that can feed 6–8 people (some examples, pasta, bagels, rice, ethnic dishes, etc). Please write down the name of your dish along with the ingredients of your meal with special attention to common allergens.

To volunteer please contact Maria Albarran. We look forward to sharing a most eventful and enjoyable evening! Thank you!

This event is sponsored by Douglas and Conant PTOs.

*Maria Albarran, 978.263.6807, rivero\_albarran@yahoo.com*

## ***March Reading Challenge—an Incredible Success!***

The theme this year was “Reading to Kenya, Africa” and students read above and beyond their assigned school work to make their way to Kenya, where the Douglas community hopes to build a school. The large map in the lobby displayed the progress of the students. We had 100 students and parents attend our first read in. Their minutes went towards the number of minutes read for the school. Animal markers on the map showed how much the students traveled each week based on their number of minutes read. The students went 12,600 miles (to Kenya and 3/4 of the way home!). This year’s March Reading Challenge continued the Douglas tradition of reading toward a school-wide goal to help others outside the Douglas community. We raised \$798 which will go towards building the school in Kenya.

Now, what do you think Dr. Whitbeck did this year as a result of our reading all the way to Kenya? He already kissed a pig, rode in a hot air balloon, and raced an Olympic athlete. On April 14, he hugged a small snake, let an 85 pound snake wrapped around him, and held a baby alligator! Thank you, everyone, for a wonderful and very successful Reading Challenge.

*Sasha Demello, Sue Stewart, Stacey Smith, LeeAnn Layton, Kim Shamah*



### ***Native American Storyteller shares with Kindergarten, First, and Fourth Grades***



On April 8, James Bruchac, a Native American storyteller and author, came to Douglas to talk about Native American culture and storytelling. He is the son of Joseph Bruchac, from whom he inherited many of his stories and talents. For more information about what your children learned at this Cultural Enrichment program, see his website [www.jamesbruchac.com](http://www.jamesbruchac.com). Thank you for supporting this program with your Snack Cart donations!



*Susan Cudmore and Linda Skolnik, Cultural Enrichment Chairs*



### ***Douglas Day is Coming!***

Douglas Day will be held on **Monday, June 6**, with a rain date of Wednesday, June 8! We have planned the usual assortment of games and barbeque lunch for all to enjoy! Please fill out your volunteer form that was sent home. If you run an event you could be done by 11:15. We need many parents or grandparents to make this event happen—please make sure you have a CORI form on file in the office.

*Erika Cormier, Douglas Day Chair, [erika.cormier@comcast.net](mailto:erika.cormier@comcast.net)*



### ***Spring Cleaning Thanks***

*Thank you* to all of the helpers who came to rake and prune on April 12! In particular, we would like to thank PM Kindergarteners Miriam Woods, Joshua Formaggio, and Aidan O'Sullivan for ridding the Douglas gardens and bushes of a winter's worth of litter. Their parents (Keith Woods, Jaymi Formaggio, and Deanne O'Sullivan) were also quite helpful. Our youngest helper, Christopher Brown (and his mother Megan) did yeoman's work helping us get rid of the piles and piles of leaves which emerged from the flower beds. Thanks also to Jamie Norton, Renate Ruszczuk, Judi Mugane Muratha, Kristan Smith-Park, and Eileen Matarese (with new puppy Trapper) for helping us to accomplish so much in such a short period of time! It was a pleasure working with you all. Have a wonderful spring and good luck with your own gardens!

*Phoebe Conant and Lisa Munson, Garden Committee Co-Chairs*

### ***Notes from the Health Office: Ticks***

With spring comes rain and an influx of ticks. Ticks bites are usually harmless, but they may carry diseases including Lyme Disease. Protect yourself and your children from tick bites by making a habit of thoroughly checking yourself and your children for ticks after outdoor activities and vacations. Also remember these tips:

1. Always wear shoes and wear long pants tucked into socks while in the woods and long grass.
2. Use a EPA approved tick repellent and follow the directions before and after using.
3. If you do have to remove a tick, watch the bite site and call your doctor if you notice anything unusual about it.

Visit these sites for more information:

[http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid\\_safe/sheets/tick\\_bites\\_sheet.html](http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/sheets/tick_bites_sheet.html)

<http://www.healthcentral.com/ency/408/002856.html>

## **Douglas at Dawn/Dusk April Vacation Program is a Resounding Success!**

Our April vacation program was a blast! We enjoyed special guests, fun arts and crafts, a field trip on foot to New London Style Pizza, and very special snacks including fruit kabobs and granola parfaits. The kids enjoyed the cup stacking contests, the obstacle course in the gym, and balloon animals!

We thank you all for your support and are pleased to be able to offer such a valuable service to you and your families. Remember that now is the time to register for Breakfast Club and Work and Play for next year. Registration forms are available on the Douglas School website and outside the school office. All profits from our programs directly benefit Douglas School.

*Chris Borgman, cborgman@mail.ab.mec.edu*  
*Sasha DeMello, sdemello@mail.ab.mec.edu*

## **Take Me Out to the Ball Game...**

Mark your calendars! This year's Douglas School Lowell Spinners night will be held on Saturday, June 18, at 5:05 PM versus the Connecticut Tigers. Enjoy some great baseball with this Red Sox Single A farm team and sit with your Douglas friends. Ticket order forms will be sent home via your child's backpack during the first week in May. Please email Julie Marvin with any questions.

*Julie Marvin, marv711@comcast.net*



## **Boardwalk Phase II is Coming!**

We hope that everyone has had a chance to use the beautiful new boardwalk over the wetlands last fall, and maybe even winter, into this spring! The boardwalk has done its job, standing strong during the high water season. The Boardwalk Committee is now working on Phase II—the pathway and observation deck that stretch into the wetlands. This phase will begin this summer.

We are continuing the Buy-a-Board program. You can now purchase a board for Phase II and have a name or saying engraved. Please watch for more details in the next Digest, or download a Buy-a-Board form from the web: <http://boardwalk.westacton.net>.

### **This month's recipe from EverydayHealth.com: Homemade Oatmeal Energy Bars**

Prep time: 10 minutes. Cooking time: 20 minutes. Total time: 30 minutes. Yield: 28 bars.

1/4 cup butter, chilled and cut into small pieces  
2/3 cup brown sugar, packed  
3 cups oats  
1 cup raisins  
1/2 cup dried cranberries  
1/2 cup dried apricots, chopped  
1 teaspoon cinnamon, ground  
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg, ground  
2 large egg whites, lightly beaten  
1/2 cup peanut butter, chunky  
1/2 cup condensed milk, sweetened, fat-free  
cooking spray

Preheat oven to 350F.

Cut butter into brown sugar with a pastry blender until crumbly. Stir in oats and next 5 ingredients.

Combine egg whites, peanut butter, and condensed milk in a small bowl; stir with a whisk until smooth. Add egg mixture to oats, and stir well.

Press mixture into a jelly-roll pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350 for 20 minutes; cool completely. Cut into 28 bars.

Tip: Store bars in pan or on a plate, covered.

Nutritional info per serving: Calories: 130, Saturated Fat: 1g, Sodium: 46mg, Dietary Fiber: 2g, Total Fat: 4g, Carbs: 22.5g, Cholesterol: 3mg, Protein: 3.5g. Carb Choices: 1.5.

**Dates to Remember**

Wednesday, May 4	Possible AB and APS School Committee meeting, ABRHS rooms 102/104E
May 9–17	MCAS testing
Tuesday, May 10	PTO General Meeting at Douglas, 7:30 PM
Saturday, May 14	Festival of Cultures, RJ Grey Junior High, 5:30–8:30 PM
Thursday, May 19	APS School Committee meeting at Conant, 7:30 PM
Monday, May 23	Deadline for submissions to June Digest
Friday, May 27	Memorial Day program, 9 AM
Monday, May 30	Memorial Day: NO SCHOOL
Monday, June 6	Douglas Day (rain date, June 8)
Tuesday, June 7	PTO General Meeting at Douglas, 7:30 PM
Thursday, June 9	Spring Band Concert at Douglas, 7 PM
Saturday, June 18	Lowell Spinners vs. Connecticut Tigers, 5:05 PM
Tuesday, June 21	Sixth Grade Graduation
Tuesday, June 21	Last Day of School, 12:15 PM dismissal (regular Thursday schedule)

**Snack Cart Donations**

May 5	Pretzel Day
May 12	(Grade 4 and 6) Mrs. Bethel, Mrs. Breslin, Mrs. Nadolny, Miss Hillman
May 19	(Grade 3 and 6) Mr. Cail, Mrs. Ritter, Mrs. Simeone, Mrs. Christensen
May 26	(Grade 2 and 6) Mrs. Kay, Mrs. Littlefield, Mrs. Savage, Mrs. Oxnard
June 2	Pretzel Day
June 9	(Grade 1 and AMK) Mrs. Browne, Miss Hunt, Mrs. Ingraham, Mrs. Smith (Spring AMK)

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**MCAS Dates—2011**

Dear Parents of 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students:  
 Your children will be taking the MCAS tests on the following dates:  
 Grade 3: May 9, 10, and 11  
 Grade 4: May 9, 10, and 11  
 Grade 5: May 9, 10, 11, 16, and 17  
 Grade 6: May 9, 10, and 11  
 Please make every effort to have your children attend school on these dates and arrive promptly by 8:30 AM; tests will begin shortly after the start of school.  
 Your support is appreciated.  
 Dr. Christopher Whitbeck