

DOUGLAS DIGEST

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Douglas Digest

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The Douglas School PTO publishes the Digest seven times each school year. **Next issue: March 9.**

We welcome article ideas and feedback. Please email Sharon at sharon.metzger@gmail.com.

From the PTO

"And now we welcome the new year, full of things that have never been." —Rainer Maria Wilke

Indeed, the PTO wishes you many good things as we look ahead to what 2015 may bring.

Our next General Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 20, 7 PM**. This is our annual speaker event, and we are delighted to welcome sleep expert Dr. Kirsty Kerin, who will share wonderful insights into the what, why, and how of our children's sleep. This is timely conversation, as the School Committee is currently discussing the relationship between school start times and student wellness. Please join us for what promises to be an interesting conversation!

Our **Spring Social and Fundraiser** will take place on **Saturday, March 21, 6 PM**. This is our largest fundraiser of the year, and it takes many volunteers and auction donations from parents and our business community to make this event a success. We need your help! Here's how:

- ◆ **Buy your tickets early.** It helps us plan. Purchase tickets online at www.DouglasSchoolAuction.com.
- ◆ **Sell your raffle tickets.** Win an iPad, a Bose Bluetooth speaker, or a GoPro camera! At \$2 a ticket, your friends and family will thank you for the chance to win!

A Reflection on Exhibition

Have you ever seen a shadow puppet play? They are magical because the audience sees a story told by moving shadows on a screen. We never see the puppeteer's story writing, hard work that went into creating the show, or the work behind the screen; a lot is invisible. At the Douglas School December Exhibition, guests only saw the final student exhibition. The teaching and process of students' learning were represented, but also remained somewhat invisible.

The pressure of our first exhibition was also invisible. In a natural fear of being judged, we all found ourselves in an invisible panic. As everyone entered the school, I looked calm, collected and confident; I was none of the above. My stomach had been aching all day, and at three o'clock many of the adults were already completely exhausted. Yet there was a palpable energy. It was like late Christmas Eve after wrapping presents and waiting for morning to come! Still, my students and my teachers were going to go out there and deliver the culmination of three months' work, and families may leave wondering why we chose Exhibitionary Learning and whether children were doing "important" academic work at all. Although I have never passed a stone, it felt like the emotional version!

Jump to five minutes after Exhibition. A student who had complained of not being challenged in the past, the child whose parent remarked that this work was for little kids, just mentioned to me that he really had to learn about the colonies in a deep way to pull off the work demanded for an exhibition. I realize that the exhibition format challenges students, parents, and teachers to rethink what learning really is and what constitutes legitimate representations of student learning. Students have said it best:

Before this exhibition, I never felt like I was learning anything from projects, but now I realize that this work really makes me learn. I also learned to put the time and effort into things for school. It takes a lot of work to learn this way 'cause you have to show people what you know.

Every student contributed significantly to the exhibition, and now, they approach learning with a new swagger. The spring will bring another exhibition. The staff will work together to make this one even better. We've learned that learning through experience can be grueling. The experience of exhibition can be painful for teachers and students new to this because it is a radically different way of thinking about learning. It is hard to trust that learning is happening when it is not always visible. But the exhibition experience can deepen the learning that takes place. This is the type of experience that, over time, can lead to real perspective and wisdom, for students, teachers, principals, and families alike.

C. Whitbeck

- ◆ **Share your coveted babysitter list with a friend.** Don't let a shortage of sitters stop anyone in the Douglas community from getting to the event!

- ◆ **Share your donation ideas.** Can you provide a service that others might find useful? Have an unused gift card collecting dust somewhere? A favorite restaurant that would donate a dinner? A great idea for a gift basket full of goodies? No idea is too big or too small!

- ◆ **Volunteer!** Help on a committee before the auction or during the event. Enjoy socializing while you're helping raise funds for our school.

To find out more or to share an idea, contact us at cochairs@douglasschoolpto.org.

Finally, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your contributions to our **Annual Giving Campaign**. We are celebrating 35% participation by our Douglas families. To date, we have raised over \$17,000! Those funds will go a long way to support so many incredible programs!

Karen Jarsky and Abigail Vargus
PTO Cochairs

Purposeful Change

For three weeks, January 12–30, the Free the Children Team is trying to raise \$1,000 to buy goats. We've already raised enough to purchase 50 of 100 goats (our goal)! But we've still got a ways to go.

Here's how it works. Put together, your change can become \$50. And \$50 can provide a goat for a woman's family in Kenya. Our goats can become a herd, providing a family with nutritious milk and sustainable income. That herd enables a woman to start turning her home farm into a thriving business. She can earn enough to send her children to school, plan for emergencies, and build a better future for her family.

Ending poverty means equipping families with tools so they can empower themselves and their communities. Now that's some goat! And your change can make that happen. Add your donations to the "Get Our Goat" container in the Douglas Lobby. The largest donation will win some fantastic gift certificates!

Dates to Remember

Tuesday, January 20, 7 PM
PTO General Meeting/Speaker Event

Thursday, January 22 *
School Committee Meeting
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

January 23 & 27 and February 2 & 11
Kindergarten Tours

Friday, January 23
Report cards available on PowerSchool

Friday, January 23, 6:30 PM
Movie Night (Grades 3–4)

Thursday, January 29
Half-day K begins meeting on Thursdays

Friday, January 30, 9:15 AM
Winter Band Concert

Saturday, January 31, 9 AM–2 PM
School Committee Budget Hearing,
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

Thursday, February 5 *
School Committee Meeting,
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

February 16–20
Winter Break

Monday, March 2, 6–8 PM
AB PIP STEM 4th grade Star Party
(See www.actonpip.org)

Thursday, March 5 *
School Committee Meeting,
RJ Grey Jr. High Library

Tuesday, March 10
PTO General Meeting

* See www.abschools.org/school-committee for meeting times.

Snack Cart Donations

See snack details on the PTO website.

January 22 Grades K and 1
January 29 Grades 5 and 6

February 5 Grades 3 and 4
February 12 Grades 1 and 2

February 19 No School
February 26 Grades K and 6

March 5 Grades 4 and 5

Save These Dates

Saturday, March 21, 6 PM
Douglas Spring Social and Auction

Saturday, April 11, 5 PM
Festival of Cultures

MCAS Testing Dates

March 23–25: Grades 3, 5, 6

March 23–25, and 27: Grade 4

May 4–6: Grades 3, 4, 6

May 4–6, and 11–12: Grade 5



Spotlight:

Douglas Spring Social and Fundraiser— Back to the 80s!

Get ready to be transported *Back to the 80s* at our Annual Douglas School Social and Fundraiser, which will take place on **Saturday, March 21, 6–10:30 PM**, at the Devens Common Center. This is the PTO's biggest fundraiser, supporting our teaching assistants and many educational programs that would otherwise not be available for our children.

We'll have something for everyone: live music from the 80s and beyond (the Acton Music Project with Dr. Whitbeck, Mr. Broggi, and other familiar faces), a delicious dinner buffet and dessert, over 200 silent auction items, an entertaining live auction, and fun games and giveaways throughout the evening. There is absolutely no pressure to bid at the auction, and confidential financial assistance for event tickets is always available. Please come and enjoy!

Devens is just 20 minutes from Acton on Route 2 West. Guest rooms are available at the attached Marriott Springhill Suites hotel at a special rate of \$139/night, including breakfast. We will once again hold a kids'

movie night to coincide with the Spring Social (6–10 PM). While you are socializing, your children can have their own fun on-site watching a movie, playing board games, and making crafts. Space is limited so reserve your spot quickly! Kids' movie night is \$20 per child (ages 5+).

Finally, an important part of this fundraiser is our community-wide raffle. Each family will soon receive information about the raffle and six books of raffle tickets. Stubs from sold tickets and collected payments should be returned to the office (in person or via backpack). A PDF to print additional tickets can be found at www.DouglasSchoolAuction.com. And wait until you see what this year's awesome raffle prizes are!

As an incentive to sell tickets, we will provide one lucky Douglas student a **\$150 Amazon gift card!** For every book of tickets sold to family, friends, and neighbors, the name of the Douglas student who sold the tickets will be placed in a drawing for this prize. The more sold, the better the chances of winning!

More information on the Spring Social will be sent out via your child's backpack and is available at our event website: www.DouglasSchoolAuction.com. Questions? Email auction@DouglasSchoolPTO.org. Can't wait to see you in Devens!

Thanks from the PTO

It's hard to believe we're halfway through the school year! Douglas has been bustling with activity since day one, and there's no end in sight. A few events have come and gone since our last issue:

Book Fair: If you only knew the logistical magic that goes into getting the Douglas Book Fair set up and broken down (and set up and broken down and set up and broken down...), you'd know why we owe a *big thank you* to **Betsy Mercier, Sandy Munger, Jennifer Standley, and Tiffany Prunesti** (and all their "heavies") for making it look like it's no big deal.

Scrip: Who loves gift cards? We do! **Linda Gower** and **Debbie Cox** have already run two Scrip fundraisers this year, making sure we can fuel our love for shopping while we help Douglas out in the process.

Tech Team: Did you ever notice how very many ways there are to find answers to your Douglas questions? From the Eagle Eye Weekly to Facebook to the PTO website, our Technology Team has things solidly under control. Thank you, **Sharon Metzger, Kara Letourneau, Joe Walsh, and Lori Fassman** for keeping cyber-Douglas zipping along!

Movie Nights: Every year **Bridget Steinkrauss** and **Jen Patenaude** bring a taste of Hollywood to 21 Elm Street, and our kids just love them for it. Thank you, Bridget and Jen! (And don't miss the Grade 3–4 movie night on Friday, January 23!)

Eagle's Nest: **Janice Yee, Joan Luciani, Vidya Sampathkumar, and Carolyn Kelly** have been diligently working with fourth-grade students, parents, and teachers all year long to keep our beloved school store running like a well-oiled machine. Thank you, ladies, for carrying on this Douglas institution!

Whether you've used your evening hours to organize a spreadsheet or spent your morning with a group of students on a nature walk, we say thank you. Maybe you've meticulously clipped every box top and label, bought your gift cards through Scrip, or helped out a parent seeking advice on our Facebook page. We know that so many of you have shared your time and energy with our students and staff in so many large and small ways. We thank you all. Your dedication and enthusiasm humble us at every turn.

Haven't yet found just the right way to volunteer at Douglas? Browse the "Get Involved" section of the PTO web site or contact Karen Jarsky (ptokaren@gmail.com) or Abigail Vargas (abigailPTO@gmail.com) for more information.