



**HIGHLAND PARK
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Dear Middle School Parents and Guardians,

This letter is to inform you that this coming Thursday, May 31st, students will participate in Diversity Day at Highland Park Middle School. An annual school-wide program, Diversity Day is a unique day where students explore issues of diversity, difference, race, community, and respect. The day is comprised of guest speakers and workshops that investigate culture, religion, identity, and gender. Speakers focus on the diversity of voice, community, expression, and experience, encouraging students to gain a deeper global understanding of diversity and to introspect. We wish students to understand that we belong to a diverse society, that diversity is something to be understood not demeaned, and that while this task is not easy, progress is made incrementally. Some of the essential questions we will be asking students are: How can we respect each other and get along on a regular basis? How can we become a more supportive community? How can we reach out and make a difference in our own community?

The day will begin a keynote address to the school by David Acouth, a Lost Boy of Sudan who was forced to flee his home country when he was a child. After a long journey, David made it to the US where he is currently working in D.C as a legislative fellow in the US House of Representatives. David will speak to students about courage, resilience, determination, and the import of giving back to the community. Additionally, students will hear testimony from Holocaust survivors, Sally Frishberg and Henry Shanzer, who will speak about their personal experiences and life lessons as survivors of the Holocaust. Throughout the remainder of the day, students attend self-selected workshops which address this year's theme.

We thank the Highland Park Educational Foundation for their continued and gracious funding. This year they are funding David Acouth's speech, as well as workshops by Hip-Hop Fundamentals and Mexico Beyond Mariachi.

The goal of Diversity Day is to enhance the understanding of each other's differences, as well as to explore larger issues in the world. Students will have an opportunity to choose from a number of offered workshops throughout the day. Workshops students will participate in include: Rising India, Tibetan Meditation, Yoga, Pinwheels for Peace, Chinese Calligraphy, Hip-Hop Fundamentals, Mexico Beyond Mariachi, Human Rights, and LGBT.

We are greatly excited to extend this day to your children and must thank the Highland Park Educational Foundation, the Highland Park PTO, the Teen Center, and our countless volunteers and presenters. Without their support, this day would not be possible. This will be our ninth annual Diversity Day and from our experience, and much student feedback, it is an extremely rewarding and thought-provoking day.

We continue to enjoy and appreciate working with your children.

Sincerely,

The Highland Park Middle School Faculty & Administration