



Weekly GLA Family Newsletter

April 7, 2026

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Meagan Johnson - Assistant Principal of Academics

Tell us one of your favorite memories from your time at GLA.

All the dress up days. I love getting dressed up and I love seeing the kids' reactions to my outfits. From Sadness from Inside Out to blow up uniforms, Christmas tree, and Buzz Lightyear. The kids get excited, I get excited. It's just a great part of being at GLA.

Tell us one of your proudest teacher moments.

When you've tried everything. Thought outside the box. Hit that wall where you're like, I don't

know what else to do. And then you get that breakthrough and you really see the impact you made. That's what makes it all worthwhile.

What made you want to become a teacher (or what made you want to work in a school)?

I've always been good with kids and have always worked with them. But more than anything, I've always wanted to give back to kids that look like me. Representation matters. I want kids to see themselves in me, to see that their goals are possible, that someone who looks like them believes in them and is showing up for them every single day. That's always been the driving force.

What keeps you coming back to GLA every day?

The continuous growth. The students, the families but also the staff. They've become like family. The support, the familiar faces. Watching kids grow from kindergarten to middle school. That's what makes a difference. GLA is not like any place I have ever worked and I really do love how far we have come!

Where are you originally from? (If Chicago, tell us what neighborhood!) What do you love about that place?

Bolingbrook. I love the memories, the long lasting friendships and the home my parents created.

What's your favorite memory from elementary/middle school?

I loved my elementary school! Field day was always my favorite and it always fell on my birthday.

We all know teaching can be a stressful job! What's your favorite way to unwind?
Relax on the couch and do nothing!

What are your hidden or surprising talents?
I know how to do hair. Braids, sew ins, etc.

What's your dream vacation?
Greece! Going this year for my 40th birthday! :-)

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

This week, GLA is proud to celebrate our incredible Assistant Principals during National Assistant Principal Appreciation Week!

We invite our families and community to join us in showing gratitude for our outstanding Assistant Principal of Operations and Programs, Dr. Stephanie Beck and Assistant Principal of Academics, Ms. Meagan Johnson. Assistant Principals are critical to the success of any school and their leadership has been pivotal to GLA's continued growth and success. Their commitment to and heart for our school community make a lasting impact. Whether they are supporting students, guiding staff, or ensuring everything runs smoothly, they do it all with positivity, passion, and excellence.

We also want to give a huge shoutout to our amazing Deans on GLA's School Leadership Team. Though not assistant principals in title, their work as school leaders is also essential to our success as a school.

GLA is stronger because of your leadership, and the impact you make is felt by every student, in every classroom, every day.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashli Miller".

Principal Miller

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

The BE GREAT Lighthouse Alumni Scholarship

We are proud to introduce the Be Great Lighthouse Alumni Scholarship, a \$5,000 award created to honor and support Great Lakes Academy's inaugural graduating class of 2022. This scholarship celebrates academic achievement, resilience, and leadership while continuing our commitment to investing in your future success. As our scholars transition through high school and beyond, we remain dedicated to being a beacon of opportunity every step of the way.

One deserving scholar will be selected to receive this award. The application deadline is Monday, April 27, 2026 at 9:00 AM. Please see the attached flyer for full details and application access or click this [link](#).

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to Mrs. Long (ylong@glachicago.org). We can't wait to celebrate the continued success of our Beacons.



THE BE GREAT LIGHTHOUSE ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP



ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

The Be Great Lighthouse Scholarship is a **\$5,000** award established to honor and support Great Lakes Academy's inaugural graduating class of 2022. Created to celebrate academic achievement, resilience, and leadership, this scholarship serves as a beacon of opportunity as our scholars transition to high school and beyond. Rooted in GLA's mission to empower students to change the world, the Lighthouse Scholarship reflects our commitment to investing in their continued success and bright futures. One scholarship will be awarded.

CRITERIA

- Must be a 2022 graduate of GLA
- 2.5 GPA (upload transcript)
- Letter of acceptance (upload)
- Personal question essay
- Letter of recommendation from your high school or community leader (upload)
- Availability to accept the award on Thursday May 7, 2026

APPLY NOW >



DEADLINE:
MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2026 AT 9AM

MORE INFORMATION:
YANA LONG, DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT
(773)217-8193
ylong@glachicago.org

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Save the Date: Spring Art Show!

The 4th Annual Spring Art Show will be hosted on Thursday, April 16th from 4-6pm.



All families are encouraged to attend! The show will feature art work from all Kinder-4th Grade as well as the Advanced Art and Creative Arts Enrichment Programs!

For questions, please contact Ms. Paull (kpaul@glachicago.org)

Summer Programming at GLA!



The GLA Summer Program will run from June 22nd to July 17th. All programming will take place Monday-Friday (exception July 3rd - building closed for July 4th holiday observance)

for current K-7th graders.

The deadline to sign-up is Monday, May 25th. Click here to enroll!

The following options are available for enrollment:

- **K-2nd AM/PM Enrichment Camp (8:30 am - 4:00 pm)**
- **3rd-4th S.M.A.R.T Summer Camp (8:30 am - 4:00 pm)**
- **5th-7th S.M.A.R.T Summer Camp (8:30 am - 4:00 pm)**

Each program is \$400 per student.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. O'Leary (coleary@glachicago.org) or Dr. Beck (sbeck@glachicago.org)

State Testing is Coming Up!

Spring state assessments are right around the corner. Mark your calendars:

- **IAR (ELA & Math, grades 3–8): April 6–9**
- **ISA (Science, grades 5 & 8): April 20–22**

How to help your student prepare:

- Keep up with attendance — every day of instruction counts
- Talk to your child about why doing their best matters
- Make sure they're getting enough sleep each night
- Ensure they arrive to school on time on test days
- Encourage a positive mindset — remind them of how hard they've worked!
- Practice on the Student Readiness Tools: srt.testnav.com/psrt/psrt.html

Questions? Reach out to Meagan Johnson. (mjohnson@glachicago.org)

Slice the Price is Back at Great Lakes Academy!

Get ready to save big while supporting our scholars! Great Lakes Academy is launching our Slice the Price Card Fundraiser with Domino's Pizza from March 31st – April 14th, and you don't want to miss it. For just \$20, you'll receive a Slice the Price card that lets you buy one large pizza and get another FREE—with unlimited uses through December 31, 2026! It's perfect for family nights, parties, and quick dinners all year long.

Exciting news: Students have already received their fundraiser materials, and sales are officially underway! Participants have the chance to **earn prizes** for both selling cards and engaging in the fundraiser.

Not only are you getting an amazing deal, but every purchase directly supports our students and school programming.

GREAT LAKES ACADEMY

DOMINO'S FUNDRAISER

LEARN MORE



- Si hablas español escanea el código QR.
- אם אתה דובר עברית סרוק את קוד QR.

- 如果您会说中文，请扫描二维码。
- Si w pale kreybi ayiisen, eskane kòd qr la.

WE ARE SELLING THE SLICE THE PRICE CARD

- The card allows you to buy a large pizza at menu price and get a large pizza FREE!
- **NEW!!!** The SLICE THE PRICE card now works for online orders, delivery or carryout!
- The card sells for just \$20.00! Use the card just one time, it pays for itself!
- Use the card as many times as you would like until Thursday, December 31, 2026.
- Great for parties! Buy 10 large pizzas, get 10 large pizzas FREE!

REGISTER



HOW TO SELL THE CARD

- Register <https://Register.Dominos.cards/53804> to get your personalized store link to share!
- Use the QR Code to the left for the general store, <https://Store.Dominos.cards/53804>, just make sure your supporters choose your participant at check out.

STORE



WHAT YOU CAN EARN

- Sell at least 15 SLICE THE PRICE cards and receive a card!
- Track your online sales: <https://Dash.Dominos.cards/53804>
- Win Bonus Cash for your group: <https://Leader.Dominos.cards/53804>
- Every teacher with 5 or more participants will receive a FREE card!
- Register to pick your prize and enter to win a \$50 gift card: <https://Dominos.cards/53804>

MAP



WHERE THE CARD WORKS

- The Slice the Price card works in **2,683** Domino's in **42** states! Most importantly all the stores in **Cook County, Illinois** accept the card!

WHEN THE CARDS WILL BE RETURNED

- Cards purchased online will be sent directly to the purchaser by the method chosen at checkout.

SLICE THE PRICE OF PIZZA AND HELP SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL!

**REGISTER ONLINE
TO PICK YOUR PRIZE!**

<https://Register.Dominos.cards/53804>



You're Invited: 11th Annual Be Great Benefit

Please join us on Thursday, May 7th for the 11th Annual Be Great Benefit in support of Great Lakes Academy. Hosted from 6 - 9 pm at the Chicago History Museum, this exciting evening will bring together community leaders, supporters, and friends for a memorable night of fun and giving. Guests will enjoy access to the Chicago History Museum exhibits, open bar, dinner, and a silent auction all while supporting the continued success of Great Lakes Academy scholars. Tickets are \$250 and tables of 10 are \$2,500 and can be purchased here: <https://bit.ly/47ge4he>

Can't make it but still want to support our scholars? You can make a donation here: <https://glchicago.org/donate>

We hope you will join us for a great night in support of our scholars.



11TH ANNUAL BE GREAT BENEFIT

POWERED by PURPOSE

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

JOIN US!

THURSDAY MAY 7, 2026
Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark
6p-9p

2026 BE GREAT COMMITTEE

Christine Chen
Brad Karsh

Katie McClay
Kirsten Villers

Larissa Siberberg
Ebonie Durham

Aniyah Fisher
Yana Long

Beacon Dash Pass

Our next **Beacon Dash Pass** is here for all grade levels, with grade-specific celebrations! K-2nd-grade scholars can earn a ticket to a Magic Show with live animals and interactive fun. 3rd and 4th-grade scholars can earn a celebration with a bouncy house, music, and games. 5th-8th-grade scholars will participate in an Escape Room experience. Scholars must meet expectations from March 20 to April 16 to attend their event.



Great Lakes Academy's Uniform Expectations

Recently, we have seen an increase in scholars arriving to school out of uniform, and we want to ensure families are aware of expectations and next steps. [Uniform Policy](#) can be found here. Repeated out-of-uniform violations will result in scholars being ineligible for incentive events and referral documentation.

K-3rd grade Spring Fest

Spring is in the air at Great Lakes Academy!

Join us for our **K-3 Spring Fest** on **Saturday, April 11, 2026 from 12PM-3PM** at 8401 S. Saginaw Ave. This family-friendly celebration will include music, snacks, fun, and games

for our youngest scholars.

We can't wait to see our K-3 families come out, connect, and celebrate the season together. Be sure to RSVP using the QR code and mark your calendars for an afternoon full of springtime fun! All students must be accompanied by an adult for the entirety of this event.

A promotional poster for a school event. At the top left is the Great Lakes Academy Charter School logo, which features a lighthouse on a boat. The text 'Great Lakes Academy' is at the top center. Below it, 'K-3' is written in a simple font, and 'Spring FEST' is written in a large, colorful, cursive font. The background is decorated with various colorful flowers like hibiscus and daisies. A dark blue horizontal band contains the date and time: 'SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2026' and '12PM-3PM'. Below this band, the text 'MUSIC | SNACKS | FUN | GAMES' is displayed. At the bottom, the address '8401 S. Saginaw Ave. Chicago, IL 60617' is listed, followed by 'RSVP here:' and a QR code.

Great Lakes Academy

K-3
Spring
FEST

SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2026
12PM-3PM

MUSIC | SNACKS | FUN | GAMES

8401 S. Saginaw Ave. Chicago, IL 60617

RSVP here: 

Race to 10 is On!

A huge congratulations to Purdue and UIC for racing to 10 and winning Heat 5! Both homerooms secured their second win and will be going on another free field trip. Also, congratulations to the four parents who won our gas raffle. Thank you for helping your student and their class win the race! Race 6 started 4/3. Let's keep up the momentum and continue working together to make everyday count! Attendance matters.



2025-26 School Calendar

The 2025-26 school calendar has been posted to GLA's website. Please [view it here](#).

School Year Office Hours

Monday-Thursday, 7:30-4:30 pm

Friday, 7:30-2:00 pm

GLA Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper Menus

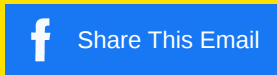
Access April's [Breakfast](#), [Lunch](#), and [Supper](#) menus here (these are also linked on our website's [Parent and Student Resource Page](#))

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES
March 30 - April 17, 2026

30 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week	31 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week	1 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week Start of Month of Kindness, Autism Acceptance Month	2 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week	3 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week
6 IAR State Testing	7 IAR State Testing	8 IAR State Testing	9 IAR State Testing	10 IAR State Testing
13 Spring Cultivate Survey	14 IAR State Testing	15 IAR State Testing	16 K-4 Spring Art Showcase Open House, 4:00-6:00 pm	17 8th Grade Graduation Portraits
20 Illinois Science Assessment	21 Illinois Science Assessment	22 Illinois Science Assessment 5th-8th Grade PTDYA x GLA Performance, 5:30 pm	23 K-4 Spring Art Showcase Open House, 4:00-6:00 pm	24 Wellness Day, No School

Follow Us on Social Media!



Great Lakes Academy Charter School | 8401 S. Saginaw Ave | Chicago, IL 60617 US

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