



The Weekly Wave

Weekly GLA Family Newsletter

April 21, 2026

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Mrs. Robertson -3rd Grade ELA teacher & 2nd-4th Grade Cluster Engagement Leader

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

Some of my favorite memories from working at GLA are all of the scholar point parties my classes have earned! Some honorable mentions would have to be our Taki Tasting party, our "Vacation" party, and our "Pool party"! The entire class works hard together to earn these class points.

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

My future, current, and former students are what keep me coming back each day! Some days can be tiring, but it makes me so happy

to visit with former students in the mornings, have fun during class with my current students, and smile at future students in the hallways.

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

I am originally from Michigan! I grew up near Kalamazoo and then lived in Grand Rapids for a few years before moving to Chicago in 2021. One of my favorite things to do when I'm back in Michigan is visit the Holland/Saugatuck areas!

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

One of my favorite memories from elementary/middle school was forming strong relationships with my teachers! I actually taught in my former school district during my first year of teaching and it was so cool to work alongside some of my favorite elementary/middle school teachers.

We all know teaching can be a stressful job! What's your favorite way to unwind?

My favorite way to unwind after a long or stressful day is watching a movie on the couch with my dog! A good dinner or snacks always help too. :)

What's your dream vacation?

My dream vacation is Greece! I also love anywhere with a beach!

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

As we continue through a busy stretch of the school year filled with learning, activities, and testing, we want to take a moment to highlight two important upcoming dates dedicated to student well-being.

Our Wellness Days will take place on **Friday, April 24th and Friday, May 1st**. These days are designed to give students and staff an opportunity to rest and reset after several demanding weeks. Time away from the classroom can help students and staff return feeling refreshed and ready to finish the school year strong. We encourage families to support this time by helping students slow down, rest, and engage in restorative activities.

As a friendly reminder, **Thursday, April 30th is now an instructional day with a normal schedule.** This change serves as a make-up day for the inclement weather closure we experienced in late January. We appreciate your flexibility and support in ensuring students are present and ready to learn on this day.

Thank you for your continued partnership in supporting both the academic success and well-being of our students.



Principal Miller

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

Book Blast is coming to GLA!

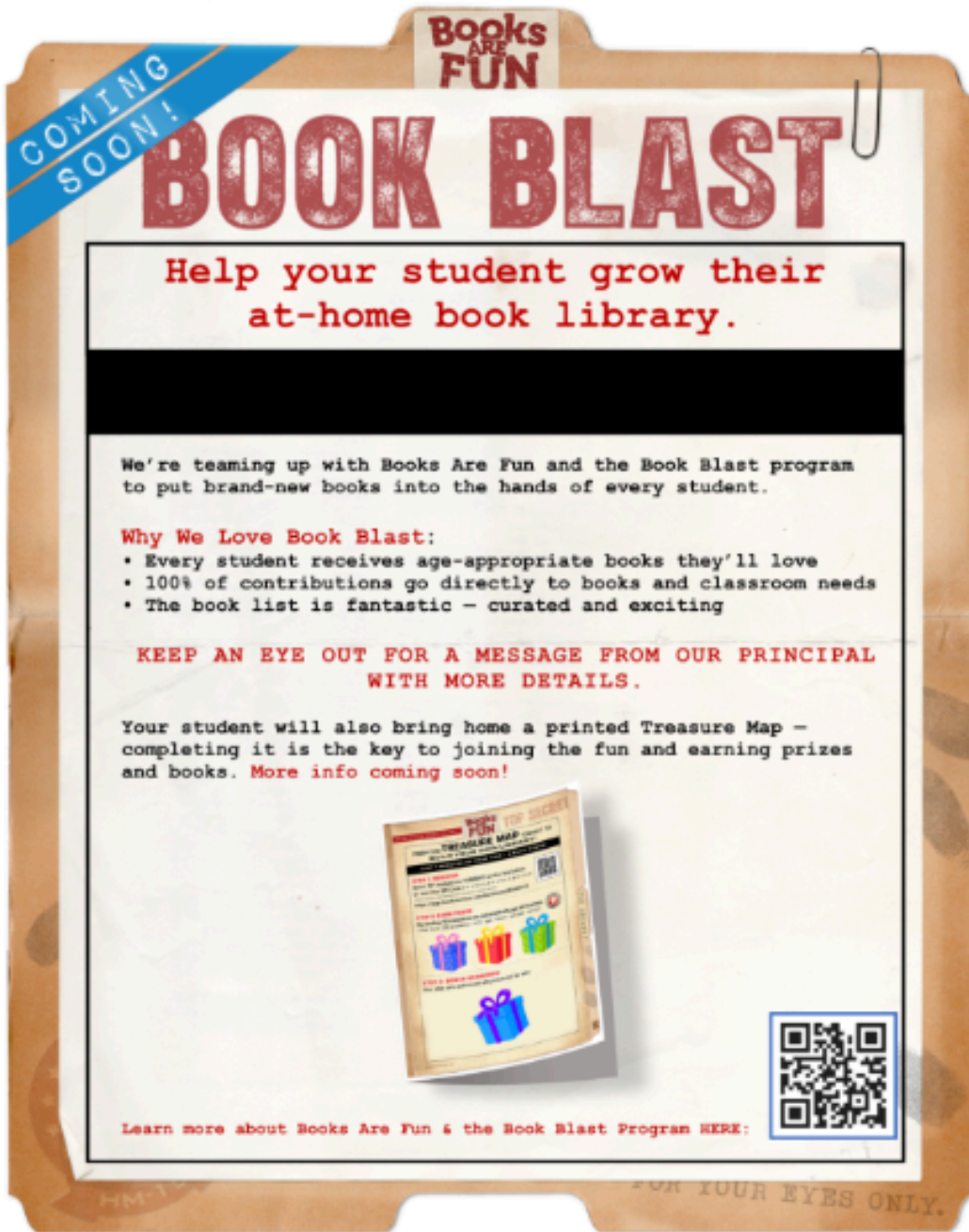
We have exciting news! Our school is partnering with Books Are Fun and the Book Blast program to help put brand-new, age-appropriate books into the hands of every one of our scholars!

Here's why we love Book Blast:

- Every student receives books they'll love and want to read
- 100% of all contributions go directly to books and classroom needs
- The book list is thoughtfully curated and truly engaging

Here's how your student can join the fun:

1. They'll be bringing home a Treasure Map on April 27th—their ticket to joining the fun, earning books and unlocking awesome prizes! It's simple, exciting, and brings reading to your home.
2. Dress Down on Monday, April 27th in your secret spy gear!



GLA Takes Over Chicago Sky! 🏀

Join Great Lakes Academy for a fun night out as we cheer on the Chicago Sky!

Wednesday, April 29, 2026

Game Time: 5:30 PM

Location: Wintrust Arena

Ticket Package (\$55) includes:

- Lower level seats
- 30-minute pregame workout experience

Only 40 tickets available – first come, first served!

Get your tickets:

<https://tinyurl.com/BeGreatSKY26>

Let's show our GLA spirit and enjoy this special community experience together! 💙💛



GREAT LAKES ACADEMY

TAKES OVER

CHICAGO 



WED.
4/29/26

\$55

TICKETS INCLUDE:

LOWER LEVEL SEATS

30 MIN. PREGAME WORKOUT

CHICAGO SKY VS ATLANTA DREAM

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT

<https://tinyurl.com/BeGreatSKY26>

START

5:30 PM

Wintrust Arena 200 E. Cermak Rd. Chicago, IL

Staff Appreciation Week: May 4th-8th

Staff Appreciation Week is May 4–8! As we celebrate and recognize our staff, we invite families to join us in showing appreciation in a few meaningful ways:

- Gift Giving: We have included a [Staff Favorites Gift Guide](#) to help you select something special your student's teacher or staff will enjoy. If a staff member's name is not on the list, they did not submit answers.
- Messages of Appreciation: We have created an [appreciation form](#) for families to share kind words, notes of gratitude, or thank-you messages. These will be delivered to staff during Staff Appreciation Week. If you would like to include a message, please submit by Wednesday, April 29th.

Your support and recognition mean so much and help make this week special for our staff. Thank you for partnering with us to celebrate all they do for our students and families!

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ebonie Durham, Executive Director x Charter School Insider Podcast

"Schools are human development spaces—not just academic centers."

We're proud to share that our Executive Director, Ebonie Durham, is featured on the Charter School Insider Podcast in an episode titled *"From Vision to Village: Building Partnerships that Drive Student Support."*

In this conversation, she shares how Great Lakes Academy is working with partners to support the whole child—from behavioral health to nutrition and community-based services—so students have what they need to truly thrive.

Full episode available now:

Spotify | Apple Podcasts | Amazon Music | YouTube

Listen here: <https://bit.ly/47TFUjY>

Mental Health First Aid- Adult Blended

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-based training program that teaches people how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health or substance use challenges. Similar to traditional CPR, it provides skills to offer initial support to someone in crisis until professional help arrives. MHFA is designed for anyone, including employers, school staff, faith communities, and the public, to build stronger, more supportive communities.

- **When: Saturday, May 2nd, from 9:00-3:00 at GLA**
- Sign up here to attend for free by 4.30.26 Adult Mental Health First Aid -May 2nd
- **Once you sign up, you will receive an email from Mental Health First Aid Connect to complete the 2-hour online pre-work.**
- **Questions: Contact Ms. Melissa, mstangl@glachicago.org**

Top Secret: An Undercover Mission is Coming!

An undercover secret mission is coming to GLA on Monday, April 27th. Scholars may dress down in spy gear! Think all black outfits, sunglasses, trench coats, fedoras, etc. Stay tuned for more information on this important mission!

TOP SECRET

Undercover Spy
Dress Down Day

4.27.2026

Sunglasses.

All Black.



GLA x PTDYA Spring Performance

Join us on Wednesday, April 22nd from 5:30pm-7:00pm for the 5th-8th Grade Spring Performance! We will be celebrating the onstage performances of Black artists of the Broadway stage as well as pop and recording icons.



ON STAGE 2026



Great Lakes Academy
Wednesday, April 22, 2026
5:30 pm
8401 South Saginaw
Chicago, IL 60617

Celebrating the onstage
performances of Black artists of
the Broadway stage as well as
pop and recording icons



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

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:

- **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)

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://glachicago.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

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.

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.





Team Illinois Youth Police Camp

A free summer camp will take place June 21–27 at Lewis University for boys and girls ages 13–17.

This is a highly structured, paramilitary-style team-building camp focused on leadership, discipline, and growth.

Applications are due May 9, 2026. Limited spots available. [TIYPC Mission & Goals 2026 TIYPC Cadet Application \(2\).pdf](#) If you have any questions, you can contact Trooper Duane Chappell (312)-630-417-5892 or email: duane.chappell@illinois.gov

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
April 21 - May 15, 2026

20 Illinois Science Assessment	21 Illinois Science Assessment	22 Illinois Science Assessment 5th-8th Grade PTDYA x GLA Performance, 5:30 pm	23	24 Wellness Day, No School
27 Undercover Mission Day- Dress Down Day (see above)	28	29 ABC Countdown to Summer Begins!	30 El Dia Del Ninos!	1 Principal Appreciation Day Wellness Day, No School
4	5 Cinco de Mayo	6	7 GLA Spring Benefit, 6:00 pm	8
11	12	13	14	15 8th Grade Decision Day, 9:00 am 5th-8th Spring Ball, 5:30-7:30 pm

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

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