



Dear Kindergarten Families,

Today your child participated in Hillside's Understanding Our Different Abilities (UDA) program. UDA is a parent-led volunteer program, a version of which exists in each grade level at all Needham elementary schools.

It is the mission of UDA to promote understanding, empathy, acceptance, and respect for all people regardless of differing abilities. Through the use of multi-sensory activities, speakers, and discussion, elementary students at each grade level, are introduced to a broad range of abilities, both visible and invisible, to reinforce that we are all different. Understanding and accepting those differences creates a stronger community. One central theme that is reinforced at all levels, is that being different is what makes us the same – and special!

At each grade level, your child will participate in a hands-on UDA workshop focused on a different type of disability. Often, students in grades 1 through 5 also hear from a guest speaker who talks with them about living with the disability or difference they are studying. The curriculum areas by grade are:

Kindergarten:	Introduction to Disabilities and Differences
Grade 1:	Blindness and Visual Impairments
Grade 2:	Deafness and Hearing Loss
Grade 3:	Physical Disabilities and Challenges
Grade 4:	Learning Disabilities and Differences
Grade 5:	Developmental and Cognitive Disabilities

To find out more about your child's experience with UDA today, you might ask them:

- What are some ways that people can be different from one another?
- What does it mean to have a disability?
- What makes you special or unique?
- How would you treat someone who is different from you?

For more information about the UDA program or the activities in your child's class, feel free to contact us at erinkellytravia@gmail.com or vanessajones694@icloud.com.

Sincerely,

Erin Travia and Vanessa Jones
Hillside UDA Co-Chairs