



# Pathways

*A weekly collection of information, thoughts, reflections, and accolades for the Reading Public School Community*

February 26, 2017

Volume 8, Number 24

## Upcoming Dates

- February 26 – (6:00 p.m.)  
RMHS Drama Sitzprobe
- February 27 – (7:00 p.m.)  
School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- February 28 – (7:00 p.m.)  
RMHS – Future Freshman Night I
- March 3 – (7:30 p.m.)  
RMHS Drama Winter Musical "1776" in the Endslo PAC
- March 4 – (7:30 p.m.)  
RMHS Drama Winter Musical "1776" in the Endslo PAC
- March 5 – (3:00 p.m.)  
RMHS Drama Winter Musical "1776" in the Endslo PAC
- March 6 – (7:00 p.m.)  
School Committee Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room
- March 7 – (2:00 p.m.)  
RMHS MAJE Jazz Festival @ RMHS
- March 8 – Grade 6-8 Early Release, (after school)  
Secondary Building Meetings – Collaborative Proposal Time
- March 9 – (after school)  
RISE/Elementary Building Meetings – Grade Level; (6:30 p.m.) Parker Middle School Musical Once Upon an Island, Jr. @ Parker
- March 10 – (7:30 p.m.)  
Parker Middle School Musical Once Upon an Island, Jr. @ Parker

## Parker Middle School Holds 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Heroes Among Us Ceremony

*Molly Callahan Honored*

*By Leah Cristi, Parker Middle School Foreign Language Teacher*

On Friday, February 17th, Parker Middle School held its 7th annual Heroes Among Us ceremony. Under the guidance of Parker teacher Leah Cristi, members of the Parker Leadership group honored Molly Callahan.

In September of 2006, just a week into her sixth grade year at Parker, Molly was diagnosed with Leukemia. During the 2+ years she was undergoing treatment, she balanced her academics, fought her illness, and remained optimistic despite feeling awful from chemo and having to miss out on many events. The medications left her frail and she did lose her hair. Her courage and grace during such a difficult time could have easily been the reason she earned the award, but Molly didn't stop there.

Now that she's in remission, Molly and her family have ridden in the Pan-Mass Challenge from Wellesley to Bourne the past 2 years. Parker raised \$1,075 and surprised Molly with the donation to this year's ride.



*Molly Callahan*

- March 11 – (8:00 a.m.) SAT Testing – RMHS is a test center; (9:00 p.m.) SEPAC Meeting in the Superintendent's Conference Room; (2:00 p.m.) Parker Middle School Musical Once Upon an Island, Jr. @ Parker; (5:00 p.m.) RMHS Freshman Progressive Dinner in the RMHS Cafeteria

Still, what really solidified the decision to honor Molly is her admirable choice to pursue a degree in Pediatric Oncology Nursing. She is almost there! She is currently a senior at Georgetown University and would love to come back and work at Boston Children's Hospital in the same wing she used to receive care herself.

Troy Pollock and Catherine Adams opened the assembly and spoke about the history of the award. Niamhy Fitzgerald talked about what makes a hero and showed a video created by Millie Pontone, Rachel Spezzaferro, Ashley Keaveney, and Samantha Jaynes with testimonials from Parker faculty and students about the definition of a hero in their own words and who their personal heroes are.

Molly's story unfolded in another well done video where students heard from Molly herself, her parents and Brienne Black (Molly's 6th grade English teacher at Parker who became her outside tutor to help her keep up with her studies during treatment). The creators of this video, Brooke Beaulieu, Sarah Bacci, Margaret Coles, Elizabeth Fialla, and Grace Brenner, coordinated conference calls with Molly, scheduled interviews with her parents outside of school, and arranged a sit down with her tutor.



*Molly Callahan and Parker Student Leadership Group*

Hailey Waddell and Dan O'Connor delivered the main body speech. Embedded in their words was a final video, a tribute to nurses, put together by Luke Hollenbeck and Brian Bloom. The boys took the T to Boston and were able to interview Jillian Gundersheim, a young nurse who is very close to Molly because the two have worked together as clinical assistants and ride the PMC as a team. They had parent input from a family whose young son is currently receiving care, and a moving collection of photos and music. Dan said, "You have proven to be an amazing role model. You are a survivor, a fundraising champion, a difference maker, and a true citizen recognizing a responsibility to contribute to the community. You have shared and given back your gifts, your light, and you are a perfect example of a young

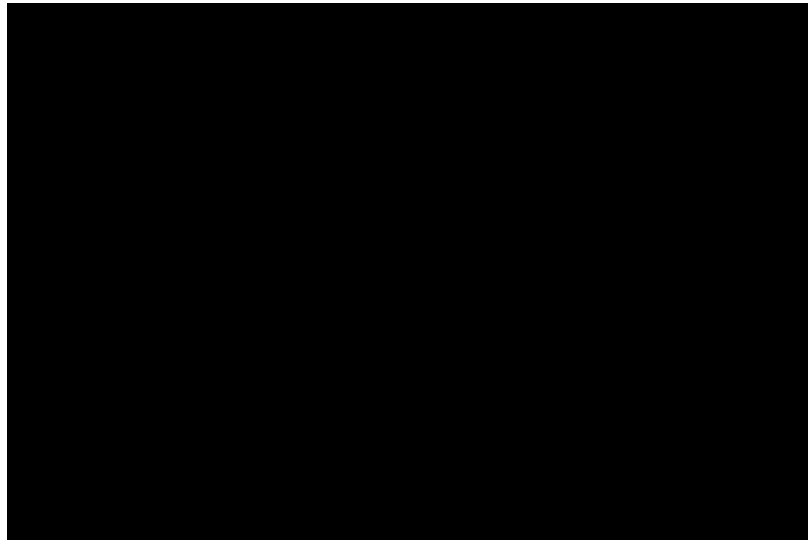
woman who has come full circle." He then presented Molly with her plaque.

Molly took the podium and encouraged students to find their passion. She and her family enjoyed a reception given by the Parker Leaders afterwards in the teacher's lounge. Many teachers were excited to see Molly again after all these years, grateful that she is doing so well, and proud, though not surprised, of who she's become.

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### Reading Hockey Manager Scores Touching Goal on Senior Night

*By Louisa Moller, WBZ TV*



Video can be accessed [here](#)

Christopher "Bear" McFarland is known for his smile and practical jokes in the locker room, but on Wednesday night, the manager of the Reading High School Hockey team scored more than laughs.

In a Senior Night **face-off** between Reading High School and Woburn High School, Bear, who has Down syndrome, suited up and got ready to play for a special shift.



Reading High School Hockey manager Chris "Bear" McFarland (WBZ-TV)

His dad was recording on his cell phone when Bear took his first shot at goal and missed. His second shot was a slap shot from center **ice**. This time, it was all net. "I went like crazy," Bear said, describing the goal.



## Kudos and Accolades

- Congratulations to the girls & boys basketball, and boys & girls hockey for recent victory.
- Congratulations to the girls gymnastics team for being undefeated, Middlesex League champions for the first time in 10 years. They ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the North and 6<sup>th</sup> overall in the State heading into the Team Sectionals.
- A special congratulation to Emily Eagleston, Maddie Doyle, Molly Craven and Jordyn Castelli for qualifying for the State Individual Gymnastics Championships.
- To our custodians and facilities department for all of their hard work during our recent snow storms
- To Coolidge Wellness Teacher Jennifer White for all of her hard work in organizing the Hoops for Heart event at Coolidge last Friday.
- Congratulations to the Reading Memorial High School Jazz Band, under the direction of Joseph Mulligan for receiving a gold medal at their first competition last week. Senior Thomas Gray was awarded the best trumpet player of the competition. The next competition is here in Reading on Tuesday March 7th.
- To middle school band and choral students who qualified for the Junior Districts. Thirty-two students were selected to represent Reading at the festival which will, for the first time, be held at Galvin Middle School in Wakefield on March 15, 17, & 18.



Chris "Bear" McFarland (center) and his teammates (WBZ-TV)

"I was probably screaming the loudest and I was starting to tear up because it was so emotional," Bear's dad, Darin McFarland said.

Bear's teammates say they will never forget that moment.

"I was just proud and I was happy for him because I knew he was loving it and he will probably remember it forever," Bear's brother Nick McFarland, a sophomore on the team said.

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## Email Guidelines For Parents and Families

In an effort to help clarify email expectations for families, the Reading Public Schools administrative team has created some guidelines that we hope will alleviate some of the confusion regarding email communication between school and home. The guidelines for families are as follows:

- Urgent information or anything time-sensitive should be relayed to teachers via written notes or telephone calls to the main office. This would include medical concerns, changes in after-school plans, personal issues, and attendance information (absences, tardiness, and dismissals).
- Responses from teachers to parents can usually be expected within 2 school days. (Staff are not expected to reply to email messages over weekends or holidays.) Teachers will make every attempt to check their email during the school day, however, depending on their individual schedules, this is not always possible. The arrangement of our school day sometimes allows for limited email access. Some teachers also may prefer to respond to email by phone or writing a note.
- Your child's academic progress, learning expectations, or behavioral issues are sometimes best addressed through a telephone conversation or by scheduling a personal conference with your child's teacher. If you need to have a conversation with a teacher, email may not be the best or most efficient communication tool to address your needs. Lengthy emails may not be effective. If necessary, please set up a meeting or have a phone conversation with the teacher. Your child's teacher may also choose to reply to a concern by arranging a time to talk further.
- When teachers are absent from school, substitutes will not be reading the teacher's emails. If a teacher is absent from school, they most likely will not be checking their email on that day.
- Because written emails can be easily misinterpreted, *tone* and *respect* are of course important to us in all home-school communications. It is always recommended to both staff and families that draft emails be read carefully before sending to make

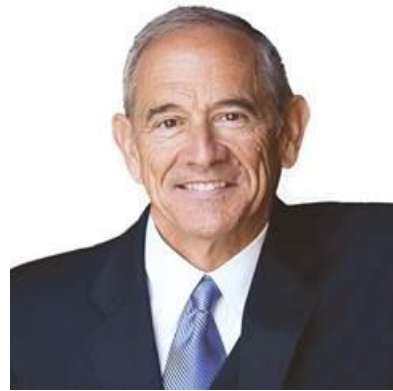
sure that they are communicating the information accurately and with the desired tone.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's classroom teacher or building principal.

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## Richard DuFour, Advocate of Professional Learning Communities, Dies at 69

By *Madeline Will* for *Education Week Blog* on February 9, 2017 4:37 PM



Richard DuFour, a renowned education consultant and author who advocated collaborative teaching environments, died Feb. 8, following a long battle with cancer. He was 69.

DuFour was a leading voice in the movement to improve schools through professional learning communities, in which teachers come together to analyze and improve their classroom practice.

His 1998 best-selling book, *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement*, that he co-wrote with former education school dean Robert Eaker, includes collaborative strategies for teachers and principals. DuFour held that principals should have a "loose-tight" leadership style that allows teachers some autonomy in decision making, but protects the school's shared vision and values.

In a 2015 opinion essay for *Education Week Teacher*, DuFour, along with Douglas Reeves, **wrote that** school leaders must do more than simply provide time for teachers to collaborate. "A professional learning community is not simply a meeting: It is an ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recursive cycles of collective inquiry and action research in order to achieve better results for the students they serve," they wrote.

Essential elements for professional learning communities include consistent criteria that teachers use to assess student work, an ongoing assessment process that includes frequent, team-developed common formative assessments, and a collective sense of responsibility for student learning.

## Superintendent's Office

### Hours this Week

*All are welcome*

2/28 (7:45-8:45 a.m.)-  
Wood End Elementary  
School

3/2 (5:30-6:30 p.m.)-  
Reading Public Schools  
Administration Offices

DuFour's other well-known works include *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work* and *In Praise of American Educators: And How They Can Become Even Better*.

A former teacher, DuFour spent 19 years as a principal and then a superintendent in Lincolnshire, Ill., during which he received numerous accolades. Under his leadership, Adlai E. Stevenson High School won the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Award on four occasions—one of only three schools in the nation to do so.

An [Education Week](#) article from 2008 profiled Stevenson High School for its focus on teacher teamwork.

"We have to collaborate and make a collective effort" to help students succeed, DuFour told *Education Week*. "The beauty of working in isolation and doing your own assessing is that you are buffered from an external source of validation. But here we want you to talk to colleagues, want you to look at common assessments that you and your teammates have developed, and that's pretty scary initially. ... [But] we didn't want to be a good or good enough school, but an exemplary school that lived up to a model of success for every student."

DuFour is survived by his wife, Rebecca DuFour, a former teacher and principal who implemented a professional learning community in her own school. After retiring from their jobs as educators, the DuFours were business partners—writing, consulting, and presenting about the PLC model described in their books. In a [District Administration](#) feature of the pair in 2012, the DuFours said that more than 200 U.S. schools have been recognized as implementing the 'Professional Learning Community at Work' model because of the schools' significantly improved student achievement.

Rebecca and Richard [participated in a live chat](#) with *Education Week* in 2007 about how schools can build professional learning communities.

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## Getting the Most Out of Professional Learning Communities

In this *Kappan* article, consultant Michael Wasta says many teacher teams are looking at student work and assessments, identifying areas where kids are having difficulty, and defining specific goals for improvement and criteria for progress. But after observing more than 100 PLCs in action, Wasta and his colleagues noticed that a crucial part of the data process is often missing: "how team members would have to change their teaching practices to reach those goals." This, he says, squanders a "tremendous opportunity to help teachers find out precisely what is and is not working in their classrooms." All too often, teacher teams are looking at effects without investigating the causes – their day-to-day instructional practices.

To fill this gap, Wasta recommends that when teams analyze student results, they go beyond vaguely defined follow-up strategies – for example, *We will increase the amount and quality of feedback to students* – and get much more specific, drawing on research-based practices, for example:

## Quote of the Week . . .



Your past is done, so forget it. Your future is yet to come, so dream it, but your present is now, so live it with no regrets!

-Unknown

- Deliver feedback within the class period as close as possible to task completion;
- Indicate errors students made and specific corrections that are needed;
- Link corrections to a clear criterion;
- Encourage students to keep working until a problematic item is correct.

“The key to this process lies in identifying precisely what counts as exemplary performance,” says Wasta. Then it’s possible to tell whether it was the strategy that was flawed or the fact that it was poorly implemented. Teams should aim for a “sweet spot, ensuring some consistency of implementation while still letting individual teachers bring their own style and creativity to the classroom.”

Outlining the details of a follow-up classroom strategy is the first step. Next, team members should monitor how they’re doing by observing each other’s classrooms or viewing 10-15-minute classroom videos. In one school implementing the four-part student feedback strategy outlined above, a team concluded that: (a) overall, the strategy wasn’t being implemented very well at all; (b) one teacher was doing much better than the others, making her the go-to person for the team; and (c) the second practice (indicating student errors in real time) wasn’t being implemented by any of the teachers.

This spurred them to set a measurable goal for improvement and redouble their efforts to implement the strategies. Some approaches they considered:

- Observe the most proficient teacher;
- Prepare and deliver mock lessons to the team;
- Research video examples of exemplary implementation;
- Bring in an outside expert;
- Video classroom samples and review and critique them as a team.

“In effect,” says Wasta, “these teachers are designing and implementing their own professional development, focusing on an issue that they have identified as important to them. Over time, they will monitor both data streams – the change in their practice and the change in student performance – and these sources of information will guide the direction of their work.” Wasta believes these are the key conditions for the PLC process to work really well in a school:

- Active leadership by the principal;
- Teacher commitment;
- Trust – between leaders and teachers, and among teachers;
- Time – a minimum of two 45-minute team meeting blocks a month;
- Patience – a recognition that progress will take weeks or months;
- Some structures – roles, agendas, notes.

“PLCs on Steroids: Moving Teacher Practice to the Center of Data Teams” by Michael Wasta in *Phi Delta Kappan*, February 2017 (Vol. 98, #5, p. 67-71), [www.kappanmagazine.org](http://www.kappanmagazine.org); Wasta can be reached at [michaelwasta@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelwasta@yahoo.com). Reprinted from Marshall Memo 674.

## Disney Tweet of the Week



Laughter is timeless,  
imagination has no age,  
and dreams are forever.

—Walt Disney



**Reading Public Schools**  
Instilling a joy of learning and inspiring  
the innovative leaders of tomorrow



**Understanding  
Disabilities**  
Learning to live with the world as it is



**Reading  
Coalition  
Against  
Substance  
Abuse**

*We invite high school students and adults*

# Just Talk About It\*\*

## Mental Health for Teens

A two hour presentation for parents, high school students, teachers and adults  
to learn the warning signs of mental health issues in adolescents and teens.

7pm An interactive presentation by Minding Your Mind\*\* to increase your awareness of

- what is considered a **crisis**
- how **stress** affects a teenager
- the symptoms of **depression**
- the warning signs most often associated with **suicide**
- **how to help** a student or a friend

8 pm Melissa Ann Hopely will share her personal experience with mental health challenges, bullying, and the help that saved her. Melissa is the author of "The People You Meet in Real Life."

Monday March 13, 2017 at 7:00pm

Doors open at 6:45 pm

RMHS Performing Arts Center

This presentation is intended for high school students and adults.

\*\*Minding Your Mind is a national educational program working to prevent crises through education  
"Just Talk About It" is Approved by the Best Practices National Registry, Section III: Adherence to Standards.

*Because awareness leads to help-seeking behavior*

**[www.understandingdisabilities.org](http://www.understandingdisabilities.org)**



## Important Websites

### RPS District Website

[www.reading.k12.ma.us](http://www.reading.k12.ma.us)

### Interface Health Services

<https://interface.williamjames.edu/community/reading>

### Need help finding mental health care?



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<https://interface.williamjames.edu/>

## Reading Public Schools Happenings

### RMHS High Fives

Below are the RMHS High Fives for last week.

### Katie McLaughlin, Class of 2017



Katie is being recognized for her perseverance and excellence in academics, activities, and service. Academically, Katie has been especially dedicated to Spanish, which she has taken over the past six years. She is hopeful that her diligence and passion in foreign language will help introduce her to exciting global experiences in the future. Katie has also enjoyed her field seminar experiences at Parker Middle School, where she works with 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in both science and English. In terms of activities, Katie has been a four year member of the Drama Club, and was a stage manager in last week's outstanding production of *The 12 Dancing Princesses*. Last year, Katie was an assistant manager in the Drama Club's performance of *The Wedding Singer* and *Edgar Allan Poe*. She is also an officer of A World of Difference and has volunteered in the RMHS Library for the past four years. In terms of service, Katie helps fundraise during the holidays for Toys for Tots and other various can drives through her church in Charlestown. She also assists the elderly and disabled adults with their daily needs at the Zelma Lacey House and even finds time to assist at Parker Middle School as a mentor to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade stage manager. In the summers, Katie works as an assistant manager at Funtown Splashtown in Maine. Next year, Katie will be attending Fitchburg State University, and will be majoring in Special Education to become a middle school teacher.

## Dennis Ebert, Class of 2017



Dennis is being recognized for his excellence in academics, activities, and service. Academically, Dennis is in the top 10% of the class of 2017, taking a rigorous course load of AP and honors classes. He is a member of both the National Honor Society and the Spanish National Honor Society, and has really enjoyed the challenges of calculus. In terms of co-curricular activities, Dennis has been a four year member of the Drama Club, coming off of another very successful production last week: *The 12 Dancing Princesses*. Additionally, Dennis has been selected to be the stage management mentor for the upcoming spring production of the musical, *1776*. He was also the stage manager for last year's hit production of *The Wedding Singer*. In terms of service, Dennis generously extends his passion for drama to the Reading community by volunteering to build sets and assist technicians at both Parker Middle School and Coolidge Middle School, as well as working with children during the summer at The Five Star Theatre Company. Next year, Dennis will be attending college and will be pursuing a major in Stage Management. Congratulations, Dennis!

### Hoops for Heart

Last Friday, Coolidge Middle School held its annual Hoops for Heart event for the American Heart Association. Below is a collage of the day long event which raised thousands of dollars for this worthy cause. Thanks to Wellness Teacher Jennifer White for coordinating the event.





## Stepping Stones...

- Our thoughts and prayers go out to Killam paraeducator **Erilne Trites** and Custodian **Ben Trites** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- Our thoughts and prayers go out to RMHS teacher **Tanya McSorley** on the loss of a loved one recently.
- We welcome the following new staff to the Reading Public Schools:
  - ✓ Catherine Taglilatela, Special education Teacher, RMHS
  - ✓ Alexandria Julian, Daily Substitute, District
  - ✓ Cara Moretti, LTS Guidance Counselor/Social Worker, Joshua Eaton
  - ✓ Daniel Pina, LTS Math Teacher, RMHS
- **We have posted** a new position. If interested, please visit <https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx> to view the job detail

Elementary Principal, Joshua Eaton Elementary School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=235>

Regular Education Tutor, 60 hours biweekly Coolidge Middle School

<https://reading.tedk12.com/hire/ViewJob.aspx?JobID=236>

## Blazing Trails...

**"#MSSAAchat Storify on #WholeChild."** On Tuesday, February 14, author, educator Starr Sackstein and Massachusetts educator and Tech specialist Suzy Brooks co-hosted #MSSAAchat on educating the #WholeChild. These two incredible educators are the keynote speakers at MASCD and MassCUE's Spring Leadership Conference at Holy Cross on March 10 (make sure you register now). The tremendous discussion and resources can be found in this Storify of the chat. [Read More](#)

## Contact Us

*The Pathways* newsletter is published weekly for the Reading Public School Community. If you have anything that you would like to share, please email your info to John Doherty at:

**"UMass Dartmouth Professor Gets NSF Grant To Help Improve STEM Teacher**

**Training."** The New Bedford (MA) Standard-Times reports the National Science Foundation has given UMass Dartmouth Associate Professor of STEM Education and Teacher Development Walter Stroup a "\$457,755 grant to develop new strategies for middle school and high school teachers to excite their students about science, technology, engineering and math careers." Stroup and his team "envision classrooms where students engage in collaborative problem solving projects - untangling traffic jams or mapping the potential spread of the Zika virus - using math and science skills and knowledge." [Read More](#)

**"Literacy in Every Classroom."** The new issue of ASCD's *Educational Leadership*, "Literacy in Every Classroom," explores how explicit literacy-based strategies can deepen students' understanding of content-area subjects. Some of the most prominent names in literacy instruction share strategies to support struggling readers, find relevant academic texts, and incorporate writing activities that enrich learning in your classroom. [Read More](#)

**File This Under Great Ideas: Interdisciplinary Greenhouse**-Math teachers, social studies teachers, and art teachers as well as community members all [envision diverse benefits from a greenhouse project](#) at Sanborn High School (Kingston, N.H.). The project is funded in part by an alumni group who supports school and community projects like this. "They want to support things that are out of the budget ... that get kids really interacting with their learning in some way," said Principal Brian Stack. The greenhouse is expected to be finished in 18 months and will facilitate learning by students in all kinds of classes (Golden, *Eagle-Tribune*).

**Understanding the Great War** -The latest education newsletter from the U.S. World War One Centennial Commission and the National World War I Museum and Memorial highlights the events and themes surrounding America's entry into World War I. This curated collection of lessons, primary source materials, and multimedia resources sets the stage for the actual 100 year anniversary of this historic event, coming up in April 2017. [Read the newsletter.](#)

**Sesame Street puts the ideas of Carol Dweck and Jeff Howard to music** – This 2014 video by Janelle Monáe captures the effort-based, growth mindset that can be so transformation in classrooms: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLeUvZvuvAs>

**Pixar on storytelling** – In collaboration with Khan Academy, Pixar created this website on storytelling <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/pixar/storytelling> with segments on the storyteller's unique perspective, favorite stories, words and character, and specific advice.

**Hans Rosling's website** – Gapminder <http://www.gapminder.org> is the website created by Swedish graphic presentation guru Hans Rosling to visually dramatize the issues he cared about, especially ending world poverty. It contains some of his last video presentations.

**Have a Great Week!**