

## WHERE SCIENCE HISTORY AND ART CONNECT

To: friends of Raven Hill

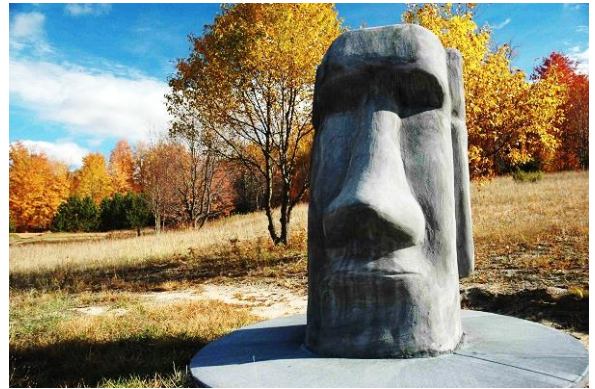
From: Cheri

Date: July 12, 2025

Re: Happy Birthday, DumDum!

At the far side of the Ancient World exhibit at Raven Hill Discovery Center, this towering figure has fascinated visitors for two decades. With its broad brow, long nose and stern expression, DumDum is a replica of the actual Easter Island heads that are scattered across Rapa Nui, commonly known as Easter Island. It instantly sparks visitor interest, as it offers a glimpse into one of the world's most mysterious sculptures.

On guard



DumDum stands at attention and watches over all the visitors traveling through time in the Ancient World.

Up close and personal with DumDum



DumDum poses for photo-op with family!

Our DumDum captures the iconic look of the actual Moai, but there are significant differences. First, most of the original Moai sculptures are much larger than Raven Hill's 10-foot version. The actual sculptures average about 13 feet tall with some reaching 30 feet tall. Second, the authentic statues were painstakingly carved from a soft rock called volcanic sandstone or "tuff" (pronounced "tough") and then polished. Our DumDum is Styrofoam covered with chicken wire and five coats of cement.

Third, DumDum is one of a kind. Centuries ago nearly 1000 statues were carved by Polynesian ancestors of Easter Island's current inhabitants. Fourth, Raven Hill's replica is the head only. The true ones are full body figures with long torso and carved arms and hands. Over time shifting earth and local tradition buried many of the torsos, leaving just the heads visible.

Archaeological digs later revealed their full body form.

Finally, DumDum's purpose is to educate and entertain. The original Moai had spiritual meaning with each one representing a powerful ancestor to watch over villagers.

DumDum provides a meaningful introduction to one of history's most fascinating sculptural traditions. It is one of the many examples of blurred boundaries that exist in Raven Hill's Ancient World. It connects the volcanic rock of Easter Island used to create the art that preserves the history of past times. The Moai are a symbol of ancient ingenuity and a reminder of all that we can learn from the past. DumDum may not have that same spiritual meaning, but it certainly carries the spirit of discovery for all who visit this iconic sculpture at Raven Hill.

With that spirit in mind, we invite you to join us in a celebration of **DumDum's 20th birthday**. Join us in the Ancient World from **3 to 4 PM on Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup>**, for some fun activities and plenty of birthday cheer for this beloved replica who's been watching over Raven Hill's hillside since 2005. It's a great chance to explore how ancient art, modern technology, and a lot of fun can come together for one unforgettable birthday party. If DumDum could speak, just like in the movie, he might even say, "DumDum, give me gum gum!" Raven Hill's main campus will be open from 2pm to 3pm for those who want to explore the rest of the Raven Hill Discovery Center campus before the party begins.

If you can't make it to the birthday party, come when you can! Summer hours are in effect. Raven Hill is open weekdays from 10am to 4pm; Saturdays from noon to 4pm; and Sundays from 2pm to 4pm, as well as holidays and other times by appointment. Admission is \$10 per person. In addition to classes, workshops and events, Raven Hill is also a perfect place for scout and 4H activities, birthday parties for youngsters & adults, retreats, weddings and other gatherings. For more information, call Cheri at 231.536.3369 or email [info@miravenhill.org](mailto:info@miravenhill.org)

Cheri

Moai in situ on Easter Island



Moai in the making



*Former summer staffer Susan Banyai Howard was tasked with putting the final touches on DumDum, our Easter Island head.*

### UPCOMING CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

Sign up soon by calling 231.536.3369 or email [info@miravenhill.org](mailto:info@miravenhill.org)

**Discovering Poetry at Raven Hill with Holly**  
July 17 | 10am-1pm | \$30

**Portraiture with Elaine**  
July 24, 25 | 10am-3pm | \$150

**Clay Whistle Making with Sally**  
August 2, 9 | 1-4pm | \$60

**3D Printer Build with John**  
August 7, 14, 21 | 6-8pm | Cost TBD