

LLP – “I had the time of my life!”

It was a hot, sticky morning and the grass was thick with dew as 36 bright eyed students, now called scholars, trekked across Endicott College. They were on their way to the Academic Center for their first day of classes at LLP, the Leadership and Learning Program. There, blocking their entry into room AC129 was yellow “CRIME SCENE” tape. They all just looked at one another, not sure of what to do or where to go when all of a sudden, someone came to the door. “I am sorry, you can’t come in,” he said. “This is a crime scene. A very valuable piece of equipment has been stolen and I need your help.” The scholars were handed gloves and entered the room to begin collecting, submitting and analyzing forensic evidence, captivated by this introduction to LLP.

In 2008, while it was only a vision, creating a summer residential program for students that would focus on the fields of biotechnology, computer science, environmental science, visual art, and drama. Fast forward to July 2010. Thanks to full scholarships from various organizations and local foundations, 36 exceptional 8th – and 9th – grade students from Lynn, walked onto the ocean front campus of Endicott

College. They were handed everything they would need for the three weeks ahead, from toiletries, linens, and towels to school supplies and an LLP embroidered duffle bag and polo shirt. They devoted over 100 hours to in-depth learning, interactive activities, group projects, leadership training, and field research. Chosen for their interests and leadership potential, students took full



LLP scholars learning how to extract DNA from strawberries.

advantage of Endicott’s high-tech labs and equipment and the College’s new Center for the Arts, as well as the campus’s natural environment and sports facilities.

Students lived on campus Monday through Friday, engaging with professors, administrators, staff and each other. Endicott faculty members, along with teachers from

the Lynn Public Schools, NEC’s Northshore Recovery High School, and Gordon College, led classes and activities and mentored students in the creation of capstone projects. These projects, presented on the final day of the program to friends and families, had titles ranging from “Scholarly Smackdown: Genetic Testing” to “Lego Robotics Race” to “MIT’s Scratch Programming.” It was the culmination of three weeks of hard work and an overwhelming sense of pride. One student said it best: “I have had the time of my life and I just don’t want it to end.”

Combining academic endeavors with residential living and recreational activities enabled these students to enjoy a complete pre-college experience, one which fostered creativity, critical thinking, and leadership skills. A grateful parent expressed, “This program has been a success, not just for the academics, but for all of the other life skills that have been taught to my son... plus it has shown him that he can be independent, go far in life and do whatever it is he wants to do.”

Thank you to Shawn Fisher, Coordinator of Arts & Sciences at Endicott College, for her contribution to this article.

Students embark on food services career

Collaboration between three Consortium programs – Embark, North Shore Academy – McKeown and the Kevin O’Grady School (KOGS) – is giving three young adults valuable on the job training in food services while providing a delicious lunch for KOGS employees. The three Embark students pictured here rolled out the program in July. Now it is fall and they are once again offering gourmet salads and roll-up sandwiches, which they prepare in the Academy kitchen and deliver to KOGS every Tuesday and Thursday. The students create and circulate menus, take orders, clip coupons, shop for ingredients, prepare and deliver the food. It has been a positive experience for all. One student says she loves working with food and wants to continue after graduating from Embark. Another student discovered she prefers doing office work! The third student says he loves making Grilled Chicken Caesar Salad rollups – it’s his favorite. KOGS staff – watch for the fliers in your mailboxes. At \$5, this is a bargain. Prices will increase slightly to add a drink.



Story and photos by Deborah Gardner Walker

MEMBER DISTRICTS: Beverly, Danvers, Gloucester, Hamilton-Wenham Regional, Lynn, Lynnfield, Manchester/Essex Regional, Marblehead, Masconomet Regional, Nahant, North Reading, Peabody, Reading, Rockport, Salem, Swampscott, Tri-Town Elementary Union, Triton School Union

ACES Program is Consortium's "Ace in a Hole"

Colleen's Column



Welcome to a new school year. Northshore Education Consortium has seen many changes over the last few months. With the retirement of Bob Gass, I have begun my tenure as the executive director of

NEC. Thanks to the many opportunities Bob arranged for me to meet with him and NEC staff, the transition has been a smooth one. My thanks also go out to the central office staff and administrative team for the knowledge and experience they have shared and the support they have provided.

Throughout the application process for this position, I had an opportunity to speak to the many constituents of NEC: parents, educators, administrators, support staff, board of directors and special education directors of our member districts. I heard great things about the dynamic administrative team, the positive direction the Consortium is moving in, and the excellent support from our member districts. The enthusiasm of Consortium constituents was contagious. The more I heard, the more I wanted to be part of the Northshore Education Consortium team.

Special education is my passion and has been throughout my career. My goal is to utilize this passion to continue to move the Consortium towards excellence.

First and foremost, we aim to provide excellent services for students in a fiscally responsible manner. We look to expand our technology resources, offer curriculum based on core standards, provide professional development opportunities for staff and support parents through resources and workshops.

I look forward to collaborating with the administrative team, professional and support staff, and parents of NEC students regarding what is working and what can be improved.

I am excited to be onboard and ready and eager to face the challenges this new position presents.

Colleen Dolan, Executive Director

Photo by Deborah Gardner Walker

It might sound counter-intuitive, but if Maureen Michaud, Director of the Consortium's ACES program, and her staff do their job right, they will provide the support needed to keep special needs children in their own school districts, rather than transfer to a school run by the Consortium.

Michaud, who started the integrated pre-school program for the Beverly Public Schools many moons ago and then came to the Consortium in 1995 to teach autistic students, likes to say, "My job is to put myself out of a job. We are there to train others, not do for them."

Training and empowerment are the models for the ACES program. ACES is short for Access to Consultation in Educational Services. The Consortium operates five programs that provide direct services for special needs students with a wide range of physical, emotional and cognitive challenges. In Michaud's case, her job is to observe students, recommend services and then train students' educators and parents to provide those services.

On-site consultation from the Consortium's ACES program is available to school districts for a fee at an hourly rate. According to Michaud, some districts need only one or two visits, some contract for yearlong services. Michaud says she prefers longer-term arrangements, because "then I can see the plan through to the end. Sometimes, what you see at the beginning changes as time goes along and I can recommend adjustments as needed." Michaud often matches up similar needs between districts to craft together an economical plan for schools.

Michaud has been directing the ACES program for four years. She is both a certified SPED and regular teacher. She has an M.S. in Marriage and Family Counseling, an M.Ed. in Special Education, and a graduate certificate in Applied Behavioral Analysis. Her staff includes two home trainers, two vision teachers and a part-time orientation

and mobility teacher.

Michaud explains that services, such as orientation and mobility training, are driven by a student's IEP. The mobility teacher provides hands-on training in functional life skills, such as showing a physically challenged student how to navigate public transportation. "She will get on the train with the student, help him get a Charlie card, pay for his ticket, read the train schedule."

"Parent training" may be specified on a child's IEP and the ACES staff will go into the home to help parents help their child to cope in the community doing basic, but high anxiety tasks for some children, such as getting a haircut or going to the dentist. Michaud also goes into classrooms to observe and advise on behavior issues, such as bolting and self-injury. She is always very circumspect and protects the child's confidentiality and privacy. She never announces she is there for a specific child, but rather asks the class if she can join them today or says she is there to watch the teacher.

Michaud works with children of all ages, but her heart and soul is with the pre-schoolers. After all, that's where she started her career. She recently celebrated what she describes as "a sweet moment" with a four-year-old in a SPED pre-school class. She had been helping staff to work with the boy on early skills, such as toileting and pointing to request what he wanted. "I walked into the room recently and he pointed at me," Michaud says, her face beaming. "It was a really sweet moment because we had worked for months and months to teach him that skill."

Story by Deborah Gardner Walker

HOW TO CONTACT ACES:

Maureen Michaud, M.Ed., BCBA
ACES Program Director
Northshore Education Consortium
(978) 232-9755, ext.1430
nec_maureen@yahoo.com



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My Summer Experience by Sarah C., Recovery High School Student

I left school, and all of a sudden I didn't have anything to do – or so it seemed. For weeks, I slept late just because I could, lounged around the house, ate junk food, stayed out too late, and did all sorts of ridiculous things. That blissful state didn't last long this summer for me, because my dad decided I needed to learn a lesson in life. On the day of my 16th birthday, I got a phone call saying that I had gotten a job at a hotel. I proceeded to spend the rest of the summer doing physical labor and taking abuse. I am asking you, was this worth \$9 an hour?

“Chamber maid” -that was my title. My job description was to clean everything until it was spotless, make the rooms look like nobody had ever set foot in them before, restock the free stuff every day, and,

most importantly, make myself scarce. But the uniforms! Oh, the uniforms! I had to wear a smock in the hotel's colors, which apparently were sickly blue and dirty white, plus adhere to a truly attractive dress code that included no makeup, hair out of my face at all times, shorts that extended over my knees, and sleeves that covered my shoulders.

I went home after my first day and slept until my second day. When my dad asked me what was so tiring about my job, I couldn't even begin to tell him. It was everything. It was lifting up the king-sized mattresses to get the sheets on them (with no upper body strength to speak of), it was being on my hands and knees scrubbing tile floors in the bathrooms until they shone, it was removing large

tufts of hair from the shower drains, it was running back and forth to the laundry room to get things – like a gofer.

Throughout this period of summer fun, I discovered something about myself. Actually, two things. One is that I am a very tolerant woman when I need to be. And the other is that I can't clean to save my life. I worked with women who had been chamber maids for twenty years, and they were not patient with my lack of experience. I finally exploded and told one of the women that it was not my fault that I didn't do things perfectly, because I'm not perfect, and neither is she. This did not go over too well, and needless to say, I didn't last past the summer. All I know is that I won't be a chamber maid when I grow up.



the
**Family
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at the Northshore Education Consortium

NEW
for Fall of 2010!
Education & Support Groups

Parents of Children with Visual Impairment

An opportunity for parents to come together in a supportive environment to learn strategies, skills and the newest information on visual impairment.

When: the first Wednesday of every month from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Family Center

Cost: \$5.00 per session

Boardmaker Parent Training

This workshop is an introduction to Boardmaker, where parents will learn to navigate the program and leave the workshop with a finished personalized product.

When: Oct. 19th & Nov. 16th from 11-12:30 p.m. at the Family Center, Beverly

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- Autism Cruises is dedicated to servicing the cruising travel needs for every individual and family faced with Autism and Asperger Syndrome, and all Cognitive, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities as well as (but not limited to) Cerebral Palsy and Down Syndrome. Please visit: autismontheseas.com
- Are you wondering if Disney World could ever be a possibility for you and for your child with autism? Go to www.allears.net/pl/dis_aut.htm to learn about the special accommodations made by the favorite theme park and maybe a trip to the “Magic Kingdom” could be a dream come true.
- You can still request passes from the Family Center to Storyland in New Hampshire, Museum of Fine Arts, Peabody Essex Museum, the Franklin or the Stone Zoo.

CONTACT INFORMATION

112 Sohier Road, Beverly • Phone: 978-232-9755 Ext 1328 • Email: mmyers@nsedu.org

West Peabody Summer Fun



Written by Northshore Academy Lower School Staff

The Northshore Academy Lower School & Assessment Program's summer session offers a “braided” curriculum designed to support a learner's continued social, emotional and academic growth during the summer months.

This summer, learners participated in creating a Mastery Project, which requires them to synthesize and apply material from all areas of the curriculum. They combine what they learned into a single project, designed to demonstrate their mastery of content and create something that is both “real” and “important.” At the end of the summer, we invited our families to Exhibition Day. What a success!

In addition to our core summer curriculum, we did a school-wide cultural enrichment/international studies module. The learners explored the language, dress, and holidays of the United States, France, Greece, Portugal and China. We ended the study module with an International Food Day. Each learning center prepared samples of food from their country and provided samples for the entire school to enjoy.



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The PlaySpace Campaign Committee, from left: KOGS teacher Joshua Fouser, Kate Cabot, Jeff Shwom from the Development Office, Maureen Trefry of Eastern Bank, KOGS parents Eva Quinlan and Alison Watt (also a Friends Board Member) and KOGS Physical Therapy Director Beth Currier. Not pictured: Gerald MacKillop of Beverly Hospital and Campaign Coordinator Deborah Walker (the photographer).



Online Giving!

The Friends of NEC offers online giving as a donation option. Visit www.nsedu.org for General Fund and PlaySpace donations. If you would like to learn more about giving opportunities, please call The Development Office at 978.232.9755 ext. 1251

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Colleen Dolan
Executive Director

Jeffrey Shwom
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The Friends would like to extend a special thank you to those donors that attended our October 5th Donor Recognition Event at Kevin O'Grady School. We would especially like to extend our sincerest thanks to those individuals who contributed to our Help Us Build a Special PlaySpace campaign!

The PlaySpace of Dreams: Build it and they will come.

Thanks to our great PlaySpace Campaign Committee (pictured above) who worked hard to raise \$125,000 to "Build a Special PlaySpace." Thank you to all of our parents, staff and supporters for their generous response as well. We met our goal! We will be breaking ground this fall on Phase One of our planned physical improvements to the campus of the Kevin O'Grady School in Beverly. By spring, the younger children will have a long-dreamed of PlaySpace, a beautiful playground that will be useable by children of all abilities. Phase Two of the campaign to Build a Special PlaySpace, along with a basketball court and track for students ages 10 to 22, kicks-off this academic year.

Story and Photo by Deborah Gardner Walker



Students and staff from the Northshore Academy's High School Program embarked on an overnight hiking trip to the Pinkham Notch area of New Hampshire. Youth Opportunities Program (YOP) certified staff from the Academy introduced the students to basic hiking and various outdoor adventure skills. The group hiked to the top of Square Ledge, viewed a 60 foot waterfall and traveled to the top of Mount Washington, "Home of the World's Worst Weather." This two day hiking adventure provided these students their first opportunity to see and enjoy the wonders of the White Mountains National Forest.

2009-2010 Honor Roll of Donors

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, the Friends of NEC, staff and teachers, and the entire Consortium community, I want to thank you all for your generosity during the past year. The support of our donors helps to fund and support our offerings that make the Consortium the best provider of special needs services and programs on the North Shore. From our annual Celebrate Our Future to our successful Walk and Roll event, thank you for your support.



Colleen Dolan, Executive Director



*Please note that while each giving level is named after a Consortium program, giving at any level goes to benefit all students of the Consortium.

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The Friends of NEC worked with the Consortium to fundraise over \$230,000 last fiscal year through focused efforts in grant writing, event planning and direct mail appeal. Some of the wonderful opportunities our students were afforded include: music therapy lessons at Embark, new microscopes and science displays at Northshore Academy at McKeown, and nearly \$50,000 for technology consulting that will impact the effectiveness and efficiency of our business and classroom processes.

2009-2010 Honor Roll of Donors

MAJOR EVENTS

Our two major events helped us fundraise over \$55,000 in support of our programs. The “Help Us Build a Special PlaySpace” initiative secured over \$100,000 for Phase One of the PlaySpace Build at our Kevin O’Grady School in 2010 alone, pushing us closer to building our first playground at the Consortium that is accessible and useable for children of all abilities.

For more information about the Initiative, please visit www.nsedu.org and click on the PlaySpace Logo. Online giving opportunities are available for this initiative.



HELP US BUILD A SPECIAL PLAYSPACE PHASE ONE

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TRIBUTE & MEMORIAL GIFTS

Throughout the course of the fiscal year 2009-2010, the Friends of the Northshore Education Consortium has been the grateful recipient of tribute and memorial gifts, which pay homage to loved ones and friends, while enhancing the quality of services offered to our students. The Friends would further like to honor these individuals in this special Tribute section:

Bernard J. and Bunny Filler
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In memory of Peter Miller

Other Giving Opportunities:

Online Giving

A convenient method for giving, the Friends of NEC now offers an online giving option through two secure donation pages on our website. Contributions of any denomination are accepted using this donation form and will go to benefit the greatest need within our organization. Donations will go to supporting and continuing the services and programs that The Consortium provides to our students, families, and communities.

Bequests

A simple yet powerful way to remember the Consortium is to include a gift to NEC through a will. A bequest of any size is welcome and can be made out to: Friends of Northshore Education Consortium. Giving through a will is another way to ensure the continuing support of our mission.

Thank you to all of our donors. Your generosity allows the Consortium to continue to make a positive difference in the lives of students and families on the North Shore.

If you would like to inquire as to how you might best support the students of the Consortium, please contact our development office at 978-232-977 ext. 1251. Information is also available online at www.nsedu.org.

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