



New year off to a great start!



The fifth annual SOAR/Embark Program International Dinner drew a large turnout, including Embark student Steve Roller and his parents Craig and Kelly pictured above. Attendees enjoyed sharing dishes of many different cultures. The festivities included a holiday-themed photo booth, portraits by caricature artist John Doherty, the holiday basket raffle, fun games and prizes.

Message from Executive Director Fran Rosenberg

New Initiatives Expanded to Assist Struggling Students in Our Districts

It has been a fabulous fall here at Northshore Education Consortium and we are looking forward to what the new year brings.

We started the school year with full enrollment in all of our programs and several new initiatives.

We are very excited about the continuation and expansion of two grant-funded programs designed to support students in our region who are struggling to remain successful in their local public schools. The NEC Connections Wraparound Program,

OTHER PROGRAM NEWS

Vote for Franklin!

Franklin, the Northshore Recovery High School's emotional support dog, has won an Honorable Mention in the Petco Foundation's Holiday Wishes campaign. The recognition came with a \$1,000 award for Cape Ann Animal Aid Association, the shelter that Recovery High Art Teacher Mary Devin adopted Franklin from last year.

Franklin now has a chance to win a \$25,000 People's Choice award for the shelter, but he needs our votes to do it. You can vote for Franklin until 1 pm on Friday, December 20th by clicking on this link: [VOTE](http://www.petcofoundation.org/vote)

funded through a \$115,000 two-year grant from the Tower Foundation, is providing services to students in five of our member districts.

The PASS (Positive Alternatives to Suspension) Program, run in collaboration with our partners at the YMCA and JRI/Children's Friend, has been a huge success and received state funding for the next five years. The program served 200 students from nine participating districts in its first year and has quickly become a model for regional replication. (Message continued below)



New KOG Principal Martha Krol in the classroom.

We were thrilled to welcome Martha Krol as the new Principal of the Kevin O'Grady School. Martha brings a great deal of experience as a special education administrator in several of our districts, most recently Marblehead.

We are also very excited that Windi Bowditch has moved into a new position as Director of Clinical Training and Consultation. In this role she will work with all of our schools to enhance the quality of clinical programming and mental health supports, and will be available to provide training, consultation, and supervision to member districts.

In addition, we have added a part-time English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher this year, so that we can begin to more systematically address the needs of our English Learners.

I am proud to be out in the community, representing the Consortium on several regional and statewide committees, as well as on the Board of the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC).

In this role, I was pleased to host MOEC's first "Learning Tour." Leaders from collaboratives throughout the state visited the Kevin O'Grady School, observed in our classrooms and engaged in a discussion of best-practices for students with severe disabilities. (Message continued below)

[FOR FRANKLIN.](#)

Mary submitted the moving story of how Franklin was chosen as the dog for Recovery High, and the impact his presence has made at the school. Not surprisingly, the story grabbed the Petco Foundation's attention. Here's an excerpt.

"Every day, Franklin walks into the school like it's an extension of our home, strutting down the halls, visiting the office for treats and stopping to greet students as they arrive. His presence serves as an incentive for productivity and encourages healthy coping skills. Some students report that he is the reason they want to come to school at all.

"Franklin respects the journey that each one of us is traveling. For the students, he is an unbiased confidant. While he cannot actually fix their problems, he'll be right by their side as they work through them. When Franklin senses a student in need of support, he doesn't waste time in seeking them out, those soulful eyes of his meeting theirs as they pull him close. It's his job, but I swear he doesn't know it. He's just doing what comes naturally to him."

- Mary Devin, Franklin's owner

**Northshore Academy
Upper School**



SOAR and Embark students at the Topsfield Fair.

Students from all programs visited the Topsfield Fair this fall, thanks to complimentary tickets donated to us by the fair once again this year. Students went on many other fun field trips as well, including apple picking, and got to enjoy the beautiful weather.

There were other fun happenings in addition to academics. KOG students celebrated the season at their Halloween Dance; elementary students at the Northshore Academy Lower School enjoyed a magic show; and students at the upper academy played intramural soccer.

Taking learning outside of the classroom -- Topsfield Vocational Academy students have been studying beach erosion on Plum Island. And, vocational opportunities for our SOAR and Embark students were greatly increased through new partnerships with local businesses. Students work at nearly 20 sites, including restaurants, stores, doggy daycare, an assisted living facility, chocolate shop, Salem Public Library and community agencies. (Message continued below)



Northshore Academy Upper School students (grades 7 to 12) explored the great outdoors this fall.

Students have gone on field trips to Chebacco Lake in Essex (shown above), Stage Fort Park in Gloucester, the Coolidge Reservation in Manchester, Flax Pond in Lynn, the Danvers Rail Trail, and the trails behind Gordon College.

RHS: Sharing Gratitude



Many thanks to our friends at the Second Congregational Church in Beverly for hosting again this year a wonderful Thanksgiving meal for our Northshore Recovery High School students, staff, alumni, family and friends.

Before the meal, the RHS community very openly and movingly shared what they are grateful for this year. Here is what Felix, class of 2021 wrote:



Above - a transition program student working with dogs at North Shore Dog doggy daycare in Danvers. The transition program has greatly expanded its partnerships with local businesses to provide nearly 20 internships for SOAR and Embark students. Other locations include: Breakaway function hall in Danvers, Brightview Assisted Living in Danvers, CB Stuffer chocolatier in Swampscott, Harry Lee Cole Elementary School in Boxford, Salem Community Life Center, Copyright Clearance Center in Salem, CVS stores in Beverly, Salem and Lynn; Loyal Canines in Beverly and Peabody, Marshall's in Danvers, Spirit of 76 Bookstore in Marblehead, Salem Community Life Center, Salem Public Library, Salem Access TV, St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Marblehead, Willowdale Horse Farm in Topsfield, and You're With Us!, a nonprofit service provider in Methuen that creates inclusion opportunities for young adults with disabilities. Gaining employment skills and job experience is crucial to the students becoming independent after graduation.

Executive Director's Message Continued:

We continue to receive incredible support from our donors. Through the generosity of the Raffa family, we have been able to upgrade the Recovery High School's music studio. Longtime major corporate supporter Lincoln Investments hosted a golf tournament for us in August at the beautiful Ipswich Golf Club which raised over \$23,000 for our programs.

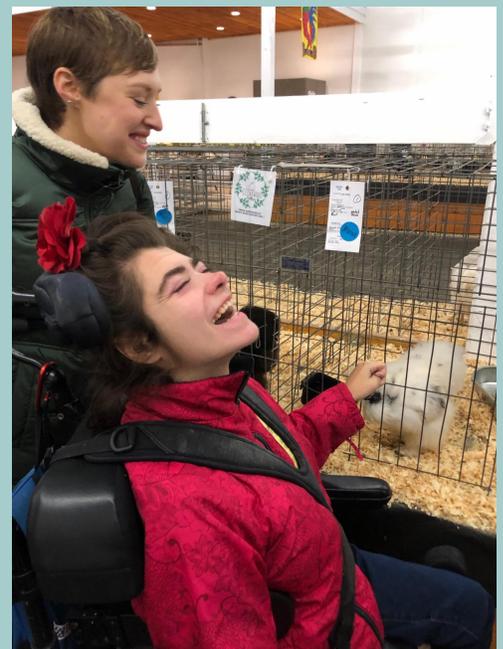
It is a pleasure and privilege to be at the helm of such a vibrant and exciting organization, and to watch the miracles small and

"I'm grateful I'm not dead. I'm grateful that I am not a crack addict. I'm grateful that I have my life decently together at 16. I'm less of a mess than most people my age.

I'm grateful that I'm not homeless. I have somewhere to sleep at night. Food gets put into my stomach every day. I have all the necessities that I need to survive. I may not always be happy, and life isn't unicorns and rainbows, but I am content with life....

I am grateful for all of the supportive people in my life who helped me become the young man I am today. I am grateful that I am young and still have plenty of time to figure out what I want to do with my life, because I have no idea yet."

Kevin O'Grady School



KOG students, like students in all of the other programs, enjoyed going to the Topsfield Fair. They had a chance to see the agricultural wonders, including a 1,000+ pound pumpkin, and pet

large that occur with our students each and every day. Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support. Best wishes for a Happy Holiday and Happy New Year. - **Francine H. Rosenberg, M.Ed., Executive Director**



Thank you to our friends at Lincoln Financial! A longtime corporate supporter, Lincoln Financial hosted a golf tournament this past summer that raised \$23,000 to support the Consortium's programs. Pictured above are (l-r) Financial Advisors David DeCesare (left) and Graham Bacheller, Friends of NEC Board President, both of Lincoln Financial's Beverly office, with Director of Development Sarah Wadhams-Seiler.

TVA students sail on Adventure Schooner

For the past couple of years, word working students at the Topsfield Vocational Academy have partnered with Harold Burnham and the Essex Shipbuilding Museum to build a skiff. They launched the most recent one that they built last spring.

This effort has led to a great interest in wooden ships and to a number of students volunteering on the Adventure Schooner in Gloucester this past summer. Adventure is an old fishing vessel that was built in 1926 in Essex and named a National Historic Landmark in 1988. The schooner provided wind jammer cruises up and down the coast of Maine before moving to Gloucester in 1988 and beginning a complete restoration, which took more than two decades.

The schooner is now seaworthy again and TVA students got to sail on it in Gloucester Harbor at summer's end. You can see in the photo below that they had a beautiful day for sailing! Students helped to raise and lower the massive sails.

fuzzy animals.



The Kevin O'Grady School offers vocational training as part of its curriculum. In-school job training includes recycling, sorting and stocking items. Above a student refills a rack of Keurig K-cups.

Lower Academy



Learners at the Northshore Academy Lower School enjoyed many fall activities along with their academics, including a day at the Topsfield Fair, painting pumpkins and harvesting vegetables from their summer garden.

The school has a therapy dog to provide emotional support and love during the school day. Here's a student (below) enjoying special time with "Charlie Brown."



SOAR & EMBARK



Among the many fun fall field trips taken by our Transition Program students was this one (above) to pick apples at Russell Orchards in Ipswich.

But it's not all play and no work for these students. They get on the job training and work experience through internships at local businesses. Below, a student makes pizza at Breakaway Restaurant and Function Hall in Danvers.



Festivus 5K Race Winners

Festivus 5K for Autism raises \$27,000

More than 300 runners took to the streets of Salem to participate in the 8th Annual Festivus 5K for Autism on Sunday, December 15th. The event, hosted by Finz Seafood & Grill, and run by Upper Academy parents Cindy and Rick Johnson, raised \$27,000 for our students. Many staff, students and friends of the Consortium ran, walked, volunteered and cheered folks on. Beverly State Representative Jerry Parisella, a longtime friend and supporter of the Consortium, took part in the race again this year. At the after party, racers enjoyed muffin tops and stumps baked by the Upper Academy's culinary students, and awards for the winning runners, best costumes and grievance.

To see lots of photos from this year's Festivus 5K, see our Facebook post [Festivus 5K Pix](#).



Consortium Clinician Jennifer Orlando and Upper Academy Physical Education Teacher Mike Burns running the Festivus 5K for Autism. More

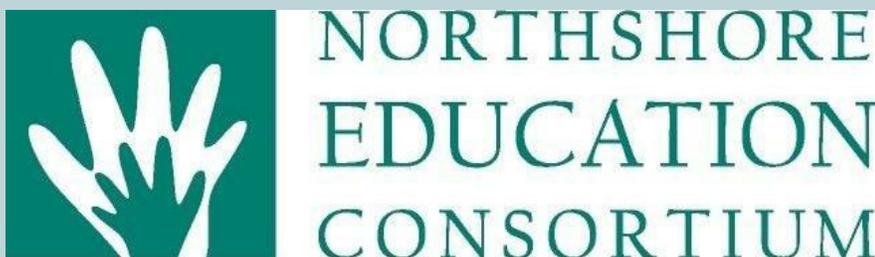
photos right.

East Boston Savings Banks awards \$5,000 grant

Thank you to the East Boston Savings Bank Charitable Foundation for awarding us again this year a \$5,000 grant for Chromebooks for our high school students. The bank has provided \$5,000 per year for five consecutive years, totaling \$25,000 for student technology. Pictured below are Grants Manager Deborah Gardner Walker (seated left) and Director of Educational Technology Eric Aldrich (standing third from left). Standing far right is former Friends of the Northshore Education Consortium board member Jeff Dickinson of East Boston Savings Bank.



Adam Linsky, 22, of Marblehead (above), was the men's overall winner of the annual 5K for Autism through Salem, with a time of 17:23. Olivia King, 16, of Swampscott, (below) was the women's overall winner with a time of 22:16. Congratulations to them and all who completed the race.



Newsletter Edited by Deborah Gardner Walker

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