



Fall 2021

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Pulling together, focusing on our mission, and practicing gratitude

Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends;

Despite the continuing challenges of the pandemic, our school year is off to a positive start! Our amazing team has persevered and risen to the challenge, pulling together as a community, focusing on our mission, and practicing gratitude. Watching the extraordinary work of our staff as the school year began, seeing the smiling faces of students as they made friends and learned new skills reminds me that even in tough times, NEC is a place where small miracles take place each and every day!

These quotes from our recent graduates and/or their parents remind us of why we do the work that we do:

“My son is in a positive place and feeling confident about his future.”

“My daughter now has a goal that she set. If it weren’t for your school and staff, I feel she would not have accomplished as much as she has. I never thought her transformation would be this great. I cannot express how thankful I am.”

“I have gone from feeling lost to having options that I feel positive and passionate about. Finally, I am ready to see the things I can do in the world!”



I’d now like to share what each of our programs are up to... Dave Mercier, our new Northshore Academy Upper School Principal has jumped right into his new role with many ideas and lots of energy. Prior to becoming Principal, Mr. Mercier taught English at the Upper School and played critical roles in leading the middle school team, co-coordinating NEC’s mentoring program, helping to develop and run the very successful outdoor education program, and serving as a mentor/supervisor to many teachers and instructional assistants. Dave brings passion and insight to the position and has exciting new ideas for the Upper School, including the development of a new Media Program and an expansion of outdoor

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Program News

Harvest Time!



(top & bottom left) Colby & Billy, tending to the school's garden which has become a primary focus during the pandemic! (bottom right) Amber and TVA Staff, Meg delivering home grown sunflowers to classrooms!

“I have gone from feeling lost to having options that I feel positive and passionate about. Finally, I am ready to see the things I can do in the world!” -NEC Graduate

TOPSFIELD VOCATIONAL ACADEMY & STEP

TVA staff member, Meg Brady did an outstanding job overseeing the Garden Elective with a group of students that began back in March when seeds were planted indoors and quickly became a focus! The students' attentiveness to the plants each day paid off as, shortly thereafter, the seeds began to sprout. The outdoor garden was then prepared for planting in early March and the plants were moved outside in June with vegetables and herbs being enjoyed ever since! Meg and her students shared their produce with Chef PJ and the Culinary Program who used the vegetables in their recipes, but the students were also thrilled to take vegetables home and share with their families.

The garden harvest has included: kale, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchinis, beets, swiss chard, green beans, potatoes, morning glories, zinnias, sunflowers, parsley, cilantro, mint, basil and a great crop of pumpkins. (see pictures to the left)

NORTHSHORE ACADEMY LOWER

Back in 2018, our dear friends Linzee Coolidge and John & Mollie Byrnes supported the building of raised garden beds and a year long collaboration with Backyard Growers out of Gloucester! This garden project was a huge hit equipping staff and students with the knowledge and the tools needed to start a “farm to table” project! The Garden Project has grown adding more raised beds and incorporating a Salad Day and a fall harvest when staff and students can celebrate all of their hard work! Plus, tons of vegetables have traveled home with students to be savored with their families! (see pictures below)



(left) Keny and Lexis picking lettuce out of our raised beds for Salad Day. (middle) Damien enjoying Fall Harvest Soup. (right) The students are able to enjoy the benefits of our fresh grown vegetables in our farm to table project.



NORTHSHORE RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL

Northshore Recovery High School (NRHS) just held its 14th graduation celebrating the lives of students determined to use what has challenged them to prepare them for their future! NRHS remains grateful to the Second Congregational Church of Beverly where graduations in recent years have been held and whose members have embraced our students during some of the most pivotal moments of their lives.



KEVIN O'GRADY SCHOOL

Kevin O'Grady School (KOG) students received a warm welcome back on the first day of school and are now getting back to routines of hands-on learning, services, enrichments and vocational training. KOG is also excited to announce that with the support of a grant from New England Biolabs, the school's new Copy Center is up and running providing copy services to the school and local community.



TRANSITIONS PROGRAMS

Student's in the SOAR Program participated in a six week research report class during the Extended Summer Year Program where they were tasked with finding a news topic of interest dating anytime from the 1800's to 2021! After identifying and researching their news topic, they created a Google slide presentation which they proudly shared with the class on the last day of the program.



NORTHSHORE ACADEMY UPPER

Northshore Academy Upper's (NSAU) Outdoor Program has purchased five new canoes thanks to a grant from the Cell Signaling Technology. Students had many opportunities to get outside during the Extended School Year Program (ESY) and will continue their outdoor adventures this year!



TVA Print Shop

Like so many of our programs during the pandemic, internships in the community were halted and as a result, some "in-house" opportunities were created! The Print Shop out at the Topsfield Vocational Academy had been a long time hope for the program but quickly came together providing a host of hands-on learning experiences for students ranging from graphic design, to production to marketing and sales! The Print Shop completed its first job back in February and has been creating and printing custom clothing since!

Donor Support Makes Us Stronger Together

Development Office Update



Thank you....

Those words are simple but they are perfect. Giving matters. It matters to our students, our families, our staff and do you know who else it matters to... the cities and towns who entrust their students to us. Philanthropy supports our mission to keep our tuition rates low and the quality of our education high.

So, thank YOU. We simply could not do what we do without you.

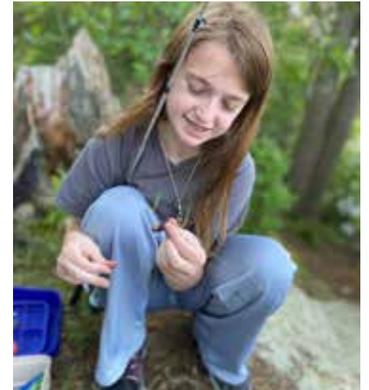
That being said, we are thrilled to share with you that philanthropic support is paving the way for a state of the art "Vocational Laboratory," (VocLab) being built out in a newly rented space at the Salem State Enterprise Center for our SOAR and Embark programs. The VocLab is an innovative and blended learning environment teaching career readiness, post-secondary education support, and independent life skills.



And here is Trevor Johnson (NEC Alum/ college student at St. Michael's) and Mr. Willwerth, one of his teachers while at Northshore Academy Upper School (NSAU), sharing a proud moment! Mr. Willwerth has been a longtime mentor to Trevor since he was at NSAU, so he was one of

the first people he added to his Eagle Scout Court of Honor ceremony over the summer. Trevor's speech not only articulated Mr. Willwerth's impact but also that of the school. He even gave a shout out to recently retired and former Principal Ken Letzring!

Trevor and his family have been part of the Consortium family for many years. His parents Cindy & Rick Johnson are the founders and Race Directors of our very own Festivus 5K for Autism! Check it out and come run (or walk) with us!!



"Our son is currently a sophomore in a pre-med program and just excels at organic chemistry! The opportunities that he has before him would not have been possible without NEC. Their therapeutic programming allowed him to learn coping mechanisms for his social and emotional needs so that he could focus on his education. This prepared him to be successful in college and will continue to open doors in his life that we did not think possible." -Parents of NEC graduate

Thank you! Your giving matters...

"Every student. Every day. Whatever it takes."

Support NEC: www.nsedu.org



Upcoming Event



Festivus 5K for Autism

Sunday, December 12, 2021

Join us for the 10th running of the Festivus 5K for Autism on December 12, 2021 in historic downtown Salem, MA! We are looking forward to a LIVE race and expect 400-500 runners!

For more info or to register go to: www.festivus5k.com

Thank you to our event sponsors! *as of October 18, 2021



Executive Director Message, Cont

education. And, our generous landlord J. Hilary Rockett is working with us to plan enhancements to our indoor and outdoor space. This amazing start for Dave follows on the heels of former Principal, Ken Letzring's retirement who devoted 25 years to growing the Upper School into the program it is today. Thank you, Ken!

Our Northshore Academy Lower School students were excited for fall field trips, which included the Topsfield Fair and apple picking. They have already enjoyed harvesting vegetables from their garden and cooking healthy and delicious recipes and have even conducted a few science experiments with gummy worms!

Students at Topsfield Vocational Academy, STEP, SOAR and Embark are happy to finally be back on the job at a wide array of community internships! Job sites include Audubon Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary, Breakaway Restaurant, CVS, Holten Street Creative Spaces, Northeast Animal Shelter, Trident Electronics Recycling, Ipswich River Watershed Association, Skillman Services Auto Repair, Dawson's Hardware in Topsfield, and Wenham Country Club.

Our Northshore Recovery High School team continues to forge ahead and recently applied for a Department of Public Health grant to expand services for students who require additional stabilization supports. We are using philanthropic funding to provide recovery coaching for recent graduates who continue to need this support.

Students at the Kevin O'Grady School are busy with a wide array of academic, social, art, fitness and pre-vocational activities. I love to see student workers

collecting the recycling, refilling supplies, and creating beautiful buttons and cards to celebrate our local sports

teams and seasonal holidays! Our vocational centers are open again and we are back to some community-based instruction! And, it is always great to see the outfits on Friday School Spirit days!

Thanks to support from the North Shore Community Health Network, and extended support from the Tower Foundation, we have expanded our Connections Wraparound program addressing student mental health. An additional social worker has been hired, doubling the number of students and families we can support in participating districts. And, we are thrilled to have become connected with the Essex County Learning Community participating in several summer professional development activities focused on equity, inclusion, and educational excellence.

As we start another school year, it is clear to me that YOU, our community of NEC families, individual, foundation and corporate supporters enabled us to remain strong during a programmatically and fiscally difficult last year, and knowing you stand with us, we can confidently look forward to what comes next.

Francine H. Rosenberg, M.Ed.
Executive Director



NSAU Director Ken Letzring and his successor David Mercier



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Northshore Education Consortium • 112 Sohier Road • Beverly, MA 01915 • 978.232.9755 • www.nsedu.org