

Goldie lights up Kevin O'Grady

Petting a dog fulfills the basic human need to touch. Stroking or hugging a dog can lower blood pressure and rapidly calm and soothe us when we are stressed and anxious.

The Consortium has been fortunate to have therapy dogs regularly visit the Northshore Upper and Lower Academies, as well as our transition programs. Now there is Goldie - a huge and sweet Great Dane - to light up the lives of our students at the Kevin O'Grady and Recovery High schools.



KOG student Chase pats Goldie from the Service Dog Project.

Goldie and her brother Finn from the Service Dog Project in Ipswich began visiting students this fall and the faces of the children showed how much joy the two dogs brought. Goldie and Finn recently visited Sarah Schocker's class of students with severe physical and cognitive challenges. Staff was able to help students reach out their hands to pat the tall dogs and they were delighted. Goldie also stopped by Recovery High, where she was eagerly greeted by students.

"There is so much evidence that interacting with dogs can help children with their health, emotional regulation and social skill

Students enjoy fall fun!



In addition to all of the great academic studies learners at the [Northshore Academy Lower School](#) are doing in math, science, reading, writing and social studies, many of the classes enjoyed field trips to the Topsfield Fair and a local orchard for apple picking.



The students and staff at the [SOAR](#) SOAR and [Embark](#) programs are having a very busy fall. In early October they hosted a successful Meet the Teacher/Game Night Pizza Supper. On a beautiful

development. Seeing the looks on the faces of our students when they are with the dogs is amazing! We are thrilled to have Goldie and Finn visiting our Kevin O'Grady and Recovery High students," said Fran Rosenberg, Executive Director.

Not only do the students benefit, but the dogs enjoy their work too, according to Carson Garvin of the Service Dog Project and Goldie's handler. "They know they have a purpose and a job to do each time they are taken out, I know they enjoy their visits almost as much as we do."

Festivus 5K for Autism set for Dec. 11th



Get on your sneakers and run or walk the fifth annual Festivus 5K Race for Autism on Sunday, December 11th in Salem. Form a team! Race organizers hope to raise more than \$15,000 for classroom technology for students with autism at the Consortium.

Salem residents Cindy and Rick Johnson started the Festivus 5K in 2012. "My husband Rick and I are both runners. We wanted to participate in a run for autism, but there were none on North Shore, so decided we would start our own," explained Cindy Johnson.

Their son Trevor, who is on the autism spectrum and a freshman at the Consortium's North Shore Academy Upper School, was the inspiration for the race. From the start, the Johnson's decided that race proceeds would go to help children and families, instead of autism research. In four years, they have raised almost \$50,000. Please run or [donate online](#) donate to help make a difference for the Consortium's students.

WHEN: Sunday, December 11th at 10 am

WHERE: Race starts at Derby Wharf, Salem

SIGN-IN: 8:30 - 9:45 am at Finz, 76 Wharf Street

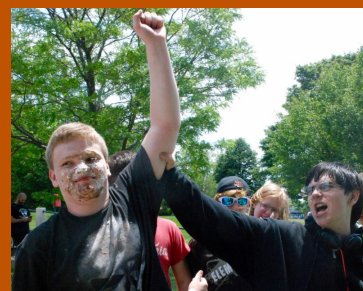
COST: \$25 in advance, \$30 day of

[ONLINE REGISTRATION](#)

autumn day, they visited the Topsfield Fair where one of the highlights was meeting Lucy the elephant. One student came closest to guessing her weight and got to feed the elephant!



The [Northshore Academy Upper School](#) held a pie eating contest and Mickey Coleman, who ate five pies, was the winner!



Students attended the Topsfield Fair, which has the distinction of being America's oldest agricultural fair. They learned a lot from viewing the exhibitions of flowers, fruits and vegetables, livestock and poultry, beekeeping, and arts and crafts. All amazed by the winning entry in the giant pumpkin contest, which weighed in at 2,075 pounds!

College Visits

Seniors are getting ready to apply for college. North Shore Community College visited NSAU on October 11th for on-the-spot admissions with interested seniors. A representative from Framingham State visited on October 14th to talk about what FSU has to offer.

Recovery speaks out

Two [Northshore Recovery High School](#) (RHS) alumni

Generous gift buys assistive tech for KOG



Speech-Language Pathologist Emily Laubscher guides Matty through a lesson on a new iPad.

Generous gifts to our technology campaign have resulted in much new classroom technology, including Chromebooks, iPads and SmartBoards. And now a major gift of \$30,000 from Linzee and Beth Coolidge has led to the purchase of a host of new assistive communications technology for students at the Kevin O'Grady School, including the myGaze eye gaze system.

Children can use eye gaze on a tablet or computer to explore, play games, learn, participate in classroom activities, communicate and more. There are many KOG students with varying types and levels of vision impairment and trying to set them up with a communication system can be challenging, according to Jennifer Leighton, newly hired supervisor of the Speech-Language Pathology Department. This eye gaze technology will help staff to acquire a better understanding of a student's vision skills and assist with setting up their communication displays and visual supports for learning.

"The donation from the Coolidge's was a beautiful gift that will really help our staff to provide the types of technology interventions that they would like to for our students," said Leighton. "It will enable us to carry out best practices in the fields of communication and technology. It will allow us to provide our students access to the curriculum, communication, leisure and environmental controls in a way that we were not previously able to offer."

Additional technology was purchased, including The Surface Pro tablet, iPads and switches. Many communication and literacy apps for the iPad were purchased. This will allow KOG to have an iPad lending library so that children, teachers and therapists

and a parent played an important part in a recent forum held in Hartford by Connecticut lawmakers as they seek to build momentum to provide funding to establish recovery schools in their state.



RHS student artwork

There are 36 recovery high schools across the U.S.; RHS was the first of four currently in Massachusetts. Our neighboring state Connecticut has none to date, but the powerful voices of RHS about the importance of these schools to students in recovery may help change that soon.

RHS grads Cody Desmond, 23, who is working on a masters of psychology and Genna Chesley told their personal stories and how their time at RHS changed their lives. Kathleen Errico, whose daughter Kelsey relapsed and died of an overdose at age 23, also spoke courageously in front of legislators and community leaders. To learn more, read [this ARTICLE](#).



RHS student painting.

Supporters speak

can determine what apps will work for a student.

A large number and variety of switches, including Bluetooth switches, were also purchased. Some are voice output devices and some can be attached to switch interfaces that can be used with iPads and computers so that students can interact with web pages, learning websites and apps. Students can access these switches via their hands, feet and heads.

Message from the Executive Director

It has been a very positive start to the school year here at the Northshore Education Consortium. Students and staff at 112 Sohler Road were so pleased to see our new and improved parking lot, safe and accessible walkways, and freshly painted, bright colored hallways and stairwells when they returned to school!

We have welcomed many new employees, who bring positive energy and new expertise into all of our programs. Since our greatest asset as an organization is our talented staff, we have recommitted to strengthening our mentoring program for new educators and to improving professional development at every level.

In addition to providing excellent special education services in our schools, one of my goals has been to expand our ability to be a community resource around issues related to special education and children at risk. We have done this in a variety of ways in recent months: by running successful conferences on Student Mental Health, hosting a course for aspiring special education team leaders, participating in statewide projects on licensing special education teachers and on educating students in inclusive environments, and by expanding our capacity to consult to member districts.

It is an exciting time at the Consortium. I continue to be inspired each and every day by our amazing students, dedicated staff and committed families and friends! -- *Fran Rosenberg*

Annual Appeal to support tech underway

The Friends of the Northshore Education Consortium have launched the annual appeal, which will benefit our ongoing campaign to purchase up-to-date classroom technology.

With your help we have been able to replace old and failing computers with current educational technology for our students. We've made a lot of progress, but still have a ways to go. Will you support this effort? Thank you.

[DONATE](#)

Laurie and David Hark are longtime supporters of the Consortium. Laurie was a teacher and director at the Kevin O'Grady School.

As our Annual Appeal got underway, they spoke about their commitment as donors.

"The Consortium is a very special place. It is more than a collection of schools. It is a community for people whose lives have taken a different path from the norm.

"The schools are filled with the bravest, most resilient children, families and staff members. It is a place where all can thrive and grow together.

"The Consortium is an important place to our family and we are committed as donors and friends to remain supportive in whatever ways that we can." - Laurie & David Hark

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NORTHSHORE
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Newsletter Edited by Deborah Gardner Walker