

Summer 2017

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*Students enjoyed a wide range of enrichment activities this year. The Bamidele Drummers and Dancers performed for Kevin O'Grady School students through a grant from Young Audiences of Massachusetts.*

## What it takes to move from "good" to "great"

### Message from Executive Director Fran Rosenberg

The Consortium's mission is to prepare all of our students for the best possible outcomes in their adult lives, whether that be college, career and/or maximum independence. In order to live happy, healthy and satisfying lives, our students need a rich, vibrant and up-to-date academic curriculum, as well as an array of activities to enable them to experience

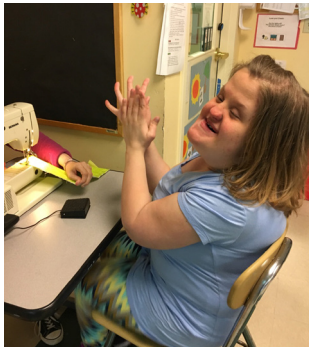
music, art, dance, drama, athletics, outdoor exploration and community involvement.

Thanks to the support of our member districts, healthy enrollment in all of our schools and programs, and some extra support through grants and fundraising, our financial position is stronger than it has been in years. This enables us to put energy into moving from "good to great" by expanding our use of technology, upgrading our curriculum and enrichment programs, and providing professional development so that all of our staff

**Continues on pg 5**

## Program News

### KEVIN O'GRADY SCHOOL



#### Gifts for Mom

Students in Erin Himmel's class crafted hand decorated pillows for their moms for Mother's Day.

"We went shopping and they picked the fabric color for the back of the pillow," Erin said. "Students picked the statement they wanted me to write and we ironed it with their photo onto white fabric for the front of the pillow. Students helped sew the fabric together and then we had a second shopping trip to buy the pillow forms to put in the pillows. It was a wonderful experience with them!"

Students used a sewing machine with a Powerlink connected to a foot pedal, which was loaned to the class by the speech department, according to Erin. Students used the foot pedal to turn the sewing machine on and off as they assisted the teacher, while the teacher's foot pedal controlled the speed of the sewing machine.

### TRANSITION PROGRAMS



#### A week in the dorms

One of the biggest transitions that college freshman make is moving away from home and living in the dorms. The SOAR and Embark programs ran their annual five-day living skills overnight program this spring and 19 students got to stay in the dormitories at Salem State University.

They got to check out what it's like to live

on their own and take care of oneself. They had a lot of fun in the dorms and enjoyed a whole range of activities, including field trips, cooking, art, games and other social and living skills activities.

### NORTHSHORE ACADEMY UPPER SCHOOL



#### SOUP-ER-BOWL

The Northshore Academy Upper School hosted its 8th annual Soup-er-Bowl, which featured more than 20 kinds of soup, chowdah and chili whipped up by students, staff, the culinary class, families and local restaurants.

Chef Paul made a fantastic Thai pumpkin soup and Robbie (left) made a spicy "Death Chili" - his own name for it! Members of the Student Leadership Team served.

The Soup-er-Bowl usually coincides with the NFL Super Bowl, but snowstorms delayed the event to the first week of spring!

### RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL

#### RHS students win poetry awards

Recovery High School student Ashley Freda won third place in the Beverly Public Library's Teen Poetry Contest for her poem "Ashley October 25." Four other RHS students won Honorable Mentions for their poems.



### NORTHSHORE ACADEMY LOWER SCHOOL



#### Brush your teeth!

Dental Hygienist Michelle Shatford visited each class at the Northshore Academy Lower School to give tips on good oral hygiene. Everyone received a goody bag full of dental supplies to keep their teeth healthy and clean. Look at those smiles!

#### Ode to Spring

The fifth grade students wrote Haiku poems, the short 5-7-5 syllable Japanese poems, this spring. Here is some of their original work:

*Grass is green and wet.  
People eating popsicles.  
Spring is a great time.*

*Bees are buzzing now,  
Trees are covered with green leaves.  
Parks are full of kids.*

*Dogs out on the field  
Kids trying out new flip flops  
Best time to ride bikes*

### VOCATIONAL PROGRAM BECOMES PART OF CONSORTIUM

Executive Director Fran Rosenberg announced that the Topsfield Vocational Academy (formerly known as Merrimack Academy, a program of CREST Collaborative) will become part of the Northshore Education Consortium as of July 1st. The Consortium's STEP program, which serves a similar population, will join them.

The program serves approximately 40 middle and high school students with emotional, behavioral and learning challenges who benefit from a hands-on vocational approach to learning. There are 15 staff members, including teachers, vocational teachers, vocational specialists, a social worker, guidance counselor, nurse, administrative assistant and the principal.

"They have a fabulous carpentry program, culinary program and a wide variety of community based work sites for their students," Fran added.



## Deb Morrison honored for going above & beyond

### "She exemplifies the best in social-work"

During her 14 years as a social worker at the Kevin O'Grady School, Deb Morrison has "gone above and beyond" in her work with students with significant intellectual, physical, developmental, and/or medical impairments, according to Executive Director Fran Rosenberg.

In June, Morrison was honored with the Diruhi Mattian Memorial Award for social workers who have made an outstanding contribution to the lives of youth and families at risk. The award, presented during the Youth at Risk conference at Salem State University, honors the memory of an extraordinary social worker who was tragically killed in 2008.

"This was a well deserved honor for a dedicated professional," Rosenberg said. "Deb's expertise and work with this unique population of young people and their families is extraordinary. She exudes love, compassion and positive energy."

"There are many staff members and parents who would say that Deb Morrison is the heart and soul of the Kevin O'Grady School. She reminds us to put the students first, to take care of ourselves, and to maintain positive energy and optimism even when the work is sad, frightening and extraordinarily difficult," Rosenberg continued.

"She exemplifies the best in social-work."



KOG Social Workers Alison Dudley (left) and Deb Morrison. Morrison was honored at the Youth at Risk conference in June.

## Frankie's Voice raises funds for Recovery High

A little over a year ago, well-known Beverly resident and carpenter Frank Raffa, Jr. died of a heroin overdose at the age of 33. It was a huge loss for his family and the greater Beverly community where Frank was involved in many activities, including drum corps, sports and the family business, Raffa Construction Company.

Frank's parents, Frank, Sr. and Karen, asked family and friends to make donations to the Recovery High School to honor their son's memory and support others struggling with substance use. More than \$9,000 came in and a scholarship fund was established; scholarships were awarded at the 2016 and 2017 graduations.

This spring, the Raffa family decided to

hold a fundraiser to benefit Recovery High, with their goal being to educate people about the opioid epidemic and provide more support to students in recovery.

They expected it to be a small affair, but they wound up filling The Cabot in Beverly on April 22nd with an event they called "Frankie's Voice." More than \$26,000 was raised for the school.

The money will be used to buy photography equipment and software, and ping pong and foosball tables; build a sound proof room in the music studio, which will allow students to record music; and host a recovery support group twice per month on Wednesday nights.

"Your commitment to our students

has and will continue to afford tangible benefits. But beyond that, it has offered your invaluable affirmation to each and every person who walks through our doors," said Director of Development Sarah Wadhams-Seiler to the Raffa family. "You are helping to change lives and we can't thank you enough for your partnership."





# Student enrichment: arts, athletics, tech, cooking, nature & more...

## Grant supports outdoor adventures at NSAU

Northshore Academy Upper School students went on five overnight hikes this year thanks to an environmental education grant from Cell Signaling Technology to support the Outdoor Adventures program. We are thrilled that both Cell Signaling and the North Shore Community Health Network awarded grants of \$5,000 each for next year's hiking trips. Here's the group that summited Mount Cardigan this spring.

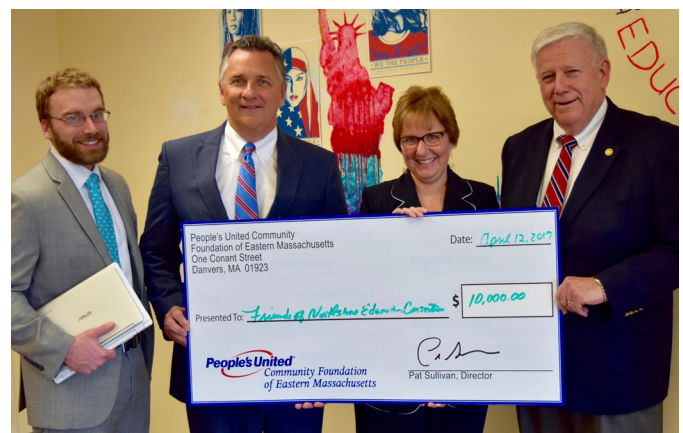


## RHS Express Yourself

Recovery High students and staff appeared onstage at the Boch Center Wang Theatre in Boston in the 2017 Express Yourself performance SOUL in May. They performed a lively samba number with Afro-Brazilian musician Marcus Santos and Cammie Griffin of the STOMP! International Tour. It was the ninth consecutive year that Recovery High has participated in the 30-week Express Yourself arts immersion program, which includes visual arts, music, dance and spoken word.

## \$10,000 Grant for Technology

Our friends from the People's United Bank Community Foundation of Eastern Mass came by this spring with a big check, big as in \$10,000! This generous grant in support of our \$250,000 classroom technology campaign will allow us to purchase 50 Chromebooks for high school students at North Shore Academy and Recovery High School. L-R: NSAU teacher Eric Aldrich, Peoples Massachusetts President Patrick Sullivan, Consortium Executive Director Fran Rosenberg and People's Bank Vice President Jack Good, III.





## Rainbow Dance

### Music & movement at KOG

Rainbow Dance is another fun movement and music activity at the Kevin O'Grady School, run by KOG Social Worker Alison Dudley (pictured right, below). Alison has a background in dance and it's only natural that she is interested in using the body as a form of therapy that compliments the work of occupational and physical therapists at the school.

Each week Alison visits four classrooms and adapts the program to meet the needs and developmental stages of various students, including the integrated pre-school, young medically fragile students, and young students with autism. Students with greater mobility run, jump and dance; others with severe physical challenges have teachers and paraprofessionals who help them clap, wave scarves, play instruments and make other movements.

The sessions feature a predictable order of songs, movements and sounds that students come to recognize: waving scarves, hand and foot movements, drumming, shakers, bells and even feathers to represent baby birds.

The classes bring out a lot of smiles and students, even those with non-verbal autism, sing the songs all week, both in and out of class.



### Berklee Visits KOG

Music therapy students at the Berklee College of Music have been interning at KOG. They visit Michelle Legere and Jenny Baylor's classrooms each week to provide Music and Movement classes for medically fragile students.



### Letter from the Executive Director from pg 1

are up to date on best practices to help students meet their full potential.

Students have been very excited and motivated by the increased use of Chromebooks in our Northshore Academy and Recovery High School classrooms. Many teachers are taking advantage of outstanding on-line resources for education in a wide range of curriculum areas. At the Kevin O'Grady School (KOG) the focus has been on updating technology for communication.

In many special education settings, music and art are the first things to be eliminated when budgets get tight. At the Consortium, we have made every effort to find creative ways to keep music and art in the curriculum.

We were selected by Young Audiences of Massachusetts to receive a grant through their Healing Arts Program. This has enabled us to bring some wonderful music and art experiences to KOG students, including the Bamidele Drummers and Dancers, Ezekiel's Wheels Klezmer Band and a five-week Dance Residency called Dancing Bodies, Dancing Minds, run by a dance therapist.

At Northshore Academy, students have the opportunity to participate in a range of art, music and drama experiences. Upper Academy students can participate in outdoor exploration, culinary arts and intramural sports as part of a fabulous enrichment program.

And the Upper Academy demonstrated some athletic prowess when the Wolverines Basketball Team brought home a first place trophy from a tournament at UMASS Lowell. We are so proud of their teamwork and sportsmanship!

Recovery High School students submitted their poems to several contests. They won five of the 13 awards given to high schoolers in the Beverly Public Library's Teen Poetry Contest. Ashley Freda won third place. A group of students, along with staff members Mary Devin and Jonah Ford appeared on stage in SOUL, the big Express Yourself year-end extravaganza in May. This was the ninth consecutive year that Recovery High has been seen on the big stage with ExYo at the Boch Center Wang Theatre in Boston.

Our transition students in the SOAR and Embark programs access the arts through Raw Arts of Lynn.

As you can see, our students have been busy with a wide range of enrichment activities during the 2016 – 2017 academic year. Wishing you a wonderful summer and, as always, thank you for your support. *-Fran*

## New sensory equipment offers choices

Some students need extra sensory input to help them get ready to learn. Various kinds of visual, auditory and tactile stimulation can help to calm their minds and bodies, and organize their thoughts, according to Occupational Therapy (OT) Program Director Kathy MacWhinney at the Kevin O'Grady School.

KOG has a special OT sensory room and, thanks to a generous gift from the Cummings Foundation, students have a lot of new equipment to enjoy when they work with therapists.

Those who crave movement can self-propel by pushing and pulling on the gliders, swings and flexion disc. Students who seek calm can use the equipment passively, with pushing coming from the therapist, or they can rest on the mats.

"We wanted to have the kids do more flexion, more holding on," Kathy said in reference to the linear and bolster gliders. "The nice forward and backward movement of the gliders is grounding and centering. They also have handles to hold onto and do pushing and pulling, which provides resistance and gives deep input to the muscles and joints."

By using a variety of equipment, students can strengthen their core, gain awareness of their bodies in space to increase balance and coordination, use both sides of their bodies, improve visual attention by reaching and increase their attention span, explained Kathy.

"With all of this new equipment, we are able to give students choices, variety and help them learn through new challenges."

**"With all of this new equipment, we are able to give students choices, variety and help them learn through new challenges."**



*KOG occupational therapist Joanne Lavallee watches as a student jumps and somersaults in the new acrobat swing in the OT sensory room.*



*PreK student enjoys the linear glider*



*Rocking the new tube swing*

## Flutie Foundation grant for iPads

The Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism awarded a \$5,000 grant to the Kevin O'Grady School through the Allison Keller Education Technology grant cycle. The Speech and Language Pathology Department has purchased iPads, assistive communication apps and various accessories, and therapists are using the assistive communication technology with students with autism.



## Congratulations, Graduates!

Congratulations to all of our 2017 graduates: 16 students from the Northshore Academy Upper School, 17 students from Recovery High School (one posthumously), and 11 students from the Embark and SOAR transition programs at Salem State University. We are so proud of all of you!

### RHS - Carrying On a Graduation Tradition

*At most graduations, the student speakers include the valedictorian, salutatorian and class president, but at the Recovery High School, the tradition has been for ALL of the graduates to speak -- and staff members introduce each one. Here are excerpts of their very moving speeches, along with remarks from Principal Michelle Lipinski and 2009 graduate Becca Murray.*

As I look at these students who are about to leave our school, I see ... a story (that) includes healing themselves, mending relationships with their families, finding a community where they can be themselves, finding faith in their own recovery, and finally going towards the lightness they have created by getting better and fighting the demons that have haunted them for so many years. These children in front of me, and those who have graduated before them, will never know the pride I have in them and the hope I feel for each and every one of them.

– **Michelle Lipinski, Principal**

Our purpose in this life is not perfection, but to furnish the world with laughter, hopefulness, and compassion. And being able to naturally supply those necessities begins within ourselves. Be kind to yourself, others, and to the earth. Take care of your sobriety, and in those impermanent moments when the entire world seems to be against you and you are questioning your ability to press on, listen to the voice that whispers, “Yes, I can.” – **Guest Speaker Becca Murray, 2009 RHS graduate**

The entire staff encouraged me to participate in “Express Yourself.” I never thought I would be able to sing in front of a large crowd of people, but I did it. I feel relieved that I accomplished this, and it makes me think of all the other things I can accomplish. – **Yaimira Aldama, 2017 graduate**

A year ago, I walked in on a sea of unfamiliar faces grieving the death of a 17-year-old boy I had never met. Up to that point, I had refused to identify as an addict, but in the dimmed eyes of these new kids in front of me, I saw a true reflection of myself. The students, now my friends, are the reason I have made it this far in my journey.

– **Marina Bron, 2017 graduate**

I started at RHS in April of 2016.... I found myself in a place where I saw a second chance and hope. At RHS, I learned that I need to overcome my drug use in order to live a successful life. I learned that people listen to me, and when I use my powers for good, I can be a positive role model.

– **Dom Guardino, 2017 graduate**



*One of our Embark graduates*

I remember when my grandmother asked, every time I saw her, if I had finally graduated. She has passed on from us and she's looking down on me now. Meme, I did it.

– **Michael Gagnon, 2017 graduate**

I wasn't me when I first came. But I got better once I started moving forward and let go of all those negative feelings that had prevented me from being happy. I had been fighting myself for so long. I finally got the care that I was craving, for which I had been asking in all the wrong ways. I am now focusing on the parts of me that I enjoy.

– **Jasmine Hamilton, 2017 graduate**

### Recovery High School Prom



*The Recovery High School students and staff enjoyed their annual prom, a cruise around Gloucester Harbor. Here they are getting ready to board the boat.*



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## EVENT SPOTLIGHT

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### Golf Tourney to benefit Consortium

Longtime corporate supporter Lincoln Investment is hosting its first invitational golf tournament and proceeds will benefit the Northshore Education Consortium.



The tournament will take place on Monday, July 31st at the prestigious Atkinson Country Club in Atkinson, NH. There will be cash prizes for first, second and third place, a silent auction, social hour and awards dinner.

For more info about registration, sponsorships or to make a donation, contact Sarah Seiler at [swadhams-seiler@nsedu.org](mailto:swadhams-seiler@nsedu.org) or go to our secure page online: <https://www.nsedu.org/lincoln-golf-registration/>.



*Graham Bacheller, David DeCesare, Brad Smith and Evelyn Marquis of Lincoln Investment in Beverly.*