



So many reasons to give thanks



KOG teacher Erin Himmel and April with the hundreds of pinwheels students created for International Peace Day.

Message from Executive Director Fran Rosenberg

Getting our students out into the world and exposing them to a range of experiences is critical to their development, and your support helps us to do this year-round. This fall, students went apple picking, to the Topsfield Fair, sailing in Gloucester and enjoyed many other seasonal activities.

Over the past several months, a number of major initiatives have been underway thanks to philanthropic support. Donations to the Technology Fund have come in consistently and enabled us to significantly increase our use of Chromebooks in our middle and high school classrooms. We now have approximately one Chromebook for every two to three students. This enables teachers to use current apps and eBooks, instead of outdated textbooks. In addition, they can take advantage of newer interactive technologies and teach students the technological literacy skills that they need

IN BRIEF

Festivus 5k for autism Sunday, December 10th



Join us in Salem!
Registration 8:30 am at Finz Seafood & Grill

Race begins 10 am on Derby Street in front of Custom House

Post race party at Finz!

Free tee shirts for first 400 who register.

Proceeds will benefit education and assistance for our students with autism.

[REGISTER](#) to run or walk.

Fall Field Trip Fotos

for a 21st century workplace.

Our longtime friends, Linzee and Beth Coolidge of Gloucester, made a very generous gift of \$150,000 that will enable us to make transformative changes in a number of areas.

Their donation is being used for a Rock Climbing Wall at the Northshore Academy Upper School; music and art enrichment; sensory integration materials for the Kevin O'Grady School and the Northshore Academy Lower School; and assistive technology and augmentative communication devices that it make it possible for our most severely disabled students to communicate.

This fall, good friends of the Coolidges hosted a surprise celebration as a way for us to thank them. Chef Paul and students from our Northshore Academy Culinary Program prepared an amazing dinner. It was quite an evening, as you can see in the photo below.



Linzee and Beth Coolidge (center) made a gift of \$150,000 and a surprise dinner was hosted to thank them. Here are Chef Paul and culinary students from the Northshore Academy Upper School, Executive Director Fran Rosenberg (left) and Director of the Development Sarah Wadhams-Seiler (right).

Executive Director's Message continued....

As we prepared for Thanksgiving, I had the opportunity to meet with three different groups of our students' parents: our Parent Advisory Committee, Recovery High School parents, and the Latino Families Group at KOG.



Above, Embark & SOAR students went to the Salem Willows.

All of our programs went to the Topsfield Fair. Below, a Northshore Academy Lower School student held a chick in the fair's agricultural exhibit.



Below, Topsfield Vocational Academy students sailed on a schooner in Gloucester Harbor. Woodworking students will be learning how to build boats from famed Essex shipbuilder Harold Burnham.



At Recovery High School, I watched as parents, through their tears, offered compassion and advice to a mother who was worried about her daughter. At the Latino Pot Luck Dinner, family members shared hugs, tears and lots of delicious food. In Spanish and English, families expressed gratitude that their child was in a school where people understood their unique needs, and where they had the opportunity to meet other parents who had been through similar challenges.

At this holiday season, I am thankful to work with colleagues, students and families who demonstrate such incredible compassion, courage and resilience. And I am thankful for all who support our work. Wishing you a happy and healthy new year. -- Fran

Hands-on at Topsfield Vocational Academy



"The strength of the wolf comes from the pack."

That's the message on a big poster with a photo of a wolf posted in the hallway of the Topsfield Vocational Academy, the Consortium's newest program.

TVA, as it's known in short, provides middle and high school students hands-on vocational training with 11 offsite internships and woodworking and culinary arts program in-school. The hope is to add welding, hair styling and computer repair to the offerings, according to Program Director Charles LeBuff (fondly referred to as "Buff").

Buff speaks with pride about the quality of the school's vocational programs. "Our culinary students cook real food, they prepare lunch for the school every day and not just for students. Local businesses stop in to buy lunch.



Into the Woods: Northshore Academy Upper School students attended the Appalachian Mountain Club's Fall Fest in New Hampshire. Above, middle school paraprofessional Leah Barnes with students.

NSAU Turkey Dinner



There definitely weren't too many cooks in the kitchen when staff and culinary students prepared a Thanksgiving feast at the Northshore Academy Upper School last week.

Recovery News

Gratitude with Attitude



Max can't get enough of the turkey and fixings!

Recovery High School held its

Our students get certified to work in restaurants with the chefs, not just bus tables and wash dishes."

Woodworking students build furniture, including headboards, chairs, tables and benches, and they make smaller items to sell as holiday gifts, including cutting boards from wood scraps.

"Our wood shop students go down to Gloucester Harbor and work with staff from the Adventure Schooner and build dories with Harold Burnham," Buff continued. "Harold is thinking about building another 40-foot boat and we hope to be part of it. He has taken some kids sailing on his Schooner Ardelle."

TVA classrooms are small, with a maximum of five to six students to assist those who need social, emotional and behavioral interventions. One of the goals of TVA, in addition to academics and vocational training, is to help students learn to make responsible choices and develop self-control.

"My job is to help you find your way," Buff says he tells every student who enrolls. And they do. Some students stay in the program for six months, then return to their home districts. Others stay through senior year; 67 students have graduated over the past decade and there are 15 seniors looking forward to graduation in June of 2018.

SOAR & Embark:

Can you hear what I feel ... this is real!



"Lady Antebellum is what I like to hear." "I like R & B and Eminem and Nickleback, and Barry Manilow with my Dad." "I like music that is classical. Chopin and Mozart help me to sleep." These were some of the musical

annual Thanksgiving Gratitude with Attitude event at the Second Congregational church in Beverly. Students and staff courageously shared deeply personal reflections on their gratitude for sobriety, the school's support, their friends and family, the beauty of nature and more. The powerful, moving first-person essays were written in Michaela Gile's English class.

State Senator Joan Lovely and Beverly Rep. Jerry Parisella were present and Rep. Parisella (who majored in journalism and had been a reporter) remarked on the fine writing.

Following the Serenity Prayer, everyone enjoyed a feast prepared by the school's longtime good friends at Second Congregational. Our Executive Director Fran Rosenberg poured gravy and Senator Lovely, who serves on the Committee on Mental Health and Addiction, dished out huge spoonfuls of mashed potatoes. Beverly School Committee Chairwoman Kris Silverstein served green beans.



SHUTTER BUGS: Thanks to a generous donation from the Raffa Family, RHS has purchased seven digital cameras for photography students. Above, a student takes photos of spectacular fall Zinnias.

Below, RHS students celebrated

choices expressed by Embark and SOAR students in the adaptive music class they began taking this fall.

Each student wrote a four-line solo for the snappy, upbeat number and then joined full-throated in the rousing chorus, "Put it on, play it loud. All alone, in a crowd. Can you hear, what I feel? This is it, this is real! It's the sound that I love! It's the MU - zic that I Lo-o-o-o-ove," going down the scale in half steps. The students will be performing their original piece for parents at International Night this month.

The weekly music sessions are brought to the Embark class at Salem State University by the *amplifi* program, which seeks to enrich the lives of participants through learner-centered music and theater experiences. *Amplifi* is offering a series on Expression for the Embark and SOAR students, who are all ages 18 to 22 and transitioning to work and independent life. The students are learning how to express their thoughts and emotions through music and dance.

"The Embark and SOAR students have limited abilities for verbal expressions; their ability to communicate is enhanced through this music program," explained Transition Program Director Ellen Heald.

"The *Amplifi* program is helping our students to increase self-confidence, expression and communication skills that will generalize to academic, internship and community settings. We chose *Amplifi*, because it has experience with a range of individuals that require specific methodologies."

As you can see in the photo above, students are having a blast and fully engaged in learning these important life skills.

Cool Sensory Cart a Tribute to Ben

RECOVERY DAY at Faneuil Hall in Boston. "John Hartford (at the podium) was a rock star as he shared his experience, strength and hope," said RHS Principal Michelle Lipinski.



Lower Academy News

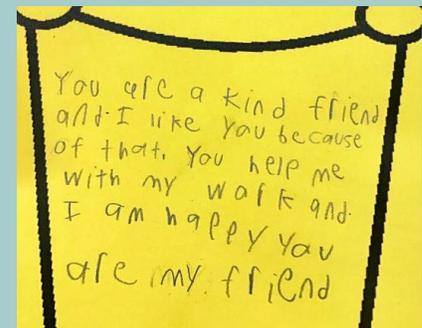
"You are good at drawing."

"You are a kind friend and I like you because of that. You help me with my work and I am happy you are my friend."

"You are a kind, nice person and I like that you are my friend."

"You are good at basketball."

These are some of the notes NSAL students wrote to classmates as part of a kindness lesson called *Bucket-filler Friday*.



A poster explained that "A bucket-filler is a kind, caring and genuine person who wants to make others feel good about themselves. Fill someone's bucket by writing them a kind and sincere letter."

The school also built a yoga



It's no wonder that Kevin O'Grady School students love their new mobile sensory cart (above), which was funded in part by donations made in memory of beloved KOG student Ben Stegenga. Recently, Ben's parents joined staff and students to remember Ben and dedicate the cart in his name. See photo of Ben below.



International Educators Tour KOG

It's not an exaggeration to say that our Kevin O'Grady School is known worldwide. Earlier this month, educators from Israel, Indonesia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Malawi, Kenya, Nigeria, Costa Rica, Mexico, Chile, Poland, Russia, Japan and Egypt visited the school with the Perkins School for the Blind Educational Leadership Program. The group has visited the school for several

studio in the old computer lab and students are practicing yoga to keep centered and mindful.

IN MEMORIAM

Patrice Grande



We are sad to share that Patrice Grande, former Director of our Embark and SOAR programs, passed away this fall after a short illness. Before she died, Patrice was happy to learn that we plan to dedicate an Embark/SOAR classroom in her name. Patrice was very well liked and regarded by staff, parents, students, peers and the community alike. She did a lot during her tenure to establish and grow the transition program.

Visit Our Thrift Shop



The Consortium has a thrift shop located within *Holten Street Creative Spaces* at 88 Holten Street in Danvers. You can find items handcrafted by our students, including jewelry from the Upper Academy and products made at KOG. You can also find KOG student Ben interning there some days!

years now.

The group was accompanied by Barbara MacLetchie, who is the former head of the Boston College Deafblind Program and a renowned consultant, author and teacher trainer. Visitors were impressed by the commitment and skill of KOG staff. They would like to collaborate with KOG to create videos, which they can share as they train others back home.



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Francine Rosenberg,
M.Ed, Executive
Director

Deborah Gardner
Walker, Newsletter
Editor