



Fall 2020

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## Reconnecting with Our Community & Moving Forward

### Message from the Executive Director

A Dear Friends;

We were so happy to welcome students back “in person” on September 16, on a modified schedule supplemented by some remote learning. It was challenging to figure it all out, but as usual, the wonderful and creative NEC workforce rose to the occasion! Students and staff are careful about social distancing, mask wearing, sanitizing, and remaining in more contained groups to keep everyone safe. And in the midst of all this, NEC staff have come up with creative new ways to engage students, foster social interaction, and keep the learning going.

Over the summer, 263 students started with remote learning, and then transitioned into limited in-person instruction by late July.

Even though spring semester was mainly spent interacting virtually, NEC staff were still busy working on a number of initiatives. Our grass roots Diversity Task Force took shape and was able to offer a variety of Zoom discussions for groups of students and staff and also hosted a peer-lead training on implicit bias at the start of the fall semester. As one employee said: “although this session focused on topics that can be uncomfortable to discuss . . . it was extremely important and relevant.”



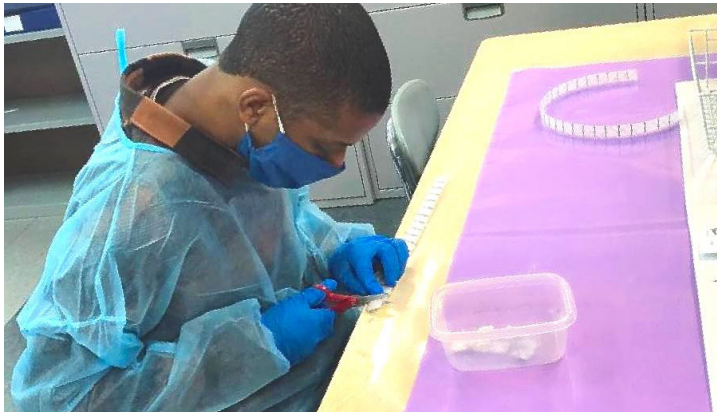
A documentary featuring our Recovery High School, *16 & Recovering*, aired recently. We hope that our participation in this project will help to raise awareness and reduce stigma around adolescent addiction, the mental health issues that are often the underlying cause, and the ongoing problems in the health care system that create barriers to accessing treatment. This four part series, which aired on MTV, was powerful and has received a lot of positive attention. Principal Michelle Lipinski and her team did a great job preparing everyone involved and supporting them through the experience.

And let's not forget graduation! It might have looked a little different this year but student successes were celebrated as joyfully as ever.

But...there are always new challenges! After a tremendous start to the new school year, our 112 Sohier Road building experienced a significant flood on September 30 when a water tank housed on the roof flooded

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# Program News



KOG student Andy is working on measuring velcro by the inch and making packages for our classrooms.

## KEVIN O'GRADY SCHOOL

Students at the Kevin O'Grady School are happy to be back at school and engaged in their school-based jobs! As many community-based internships are on hold due to COVID, we are fortunate to have so many school-based vocational opportunities that keep our moving forward!

## EMBARK PROGRAM

The Embark team is proud to announce that their very own teacher, Christine McAlpine (right) was the recent recipient of the Margaret Voss Howard Teacher Recognition Award. This award recognizes one Marblehead teacher and one Salem teacher as representative of all the excellent, dedicated teachers in the community who make a difference to children every day. Chris has been an adored teacher at Embark for fourteen years positively impacting the lives of many young adults during her tenure.



"From the first moment that we met and observed Chris, we knew that this was the luckiest day of my son's educational journey." -NEC Parent



KOG student Alex is working on removing staples from packets of paper before they go to the shredder.

## TOPSFIELD VOCATIONAL ACADEMY

During his time in remote learning last spring, 8th grader, Riley (right), wrote a poem for Ms. Lindsey Theberge's class in response to current national events. Not only does his poem bravely articulate his own thoughts and feelings, but perhaps, those shared by many of our students.



### I AM POEM By Riley

I am young and I am thoughtful.  
I wonder why there is so much racism in the world.  
I hear profanity.  
I see protests and looting.  
I want to see change.  
I am young and I am thoughtful.  
I pretend that everyone gets along.  
I feel distress.  
I touch other people's lives.  
I worry it will never end.  
I cry for those that lose their lives.  
I am young and I am thoughtful.  
I understand people are dying for no reason.  
I say there needs to be a change.  
I dream for a world where everyone is accepting of everyone.  
I try to be supportive to those facing racism.  
I hope for change, I am young and I am thoughtful.





### NORTHSHORE ACADEMY LOWER

Before COVID, Northshore Academy Lower staff and learners worked hard to creatively design and utilize outside spaces and courtyards at their school, which included a working garden that the learners harvested to create salads and stews. During the closure these unattended spaces grew wild. With the reopening of school approaching, staff donated furniture and hands on labor to restore these peaceful learning spaces. Now, in these beautifully manicured courtyards, staff and learners are able to reconnect in the outdoors.

### STEP PROGRAM

STEP teacher, Kristen Vaisvila (right) recently transitioned to her new role as ESL (English as a Second Language) & ELE (English Language Education) Program Coordinator, serving all eight Consortium programs. While she will be missed by her students in Topsfield, Kristen will still have the opportunity to work with some of them in this new capacity in addition to meeting lots of new students throughout the Consortium!



### NORTHSHORE ACADEMY UPPER

Trevor (right), engaged in remote learning as he completed his senior year at the Northshore Academy Upper School. Trevor is now a freshman on the campus of St. Michael's College in Vermont where he is excelling in his academics, campus ministry activities, and



swim team. His leadership over the last several years as Co-Race Director for the annual Festivus 5K for Autism will be sorely missed. His family founded and organized this race which has raised over \$120,000 to support children with autism.

### SOAR PROGRAM

SOAR student Sam (right) was thrilled when he was interviewed by *Chronicle*, the weeknight New England television program, for his participation in this



year's Special Olympics. Sam is a three sport Special Olympics athlete with the Newburyport Jr. Clippers participating in soccer, basketball and track. Sam is also a member of the New England Revolution Unified soccer team where he and his fellow Special Olympians partner with typical athletes and play other PSA Unified teams promoting unity on the field and off. Due to COVID, the Summer Games for Special Olympics and the Revolution season were held virtually. *Chronicle* did a segment on how this pandemic has affected different Olympic athletes, from the USA team, Paralympics and Special Olympics.

### RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL

Northshore Recovery High School was featured in a four part series, *16 & Recovering*, that recently aired on MTV. This documentary captured a year of filming RHS students grappling with the realities of addiction, from overdose to high school graduations. Thank you to each and every student, staff member and family that allowed their story to be shared with the world.



# Donor Support Makes Us Stronger Together

## Development Office Update



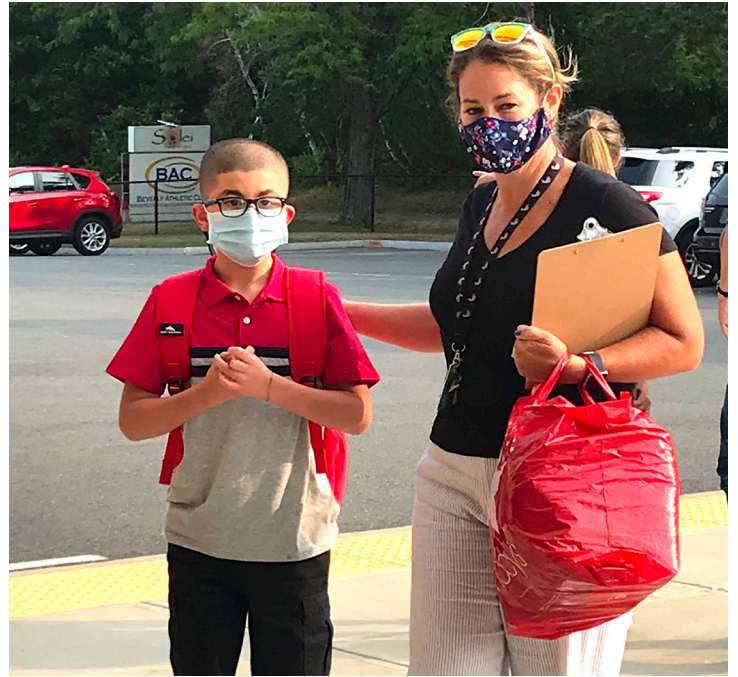
Over the years, you have read our newsletters, attended our events, sponsored our golf tournaments, run our Festivus 5k for Autism and donated to our annual fund.

It is you, our NEC family of foundations, businesses, invested individuals, parents and staff that filled in the gap. Thanks to a variety of philanthropic support, the unexpected costs and complications related to COVID did not stop NEC from graduating our seniors in June, launching our summer programs in July nor derail our schools from starting “live” this fall.

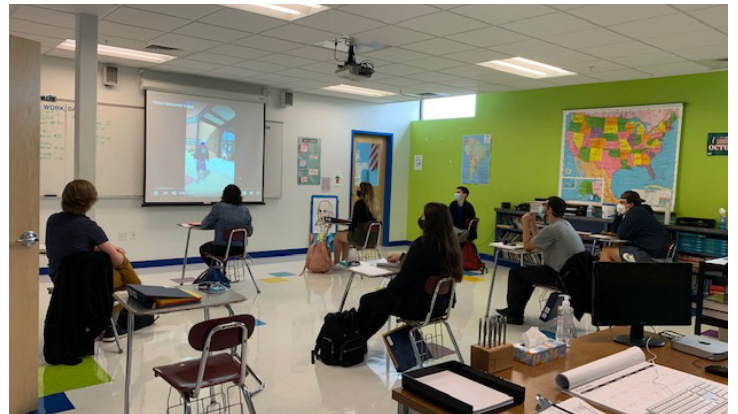
Many of these necessary accommodations were privately funded. We want to thank Linzee Coolidge, the Tower Foundation, People’s United Community Foundation of Eastern MA, East Boston Savings Bank Charitable Foundation, the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation, Cell Signaling, the van Otterloo Family Foundation, New England BioLabs, John W. Alden Trust and Lincoln Investments for not only their immediate, but also their long time support which has sustained the essential technology and programming necessary for the academic and social growth of our students.

Then, mid-summer when the cost of COVID began to soar, John and Mollie Byrnes gifted us \$100,000 to offset COVID related expenses and support our students’ return to their classrooms this fall. Their past support advanced our literacy program, built school gardens, expanded our arts programming and further developed key components to our Transition Programs. It has been their keen insight, genuine interest and steadfast generosity that have further established philanthropic giving to NEC as an essential component to our organization’s success in educating our students.

Thank you, John and Mollie! And a thank you to our philanthropic community of individuals, foundations and businesses who have stood beside us! We are, truly, stronger together!



“Philanthropy – “the desire to promote the welfare of others” (Oxford Languages)



## Support Our Work!

This year, your investment in the work we do and most importantly the students we serve will be more vital than ever.

Thank you for standing with us. “Every student. Every day. Whatever it takes.”

Support NEC: [www.nsedu.org](http://www.nsedu.org)



# Upcoming Event



## Virtual Festivus 5K for Autism

A Virtual Race for Serenity Now!

December 13, 2020 – December 20, 2020

We may not be together for this annual race in downtown Salem but you can still run or walk your own 5k to support our students with autism!

For more info or to register go to: [www.festivus5k.com](http://www.festivus5k.com)

Thank you to our event sponsors!

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## Executive Director Message, Cont

large parts of the third floor all the way down to the first floor. As a result, our Kevin O'Grady School and Recovery High School have had to temporarily return to remote learning. After all the excitement around our return on September 16th this has been heartbreaking! However, despite this unanticipated setback, or possibly because of it, the unstoppable spirit of optimism in our NEC community has everyone pulling together to resolve the situation quickly and safely, to ensure the best possible outcomes for our students.

In closing, I want to thank the philanthropic community for their sensitivity to the demands COVID has placed on organization budgets. We are so grateful to our many corporate and foundation friends for adjusting to the national, local and organization uncertainties and extending support to NEC in these unprecedented times. And a particular thank you to our friends, John and Mollie Byrnes, for their recent and very generous support to help offset essential expenses related to COVID and getting our students back in the classroom. Their willingness to join us in addressing the financial challenges this pandemic has unleashed has not only been budget relieving but also morale building. We are, truly, in this together!

I feel so fortunate to be a part of this dedicated community. Until next time, stay well everyone.

*Francine H. Rosenberg*

Francine H. Rosenberg, M.Ed.  
Executive Director



"The teachers lifted our spirits, made us laugh and, most importantly, brilliantly educated during a time when it was almost impossible to do so." -NEC Parent





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EDUCATION  
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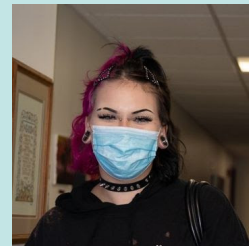
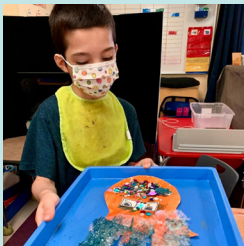
You now have a few ways to follow us on Facebook:

**Northshore Education Consortium**

**Northshore Recovery High School**

**Northshore Education Cooks**

**Kevin O'Grady School**



## Go Paperless!

**Would you like to receive the NEC E-Newsletter?**

Sign up for our electronic newsletter.

**Email: [cdeleyer@nsedu.org](mailto:cdeleyer@nsedu.org)**

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