



Spring 2024

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Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Earlier this spring, a group of students from Northshore Academy Upper School (NSAU) visited Northshore Academy Lower School to teach their younger peers about reptiles. They brought some of the reptiles they have been learning about in their Animal Care elective. This was remarkable given the fears some students had to

overcome. Their teacher Mr. Rae is a former NSAU student and is now a highly skilled and popular Instructional Assistant! *(Read more on page 5.)*



This is just one example of the wonderful growth we see every day at NEC! Philanthropic support enables us to provide an extensive array of enrichment activities for our students, helping them to experience far more than the core academic curriculum. Animal care, cosmetology, art, music, videography, media arts, culinary arts, carpentry, intramural and adapted sports, LAN gaming events, outdoor exploration, and more.

Philanthropic support is now more important than ever given the significant financial stresses facing NEC and our districts. Attracting and retaining talented teachers is expensive. Our aging buildings require significant capital



improvements to make sure that they are safe and functional. After months of planning, construction has started on a 12 million-dollar HVAC and roofing project at our 112 Sohier Road location in Beverly. The mission-critical nature of this project to replace failing systems required us to take a bank loan, which will affect our budget for years to come. Our districts have supported tuition increases to pay for this project and other urgent capital needs, however budgets are tight. We are so fortunate to receive charitable gifts and grant funding that is crucial in helping us maintain the highest quality services for our students and the professional development and support that our staff need and deserve.



Please pardon
our appearance
during construction :)

Continues on page 7

Program News

KEVIN O'GRADY SCHOOL (KOG)

Rubber Duckies of Appreciation

Who knew rubber duckies would be such a hit! At KOG, you could send a card or a duck to that special someone on Valentine's Day.



The Plunge To Fund

What happens when energized parents collaborate with friends, cold water, and the Super Bowl? Well, in the case of KOG parents Jim and Jen Lawler, you get a fundraiser for their son's school.

Principal Martha Krol could not have been more thrilled when she learned of the Polar Plunge planned for Super Bowl weekend in the chilly waters off of Nahant which raised \$1,200 for the school.

March Madness Spirit Week

KOG students and staff celebrated March Madness with Spirit Week! Dress as Your Favorite Character Day also happened to be National Reading Day. Pictured here we see a "character" from [A Bad Case of Stripes](#) by author David Shannon.



TOPSFIELD VOCATIONAL ACADEMY (TVA)

Their Future Looks Bright

TVA seniors are busy preparing for graduation which is just weeks away. A highlight has been trying on caps and gowns!



Getting a Dose of Reality

Thanks to volunteers from the Align Credit Union, TVA students participated in a Reality Fair preparing them for the future. Students' financial decision-making skills were challenged as they navigated real-life situations managing money to pay for housing, food, entertainment, transportation, and more.

Pushing the Limits

The Physical Education classes at TVA took on a whole new level of athleticism last semester. Between ice skating, various activities at SkyZone, and rock climbing, students enjoyed great workouts while having a good time.



Program News

NORTHSHORE RECOVERY HIGH SCHOOL (NRHS)

Recovery In Action

Who knew staying after school could be so good for you and for the community around you! For NRHS students, “staying after” has involved fun activities, community service, and a lot of good food!

“What NRHS staff member Niki has developed for our students during these often challenging hours, when the school day is over, has been a game changer for our kids”, states Principal Michelle Lipinski. “Not only do they get to hang out, they are engaged in the community by giving back at local shelters, soup kitchens, and more.” The after-school program is primarily funded through a state grant.

Additionally, NRHS was recently gifted \$10,000 from the Think of Michael Foundation established by Carmela and Richard Dalton to honor the memory of their son, Michael Dalton.

NRHS also received a generous gift from Frankie’s Voice, established by the Raffa family, who have supported the NRHS for many years in loving memory of Frankie Raffa, Jr.



NORTHSHORE ACADEMY UPPER SCHOOL (NSAU)

Basketball Team Wins Greater Boston Basketball League Tournament

The NSAU Varsity Basketball Team had another successful basketball season participating in the Greater Boston Basketball League. The team finished the regular season with an 11-1 record. The season culminated with a first-place finish at the Greater Boston Basketball League playoff tournament, earning the team the Division 1 Championship. Coaches Ryan Matuza, Mike Burns, and Dan Jackson were so proud to watch these students work together and encourage one another to defeat a very talented team from Campus Academy.



Souper-Bowl

This year’s tasty Souper-Bowl brought students, families, friends, and staff together for another successful event! Over 20 types of soups were sampled from Matzo Ball to Polish Żurek and everything in-between! Funds raised will go to support activities such as NSAU’s new ventures in T-shirt design.

Program News

NORTHSHORE ACADEMY LOWER SCHOOL (NSAL)

Charlie Brown, a Favorite Furry Friend

Charlie Brown is the therapy dog at NSAL. Certified to work in an elementary school, he greets students, listens to them read, and goes on special walks. He loves being part of the school's family!



Students Leading The Way to Success

The NSAL Student Leadership Group held a food drive in the fall. NSAL was able to donate 85 lbs of food to the Beverly Bootstraps Food Pantry. To celebrate the successful food drive, the school community had a flag football tournament.

The Building of a Scarecrow

It was hard work but students came together to build a scarecrow that was prominently displayed in a special location outside at NSAL! As part of the project, the first and second grade students had to write a creative story about a scarecrow.



TRANSITION PROGRAMS (EMBARK AND SOAR)

It was all Buckets for SOAR and Embark

This team was ready to SOAR as they EMBARKED on an afternoon of hard work, hustle, and heart to win their basketball game against MAICEI. In March, Salem State University's Campus Life and Recreation Department hosted an intramural game bringing together students from the SOAR/Embark and MAICEI programs, university student mentors, and staff for their first-ever Unified Recreation Basketball Game.



Spotlight on Internship Sites

Socializing puppies and making training treats is hard but rewarding work at the Northeast Animal Shelter.



Ian had a little chickadee eating out of his hand at his Mass Audubon internship!



FOR THE LOVE OF ANIMALS

William “Billy” Rae came to Northshore Academy Upper School (NSAU) in 2007 as a struggling 7th grader. There was an iguana in his science classroom that captured his interest. After two years at NSAU, he returned to his hometown high school, graduated, and began working at an accredited Animal Sanctuary presenting educational outreach programs.

In Billy’s words, “Animals can be very therapeutic. I consider myself proof of concept. Learning to care for and work with animals helped me build life skills and confidence.” His love of animals combined with his desire to work with young people led him to apply for an Instructional Assistant position at NSAU last year. In collaboration with one of our science teachers, he has embedded animals into the classroom and helped to create and teach several elective classes focusing on animal care.

He describes his success as follows: “I have seen students who would scream at the sight of a bug learn to appreciate our Hissing Cockroaches and handle them to help reduce their anxiety. One student went from not being able to be in the same room as my Ball Python to holding her for 10 straight minutes after she learned how to respect and appreciate the animal over multiple weeks. Another student has asked questions in my animal science class that you would get from a college student.”

Most recently, Mr. Rae has successfully incorporated public speaking skills in his curriculum, teaching students how to overcome their anxieties by presenting the lively creatures to a crowd. This spring he took five students to the Lower School where they each presented one of their favorite animals to students and staff. The amount of confidence that they displayed during the lectures and the pride they experienced afterward would be akin to winning a championship game in any sport. The group now has their eyes on presenting to the students at the Northshore Recovery High School as well as Kevin O’Grady School.





Donor Support Makes Us Stronger Together

Development Office Grant Highlights

New England BioLabs

A grant from New England BioLabs has students preparing for their future by building vocational skills with food and coffee preparation, cafe set-up, and product sales. Since 2009, New England BioLabs has been a strong support for the Kevin O’Grady Vocational Program which provides opportunities for our students to set them up for success in the communities they live in and are transitioning to work in.



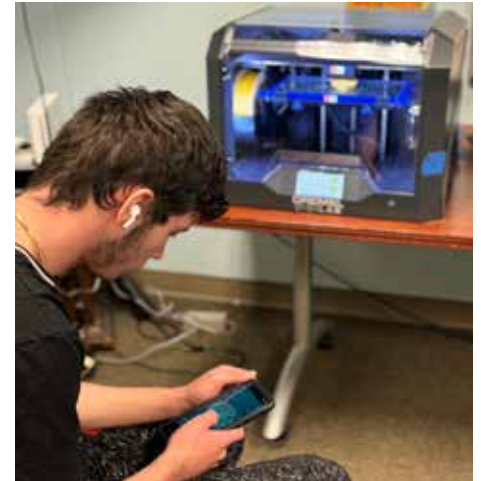
Arts for Learning Massachusetts

Our students love going to their weekly music class! Students at Kevin O’Grady School participated in two 12-week music residencies, made possible by a grant from Arts for Learning Massachusetts.

**“Every student.
Every day.
Whatever it
takes.”**

Tower Foundation

Thanks to a Tower Foundation grant in support of our Transition Programs in Salem, students are using a variety of tech devices to design images which are transformed into products with 3D printers. Current projects include key chains and activity spinners to be placed in gift bags given to each graduating senior. This grant has enabled Transitions to roll out another internship opportunity training students in graphic design, product management, and use of 3D technology. As part of their internship, students can also work with Peer Mentors in pursuit of certifications in CAD/CAM, Google, and recreational drone operation, positioning them for future careers in the field.



Thank you! Your giving matters...

Friends of Northshore Education Consortium, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization (#61-1479553).

If you would like to learn more about our giving opportunities, please contact:

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**“We make a living by what we get,
but we make a life by what we give.”**
~ Winston Churchill



Giving in Action



A Little Goes A Long Way

We all know of unsung heroes. It turns out that there are many unsung heroes at NEC whose stories are found in the lives of our students, families, and our staff.

Jim is a custodian at NEC. He is excellent at his work, but tends to be on the quieter side while focused on the task at hand. NRHS Principal Michelle Lipinski has noted that on several occasions, when Jim has been called to deal with a sticky situation, he has always treated the students with respect and kindness. As a result, the students have become fond of him. In January, Jim's dog died and he was devastated. Hearing about this, one student asked Jim for a picture of the dog,

and proceeded to use her time in art class to create a beautiful memorial plaque which she presented to Jim along with a card signed by all of the students. He was deeply touched, and the next day brought in flowers as a thank you, stating that the plaque had been hung in his home. When I saw Jim in the hallway the next day, he told me that his teenage years were challenging and that it meant so much to him to work in a place where he could make a difference in the lives of our students.

In the midst of budget stress and workforce challenges, it was a beautiful reminder of the fact that our work touches lives both in ways we expect, and in ways that we can't always see.

Thank you to the entire facilities team at NEC, your hard work and care for our school spaces do not go unnoticed!

Executive Director Message, Continued



Of particular note are two state grants that have enabled us to expand professional development opportunities, mental health, and wraparound services within our own NEC programs and for our member districts. We are working with member districts around efforts to reduce the use of time-outs and physical restraint, increase the use of trauma-informed practices, and support students impacted by community violence.

Additionally, the Tower Foundation has given us a transformative gift. As part of a Pilot Program for General Operating Grants, we have been selected to receive \$350,000 of unrestricted operating funds, spread over five years. The Tower Foundation believes that a grant in support of an organization's mission represents a "vote of confidence" in the grantee and enables us to sustain our day-to-day operations during difficult times. This unexpected gift makes an enormous difference in a tight budget cycle.



PETER & ELIZABETH
TOWER FOUNDATION

Every year at this time, I start to look forward to our June graduations! It is remarkable to look at our graduating students and think about how far they have come! Approximately 50 students will receive their diplomas this year in highly personalized ceremonies, and head off to college, continuing education, work, or adult services.

Spring is a time of hope and renewal. I wish you all a happy and healthy season. Thank you for your ongoing support in helping us enable our students to achieve success!

With gratitude,

Francine H. Rosenberg

Francine H. Rosenberg, M.Ed.

Executive Director

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GRADUATIONS/MOVING UP AND AWARD CEREMONIES

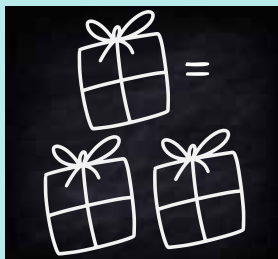
- Northshore Academy Upper School – June 5
- Topsfield Vocational Academy – June 6
- Transition Programs (Embark & SOAR) – June 7
- Northshore Recovery High School – June 12
- Northshore Academy Lower School – June 18



13TH RUNNING OF FESTIVUS 5K FOR AUTISM

Save the Date - December 15, 2024 in Salem, MA

The Friends of the Northshore Education Consortium Festivus 5K has raised over \$241,000 used to purchase technologies to assist and educate students with autism at the Northshore Education Consortium.



DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT WITH A MATCHING GIFT

Gifts to the Friends of Northshore Education Consortium are being doubled thanks to donors tapping into the matching gift program where they work. Ask your company if they have a matching gift program. Your gift could end up being twice as valuable!

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