League School of Greater Boston Appoints Bill Mulcahy as Its New Assistant Principal and Jessica Magnussen as the New Coordinator of Residential Services

Dr. Frank Gagliardi, Executive Director at League School of Greater Boston is pleased to announce the appointment of William Mulcahy as Assistant Principal at the school, and, Jessica Magnussen as the new Coordinator of Residential Services. Here is some background information on each.

William Mulcahy is the Assistant Principal at League School of Greater Boston. Bill has been in the field of special education for forty years. Bill has been working at the League School for the past six years as the Program Coordinator of the Transition Program. The Transition Program is for students that are 16-22 years of age.

Prior to working at League School, Bill spent 35 years working in special education for Quincy Public Schools as a teacher and administrator. Bill also worked one year as the high school coordinator for a Boston-based private special education school for students with social-emotional and behavioral needs.

In addition to his duties at the League School, he supervises assistant teachers working toward their special education license in severe special needs. Bill holds a Master’s Degree in special education from Boston State College.

Jessica Magnussen has been working at League School for the past two years in a variety of capacities. She has taught one-on-one, handled the morning shift at the residences as well as the weekend and overnight shifts.

Jessica has a Bachelors in Psychology from Bridgewater State and has been working in the field of special education since 2002. She started out as a teacher’s assistant in Taunton and also has worked as an ABA therapist in Taunton and New Bedford.

Jessica is looking forward to building strong relationships with all of the families of students in the residential program - she wants them to understand that their children will always be well cared for at the school and residence.

When asked what she liked most about working at League School, Jessica stated unequivocally that she appreciates the phenomenal support system that is in place for anyone working at the school – if you don’t know something, there is always someone you can turn to for guidance. Each and every member of the staff is always willing to help out in any way that they can, going above and beyond typical faculty efforts.

Please be sure to congratulate Bill and Jessica the next time you see them.

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Save the Date - The 3rd Annual League School 5K Walk/Run Will Be Held on Saturday, April 9th!
A Day to Give Thanks
For many of us, Thanksgiving can be a time to relax and enjoy time with family. However, for children with autism, it can be a challenging time. There are smells, sounds, and many other experiences that can create sensory overload for them. Knowing the challenges that come with the holiday season, the F/CT-LS and Transition programs at League hold an annual “Thanksgiving Feast.”

Thanks to Marie Canesi, our culinary arts teacher, as well as the rest of the program staff, the entire school fills with the delicious aroma of turkey on the day of the feast. During the feast, students are able to try all the traditional foods such as turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and all the other traditional fixings! The students also create personalized place mats with Judy, our art teacher, in preparation for the big day. The classroom staff provides visuals for the students so that the students can communicate that they like/don’t like the foods and to say “please,” “thank you” or “no thank you” when offered items from the buffet table. This is a tradition that continues to be fun for both the students and staff and will continue for years to come!

League School Staff Is Treated to an Appreciation Luncheon By School’s Parent Advisory Council (PAC)
On Tuesday, December 15th, the League School’s Parent Advisory Council hosted an appreciation luncheon for the entire school staff. Along with serving delicious food at a potluck lunch, the parents also arranged for gifts and gift cards for each of the staff members.

We want to express our gratitude to the entire PAC, with special thanks going out to those who served the lunch that day: Phillipa Keene, Julie Markowitz, Tricia Zappi, Lisa Sylvester, Denean Tolliver, and Pam Carleton.
League School Founder, Dr. Arnold Vetstein - Reflections on the Challenges He Faced in Founding the School

The Massachusetts Dental Society recently ran a story covering the life and career of League School founder, Dr. Arnold Vetstein - here are some excerpts from that feature that we thought you’d find interesting:

“My wife, Leona, and I are parents of an autistic son, Richard. This illness was not apparent until he was three years old, when he began to demonstrate unusual behavior. Nursery school teachers and others reported their concerns, but no one was able to put a label on the condition. We finally had him evaluated at Massachusetts General Hospital, where he was first diagnosed with autism. We then began searching for a place to have him treated and were directed to the Putnam Center in Boston. When I called the center’s director to ask if it was an appropriate place for him, he replied, “This is the only place on the planet.”

We enrolled him there....Meanwhile, we continued to look for schools. We attempted to enroll Richard in the special education classes of the public schools in Newton, where we lived. He was denied admission because he was judged as inappropriate for their classes. I called the superintendent of the Newton School Department, who explained that “it was too costly to educate such children.”...At that time, there didn’t seem to be any legal requirement that states or communities had to educate seriously disturbed children. Thus, we were left to fend for ourselves. He spent a total of three years in either inadequate or inappropriate schools. We searched in vain for a proper school that would admit our son.

It was then that we and Dr. and Mrs. Morton Olin, parents of another autistic boy, decided to explore the possibility of forming our own day school. Eventually, Leona and I took the lead in this endeavor and spent countless evenings writing letters to mental health facilities, university special education departments, and medical schools. We knew nothing about forming, staffing, or funding a school. We enlisted the help and advice of former school administrators, teachers, professionals, and parents. The name of one school came up frequently in our search: the League School of Brooklyn, which dealt with only autistic children. In early 1966, Leona arranged a visit. She flew to New York and spent a day with Dr. Carl Fenichel, founder and director of the school. Returning home that evening, Leona was very enthusiastic. Dr. Fenichel believed in “employing the discipline of special education and the specially trained teacher as the major therapeutic agent.” Instead of relying on the “holy trinity” of the psychiatrist, psychologist, and social worker to provide a few hours of individual therapy by one of these disciplines each week, the school employed a daily six-hour program of special education to play the key role. Its approach was to use well-trained teachers and staff in addressing the children’s disabilities. We had our model.

The search for classroom space was our continuous problem. I appealed to the Newton School Department, and they granted us the use of two of their classrooms within their special education building as of November 7, 1966. We had already hired our first director, teacher, and part-time social worker. The school was now in operation and began to grow. In 1968, we then discovered a nearby small, unused building that the Newton School Department owned, and we gained use of this dilapidated building. Contractors, parents, and other volunteers physically restored the building, which we occupied for several years. We eventually bought a very large school building from the City of Newton in 1981. We purchased it with the condition that, if the city needed the space for its own use within 15 years, we were required to sell it back. In 1996, just prior to the 15-year cutoff, the city notified us that it needed the building. We were given a year’s notice to find another facility. The League School then built a new home in Walpole. It is a beautiful, modern building that just completed a $10 million addition.....”

Our thanks to The Massachusetts Dental Society for allowing us to share some excerpts from their excellent piece on Dr. Vetstein’s remarkable career. To read the complete story, go to our website where you’ll find a link to it.
League School’s 2015 Holiday Wish List

As the calendar year comes to a close, we hope you keep the League School among your charitable priorities. Your support will go to fund the immediate needs of our students and teachers. Below is an example of those needs and where your donation can make a difference - please contact Tim McCabe, Head of Development, at 508-850-3900, X313, to learn more about how you can help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$50 and Under</td>
<td>Primacolor Art Stick - $25 (Many needed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>$500 and Under</td>
<td>Send a Class to the MFA - $275</td>
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<td>Origami iPad Stand - $30 (10 needed)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>iPod Shuffles - $50 (10 needed)</td>
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<td>Send a Class to the Science Museum - $300</td>
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<td>Board games for a class - $25 (Many needed)</td>
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<td>Hop Along Balls $30 (5 needed)</td>
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<td>Weighted Lap Pads - $40 (10 needed)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Racquets - $30 (Many needed)</td>
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<td>Legos Wall - $300</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Footballs/Basketballs - $25 (Many needed)</td>
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<td>Send a Class to the NE Aquarium - $500</td>
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<td>Supplies for a New Art Project - $50</td>
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<td>$250 and Under</td>
<td>Send a Class to the Enchanted Village - $80</td>
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<td>iPod Touch - $150 (10 needed)</td>
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<td>Crash Pit with 3,500 Balls - $2,500</td>
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<td>iPod Charging Cart - $1,500</td>
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<td>Yogibos - $240 (5 needed)</td>
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<td>Over $500</td>
<td>Indoor Cycle - $900</td>
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<td>Rowing Machine - $1,200</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Crash Pit with 3,500 Balls - $2,500</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Smart Board - $4,500 (4 needed)</td>
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League School Students Lend a Helping Hand With Our End-Of-The-Year Mailing

Last week, students in League School’s vocational program provided some much-needed assistance with the school’s holiday appeal. They stuffed envelopes with the mailer, the reply card and the return envelope along with a brief notation about themselves. It was an engaging activity that also reduced the costs of doing the mailing - thanks for your help.