



## Elaine Hall, Founder of *The Miracle Project*, to Speak at League School

Ms. Elaine Hall, founder and President of *The Miracle Project*, will be speaking at League School on February 13th at 4:15.

Ms. Hall, also known as “Coach El,” and referenced by The New York Times as “the child whisperer,” was a top Hollywood children’s acting coach whose life changed dramatically after her son Neal, adopted from a Russian orphanage, was diagnosed with autism. When traditional therapies did not work for him, she sought the esteemed Dr. Stanley Greenspan who encouraged her to rally actors and other creative people to join his world – the result was Neal slowly emerging out of his isolation.

Ms. Hall, whose appearance is being sponsored by the **Dedham Institution for Savings**, is a keynote speaker and workshop leader at conferences around the globe. Her book, ***Now I See the Moon: a mother, a son, a miracle*** was chosen for World Autism Awareness Day at the United Nations where she has spoken several times. Ms. Hall’s latest book, co-authored with Diane Isaacs, ***Seven Keys to Unlock Autism: Creating Miracles In The Classroom*** is being used in universities across the United States.

The methods presented by Ms. Hall in *The Seven Keys to Unlock Autism* are used to train staff and volunteers and to create *The Miracle Project*, a theatre and film program for children of all abilities that was profiled in the Emmy Award HBO documentary, *AUTISM: The Musical*. Ms. Hall also directs the Vista Inspire Program: an arts enrichment and a bar/bat mitzvah program for children and teens with autism at Vista Del Mar in Los Angeles. She has appeared on CNN, CBS News, Oprah radio and feature in a number of national newspapers.

We hope you can join us for this very special event. To reserve your space, please RSVP via e-mail to [ahauben@leagueschool.com](mailto:ahauben@leagueschool.com) or call Anne at 508-850-3900, extension 512.

Welcome back to the League School of Greater Boston’s Newsletter - UPDATE.

Any comments or suggestions are welcome. Please send them to Paul Oricchio in our development office at [poricchio@leagueschool.com](mailto:poricchio@leagueschool.com) or call him at 508-850-3900, extension 535.

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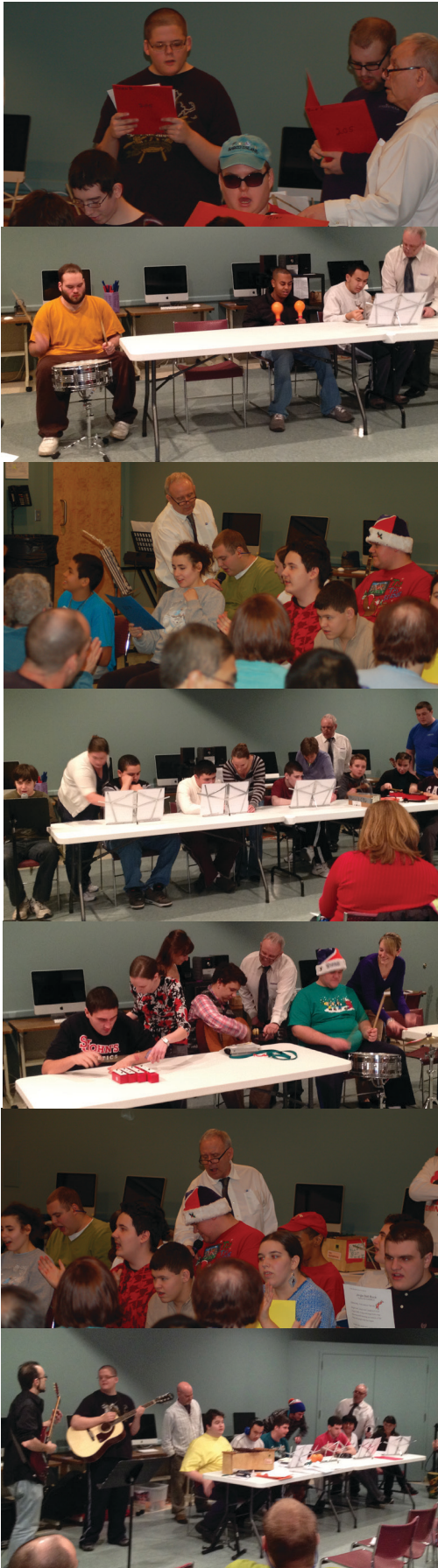
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## Saluting a League School Student Who is Doing “Good”

Before you question the grammatical correctness of the headline, we want to point out that this is a story about a League School student, Connor Ellis, who is doing “well” in the classroom, but more importantly, has dedicated himself to doing “good” outside the classroom by making donations to the *Be Like Brit* charitable foundation that was established in memory of Britney Gengel, the student from Rutland, MA who was killed in a Haitian Earthquake in 2010.

This past October, 10 cases of Connor’s books in brand new condition were loaded onto a truck to be driven to Miami then put on a boat to be taken to the orphanage which opened this month. Connor and his parents got the opportunity to meet both Britney’s family as well as a team of doctors who will be working at the orphanage when it opens.

Connor was thrilled that he was able to help others in this manner – he also donated some of his Christmas money to the orphanage. Keep up the great work Connor – you are a shining example for all to follow.



## League School's Winter Concerts Rock the Auditorium

Last month, League School enjoyed two special days of musical performances from its students under the musical direction of Frank Fitzpatrick. The concerts were truly collaborative efforts with students also distributing the programs, greeting guests, doing the announcing of numbers during the programs, and even handling the videotaping of the concerts. And we also want to thank staff members who gave up their parking spots each day to insure that there were enough spaces to accommodate parents who attended the performances.

The School's Winter Concert was held first. Students and staff members from each classroom performed – the songs ranged from classic favorites like *Yankee Doodle Dandy* to golden oldies like *Let It Be*. The concert concluded with a performance by the school's Dance Club under the direction of Kerri Vetrano. It was a joyful afternoon, with countless students cheerfully displaying their singing and dancing prowess.

Two days later, the program consisted of performances by The League School Chorus and The Rock Street Band. The former, featuring 19 League School students, entertained with a wonderful blend of seasonal holiday tunes that had the entire auditorium singing along with them. Blending traditional favorites like *Jingle Bells* with classic Beatles' songs like *Eight Days a Week*, the chorus showed great range and enthusiasm in its efforts.

The chorus was followed by The Rock Street Band, a group of seven League School students who entertained attendees with an eclectic blend of songs that included *Twist and Shout*, *Hound Dog*, and an original 12-bar blues song, *We Are the Rock Street Band*.

Both concerts were memorable, wonderful afternoons of music, highlighted by enthusiastic performances and smiling faces, both on the performers and the audience. Thanks to all who participated and attended.

Here are some images from those terrific programs. As you can see, Frank worked very hard to make sure that everyone was heard.







## Catching Up With a League School Graduate at College

Josh McGovern graduated from League School and received his diploma from the Attleboro school district in June 2011. Josh began attending Bristol Community College in Rhode Island later that Fall. We recently caught up with Josh and he sat down with us and answered some questions about how his life at a different school was going.

### ***So Josh – tell us a bit about life at College and the classes you are taking:***

I started classes at Bristol Community College on Fall 2011 and right now, I'm on my third semester there. I still live at home because BCC doesn't have any available dorm rooms on its campus. I attend class four days a week (each being about 1 hour and 15 minutes long), with 2 classes on Monday and Wednesday and 2 different ones on Tuesday and Thursday. Classes are usually over by early afternoon. I really enjoy learning something new from each of the classes I attend.

### ***Is there anything about college that has taken you by surprise?***

The college is bigger and has far more students than League School, but what really surprised me is how different these classes are. They are shorter because of the 3-month span of each semester but I still need to work hard to make sure I get good grades.

### ***What is your favorite class and why do you enjoy it so much?***

I enjoyed my Psychology course from last semester because it taught me how the brain works, gave some theories on why it works, and then had me watch "Frasier" for one homework assignment.

### ***How did the League School help prepare you for college life?***

My experience at League School got me used to hanging out with the same people, got me comfortable with meeting new people, and helped me to develop my ability to form relationships with people, a key factor for preparing for future life.

### ***Any final words of advice for League School students?***

Advice? Well, I'm not usually a person who gives out original words of wisdom, but I would say you should express yourself and don't forget to persevere. It's a school for the autistic and there's going to be some people who are going to irritate you, but you shouldn't forget that they're expressing themselves too. You get past these obstacles and try to accomplish each of your class's assignments and then...well, the rest will be history once you succeed.

*One quick footnote: While Josh was reluctant to talk about his success, his mother proudly added that he is taking Economics II, History III, College Writing II and Public Speaking and doing very well with all A's again this semester so far. Keep up the great work Josh.*



## Meet Our Employee of the Month - Sarah Conley

Sarah Conley is the head teacher in the Pathfinder's Program at League. With two children - a daughter who has autism and a son who has Asperger syndrome - she knows first-hand about the challenges her students face. And, she shares that knowledge as a parent with her students and other parents in offering an inclusive learning experience for her students.

When bestowing this honor, Principal Jean Leahy highlighted praise from other teachers which included "Sarah is a dedicated teacher that our others teachers seek out for advice." And "many times she is the last teacher to leave the building and she will work on lesson plans on weekends too. She is very flexible and is a very valuable special educator." We appreciate her commitment to the school and to her students. Keep up the great work

**Special  
Olympics**  
Massachusetts



### Upcoming Events at League School:

- Thursday, February 7th - 1:30  
League School Open House
- Wednesday, February 13th - 4:15  
Presentation by Elaine Hall sponsored by  
Dedham Institution for Savings
- Monday, February 18 - Friday, February 22  
No School - Winter Break

Please check the school calendar on the school website, [leagueschool.com](http://leagueschool.com), for the latest announcements about upcoming events at the school.

ANYONE WISHING TO MAKE A DONATION TO OUR SCHOOL MAY DO SO BY ACCESSING OUR WEBSITE AT [LEAGUESCHOOL.COM](http://LEAGUESCHOOL.COM) OR BY MAILING IT IN TO:

League School of Greater Boston,  
300 Boston Providence Turnpike, Walpole, MA 02032.

Thanks in advance for your support.

## What's It Like to Be a Special Olympian?

This past year, League School had two participants in the Massachusetts Special Olympics. We thought that you might enjoy hearing from Jonathan and Brian about their experience.

### What got you interested in participating in the Special Olympics/how did you hear about them?

**Jonathan:** I heard about the Special Olympics through my friends. For me, the best part about the Special Olympics is being with my friends hanging out with them and practicing with them. It also helped that I knew some of my teammates from years past. I also enjoyed my coaches – they were all very nice.

**Brian:** My mom heard about Special Olympics and suggested that I try out. I really like playing sports so playing basketball and running were easy to do.

### What event(s) did you participate in?

**Jonathan:** I was involved in basketball, flag football and volleyball with basketball being my favorite.

**Brian:** This year I played soccer and flag football.

### What did you like most about the Special Olympics?

**Jonathan:** I really enjoyed practicing with the team. I am proud to say that we won gold medals in all of the events. Overall, it was just a lot of fun.

**Brian:** I liked being on a team and making new friends. I also loved getting trophies, having people cheering for me, and especially hearing people cheer when I scored – that always made me feel good.

### What advice/suggestions would you give to other League School students who might be thinking about trying out for the Special Olympics?

**Jonathan:** More than anything else, I want to let other kids know how much fun they'll have by participating. I plan on playing basketball next year.

**Brian:** I would tell people not to be afraid and to be willing to take a chance because you're not going to accomplish anything if you're always afraid.

It seems obvious that both these students accepted the challenge of participating in Special Olympics and benefited greatly from it – maybe other students will be able to join them this year.

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## Did You Know....

The League School of Greater Boston is a publicly chartered 501-c3 charitable organization. Surplus revenue, by law, must be used to improve facilities and programs. Our school has a proud history of receiving philanthropy from the community since 1966. Some of the private foundations that have supported the school over the years are: Hayden Foundation, Clipper Ship Foundation, Hyams Trust, Lynch Foundation, General Cinema Corporation, Nancy Lurie Marks Foundation, a leader in funding autism related organizations and Alan Leventhal of Beacon Properties. Thanks to all of our generous benefactors for their contributions and support.

Businesses and corporations support us because the availability of high-quality special education makes this community a better place to live. The modern, well-equipped school staffed with committed and highly skilled educators helps attract businesses to the region and enhances property values as well. We appreciate the support that the town of Walpole gives us and hope that our presence enhances the community as well.

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