



League School of Greater Boston To Celebrate the Completion of Its Main Building Addition With a Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony on Sunday, October 4th

On Sunday, October 4th, League School of Greater Boston will be holding a ribbon-cutting ceremony on its campus in Walpole from 1-4 PM to commemorate the completion of its new building addition.

The celebration will include tours of the new facilities, demonstrations by teachers and staff members, and light refreshments. The “official” ribbon-cutting is expected to take place between 1:45 and 2:15, with state and local town officials expected to attend and join with school administrators and board members in participating in the ceremony itself.

League School Executive Director, Dr. Frank Gagliardi, is looking forward to that special afternoon - “This ceremony will acknowledge the years of work and planning that went into creating an exceptional learning space for our students. I look forward to sharing this memorable moment with staff members, students and their families, and friends of the school.”



Jennifer Poitras

What Teaching at League School Means to Me

Here is another League School staff member sharing with us some reflections on what it means to teach at League School of Greater Boston. We want our readers to better understand the special opportunities that both students and teachers alike enjoy by being a part of the League School family. Here is one such reflection from Jennifer Poitras:

What I find the most special about working at League School is seeing the students accomplish the goals that they have set for themselves, whether it is to graduate with a diploma, go to college, or get a job. One of my favorite days was when I told a student that he had passed his MCAS and he responded with “Finally! I thought this day would never come!” This same student was interviewed a year ago on Chronicle, sharing his successes and graduated with his high school diploma this past June. I recently had a few former students e-mail me to check in and see how everything is going here at League. They both had moved on to other schools and had also graduated this past June. I was so grateful that they thought of me when they reached their goals and e-mailed me to let me know - it made me feel like I actually made an impact on their lives, even though while they were students here, every day was a struggle to get them to stay in class and complete assignments. These students now have different post-graduation plans, one is going to attend college and the other is holding down a full time job.

Another special thing about teaching at League School that I have not seen in other schools is the sense of community within the staff. Everyone works as a team; people are willing to stop what they are doing to help each other out at a moment’s notice. Simply stated, things that are special about the League School are the bonds that are developed and the sense of community within the school. I have developed life-long friendships with staff and will continue to keep in contact with former students.

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League School Students, Staff, and Family Members Celebrate a Glorious Summer Family Fun Day

On Friday, August 21st, League School celebrated its annual Summer Family Fun Day at the school. While the slightly inclement weather did prompt a few changes in the activities planned, it certainly did not prevent all those who attended from enjoying a day filled with food, friends and fun.

The day-long activities included:

- A tattoo parlor in the main office that was busy throughout the day providing colorful creations to a variety of student body parts.
- Xbox Kinect games held in the computer lab.
- Karaoke in the music room where the dulcet tones of students, teachers, mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers filled the air all day.
- Fire trucks, police cars, and ambulances to explore in the parking lot.
- Art tables in the auditorium filled with students creating memorable works of colorful art.
- Carnival games in the gym that tested the skills of all participants.
- A delicious hotdog lunch served in the cafeteria for anyone who was hungry.

It was a very special day filled with wonderful memories that will be cherished by everyone who attended. Thanks to everyone who planned and participated.





Frank Fitzpatrick, Music Teacher

League School's Music Program Offers Students an Exceptional Blend of Learning and Participation

League School's music teacher, Frank Fitzpatrick, has been teaching at the school for nine years. During that time, he has developed a wonderful, integrated program for students that allows them to learn about, hear, touch and even play different instruments.

According to Frank, music is about creativity, expression, communication, and both individual expression as well as learning to work together. Almost everyone automatically enjoys music, for a variety of purposes, but it takes being taught to be able to identify what one is hearing on the radio and seeing at a concert.

The music program that Frank offers at League School includes:

- Music class for each classroom
- Karaoke groups
- Sing-Along class
- Chorus
- Individual lessons
- After-School programs
- Concerts for parents and classmates



Music Classes meet once a week for a half-hour and do a lot of hands-on activities to keep students active and engaged. A recent unit on instruments of the flute and whistle family involved having students look at photos and descriptions of the instruments and their parts, had them hear about and see how they produce sound, watch the teacher play them, sing songs that used the instruments, and finally, hold and play the instruments.

In music class, the classroom staff and Frank work from a schedule of planned musical activities: the opening Hello Song, followed by instruction on playing Instruments, singing, dancing, or listening to music, and finishing with the Goodbye Song. For many classes we use a physical schedule with velcro moveable pieces that are moved from To Do to Finished when completed.

During these activities students are given the opportunity to make choices and express their preferences within given parameters. Depending on the class and the individuals, a student may pick from fast or slow, and loud or quiet for the Hello or Goodbye song. For playing instruments, the choices might be which guitar or pennywhistle or drum does he or she want to play. Singing as a Music Class Activity ranges from students singing the music-teacher-selected song to choosing songs from a list for the music teacher to sing and play on guitar.

Another important element in any music class is working together. For example, students echo a rhythm played by the teacher one by one for practice and then play it all together. Next comes the concept of balance so we can adjust the relative sound volume of each person "in the band."

To foster independence and creativity, students may also take turns playing a solo, during which the rest of the class practices being a good audience: listening, being supportive, and clapping at the end.

As you can see, Frank's tireless efforts and dedication to his craft have resulted in the development of a comprehensive approach to both learning about and, appreciating music. We value his musical expertise and treasure his unwavering commitment to his students - we are lucky to have him.



League School Teacher, Krista Swiader, Reflects On Her Experiences of Participating in Our Vocational Program

For the past year and a half, I've had the pleasure of bringing two young adults with autism to The Vanderbilt Club. Every Friday afternoon, they clean the equipment and handrails throughout the building. Depending on the day, it can take us about an hour to complete each section. Some days, we get through the entire club. Others, we only manage one or two rooms. Regardless of how much we complete, we are always greeted with smiles. It is refreshing, given the stigma that still lingers with individuals with autism. Many of them are continuously told that they will never hold a job in the community, including my two Vanderbilt employees.

As we make our way through each room, I'll make eye contact with club members who are exercising in our vicinity. There's no judgment or scrutiny; many of them give compliments for their work. Some simply smile. One of my employees will always smile back and thank them for their compliments, then turn back to his work with the smile still lingering on his face. It's a boost to his confidence and his pride. It is a sign that he and his partner are welcome.

It even makes me feel proud, as both their teacher and a person. It gives our simple, weekly routine meaning. My "dynamic duo" have no knowledge of the past for individuals with autism; how many people were sheltered away and considered unmanageable or unteachable. They know that, on Fridays, we clean the equipment until around 1:45pm, then head back to The League School and prepare to sing in chorus before going home for the weekend. They also know that, by doing this each week, they're earning money and the respect of the club members.

Having the chance to collaborate with The Vanderbilt Club is more than just a vocational opportunity. It's a push in the right direction for the future of individuals with autism working in the community and a hope for their families. It is with great pride that I get to tell parents, "Your son works at The Vanderbilt Club." They are amazed and thankful, not only towards the teachers and the team, but also to Vanderbilt Club for embracing people with exceptional needs. And each week, we happily get to turn to the woman at the front desk, smile, and say:

"Bye! Have a great weekend! We'll see you next week!"

Save the Date - Saturday, October 3rd: League School to Be One of the Beneficiaries of JoJo's "Touch a Truck Day"

On Saturday, October 3rd, there will be a special event held at 152 Winslow Avenue in Norwood - JoJo's "Touch a Truck Day" - and League School, along with Autism Speaks, will be the beneficiaries of monies raised at the event.

Hosted by the Norwood Elks Lodge #1124, the event will run from 10am till 4pm. There will be fire trucks, new and old-fashioned police cars, ambulances, big rigs, monster trucks, possibly a SWAT truck, cement mixers, and everyone's longtime favorite, an army tanker.

We also will have face painting, dig for treasure, ring toss, bounce house, surprise gift bags, raffles for adults and kids, and of course, delicious refreshments for all. The event will be held, rain or shine, so we hope you can join us for what we think will be a very special day of family fun in Norwood.

Upcoming Events at League School:

- Saturday, October 3rd - JoJo's Touch a Truck Fundraiser in Norwood to benefit League School
- Sunday, October 4th - Ribbon-Cutting Celebration at School from 1-4
- Thursday, October 15th - Parent Teacher Conference Evening

Please check the school website, for the latest announcements about upcoming events at the school.



FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT!
Benefiting The League School in Walpole & Autism Speaks®

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD
10 AM - 4 PM
152 WINSLOW AVENUE, NORWOOD
RAIN OR SHINE