



League School's first Night of Champions was a resounding success, introducing the school, its people and its programs to a number of new supporters.



Student artwork, on display during the reception preceding the Night of Champions, was a popular draw at the event's Silent Auction.

League School Holds Its First *Night of Champions* Honoring Those Who Bring Hope and Achievement to Students with Autism and Their Families

On Wednesday night, May 2nd, League School of Greater Boston held its first *Night of Champions* at Four Points by Sheraton Norwood Hotel. The gathering of over 200 guests, including sponsors, board members, civic leaders, supporters of the school, parents, and staff members, was both a celebration of and a fundraiser for the school as it honored individuals and organizations that have helped "champion" its cause through their exceptional efforts.

The evening started with a cocktail reception and silent auction held just outside the main ballroom. The auction included a variety of items donated by friends of the school that included golf outings, sports memorabilia, and other gifts along with a number of pieces of artwork done by League School students. It was a wonderful opportunity for those who provide financial and directive support to the school to mingle with each other as well as get to know the school's leaders and staff members.



Last year's Vetstein Award winners, Paula and Donny Wright, joined by Donny's wife, Marta, were thrilled to be able to honor this year's winner, Greg Susco.



Vetstein Award recipient, Greg Susco, is welcomed by League's Head of Development, Tim McCabe.



League School Board member, Mary Lou McDonough and her husband, Bill, are all smiles.



Dr. Frank Gagliardi, greets the school's new COO, Larry Sauer and his wife, Molly Cochran.



League School's Chairman of the Board of Directors, Roger Lockwood, was once again the evening's emcee.



League School's Executive Director, Dr. Frank Gagliardi, reviewed the latest additions to the school's campus.



Last year's Vetstein award winner, Donny Wright, proudly introduced this year's winner, Greg Susco of Telamon Insurance.

The Night of Champions Program Included a Brief Presentation from League School's Executive Director Along With the Debut of the School's Latest Video

The Night of Champions program began with the gala's emcee, Roger Lockwood, welcoming everyone and thanking them for taking time out of their busy lives to spend some time learning more about the school and its programs.

He explained that the evening's title, Night of Champions, was chosen for three reasons: (1) to recognize the awesome kids at the school, (2) to honor the amazing people who teach them and care for them, the school administration that supports them and (3) to acknowledge those whose philanthropy rewards them. He continued by stating that "we will also honor the people who, through their exceptional work and generosity, have made it possible for some students to achieve by increasing social, educational and employment opportunities."

Lockwood noted that autism is a highly individualized disorder, and, considering the broad age range, and the differing learning styles, League School must constantly provide more resources to nurture and enable student champions. He concluded by stating "the funds the dinner raises will help to enrich League School's future and enable its teachers and staff to continue providing those specific resources that will help all our kids become Champions."

Next to speak was Dr. Frank Gagliardi who began by updating the audience with some basic facts about the school - specifically, that it currently has almost 100 day and residential students from over 50 different communities in Massachusetts. He also proudly stated that during the past year, the school completed construction of its second on-campus residence, a 4,500 square-foot facility.

An engaging video about the school followed, as event attendees were treated to a close look at the daily routines of four different students at the school. With a compilation of images and interviews demonstrating the kind of progress that has been achieved by these students, it effectively captured the remarkable spirit and energy of everyone who attends League School (along with the tireless efforts of those who teach them).



The evening's honorees are joined by League School personnel: (L-R) Dr. Frank Gagliardi, League School Executive Director; David Foster, League School Board President; James Major; Greg Susco; Jerry LaVoie; Roger Lockwood, League School Board Chairman; Connor, Geoff and Patricia Ellis, Event Co-Chairs.



Jerry LaVoie accepted the Community Leadership Award on behalf of Dedham Savings Bank.

“Champions” Honored Included the Dedham Savings Bank, retiring maaps Director, James V. Major, and Greg Susco of Telamon Insurance

The school handed out three different awards, honoring organizations and individuals whose personal and financial support have measurably assisted League’s ability to provide the best possible education for its students.

- **THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD** was given to Dedham Savings Bank - reflecting its mission of making a difference in the communities which it serves. The bank has long supported the school’s educational efforts by providing grants for technology and being a sponsor at school-related events such as its annual Walk/Run for Autism. Accepting on behalf of the bank was its Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Jerry LaVoie. He expressed the bank’s gratitude for being recognized and promised that the institution would continue its strong relationship with the school.
- **THE DIRECTOR’S AWARD**, awarded in recognition of service or achievement in support of children with autism or other disabilities, was given this year to James V. Major, the retiring Executive Director of maaps (Massachusetts Association of 766-Approved Private School). The school honored Jim for his unwavering dedication to making life better for students with special needs.
- **THE VETSTEIN AWARD** was presented to Greg Susco the President and Chief Operating Officer of Telamon Insurance. Through his company, Greg has worked on behalf of League School employees for more than a decade. He generously supports all the schools events as well as the school’s first capital campaign which helped broaden their reach while improving opportunities for their students. His charitable work does not end at League as he serves on boards and committees for a number of local non-profits.



Retiring maaps Director, James V. Major, was honored with the Director’s Award.

The bestowing of the awards was followed by additional brief presentations. The first, was by League School Occupational Therapist, Lindsay Wagner, who talked about what it meant to be a League School teacher - the dedication and energy that it required each and every day. But she was also quick to point out the sense of satisfaction that a teacher could revel in when a student reached a pre-ordained goal. It was an inspiring talk. And it was followed by an equally-inspiring speech by one of the event’s Co-Chairs, Geoffrey Ellis. With his wife, Patricia, by his side, he talked about what a difference the school had made in the life of their son, Connor, as well as their own. The life skills that the school had imparted through its programs for Connor continue to serve him well, years after his graduation. A heartfelt testimonial to what the school can help a student achieve, it was a truly moving conclusion to a memorable evening.



Telamon Insurance President, Greg Susco, recipient of the prestigious Vetstein award, reflected on his years of interacting with the people at League School.



The evening also included a presentation by League School teacher, Lindsay Wagner, who talked about both the challenges and rewards of working at the school, with a shining example of the school’s success being represented by Connor Ellis, shown here flanked by his parents, Patricia and Geoff.

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Final Thoughts and Images From Our *Night of Champions*

This special edition of Update would not have been complete without acknowledging our sponsors (listed in the left hand column) whose generous donations helped to make this special event possible. Also listed are members of the Host Committee.

While we are still determining some of our remaining minor costs associated with putting on the event, we are pleased to report that we raised

Over \$130,000

for the school from this Night of Champions. It properly captured the essence of what makes our school so very special. We are proud of what we have accomplished and look forward to achieving new successes every day with our student population.



The Christopher Catanese Children's Foundation has been a long-time supporter of the school. Members of the Catanese family enjoyed hearing what their support has helped to accomplish.



Former League School Board member Nancy Hershfield and her husband Rob, flank her father and League School founder, Dr. Arnold Vetstein.



School staff members enjoyed an evening filled with lively conversation and memorable moments.