

UPDATE: New Outdoor Learning Space Project



In the school's on-going effort to provide our students with a new outdoor learning space, we are happy to report funding for the initial phase of the project is complete.

We reached this milestone at a critical time. A recent outside assessment of our physical space recommended that the school's current play structure be removed due to safety concerns.

We will comply with the recommendation and begin removing the structure in the next few weeks. Although this will create an immediate void in the outdoor activities for our students, our hope is that it generates an even greater sense of urgency among our friends and families to help us complete the remaining phases of this much needed project. (continued)



Five Tips for Taking the Scare Out of Halloween for a Child with Autism



Tracey Mello is a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant. She has been at League School for the past eight years. She offers the following tips to help take the scare out of Halloween for children with Autism:

Halloween can be scary, particularly for autistic students who generally thrive on routine. As it only happens once a year, there are many unexpected aspects of the holiday and the lead up to it. Spooky music, creatures jumping out of nowhere, and creepy costumes add to the anxiety.

1) Preview Trick or Treating

Take time to practice what to expect on Halloween. Act out the exchange that happens when someone rings the doorbell. Practice what to do if your child doesn't like the candy he or she receives. Show your child which houses you will visit and take a practice walk. If possible, enlist a neighbor's help to role play in advance. You may want to give your neighbors your child's favorite candy to give to him or her on Halloween. Consider videotaping the practice run so you can watch it a few times before October 31.

2) Pick the Right Costume

Allow plenty of time to pick the right costume. Consider your son's or daughter's preferences when choosing a costume. If there are sensory aspects of the costume that will be bothersome, discuss other options. Some students don't like a mask on their face, so stay away from masks if this is true for your child. Does your child like to wear sweatpants or a hat? Incorporate this clothing into the costume. If possible, have your son or daughter try on the costume before you buy it. You want to be sure your child is comfortable. Once you have the costume, practice trying it on before Halloween. (continued)



Outdoor Project Update (cont'd)

Now, our focus turns to raising money to purchase the new play equipment for the area. We have worked with staff on a design that is appropriate and engaging for all of our students. The space will include structures that, in addition to providing health and physical benefits, will foster social interactions and encourage play at all levels for our students.



The modular design also offers flexibility to build in the future based on the needs and profiles of our students.

At a cost of nearly \$50,000 this phase represents half of the total estimated cost of \$100,000.

Consider helping us reach this goal by making a donation today. Your generosity, at any level, will provide a space our students deserve as they work to reach their fullest potential.

For additional information, including naming opportunities, please contact:

Tim McCabe, Head of Development, at tmccabe@leagueschool.com or by phone at 508-850-3900 ext. 313.



Welcome to the newest members of the Friends of League School! (From L-R) Ron Katz, Linda Olen, and Robert Way.

Taking the Scare Out of Halloween (cont'd)

3) Enlist a Peer Model to Accompany Your Child

A sibling or neighborhood child can be a helpful role model for your child while Trick or Treating. Your child will appreciate the opportunity to emulate the other child's words and actions. Be sure to watch for any concerning encounters, such as a barking dog, motion decorations, or scary mask, and intervene when necessary. Take along a calming object in case of an unexpected experience.

4) Quit While You're Ahead

Don't go to the last few houses just because you had planned to do so. If it looks like your child is fading, quit while you're ahead. You'll want to allow plenty of time to unwind. Plan for a calming activity after the excitement of the night.

5) Have Fun!

Follow these tips and you and your child are bound to enjoy the holiday. "The biggest takeaway of Halloween is to have fun," says Tracey Mello. "If your child has a positive experience, he or she will bring those memories to future Halloween holidays."

Friends of the League School Welcomes Three New Members

The Friends of the League School welcomed three new members this September. The Friends of League School brings together talented professionals to share their knowledge and expand our network of ambassadors and advocates. The new members include:

Robert Way, President of Robert Way Construction, Inc., a Norwood-based construction company that provides residential remodeling services and insurance restoration work.

Linda Olen, President of O'LYN Roofing, a well-known New England roofing company that has been in business for 46 years.

Ron Katz, Senior Director of National Accounts for Agile Fleet, a national provider of fleet and mobility management software systems.

The new Friends have already jumped in to help the League School advance its mission. Rob Way has joined the Board's Facilities Subcommittee, which is reviewing and providing recommendations for the Moose Hill property. Ron Katz is the Friends designee on the Executive Director Search Committee. Linda Olen has been a strong supporter of the League for the past six years, and was awarded along with her husband the 2019 Vetstein Award for their commitment to the school.

O'LYN, the name of which is a play on the Olen name and Linda's nickname, have supported the school's 5K Run/Walk for Autism, the Night of Champions, the "Fore" Autism Golf Classic, and the new playground project. "I believe every child deserves to reach their full potential," said Ms. Olen. (cont'd)

Friends of the League School Welcomes Three New Members (cont'd)



Board liaison, Tracey Robbins, addresses the Friends of League at a recent meeting

“Children and young adults with Autism can live a more purposeful and fulfilling life if given the right opportunity and training, which the League School provides,” said Rob Way. “I look forward to bringing my construction expertise and to collaborate with League supporters who I’ve respected for a long time to advance the school’s mission.”

“I hope to use my experience in building relationships to expand the school’s outreach and engagement activities,” said Ron Katz. “By increasing awareness of the school among the business community, we can increase the school’s visibility, fundraising efforts, and vocational opportunities.”

Other Friends of the League School include Daniel McCarthy, Partner for the law firm Manning, Gross, and Massenburg in Boston; David Walsh, Director of Community Relations for Direct Federal Credit Union; Cindy McGrath, HR and Healthcare Marketing Communications Consultant; Donny Wright, Jr., McDonald’s Franchise Owner and Operator; Gregory Susco, President and Chief Operating Officer for Amplified Insurance; Patrick Powers, Senior Branch Manager for Liberty Mutual Insurance; Peter Catanese II, Central Auto Dealership owner; and Sammi Robertson, founder of the non-profit Bailey’s Team for Autism.

PARTNER PROFILE: HESSCO/ Meals on Wheels



Carol Hopkins, HESSCO’s Meals on Wheels Site Manager, preparing a delivery with League students

For over 10 years, the League School has partnered with HESSCO (Health and Social Services Consortium) Meals on Wheels to provide vocational training for students. During that period, over 30 students have worked for the organization, gaining valuable skills and experience in the process including:

- Teamwork
- Food Services
- Communication
- Sanitation and Safety

“We’ve enjoyed a longstanding partnership with the League School and we value the work the students do,” said Jayne Davis, HESSCO’s Nutrition Director. Established in the 1970s, HESSCO is a private not-for-profit organization affiliated with the state’s Executive Office of Elder Affairs with additional funding from the federal government and private contributions. HESSCO covers 12 communities from Dedham to the north, Millis to the west, Plainville to the south, and Canton to the east. Elderly services include health insurance help, caregiver support, and financial and legal assistance.

HESSCO’s nutrition program provides home delivery of hot meals to 500-600 older residents per day. These residents are age 60 or over, homebound, and unable to cook and prepare food. HESSCO also serves meals in community centers, such as senior centers and senior housing facilities.

The League School students deliver meals to home-bound seniors and serve meals at Norwood, Sharon, and Walpole HESSCO centers. Other jobs include:

- Packaging food
- Labeling meals destined for homes with food content, nutrition, and heating instructions
- Washing dishes and cleaning up after group meals
- Monthly donation statement folding and envelope stuffing

“The students are learning valuable skills that they can apply to the restaurant industry and other vocations after graduation,” says Ms. Davis. “The seniors love interacting with the students, and our staff values their contributions.”

Reconstruction Process Reaps Expanded Capacity

Every six years, the League School has the opportunity to go through an evaluation process to assess whether we are optimally meeting the needs of the students we serve. As the student population and our programs change, this reconstruction process, authorized under Massachusetts regulations, enables us to make adjustments to our funding sources for staffing, equipment, and facilities. As a result of these efforts we are able to expand in the following areas:

New staff – we will be hiring new staff including a teacher, a few teacher aids, and a number of job coaches who serve as liaisons and supervisors at vocational sites.

New vans – we will be adding five new vans, which will streamline transport of students to multiple community work sites.

New property at Moose Hill – we have purchased a new adjacent property, which will enable us to expand our programming.



COO Larry Sauer led the reconstruction

The year long process was spearheaded by League School's Chief Operating Officer, Larry Sauer. "The program meets an important need for school districts," said Larry "Our highly skilled staff specialize in helping students on the autism spectrum. These students benefit from more services than are offered in most school districts. We are pleased that we will be able to expand programming and provide more services to our students."

Over 40 Attend Open House Featuring Student Artwork

Thank you to more than 40 parents, staff, Board members, Friends of League members, and guests who attended this year's Open House held at Cilla's Coffee House in Norfolk on September 18th.

Hosted by Board Member, Tracey Robbins, the event was an open discussion on what the future may hold for individuals and families with autism. In addition to learning about some of League School's new initiatives, guests heard Principal Patrick Fuller speak on how the school helps transition students to become independent adults. In addition, Friends of League member, David Walsh discussed Direct Federal Credit Union's efforts to support individuals with disabilities and their recent hire of a League School student.

Attendees enjoyed light refreshments while viewing more than 20 pieces of art by League School students which Cilla's had on display during the month of September.

Special thanks to Dave and Tracey Robbins for hosting this wonderful evening!



From L-R: Principal Patrick Fuller speaks about League programs, Tracey Robbins welcomes everyone, Direct Federal's Dave Walsh talks about their support of League students, student art was on display at Cilla's during the month of September