It’s hard to make Lillian Berry-Rogers angry. But there is a way. Just tell her students that they can’t be whatever they want to be.

Berry-Rogers was once on a field trip with Cobbet Middle School students when someone made a derogatory remark about Lynn to a student, saying that someone from Lynn would never amount to anything.

“It made me angry,” she said. “I knew it wasn’t true.”

She didn’t have to look far to find an example. Berry-Rogers earned a bachelor’s degree at Salem State and then a master’s degree from Lesley University while she was living in Marian Gardens, a public housing development in West Lynn.

She became a Lynn teacher in 1999 and is now a first-grade teacher at the Connery School, teaching in the same first-grade classroom that she attended as a first-grader.

“Mrs. Donovan was my teacher and like everyone else at the time, we were following the adventures of Dick and Jane,” she said.

She moved to the Connery from the Tracy School last fall when Mary Dill became the Connery principal.

“She classroom is a place everyone would like their children to be,” said Dill. “It’s a joy to be there. She inspires her students with her enthusiasm and her love for teaching. Other educators love to watch her.”

In recent years, bullies have been aided by the latest in technology.

Where once bullying involved physical confrontation or verbal abuse — delivered in person by one person or a group — today a bully can sit behind the keyboard of a computer and spew venom that can have deadly results.

Now the state’s schools have become a battleground in the effort to stop bullies.

A state law passed last May in the wake of the suicides of 15-year-old Phoebe Prince of South Hadley and 11-year-old Carl J. Walker-Hoover of Springfield bans bullying on all school grounds, buses and activities, and mandates that every instance of bullying be investigated by school officials and reported to the parents of the students involved.

Lynn Public Schools has joined the fight against bullying in all forms. Health and Wellness Director Dennis Thompson has been doing a series of educational presentations at Lynn schools with Lynn police officer Bob Ferrari aimed at students in grades 5-12.

Next fall, a district-wide curriculum will be in place to address the issue on a comprehensive level.

Thompson, 35, a former three-sport athlete at Lynn English High who also played baseball at Westfield State, is in his third year as health and wellness director.

“Our efforts are concentrated on education and prevention,” he said.

Thompson started out as a physical education and health teacher at Lynn

Connery teacher Lillian Berry-Rogers with her class.
Credit recovery program helps raise graduation rate

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

A year ago, Mohammed Denny was excelling as a junior at Lynn Classical High School, setting his sights on schools such as Bentley University, Boston College and Boston University. But all of his best laid plans came crashing down the moment his mother was diagnosed with lung cancer.

Denny spent the last three months of the school year at her side.

“I was at the hospital day and night,” he said. “I couldn’t think about sitting in class after she got sick.”

Denny was short four credits at the start of this year, but thanks to the Lynn Public Schools credit recovery program, he is making up those credits and on track to graduate this spring. The program, made possible through a three-year grant awarded by the Mass. Dept. of Education’s Drop Out Prevention and Recovery Work Group, is helping students such as Denny recover lost time and credits due to illness, family emergency, pregnancy and other unforeseen factors. It is also helping to retain at-risk students and bring back those who have dropped out.

“We were finding a lot of kids who were short four or five credits wouldn’t necessarily come back for a fifth year and graduate,” said Ben Johnson, credit recovery coordinator and history teacher at Fecteau-Leary Junior/Senior High School. “Rather than repeat a whole semester for one class, they’re able make them up online at their convenience.”

The district is using an Apex Learning digital program, a curriculum aligned to state and federal regulations, and programs that benefit the social and emotional well-being of our students. How our students are presented those standards and how we respond to those regulations and programs are illustrated by the individuality and inventiveness of our wonderful faculty and staff.

You will read about our Health and Wellness director creating a comprehensive bullying policy and process for the benefit of all students and their families. You will meet two new high school principals who bring years of experience and ideas to their positions.

This edition also features outstanding faculty, including one who is teaching in the same classroom she attended school as a first-grader. You will also read about several of the partnerships from which our schools benefit, including ones with General Electric, College for Every Student, the Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development, Northshore Education Consortium and Endicott College. Most importantly, you will see our students engaged in learning and participating in sports and activities that help to make them intelligent, well-rounded citizens and accomplish their goals and our goals as well.

Negative stories always seem to gather more attention than they deserve, event they represent anomalies rather than daily occurrences. As superintendent, I am proud that the programs and articles presented here are indicative of the outstanding work that goes on in our schools daily.

Dr. Catherine C. Latham is superintendent of schools.

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Working together, using their hands to create something, brings out the best in the fifth-graders at the Drewicz Elementary School. Students who are not usually interested in school suddenly become animated. Others who have a hard time communicating suddenly find they are able to express themselves. It’s all thanks to a group of volunteers from GE who have brought a robotics program to the school, utilizing LEGO sets to build motorized cars.

Drewicz Principal Bernadette Stamm said she is impressed with how engaged the students are while working on a project. “They are truly involved,” she said. “They can’t wait until they get there. And they are the best behaved during that time.”

The robotics program is in its second year at Drewicz. It runs for 12 weeks – six weeks for each of the two fifth-grade classes at the school. Designed to give students an introduction to engineering, it starts simple, with the construction of a chair set to certain specifications, and works up to building more and more complex cars.

Caroline Linehan, a performance engineer at GE, is one of the volunteers who give up part of their free time to teach the program to the Drewicz students. She loves spending time at the school. “It’s really fun. It’s great to work with the kids and share engineering and get them excited about building things,” she said. “The kids are so incredible – very inventive, imaginative.”

Linehan is credited with bringing the program to Lynn. As a graduate student, she had been involved with the Tufts University Center for Engineering Education and Outreach, which seeks to integrate engineering into public school classrooms. Upon getting a job at GE three years ago, she decided to continue the work.

The outreach center at Tufts and the GE Volunteers Foundation help support the program at Drewicz. GE provided funding to purchase the LEGO Mindstorm Kits used by the students, at a cost of $300 per child. Drewicz science teacher Mary Louvaris agreed to help bring the program to the school. She has been thrilled to see how much the children enjoy the lessons.

“They’re really excited about it,” she said. “And at the same time, they’re learning something.” It wouldn’t be possible without the volunteers from GE. Because of them, there is a ratio of one adult for every five students during the robotics classes.

“There’s almost always someone to sit down with the kids if there’s a problem and help solve it,” Louvaris said. “We really do appreciate the GE volunteers who come. They do a wonderful job.”
It’s never too early to start thinking about college

By Rich Fahey

If you’re thinking about going to college, you don’t wait until late in your junior year of high school to repair gaps in your transcript.

A second-year program is making thinking about and preparing for college a priority for grade 8 students at the Marshall Middle School. College For Every Student (CFES) is a nonprofit organization committed to raising the academic aspirations and performance of underserved youth so that they can prepare for, gain access to, and succeed in college.

Marshall is also engaged in an ongoing partnership with North Shore Community College (NSCC) and its Educational Talent Search program, a federally-funded program that identifies and assists individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in higher education.

The CFES program actually began at the Ford Elementary School, and transferred to Marshall this year after the Ford annex closed, since most Ford students usually went on to Marshall.

Students have made visits to NSCC’s Lynn and Danvers campuses, as well as Tufts University in Medford. Other CFES activities include dinners at places such as Northeastern University and UMass Boston, a year-end ceremony at Wheelock College and possibly a hockey or basketball game at BU or Northeastern.

“The colleges make a real effort to present us with a diverse group of students for our tours,” said Oliver Toomey, a special education and inclusion teacher who heads the program at Marshall. “The kids see people like themselves. They say, ‘these kids are coming from a place I’m coming from.’”

Toomey said the 60 students in the CFES program encompass a wide range of students and achievement levels. It is open to all grade 8 students who attend the weekly meetings.

Leadership program has students seeing orange

By Rich Fahey

Marshall Middle School students who are part of the school’s new Student Leader Program wear the orange lanyard — in the school’s colors with pride.

The program is the brainchild of Principal Dr. Richard Cowdell. The main quality of students who were nominated for the program last June was strength of character. The nominated students — all of whom agreed to be in the program — underwent a day of training and team building last summer at Camp Rotary.

This fall, they continue to learn about the qualities of leadership in an elective class taught by teacher Tina Ferrari, and are developing their own leadership projects. The students are also being called upon to be ambassadors for new students and parents and to help at open houses.

As part of the program, students have pledged to conduct themselves properly, be helpful to other teachers and students, be on time each day, and make new students feel welcome.

Funding came as part of a grant from the Educational Talent Search (ETS) program. As part of the program, each cluster in the school nominates two students to join the program each quarter; 15 students were recently inducted, bringing the total of grade 7 and 8 students to 90.

School officials are now looking for grade 6 students who may be invited to join the program at the end of the school year.

“It’s definitely an honor and there’s prestige at being picked,” said school counselor Tina Beaulieu.

Student leaders are given tasks such as helping in the library. They recently assisted in holiday events at the school, including the annual bake sales.

Cowdell approached Ferrari, who teaches English in grades 6-8, to teach the leadership class that is part of the program. Students learn the traits that all leaders have — from the grade 6 class president all the way up to global leaders.

They also talk about the leadership traits of people in their lives. Then the students have a chance to put leadership into practice with mandatory service projects. Students create and plan their own projects and recruit volunteers.

“The idea is to get volunteers for their project who aren’t part of the program,” said Ferrari, who works with the students on the logistics of their projects.

Sometimes, the projects hit close to home. Marshall students who attended the Harrington School banded together to clean the schoolyard there. Other students have visited assisted living facilities in Lynn and distributed cookies or written letters to the troops.

“These ideas have all come from the kids,” said Ferrari.

Students are told that they shouldn’t expect anything in return for what they accomplish in their service project.

“One of the leadership traits we talk about is being humble — not bragging about it,” said Ferrari. “There’s no ‘what do I get for doing this?’ I think the kids are getting the idea that what they’re doing is worthwhile.”

That’s not to say that there aren’t perks such as the lanyard.

“It’s become a fashion trend to have it (the lanyard) hanging on you,” Ferrari said.
In the race to the achievement summit, Massachusetts is charging forward, and Lynn is reaping the benefits.

Earlier this year, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan announced the state’s award of $250 million in federal education funding, including $4 million for Lynn.

“This is not a gift, it’s an investment, and I couldn’t feel more positive about our investment in this state,” said Duncan.

The funding is part of the Obama administration’s $4.35 billion Race to the Top program, an unprecedented federal investment in reform. The program includes $4 billion for statewide reform grants and $350 million to support states working together to improve the quality of their assessments.

The Race to the Top competition rewards states that are leading the way in comprehensive, coherent, statewide education reform across four key areas:

- adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace;
- building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals how to improve instruction;
- recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and
- turning around their lowest-performing schools.

A total of 46 states and the District of Columbia put together comprehensive education reform plans to apply for Race to the Top in phases 1 and 2. In the first round of competition, Delaware and Tennessee won grants based on their comprehensive plans to reform their schools and the statewide support for those plans. In August, Massachusetts and nine other applicants were awarded grants in the second phase. The others included the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Rhode Island.

“These states show what is possible when adults come together to do the right thing for children,” said Duncan. “Every state that applied showed a tremendous amount of leadership and a bold commitment to education reform. The creativity and innovation in each of these applications is breathtaking. We set a high bar and these states met the challenge.”

Massachusetts was the top contender of the phase 2 grantees, scoring 6.2 points higher than second-seed New York and 30.2 points higher than tenth-place finisher Ohio.

In Lynn, the money will be distributed between Connery and Harrington elementary schools, both of which have been classified as Level 4 schools by the Mass. Dept. of Education. They are among 35 Level 4 schools statewide – two-thirds of which are located in Boston and Springfield.

As a result of their Level 4 designation, Connery and Harrington are eligible for additional federal aid and state support to bring about improvement. The schools are implementing redesign plans and are under new leadership this year. Dr. Mary Dill, former principal of Tracy Elementary, is serving as principal of Connery, and Debra Ruggiero, former principal of Brickett Elementary, has taken the reins at Harrington. Both principals hope the Race to the Top funds will help their schools retain quality teachers, improve curriculum and instructional support and bolster student achievement.

At Harrington, Ruggiero hopes to implement the following strategies:

- small group instruction in all grade levels to address students’ needs in a more explicit and intimate way;
- professional development in reading comprehension strategies, response to intervention, and the three-tier model; and
- the addition of a six-computer station in every classroom with SuccessMaker software, to allow all students access to the software and to enhance the small group instruction.

“These are the top three strategies that we would like to address that are sustainable over time and that we feel will give the most impact for student academic achievement,” said Ruggiero. “The funding will allow us to move forward in this work in helping this school make improvements.”
Fourth-graders typically have a lot to say. But when it comes time to sit down and put their thoughts on paper, they find it’s not so easy to get it all out.

Enter a new writing program being piloted at several elementary schools in the district. Designed to guide students through every step of the writing process, the Writers Express curriculum is already showing results.

“I’ve never seen so much quality writing,” said Patricia Mallett, principal at the Sewell-Anderson School. “This program really engages them. It’s definitely having a positive impact.”

With the program, children are taught to write in steps, starting with taking notes and ending with sharing their work and making revisions. Many of the lessons revolve around getting students to use their senses to describe their topic.

Sewell-Anderson teacher Richard Masters likes how the program gets students to stay on topic. “It helps them kind of narrow down,” he said. “Now the students are writing with more focus.”

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“The program is especially helpful because it helps students get started, avoiding the dreaded writer’s block,” Masters said. Children are led through activities to help them brainstorm on their chosen subject.

Before teaching the curriculum, Masters attended professional development sessions at the school administration building. He was then paired up with coaches and mentors, who still visit the school during the lessons to provide ongoing support.

Sewell-Anderson was chosen by the Education Development Center in Newton to study the impact of the Writers Express curriculum. The study is ongoing.

Mallett hopes the results will show that while several writing programs are available, the Writers Express is one the district should consider keeping.

“I would like to see it back,” she said. “I hope we keep it.”
Diane Paradis brought more than 30 years’ experience and a passion for technical education to Tech.

**PHOTOS: PAULA MULLER**

Paradis has a passion for technical education

**BY PAUL HALLORAN**

Even though it was open to the public, Diane Paradis did not expect much of a crowd to turn out for her interview for the principal/director’s position at Lynn Tech, seeing as it was scheduled for 4 p.m. on the Friday leading into the April school vacation.

So when she arrived to find almost 30 staff members from the school in attendance, she got the feeling this was the place for her. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Catherine C. Latham obviously agreed, hiring Paradis to replace the retiring Jim Ridley.

“I felt this is where I wanted to be,” said Paradis, who had spent the last five years as vocational/technical director at the Rindge School of Technical Arts in Cambridge. “My ultimate goal had been to become a superintendent of a regional technical school, but when this position came about, I did my homework and it really looked like I would be the right fit.”

Paradis brought to Tech more than 30 years’ experience and a passion for technical education. Prior to the position in Cambridge and one year at Nashoba Valley Technical High School, Paradis spent 22 years at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High as a science teacher, drama/choreographer advisor and track and field coach. She was also the High Schools That Work program coordinator. She began her career as a science teacher at Worcester Tech.

“I’ve always had a love for hands-on learning,” said Paradis, who gained valuable administrative experience while serving 18 years on the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee, which is comprised of 13 communities in central Massachusetts.

At Tech, Paradis oversees a school that offers its 800 students 15 technical education programs as well as the same academic course of study used by Classical and English. That’s a point Paradis is trying to stress. “We have the same academic programs and our kids have to pass the same MCAS test,” she said.

Tech juniors and seniors are on an A week/B week schedule, which has them taking all their academic courses one week followed by technical education courses the next week. Freshmen and sophomore have both every day.

Since arriving, Paradis has strived to put in place a common curriculum in the core academic subject areas. She has asked all math teachers, for example, to use the same lesson plans at their respective levels, so there is consistency in instruction.

“We want to have a common curriculum, with common assignments and common assessments. The creativity comes in how an individual teacher presents the material,” Paradis said.

Paradis feels Tech has a lot to offer prospective students: the combination of an academic and technical education in a college-like setting with three buildings on campus — the main building, annex and field house. She also wants people to know the days of preparing students only for the workforce are gone.

“More and more of our students are going to college,” she said, noting that more than 10 percent of the Class of 2010 qualified for the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship.

The new principal of Lynn English High promises a seamless transition, and why not? He’s been playing for the same team for a long time.

Thomas Strangie, 46, was just 32 in 1997 when he became Lynn Public Schools’ youngest assistant principal. When Andrew Fila announced his retirement after heading the school since 2000, he recommended Strangie as his replacement.

“We’ve been a team for a long time,” said Strangie about himself and Fila, who is now serving the city as an unpaid educational liaison.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Catherine C. Latham announced on Oct. 15 that Strangie would be the new English principal, and he officially took over on Nov. 8.

“Mr. Strangie brings a high level of intelligence and experience to the principalship and I have great confidence that he will continue the long history of excellence that we have grown to expect from Lynn English High School,” Latham said.

During Fila’s tenure, the school revamped its guidance department and its test scores won acclaim from publications such as *US News & World Report* and *Business Week*. The school has also boasted championship sports teams.

The most recent MCAS scores saw 70 percent of students in the school score advanced or proficient in math; in English language arts, 74 percent scored in the top two tiers.

Enrollment has also grown steadily, to its present 1,700 students, who are taught by 100 faculty members.

“I think when parents send their children here, they know they’ll be safe,” said Strangie. The new principal said he has adopted several of Fila’s methods.

“You have to take care of the little things,” he said. “Things like holding the line on the dress code. Having a set of rules is the key to creating a safe, positive environment.”

He also believes — as Fila did — in making a decision and standing by it. “If you have any doubts, they will come back to haunt you,” he said.

Strangie graduated from English (1982) along with two brothers and a sister — Michael (1985), Paul (1988) and Jeanne (1987). After graduating from BU and getting a master’s degree in school administration from Salem State, Strangie spent more than a decade teaching English, Latin, Spanish and special ed. before becoming vice principal.

“The vibes have been very positive to date,” said Strangie about his first few months running the school. “We have a great faculty and staff, and department heads and guidance counselors who go above and beyond for the kids.”

Student demographics have changed since he attended the school 30 years ago.

“You learn to deal with the differences among people,” said Strangie. “It also helps that we have a great English Language Learners department.”

Strangie said he is well aware that some of his students have a tough home life that can impact their performance in school.

“For six hours each day, we can offer them safety and a structure,” he said. “Everyone has to take responsibility for themselves and leave their baggage outside. Here we have someone to support you and connect with you.”

English Principal Tom Strangie, shown speaking with students Taylor Holey, left, and Alyssa Navaroli, has been an administrator at the school for 13 years.

**BY RICH FAHEY**

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Education has a home in little red schoolhouse

BY MEAGHAN CASEY

In the heart of Curwin Circle sits a little red schoolhouse – home to nearly 60 of the city’s pre-K students.

The two-room Early Childhood Center opened in 2007 in a space that was formerly Curwin Childcare Center, a private business. The Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development (LHAND) owns the property and leases it to Lynn Public Schools. It is located in Curwin Circle, one of LHAND’s public housing complexes that consists of 278 units for low-income families and individuals.

“We saw the opportunity to take over that space and LHAND has just been phenomenal to work with,” said Marilyn Mahoney, LPS assistant director of Curriculum and Instruction, Early Childhood. “They went in and repainted the building and installed new lighting, flooring and heating, and the staff continues to provide ongoing support to us.”

“It’s a wonderful partnership,” said Madeleine Leger, lead teacher at the Early Childhood Center. “LHAND is the best landlord around.”

Leger is one of two teachers, in addition to two aides and several specialists and volunteers, overseeing the center. Each half-day session can accommodate as many as 15 students in one of two integrated classrooms. Though not required for all students, early childhood education is mandated through federal law for 3-, 4- and 5-year-old children with disabilities who require special education. Including the two classrooms at Curwin Circle, there are a dozen early childhood classrooms throughout the district, engaging more than 200 pre-K students.

“I firmly believe in prevention vs. remediation,” said Mahoney. “If we can get children enrolled in a high-quality preschool program at age 3 or 4 and expose them to a comprehensive curriculum, they will be more prepared for kindergarten.”

Leger also stresses the social benefits.

“One of the advantages is that they learn to work in groups and get along with other children their age,” she said. “They also have the readiness tools in their belts, so being in school won’t be a brand new experience.”

Leger and Mahoney are excited about new initiatives to bolster the program. In 2009, the district was awarded one of the U.S. Dept. of Education’s Early Reading First grants, designed to support the development of early childhood centers of excellence that better focus on all areas of development, especially on the early language, cognitive and pre-reading skills needed to prepare children for continued school success.

Lynn was one of only two Massachusetts sites to be awarded funding, totaling $3.7 million over three years. The district is working in partnership with UMass Boston, Early Childhood Associates and the Gregg Neighborhood House. The money has allowed Lynn Public Schools to pull some of its senior staff members out of the classroom to assume the role of literacy coaches, mentoring and providing ongoing support to teachers and paraprofessionals.

Operation Bootstrap, North Shore Community College, Family and Children’s Services and the Lynn Public Library are also on board to offer comprehensive services to increase families’ knowledge of and support for children’s literacy development.

Middle-school students get a taste of college life

BY RICH FAHEY

They were together for only a few weeks last July, but they have already had one “college reunion” and another one is planned.

Thirty-six high-achieving Lynn middle school students had a chance to sample the life of a college student last summer on the seaside campus of Endicott College in Beverly, thanks to a pilot program on learning and leadership.

From July 12-30, they were part of the Northshore Education Consortium’s (NEC) Learning and Leadership Program. They lived at Curwin Circle, one of LHAND’s public housing complexes that consists of 278 units for low-income families and individuals.

“Middle-school students work in a lab at Endicott College.
Elementary Schools

Every Friday, a dedicated group of parents and students gather at Cobbett Elementary School for a morning of coffee and helpful information as part of the Nurturing Parenting Program. The NPP is facilitated by Pam Freedman, director of Lynn's Community Connections Coalition, her assistant, Nelida Gonzales, and Tina Hoofnagle, the school social worker. This group is sharing ways to effectively parent children and help them grow to their fullest potential. Cobbett strives to become a welcoming learning community that engages parents to be a part of the school and its activities.

The Power Lunch program is in its 18th year at Drewicz Elementary School, under the direction of Krystal Parker of General Electric. GE employees spend their lunch hour with second- and third-grade students, eating lunch, reading and playing games.

Gordon College art students came to the Harrington Elementary School on Dec. 14 for an event showcasing the work they did creating canvas paintings of the six Pillars of Character: caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility and trustworthiness. Also in attendance were Val Buchanan, director of the Gordon in Lynn program, and School Committee member Vin Spirito.

The Student Council conducted a food drive for the Salvation Army with the support of parents and teachers.

A large number of Ingalls Elementary School fourth- and fifth-graders participated in the cross country program this fall, culminating in the first citywide elementary meet at Lynn Woods on Oct. 23.

The successful Core Value/VIP program was developed as a way to tie children's interest in literature, develop monthly social contracts and celebrate students for individual and classroom accomplishments.

The Ingalls Farm was featured on NECN. Lynn Woods Elementary School students presented a drama production of "School House Rock" on Dec. 10-11. C Cam Greene, a fourth-grade student, has shown a remarkable dedication and passion for animals. For the second year in a row, on his birthday Cam asked birthday guests to make donations to preserving endangered animals in lieu of presents. Last year Cam organized a fundraiser for the Northeast Animal Shelter, with the help of teacher Nancy Melanson.

Sewell Anderson Elementary School's Sherrill Ellis and her K2 class have taken in a new pet, a tadpole named Flash. The students learned about the life cycle of frogs and have benefited from watching a tadpole transform to a froglet and then into an actual frog. The 12 students have effectively helped to care for Flash by changing the water in the aquarium and feeding him every three days. The children have enjoyed the presence of their new pet and have been chronicling his life daily through pictures and short journal entries. This class project is sure to benefit the children's overall learning experience.

The students and staff from Washington Elementary School have partnered with My Brother's Table as a means of granting them much needed support. On Oct. 26, Susan Burke and her sixth-grade class completed the three-mile walk for My Brother's Table and collected $100 for the organization. Cindy Anderson's class is collecting canned goods throughout the year. Last year, the school donated more than 300 food items to the soup kitchen. Students have also stuffed 500 envelopes of donation letters.

Elen Patterson, a fourth-grade teacher at Washington, volunteers regularly at My Brother's Table. Cindy Hennessey's class made fall centerpieces for all the tables at the soup kitchen, while Karen Picone's class made fall, winter, and spring centerpieces. Over the past few years, school adjustment counselor Steve Kotsakis and Washington Principal Nancy Takis-Conway have volunteered every Monday night at My Brother's Table, cleaning pots and pans, preparing food and serving meals.

Middle Schools

The Breed Middle School's sixth-grade Enterprise cluster made history by being the first group in nearly 35 years to climb to the top of the newly renovated Stone Tower in the Lynn Woods Reservation. The restoration of Stone Tower was completed with the aid of private donations. The climb to the top of the tower was done via a long spiral staircase. Upon reaching the top, students were rewarded with beautiful views of Lynn, Boston and even a glimpse of Cape Cod.

The students also explored Dungeon Rock, where students were rewarded with beautiful views of Lynn, Boston and even a glimpse of Cape Cod.

High Schools/Alternative

Bryan Windmiller served as guest speaker at a voluntary assembly at Lynn Classical High School, sponsored by the Science Club and science department. Windmiller is the scientist in charge of the Massachusetts Great Meadows Glanding's Turtle Conservation Project.

There will be a Lynn Technical Institute open house on Jan. 13 from 6-8 p.m. Eighth-grade students and parents are invited to tour Tech's three buildings and learn about its academic and technical education programs.

Compiled by Sarah Fortucci
Some of the students had never been bowling, or dressed up in a costume for Halloween.

Coming from countries all over the world, the English-as-a-Second-Language students at Classical High School struggle to learn a new language, as well as figure out the customs of their new country.

This year, ESL math teacher Jackie Burke decided to do something to help introduce them to popular American culture. So she started an after-school club, inviting ESL students to join in on fun activities such as bowling outings and Halloween parties. The first event, a soccer match on the Commons, attracted 30 students. Around 40 attended a Halloween party, where Burke handed out masks to the students, many of whom were putting on a Halloween costume for the first time in their lives.

“A lot of them are brand-new to the country,” Burke noted.

Most of the students are of Hispanic descent, coming from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. But they also hail from Somalia, Nepal, Rwanda, Liberia, Honduras and Guatemala. “It’s really diverse,” said Burke.

Students are already starting to come out of their shells and make friends with each other. Burke expects the ties between students to deepen as the club continues.

Gene Constantino, principal of Classical High, said the club ties in nicely with the school’s other efforts to help immigrant students assimilate and adjust to their new homeland. It works hand-in-hand with programs such as the guidance department’s orientation, which pairs students with mentors to guide them through their first days of school.

“We’ve tried to integrate all the students. It’s important that they all feel comfortable,” Constantino said. “This club has really tied into getting them invested in the school. It gives them a connection.”

Burke had initially wanted to run the club as a summer program, but wasn’t able to put it together in time. So she started it in September as an after-school program instead.

Burke said many of her students do not have an opportunity to engage in fun activities on their own time. The activities she chooses tend to be things that are fun, yet taken for granted by the average American teenager. Many are things that the students do not normally have an opportunity to participate in.

For example, when the group went bowling, Burke had to start from scratch, teaching the students how the game works. Half of them had never been to a bowling alley before. “I had to teach them all the basic rules,” she said.

Recently, the group went on a scavenger hunt at the mall. Soon — weather permitting — they plan to go sledding.

Burke said she is pleased the club has been so successful, and looks forward to it continuing to grow.

“It’s really going to take off,” she said.

Connery’s Berry-Rogers uses positive reinforcement

From BERRY-ROGERS: Page 1

She’s so welcoming,”

The first grade is a challenge for both teachers and students. The students are adjusting to the full school day and have varying degrees of maturity and skill levels.

“I think my first job is to make them feel safe,” said Berry-Rogers.

She operates under the power of positive reinforcement. “I don’t want to hear ‘I can’t do it.’ That’s not part of my vocabulary.”

Berry-Rogers said she realizes that for six hours a day, she is a surrogate parent to her children and she takes that job seriously.

A visit to her classroom in December found it to be a bright, cheerful and colorful place with many touches for the holiday season. Berry-Rogers had hung stockings for each of the students, for example, with their names written in glitter. Students’ names and birthdays are listed in a prominent place.

As student reading groups move around the room, Berry-Rogers reminds students not to leave a mess if they have used another child’s desk. It’s reading time, and Berry-Rogers asks her students questions about their current book, “Fun With Fish.” Students eagerly raise their hand and wait patiently to be called.

Berry-Rogers said she sometimes wishes there was more respect for the teaching profession and the work that goes into it.

“I know I’m here well ahead of the children and until 3:30 or 4 o’clock correcting papers,” she said.

“People say you have a lot of time off. I say walk in my shoes for a day, then talk to me.”

Berry-Rogers, who has four children, said being a parent helps her be a better teacher. “You learn patience and how to deal with individual personalities,” she said.

One of her children, Travonne Berry-Rogers, is a star athlete at Lynn English High, a standout as a football wide receiver and a guard in basketball. She said following his exploits is exciting, but she never forgets to make sure he makes the classroom a priority.

“You better believe it,” she said. “He’s tired of listening to me talk about his grades.”

Programs target and combat bullying in Lynn schools

From BULLYING: Page 1

Classical before moving to Pickering Middle School, where he taught science and served as the school’s athletic director.

He said each of Lynn’s 26 schools now has a bullying coordinator to make sure complaints are handled promptly and efficiently. On Nov. 2, a professional development day was held to train the bullying coordinators on what to look for and how to respond to it.

The process begins when a student confides to a trusted adult or the coordinator that he or she is being bullied. The coordinator documents the complaint and begins the investigative process. The results are turned over to the principal; if bullying is found to have occurred, he notifies the parents of the student alleged to have done the bullying.

The principal then has the final say on any discipline.

Thompson said the new protocols are crucial to battling the problem.

“By documenting everything, it makes it easy to determine when someone is a chronic offender,” said Thompson. “In the past, a teacher coming across a bullying incident may have handled it in their own way and there wouldn’t be a record of it.”

Thompson said Lynn educators “have changed with time.

“The stereotype years ago was of a big, awkward kid,” said Thompson. “Now a bully could be anyone. The cyber bully especially tends to be someone who might be shy and quiet, but gets a lot braver sitting in front of a keyboard.”

There are other differences in modern bullying that have made the practice more deadly. Years ago, the bullying would usually end after the students left school. The student being bullied could spend time with his friends and regroup at the end of the school day.

“But cyber-bullying, there is no refuge for many students being bullied,” said Thompson. “They go home and turn on their computer and the bullying continues over the Internet.”

He said that cyber-bullying is a particular problem among girls, who can adopt a “pack mentality” and isolate a female student, with devastating consequences.

Thompson and Ferrari are frequent visitors to elementary schools because many Lynn students in grades 4 and 5 have Facebook accounts, even though the site’s rules specify they have to be 14.

“Parents are surprised when we tell them their kids have accounts,” he said, adding that Internet safety is also a part of their presentations. They stress that reckless postings or photos can later result in the loss of a job or scholarship.

“Most parents we talk to are very supportive,” said Thompson. “Our No. 1 priority is keeping kids safe.”
Award-winning English quarterback hopes for a chance at the next level

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Lynn English quarterback Tyllor McDonald proved very elusive and tough to catch on the football field. Now that his award-winning senior season is complete, he is the one doing the chasing – of his future.

McDonald was named Daily Item/Agganis Foundation Offensive Player of the Year for his exploits this season, which included 1,343 yards and 16 touchdowns passing and 1,347 yards and 14 TDs rushing. He was easily the top two-way threat on the North Shore, leading the Bulldogs to a 7-4 record that included a mild upset of Classical on Thanksgiving – a game in which he showed off his all-around ability, making 13 tackles.

“IT’S BEEN A GOOD RUN

‘It feels good; I can’t lie,’” McDonald said about winning the prestigious award. “There are so many other good players (on the Item All-Star team), I wasn’t sure I would get one (of the major awards).”

While athletic success has always come somewhat naturally to McDonald, by his own admission he did not start properly focusing on academics until his sophomore year. As a result, he will likely have to attend junior college or prep school before he is eligible to compete in NCAA football.

“My freshman year I was real immature,” said McDonald, who moved to Lynn from Florida as a middle-school student and attended Pickering. “(Academics) really didn’t matter much to me at that time. Once I saw what I was doing to my GPA, I started to turn it around.”

With help from his coach, Peter Holey.

“We sat Tyllor down after his sophomore year and said, ‘this is crazy,’” Holey said. “He made some changes and got more focused as a student.”

Holey said McDonald fell into a trap that many students do, thinking bad grades as a freshman and sophomore can be overcome by good work as an upperclassman. They don’t realize how difficult it is to turn around the overall GPA.

“The message we try to get to kids is that how you do freshman and sophomore year can hurt you,” Holey said. “To Tyllor’s credit, he talks to younger kids all the time about the lessons he has learned the hard way.”

McDonald, who lists Cam Newton, Tom Brady and LaMichael James as his favorite players, said he is determined to play at the next level, and his coach has no doubt he can be a productive college player – and student – if given the chance.

“I really believe Tyllor can succeed academically in college if given the right opportunity,” Holey said. “And I know he can play at that level.”

McDonald is hoping he gets the chance – and he promises he will make the most of it this time.