When the only other male left his special-education classroom at Lynn Classical, ninth-grader Ryan Lang was feeling a void, with no guys around to talk to or hang out. He mentioned to his teacher, Kim Toomey, who enlisted the help of the guidance department to find a solution.

Enter Matt Lauria and Jack Stafford, two of Classical’s best senior athletes, who work as student aides in the guidance office. Guidance counselor Jessica Toomey asked the pair if they would be willing to spend time with Ryan and they jumped at the chance.

The result has been a burgeoning friendship that not only has made Ryan’s school experience more positive, it also has brought a great deal of satisfaction to Lauria and Stafford.

“Ryan is a great kid. Being around him makes us happy,” said Stafford, the starting goalie on the Lynn Jets hockey team. “You can be having a bad day, or you could have had a...
Grateful for Technical assistance

As we transition from winter to spring and head into the final third of the school year, we are proud to publish this edition of The Lynn Educator. There are many exciting things taking place throughout our city’s schools. As mayor and chair of the School Committee, it gives me great pleasure to applaud the efforts of our hard-working teachers and students.

You will notice a STEM – science, technology, engineering and math – theme in a few stories. We are well aware that the opportunities in these areas are steadily increasing, and we want to ensure our students who may be interested in pursuing them are well prepared for higher education and, ultimately, the job market.

We are grateful to Gov. Baker and his administration for providing Lynn Tech with a significant grant to institute an IT program and upgrade the machining program. Working collaboratively with the state allows us to expand the offerings we can make available to our students.

During my tenure as mayor, I have had the opportunity to spend time in classrooms and at many extracurricular events. I am continually impressed by the high level of achievement in and out of the classroom. Our students, teachers and administrators consistently remind us that they will maximize our investment in them.

Happy Spring.

JUDITH FLANAGAN KENNEDY

Investing in students always pays off

While this edition of The Lynn Educator is packed with photos and stories that highlight the best our school district has to offer, there are a few that I particularly enjoyed reading and I hope you will, too.

The heartwarming story on Page 1 on the "bro models" at Lynn Classical has to make you feel good about the culture that exists in that school. Congratulations not only to the outstanding young men who have gone out of their way to make a peer’s school experience better, but also to principal Gene Constantino and his staff for promoting a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere at the school.

I was especially heartened to read this comment from one of the students: “Everyone accepts them and they don’t get picked on. That’s something special about us here.”

The profile on beloved Lincoln-Thomson lunch lady Carol McPherson may also bring a tear to your eye. Carol has been an institution at the school for more than three decades, and I am sure as happy as she is to return after her horrific accident, students and staff are equally thrilled to have her back.

From visiting scientists at the Washington School to award-winning Tech engineering students to the new digital language lab at Classical, we can all take pride in the achievements of our students and teachers.

The center spread on the new programs at Marshall Middle School serves to remind us that when we provide our students and teachers with state-of-the-art space and supplies, high-level learning can and will occur. The new Marshall is an unqualified success. We can all feel good about that.

Dr. Catherine C. Latham is superintendent of schools.

Judith Flanagan Kennedy is mayor of Lynn.
Science comes alive at Washington

Washington Elementary School students are benefiting from Science from Scientists, a STEM enrichment program for students in grades 4-5. Scientists with advanced STEM degrees visit the school twice a month to work with students on hands-on, lab-based lessons.

“The goal is to inspire students, ignite interest, and improve STEM competency with the goal of filling the workforce pipeline with talented, competent individuals,” interim principal Irene Cowdell said. “The program is cost-effective, scalable and has shown measurable impact.”

Another benefit is that the program is run during school hours and the teachers work alongside the scientists to select and deliver the sequence of lessons for their classrooms.

“The students really enjoy using the science lab for Science from Scientists (SFS). They count down the days until they can do the hands-on experiments with the scientists,” said fourth-grade science teacher Lauren Schaejbe. “This is a great way for our students to collaborate with peers. It makes science fun and exciting.”

“My students love going to the science lab for the SFS visits. SFS provides an opportunity to connect to science topics. I love seeing and hearing the students so excited about science,” said fourth-grade teacher Samantha Laroe.

Here are some of the comments from students about Science from Scientists:

“I like SFS because we get to do experiments. My favorite one was when we made a magnet levitate on a pencil!”

“My favorite experiment so far has been making circuits and testing different materials to make the light bulb turn on.”

“My favorite thing about SFS is the projects...we get to test them out!”

Washington Elementary School students Jaelah Fernandez and Keiri Mauricio work during a Science from Scientists lesson.
Recipe for happiness

McPherson thrilled to be back cooking at Lincoln-Thomson

After getting run down by a passing car in October 2014 and suffering serious injuries, Carol McPherson thought that might have been it for her career as a cafeteria worker at Lincoln-Thomson elementary school. McPherson was about to get into her car after leaving a convenience store on the Lynn-Saugus line when she was struck. She suffered two broken legs, a broken hand, bleeding on her brain, and a severely damaged lip, among other injuries.

“When I came to, I was in the ambulance heading to Mass General,” she recalled. “The EMT kept telling me, ‘Stay with me.’”

McPherson’s road to recovery would be long and arduous. After a few weeks in the hospital she went to rehab before heading home, where she had a visiting nurse and continued with her physical therapy.

“I struggled when I first got out and tried walking,” she said. “But I was very strong to begin with, so I gradually got my strength back.” She credits her husband, Thomas, with playing a critical role in her recovery. “Thank God for him,” she said.

McPherson had one knee replaced in 2015 and the other last year. It was in the middle of the 2015-16 school year that a friend asked if she would like to visit Lincoln-Thomson, in what would be her first time back since the accident.

“It was overwhelming,” said McPherson, who has worked in the cafeteria at the school for 34 years. “When I saw the kids I knew I had to get strong so I could come back.”

After visiting a few more times, McPherson was determined to return to work.

“I didn’t think I would come back until I came to visit,” she said. “This school is like a home for me. The people are fantastic. They did so much for me.”

Last September, McPherson returned to the Lincoln-Thomson cafeteria, again preparing lunch – and breakfast two days a week – for the 254 students in grades K-5. Coming back to school has brought her recovery full circle.

“It has been a very uplifting experience to come back here,” she said. “It has done so much for me mentally. I never got depressed because I knew I was making slow progress.” McPherson is thrilled to be back to her 5-day-a-week routine, which sees her arrive at school at 6 a.m. and leave at 12:45 p.m. She is 75 years old, a mother of three and grandmother of six, but she is not even thinking about retiring.

“Why would I retire? I love it here,” she said. “Being around kids keeps you young, and we have a wonderful principal (Mary Foster).”

A lifelong Lynner and 1958 Lynn Classical graduate, McPherson worked at the old Lynn Hospital before taking a job in 1983 as a lunch aide at Lincoln-Thomson.

There is a somewhat unbelievable postscript to the accident. The car that struck her was driven by a man in his late 80s. Ironically, he and McPherson attended the same church for more than 20 years. Due to his age, McPherson was not interested in any criminal charges being brought against him.

About a year after the accident, she ran into him in a store.

“Do you remember me?” she said.

“I know who you are,” he replied. “It’s your fault I can’t drive anymore.”

That’s one way of looking at it.
The Lynn Educator SPRING 2017 — 5

Engineering success at Lynn Tech

By Paul Halloran

Lynn Tech has plenty of cause to be proud of its engineering program, as students placed first in a major bridge competition and the school earned a significant certification from the state.

Tech engineering students placed first in the Most Efficient category in the Boston Society of Civil Engineers 23rd annual Model Bridge Competition. Students were tasked with building a bridge according to very detailed specifications. The Tech students’ bridge weighed .998 pounds (1 pound was the maximum) and it was able to bear 100 pounds. The only materials they could use were Popsicle sticks and hot glue.

“This was the first year we competed, so we’re really proud of what these students were able to accomplish,” said Kim Keighley, one of the engineering teachers.

Meanwhile, Anthony Benavides, an engineering teacher, worked closely with the approximately 15 students who worked on the project and brought four bridges to the competition, held Feb. 4 at the Mass. Department of Transportation building in Boston.

Tech has about three dozen students in the engineering program studying electronic, civil, architectural and biomedical engineering. Purchase of a 3D printer has enhanced their learning experience, Paradise said.

The Tech engineering program has been bolstered by receiving Chapter 74 certification from the state, a designation that indicates it is a high-quality program and, more important, brings with it additional state funding.

Cooperative education coordinator Bonnie Carr led the Chapter 74 application process, which started in February 2016 and took about seven months. In addition to a mountain of paperwork, the Department of Education conducted a site safety walk-through and sat in on an engineering program advisory committee meeting. Having a licensed engineering teacher was also a prerequisite.

“It was a team effort and Bonnie did a great job leading it,” said Tech principal Robert Buontempo. “Chapter 74 certification lends to the credibility of our program.”

Tech students who participated in the model bridge competition included, from left, Leonel Leal, Victor Rivera, Lucia Gonzalez, David Milan, teacher Malcolm Paradise, Devin Chan, Sebastian Vasquez, Luis Sanchez, Jordyn Summerlin, teacher Kim Keighley and Anthony Benavides. At right, Paradise and Vasquez see how much weight the bridge can bear.

Tech engineering students are now eligible for co-op opportunities, which often lead to full-time jobs down the road.

The Chapter 74 certification is the latest in a string of noteworthy accomplishments in the Tech engineering program, as four students from the Class of 2016 were admitted to UMass Lowell’s engineering major and another to Wentworth Institute of Technology.

State gives Tech $333K to add, upgrade programs

By Paul Halloran

Lynn Tech will add an information technology program and significantly upgrade its machining program thanks to a $333,293 state Workforce Skills Capital Grant.

Tech was one of 31 educational institutions to receive grants totaling $111.8 million. The recipients were announced Friday at Greater Lowell Technical High School in Tyngsborough.

Lynn Public Schools was represented by superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham, deputy superintendent Dr. Patrick Tutwiler, Tech principal Robert Buontempo and cooperative education coordinator Bonnie Carr.

“Our vision has been to open some new programs,” Buontempo said, noting that half of the grant money will be used to establish the IT course of study. “This will be seed money for that. We’re very excited.”

The other half of the grant money will be used to upgrade equipment in the machining program, said Buontempo, who noted that the grant application had to show partnerships with local businesses and links to higher learning that would lead to building a skilled workforce and good-paying jobs in these areas.

Tech partnered with the North Shore Workforce Investment Board, the Lynn Area Chamber of Commerce, North Shore Community College and the Lynn Economic Development Committee. The adult education program will also benefit from the new and expanded offerings.

“The governor and his team see the enormous potential in investing in tech schools as key players in building a skilled workforce in Massachusetts,” Buontempo said. “We plan to apply to get our HVAC program started when the opportunity arises.”

“This grant will lead to increased and enhanced educational opportunities at Lynn Tech,” Latham said. “We are very grateful that the governor and his administration have made vocational education a priority.”

“These investments have a major impact for the educational institutions training our workforce and the students who stand to benefit from enhanced skills and career paths,” said Gov. Charlie Baker.

The Workforce Skills Capital Grants program was created by the Baker-Polito Administration last year to assist educational institutions in demonstrating partnerships with industry and aligning curriculum and credentials with local businesses’ demand, maximizing planning objectives and hiring or internship opportunities regionally.

To date, the state has awarded more than $24 million in Workforce Skills Capital Grants to 63 institutions, improving programs that impact more than 7,100 students per year. The economic development bill signed by Baker last year includes $45 million for the awards over the next three years to increase the capacity and quality of vocational educational programs.

North Shore Community College received a grant of $111,455 to purchase equipment to create a healthcare technical education program that includes a universal health lab at the Lynn campus.

The governor was joined by the Workforce Skills cabinet he established shortly after taking office, consisting of Labor and Workforce Development secretary Ronald L. Walker, II, Education secretary James Peyser, and Housing and Economic Development secretary Jay Ash. The cabinet, which seeks to align education, workforce and economic development strategies and improve job opportunities, worked to establish the Workforce Skills Capital Grant program.

“The goal of these grants is to update capital equipment, expand capacity, and launch new programs at educational institutions in order to create high-quality career pathways for more people across the Commonwealth,” said Peyser. “These grants give students and adult learners more opportunities to be successful through training, education and experience in fields that are growing and in demand.”
At Marshall, new building broadens horizons

Cooking, sewing, TV/Media among the new courses

By Paul Halloran

In one room, students learn the basics of being a chef. Next door, they bake chocolate chip muffins. Downstairs, they edit TV shows. Welcome to the new Thurgood Marshall Middle School, less than a year old but already providing a plethora of expanded opportunities in an environment highly conducive to teaching and learning.

“The space is absolutely phenomenal,” said Mark McMahon, the culinary arts teacher at Marshall. “The size of the room, the equipment … everything is state of the art.”

Cooking is one of the first classes that were added at Marshall when the new building opened last April. Sewing, TV and CAD (computer-aided design) are all others. Those classes are among 12 unified arts courses, of which students take one every quarter, for 10 weeks.

“It’s given them a broader sense of English, math, science and social studies,” McMahon said. “And there’s a window to a different type of career.”

Paulette Kowalski is the sewing teacher at Marshall. Her classroom is outfitted with 20 new sewing machines, which students use to make hats, pillow cases and quite literally almost any other item. They have to work with their hands, Kowalski said. “They’re learning life skills they wouldn’t otherwise be learning. Having the equipment and materials makes all the difference.”

The cooking and sewing classes will be able to stock up on supplies for awhile, thanks to a $2,500 grant from the Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation.

“It’s greatly appreciated for the generous support,” said Superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham, an unabashed fan of the new Marshall. “They are definitely interested in the class. It gives them a breather from, English, math, science and social studies.”

McMahon said, “and shows them a window to a different type of career.”

Reggie Douyon took TV Media at Lynn Classical and has had the tutelage of Phil Terenzoni. He went on to UMass Dartmouth and has been teaching TV for four years.

“I took a liking to the camera side of the operation and that’s what got me started,” Douyon said. At Marshall, he has a classroom, TV studio and editing suite that is equipped with 17-32 inch computers. Students are exposed to all aspects of the TV operation in their 10 weeks, spending four weeks in the classroom and six learning life skills they wouldn’t otherwise be learning. Having the equipment and materials makes all the difference.

The cooking and sewing classes will be able to stock up on supplies for awhile, thanks to a $2,500 grant from the Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation.

“Be it any gesture for the generous support,” said Superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham, an unabashed fan of the unified arts courses. “These are the classes that get some kids excited about coming to school,” she said. “Pick one you can offer, the better.”

At Marshall, new building broadens horizons.

The Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation awarded a $2,500 grant to Marshall Middle School for use in the school’s sewing and cooking classes. Pictured left, superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham, Marshall principal Molly Cohen, Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation executive director Laura Kurzrok, sewing teacher Paulette Kowalski and cooking teacher Mark McMahon.

McMahon cooks up new career

As chief at the Ritz Carlton and Fenway Park and manager at clubs such as The Country Club, Mark McMahon was often responsible for instructing and directing co-workers.

As the new culinary arts teacher at Marshall Middle School, McMahon is using many of those same skills, with one notable exception: “Now I’m giving them a grade,” he said. McMahon’s true study was a change after 30 years in the hospitality industry. When he heard that Marshall had added a cooking class and needed a teacher, he was intrigued.

After he interviewed and Paulette Kowalski gave him the opportunity to film many athletic contests and other events, under the tutelage of Phil Terenzoni. He went on to UMass Dartmouth and has been teaching TV for four years.

“I took a liking to the camera side of the operation and that's what got me started,” Douyon said. At Marshall, he has a classroom, TV studio and editing suite that is equipped with 17-32 inch computers. Students are exposed to all aspects of the TV operation in their 10 weeks, spending four weeks in the classroom and six learning life skills they wouldn't otherwise be learning. Having the equipment and materials makes all the difference.

The cooking and sewing classes will be able to stock up on supplies for awhile, thanks to a $2,500 grant from the Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation.

“It’s greatly appreciated for the generous support,” said Superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham, an unabashed fan of the new Marshall. “They are definitely interested in the class. It gives them a breather from, English, math, science and social studies.”

McMahon said, “and shows them a window to a different type of career.”

Paulette Kowalski is the sewing teacher at Marshall. Her classroom is outfitted with 20 new sewing machines, which students use to make hats, pillow cases and quite literally almost any other item. They have to work with their hands, Kowalski said. “They’re learning life skills they wouldn’t otherwise be learning. Having the equipment and materials makes all the difference.”

The cooking and sewing classes will be able to stock up on supplies for awhile, thanks to a $2,500 grant from the Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation.

“It’s greatly appreciated for the generous support,” said Superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham, an unabashed fan of the unified arts courses. “These are the classes that get some kids excited about coming to school,” she said. “Pick one you can offer, the better.”

At Marshall, new building broadens horizons.

The Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation awarded a $2,500 grant to Marshall Middle School for use in the school’s sewing and cooking classes. Pictured left, superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham, Marshall principal Molly Cohen, Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation executive director Laura Kurzrok, sewing teacher Paulette Kowalski and cooking teacher Mark McMahon.

McMahon cooks up new career

As chief at the Ritz Carlton and Fenway Park and manager at clubs such as The Country Club, Mark McMahon was often responsible for instructing and directing co-workers.

As the new culinary arts teacher at Marshall Middle School, McMahon is using many of those same skills, with one notable exception: “Now I’m giving them a grade,” he said. McMahon’s true study was a change after 30 years in the hospitality industry. When he heard that Marshall had added a cooking class and needed a teacher, he was intrigued.

After he interviewed and Paulette Kowalski gave him the opportunity to film many athletic contests and other events, under the tutelage of Phil Terenzoni. He went on to UMass Dartmouth and has been teaching TV for four years.

“I took a liking to the camera side of the operation and that’s what got me started,” Douyon said. At Marshall, he has a classroom, TV studio and editing suite that is equipped with 17-32 inch computers. Students are exposed to all aspects of the TV operation in their 10 weeks, spending four weeks in the classroom and six learning life skills they wouldn’t otherwise be learning. Having the equipment and materials makes all the difference.

The cooking and sewing classes will be able to stock up on supplies for awhile, thanks to a $2,500 grant from the Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation.

“It’s greatly appreciated for the generous support,” said Superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham, an unabashed fan of the unified arts courses. “These are the classes that get some kids excited about coming to school,” she said. “Pick one you can offer, the better.”

At Marshall, new building broadens horizons.

The Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation awarded a $2,500 grant to Marshall Middle School for use in the school’s sewing and cooking classes. Pictured left, superintendent Dr. Catherine C. Latham, Marshall principal Molly Cohen, Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation executive director Laura Kurzrok, sewing teacher Paulette Kowalski and cooking teacher Mark McMahon.
The iceman coacheth
Hockey provides release for health and physical education director

By Paul Halloran

It makes perfect sense that the person whose full-time job is to help direct and implement the physical education and health curriculum in Lynn Public Schools would spend his winter off hours in hockey rinks throughout Eastern Mass., doesn’t it?

It does to Michael Geary, LPS assistant curriculum director for physical education and health, and varsity hockey coach at Essex Technical High School in Danvers.

“It’s nice to get my foot back into coaching,” said Geary, who previously coached football at Triton and football at Melrose. “I missed the interaction with the kids. Geary had taken a break from coaching when he was named to his current position in LPS five years ago.

Geary, 34, had worked as an elementary school physical education teacher for five years before getting his current position. Working under executive director of curriculum Kimberlee Powers, he covers a lot of ground, from athletic compliance to anti-bullying to substance-abuse awareness.

“There are challenges but it’s very rewarding work,” Geary said. “The social-emotional piece is more important than ever. We work closely with school social workers on that.”

With opioid addiction a growing dilemma, if not epidemic, the district has greatly enhanced efforts to educate students on the dangers of substance abuse. “We have to try to get to them at a younger age than ever,” Geary said.

A Lynnfield native, Geary was a football and hockey standout at Lynnfield High. He went to Saint Anselm College, where he continued his football career and graduated with a degree in criminal justice.

When Essex Tech added varsity hockey this year and was looking for a coach, Geary decided the time was right to get back in the game.

Essex Tech has students from 80 different communities, so while all of Geary’s players had hockey experience, it did take some time for the young team to gel, finishing with a 2-14-3 record.

“There were a lot of different challenges involved, but if we can hang in there for a few years, we will be OK,” said Geary, who enjoyed his time behind the bench despite the record.

“I like the leadership aspect of coaching,” he said.

Geary lives in Lynnfield with his wife, Emily, and their 3-year-old daughter, Elise.

‘Bro models’ have special friend at Classical


Lauria’s older sister Kristen may have been unknowingly setting the standard three years ago when she invited a special-needs student to the senior prom. Acts such as these highlight the inclusive atmosphere that permeates Classical under principal Gene Constantino and his staff.

“In this school everyone is aware that we have some kids who are different,” Lauria said. “Everyone accepts them and they don’t get picked on. That’s something special about us here.”

Special indeed.
Fecteau-Leary students are TEAMS players

Everyone can use a helping hand now and then, and that is especially true in Lynn Public Schools’ TEAMS classrooms. The acronym stands for Together Educating and Advocating for Multiply-handicapped Students. Stacy Stirnweis has seven students age 11-16 in her TEAMS middle school classroom in the Lynn Tech Annex, and she and the paraprofessionals she works with are happy to accept any help they can get. They are especially grateful for the weekly visits from a handful of Fecteau-Leary students, who spend one class period working and interacting with the TEAMS students. “I love it. The interaction is great for the kids,” Stirnweis said.

The Fecteau-Leary students help with art projects, read books and play in the gym with the TEAMS students. Just before Christmas they helped them make gingerbread houses. “The Fecteau-Leary students are gentle and caring,” Stirnweis said. “It is obvious they enjoy helping others less fortunate than them. These are kids with physical, developmental and serious medical issues. They enjoy the 1-on-1 interaction. It helps them have age-appropriate socialization.” Stirnweis further described the visits as having an “overall aura of fun and friendship.” Sounds like a great experience for all.

Language learning goes digital at Classical

BY PAUL HALLORAN

Standing in the language lab, surrounded by 30 new HP laptops and a SMART Board, Fátima Lyle appears to be in educator heaven. Lyle, the Lynn Classical foreign language department chair, gushes about the SANSSpace digital language lab and the new Spanish textbooks from Vista Higher Learning. “This is a dream come true for me,” Lyle said. “This is wonderful for teachers and students. It’s bringing language learning into the 21st century and giving students tools they can also use outside of Lynn Classical High School.”

Students can log in to Vista’s online Supersite, giving them access to electronic versions of the textbooks from wherever they are. “The conversion to digital helps in so many ways,” Lyle said. “Everything is touch screen, which is what the kids are accustomed to. The new books are in hardcover and digital. Students can take online courses and do standardized tests online.”

Students can also access the language lab from computers or iPads elsewhere in the building, Lyle said. “Before, we only had CDs,” Lyle said. “Now they can control the lesson: stop, rewind, etc. They like coming to the language lab now. We have a lot of conversation. There is constant practice in speaking the language.”

Lyle said the new text books and language lab also allow teachers to:
• provide activities that require students to go beyond their traditional role as responder to the teacher’s questions;
• provide opportunities for students to use the language in meaningful interaction with others, and to negotiate meaning in authentic contexts in interpersonal communication;
• provide opportunities for students to engage in self-expression in interpersonal and presentational communication;
• provide opportunities for students to hear and read a great deal of comprehensible and authentic language in interpersonal and interpretive communication; and
• provide opportunities for students to engage in real-life tasks.

“We hope this leads to more students taking a foreign language,” said Lyle, a 40-year educator who has been in Lynn Public Schools since 1993 and in her current role at Classical since 2010. She added the plan is to add new French and Latin textbooks next year. “With the support of the district, the foreign language department at Lynn Classical is striving to become a leader in language learning,” Lyle said. “We look forward to integrating these skills while preparing students for a world outside the classroom.” Students are encouraged to take at least two years of a foreign language, which is now considered a minimum requirement for college, Lyle said.

Garelick donation provides smoke alarms

Dean Foods, parent company of Garelick Farms Lynn, made a $10,000 donation to the city to fund a fire prevention program. The fire department purchased smoke alarms and installed them in homes of Lynn Public Schools students who needed them. Chief James McDonald estimated the funds would cover the cost of about 100 alarms.

Firefighters also visit the children’s homes to talk to families about fire safety and prevention, cooking safety, electrical hazards and other common fire causes such as candles and driers. The smoke alarm initiative started three years ago with funding from a federal grant. Almost $300,000 from the U.S. Fire Administration allowed firefighters to install about 5,000 smoke alarms in 1,700 homes. The average two-family home should have seven detectors, and single-family homes should have three to four. Lt. Israel Gonzalez said. Many low-income households lack the devices all together, and others have alarms that have far exceeded their 10-year expected lifespan.

It’s difficult for the department to regulate alarms and other fire codes in one- and two-family homes, McDonald said. Houses with three or more apartments are subject to random inspections. “This is going to make a big difference” said superintendent Dr. Catherine Latham.

Aubrey Leake, plant manager of Garelick Farms Lynn, said the company is safety-oriented and wants to be a good neighbor and help the community.

From left, Fire Chief James McDonald, Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy, Aubrey Leake of Garelick Farms, Lt. Israel Gonzalez, Nick Piccolo of Garelick Farms and Dr. Catherine C. Latham, superintendent of Lynn Public Schools. Garelick donated $10,000 for the city to purchase smoke detectors.

Fecteau-Leary student Zanja Sharpe helps Paul Generazzo make a gingerbread house in his TEAMS classroom at the Lynn Tech Annex.

Lynn Classical Foreign Language Department chair Fátima Lyle is thrilled with the new digital language lab at the school.
Harrington Student Council aids orphanage in Afghanistan

Harrington School Student Council members conducted a letter writing campaign to ask local businesses for donations to help the Missionaries of Charity Orphanage in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Over a two-month period, students wrote letters to children living at the orphanage. They also mailed out letters to local businesses asking for donations of toiletries, art supplies, and small gifts. The Student Council would like to thank the community members who took the time to assist them. Osborne Medical Supply, East Boston Savings Bank, and Century 21 Hughes were instrumental in ensuring that these supplies were collected through their generous donations. Student Council members were extremely proud of the large amount of items that were collected to help the orphanage.

The student council is comprised of student leaders in grades 3-5.

Marshall hosts basketball jamboree

Thurgood Marshall Middle School hosted the inaugural Middle School Basketball Jamboree on Dec. 22. Boys and Girls teams from Breed, Marshall, Pickering and St. Mary’s participated in the event, with each team playing two 8-minute quarters. The jamboree was designed to give a sneak preview of this year’s middle school basketball teams.

Hands-on learning at Sewell-Anderson

What do a lever, inclined plane, screw, wedge, wheel and axle, and a pulley have in common? They’re all simple machines that fourth-grade students at Sewell-Anderson learned about and used in an after-school enrichment program. For her Night Back, reading specialist Pamela Bannister-Davis taught parts of the last unit of the fourth-grade science curriculum. She enlisted the support of her husband, John, who built a fixed pulley which the students used to lower objects from the second floor to the schoolyard and to hoist up other items.

Students used some simple tools and their fasteners, again thanks to Mr. Davis’ workshop and supplies: scrap wood with hammers and nails, screwdrivers with both Phillips and flat heads, and pliers with bolts and nuts. LEGO®s came in handy when students created simple cars with wheels and axles. They also went on a scavenger hunt to find cranks (old-fashioned pencil sharpeners) and other simple machines.

Throughout all of their experimenting, students determined how much “work” – force or effort – was required to move an object over a distance and discovered how simple machines make “work” easier. For example, they learned that an inclined plane can be a help or a hindrance depending on the degree of the incline.

Fashion show at Tech

The Fashion Club at Lynn Tech will hold the second annual Prom Fashion Show and Monte Carlo night on March 16 from 5:45 to 9 p.m. at the Lynn Tech Annex, 90 Commercial St. There will be live entertainment. Tickets are $3 in advance and $5 at the door.

Sewell-Anderson readers explore the world

The fifth-graders at Sewell-Anderson School are thoroughly enjoying the new Reach for Reading program. Selections are high-interest and student-friendly. While learning to summarize, determine importance, and identify narrative elements in literature, children are transported to a variety of places, from an immense desert in Mexico, to the depths of underwater oceans, to a Mississippi plantation. Differentiated small-group reading materials are plentiful and the National Geographic Explorer books are motivational.

Fifth-grade student Sydney Dulong said she liked the program because of the “Read with Me” and “Sing with Me” features on audio. William McCaffery said the anthologies have good reading and writing tips. Nathalya Souza was impressed by the myNGconnect website, which students can access from home. Marcy Gomez pointed out that if you are absent, you could keep up with the literature at home.
Around Lynn Schools

“Annie” finds a home at Lynn Woods

The Lynn Woods Elementary School staged a production of “Annie Jr.” in December. Madisyn Calkins led a 70-student cast, starring as Annie. The show was directed by Shawna Hemenway with assistance from Dawnn Paragios and Lauren Powers.

Lincoln-Thomson students lend a hand

The Lincoln-Thomson Student Council completed a community-service project with the intention of giving to those less fortunate. Under the direction of teacher Tracey Zimirowski, the Student Council created a Giving Tree. The members of the council collected canned goods, non-perishable food items and toiletries from Dec. 1-20. In return for a thoughtful donation, students received a winter ornament that was personalized with their name on it. The ornaments were displayed on the Giving Tree. All food donations were given to a Lynn food pantry.

The entire Lincoln-Thomson school community gained a sense of responsibility for the Lynn community, as well as a spirit of giving that endures well beyond the holiday season.

Students hungry for input on school food

When asked if there is anything students would change about school food, a common response at English and Classical is more hot lunches. With more than 1,000 students at each school split between four lunch periods, students that want the hot lunch item for that day find themselves running to lunch hoping there will be some left.

This and other issues students encounter have been discussed within the Lynn Youth Health Alliance (LYHA), a group of high school students at English and Classical on a mission to create positive change in Lynn’s health and food environment.

For the first time, LYHA partnered with Lynn Public Schools and Chartwells Schools Dining Services last fall to obtain feedback from students about school meals. School food plays a vital role in student health, academic achievement, and school behavior, especially in a district where many students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.

Additionally, more student involvement in the school food process could result in increased meal participation rates, which increases government reimbursement rates and generates more revenue for the school.

At their first quarterly meeting in October, with Chartwells dietitian Kelsey Massis, students had the chance to learn about how school food works and ask questions such as “Why is juice offered every day during breakfast, but only a few days a week during lunch?” and “Why is pizza offered every day?” At the next meeting, Chartwells and LPS administrators attempted to gain a better sense of how students feel about school meals.

In addition to the quarterly meetings, students are working to creatively gather feedback from their peers. LYHA chose two items to be featured on the January menu from a pre-approved list of recipes: Cheesy Baked Whole Wheat Pasta and Strawberry Chicken Salad. Students collected feedback from their peers during lunch hours when these items were featured on the menu, asking their opinion so they could report back to Chartwells. The youth will continue to work with Chartwells on student menu.
Yoga at Fallon School: That’s a stretch

By Paul Halloran

It is noon at the Fallon School. Students have finished lunch and recess and are getting ready to tackle the last few hours of the school day. This is a time when a school would typically be loud and bustling. Yet, at Fallon, silence reigns.

That’s because the entire school community – 48 students as well as teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators and support staff – has paused for the daily yoga break.

That’s right; everyone at Fallon – a school for special education students in grades pre-K-6 – does yoga daily at noon for 15 minutes. It is part of the school’s efforts to get students to “become more aware of the mind-body connection” and “increase their ability to regulate their emotions and foster resilience,” according to Tricia Carroll, who, along with Sara Fox-Ray, is one of the two clinical directors at the school.

In addition to the mid-day yoga, students do breathing exercises during morning announcements, compile a grateful list, and write down something they appreciate about their school experience. Principal Nancy Takis-Conway reads some of those notes over the loud speaker.

“We want to teach kids to respond rather than react to situations,” Carroll said. “It helps them learn to be valued members of the school community and improves their relationships with their peers and staff.”

Implementing these trauma-informed practices has paid dividends.

“We have seen a dramatic increase in students’ ability to engage in their academics and a decrease in behavior problems,” Carroll said. “The teachers are appreciating how much it has affected students’ mood.”

Calling Takis-Conway “so progressive,” Carroll said the principal looked at the research and saw that academic performance increases when students practice mindfulness. “They do better academically and social-emotionally,” Carroll said.

The yoga is going so well that Fallon staff decided it would be a good idea to make a video. Shanel Anderson, owner of Soul City Yoga and a Lynn English graduate, made her studio in the Lydia Pinkham Building available for the filming.

“Yoga is appropriate for all students,” Carroll said. “Using these evidence-based practices has had a major positive impact in our school.”

From left, Jeydiel Paredes, Rocco Disaia, Danny Moreno and Izmalin Reyes partake in yoga at the Fallon School.

PHOTOS: BOB ROCHE