

# Soar Newsletter



Winter 2016

## The 2015-2016 School Year Update

Soar Learning Center is well into the 17th school year. Before the school-day even begins, 13 dedicated, van drivers are hard at work ensuring our students arrive from their 17 towns. Ranging from Winooski, to Berkshire, and even out to Richford; students travel far and wide each morning and afternoon. We are very lucky to have eleven, hired drivers and two routes that are covered by Soar staff.

The number of students, about halfway through the school year, is at 71. There are 40 students in the elementary and middle school, 8 students in the LEAP Program, and 23 students in the high school.

Also an important change this year, is the name of our former Back to School Program. Now the Life Skill Education & Alternative Program, (LEAP), the name more clearly represents the program-



*Above: Pictured here are some of our returning staff members that are in new positions*

ming, academics, and community activities students experience.

Though many staff returned for another school year, several began new positions. The following are returning staff that have acquired a new position:

Ann Browning: Educational Team Leader

Nikki Rees: Middle School Special Educator

April Still: LEAP Program Special Educator

Tim Stanley: Elementary Behavioral Service Coordinator

Lee Trombley: Fine Arts Teacher

Heather Place: High School Behavioral Service Coordinator

Brad Messier: Intake Coordinator

Jesse LeClair: Transportation Team Leader

Gary Thompson: Behavioral Interventionist

Joseph Zaffuts: Clinician

Nikoa Kmetz-Derr: High School Art History Teacher

Arlene Thompson: K-8 Art Teacher & Librarian

There are also a handful of



*Above: Here are the members of our staff that joined us this year.*

new faces we want to welcome:

Tammara Palmer: Special Educator

Jennifer King: Home School Coordinator

Ben Jaquish: Elementary Behavior Interventionist

Chris Varela: High School Behavior Interventionist

Will Watson: LEAP Instructional Assistant

Chelsea Vanslette: LEAP Instructional Assistant

Thomas Fink: LEAP Instructional Assistant

Taylor Troville: LEAP Instructional Assistant



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*Left: Thank you to our van drivers: Roger Vigneault, Pete Cross, Craig Wright, Gene Corliss, Jim Thibault, Marty Whittemore, Gene Duprey, Curt Pelon, Donna Corliss, Judy Harrington, and Dick Coon. Not Pictured: Soar staff that drive vans are Lynne Heinlein, Ethan Longley, Lyn Coupal, and Gary Thompson. Soar staff that are substitute van drivers are Mike Tuttle, Iain White, Brad Messier, Jen Gabriel, and Marc Brunelle.*

## 2nd Annual Badminton Tournament

December 18<sup>th</sup> was a day of fun and excitement in the Soar gymnasium, as players and spectators packed in for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual SLC Badminton Winter Classic. The double elimination tournament was a highly anticipated event that served as a culmination of the four week long badminton unit in PE. Each of the 17 teams consisted of one student and one staff member. While

entries are reserved to high school students, elementary and middle school students got involved by watching the action, and even helping officiate!

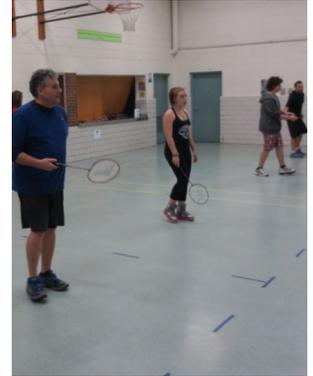
“Students show an amazing amount of improvement throughout the course of the badminton unit,” observes PE/Health teacher Tommy Hamlin. “The tournament is a nice way to let them show off their skills

and take pride in what they’ve accomplished.”

This skill development is no accident, however. On top of the hours of practice in PE class, students- even those not currently enrolled in a PE class- used almost all of their free time improving their game. On tournament day, it showed! We thank all of our athletes, officials and spectators for a great day and we look forward to next year’s tournament!



*Staff and students teamed up to take on one another and demonstrate their badminton skills!*



## Music Program & Holiday Concert

The 2015-2016 school year is the first, with Lee Trombley as the Fine Arts teacher. With a new teacher there have been many new and exciting things going on in the classroom. The elementary students have been learning how to read music. From quarter notes to rhythms, the students have been learning all the nuts and bolts of written music. Along with learning about the look of music, the classes have been getting time to explore and experiment with instruments in hopes that someone will be inspired to be the next great musician.

Many of the elementary students have also taken advantage of the ‘music lessons’ privilege available to students as they move up the Step System at Soar Learning Center. Those that have chosen lessons,



*Above: The stage is set and ready for the Holiday Concert*

*Below: An eighth grader plays the keyboard for the piece ‘Little Drummer Boy’.*



have shown a passion for learning more about music outside of the classroom, and devote time each week to improving their playing ability. Many of these students learned a song to play at the holiday concert.

This concert featured performers from each class and was a wonderful way for students and staff alike to kick off the holidays.

The high school music curriculum has been based around learning music history. The year started with the origins of all music and moved through the important periods of music composition. Through this, the students were exposed to music that they may have heard in the background of a movie or an advertisement, but never knew the origin or time period from which the music originated. Currently classes are learning about

‘American Pop Music History’. A theater program is also in its early stages at Soar Learning Center with the ‘Theater & Stage Production’ class being offered for the first time. The students in this class designed and built the sets for the holiday concert and are beginning a unit on the history of theater.

On Fridays, there are many vocationally based workshops for the high school students. The ‘Music Production Workshop’ is used as a time for students to learn about the inner workings of recording music and live shows. The students from this class were responsible for stage setup and running all of the sound equipment for the holiday concert.

This year has brought many new opportunities for students interested in the arts.



# Funventure Fridays



The K-8 teachers decided to change the structure of the Friday 'club' activities this school year, to allow for more academic time. The activities are now monthly and a great reward for students, after working hard for several weeks. The hope with Funventure Fridays is to allow the students the opportunity to learn about and spend time in their communities, build social skills, and participate in educational, hands on activities.

The students and staff kicked off the school year with a trip to Hackett's Apple Orchard in South Hero. Students enjoyed a hayride and a tour of the apple orchard. The staff at Hackett's then shared the process of packaging the apples. The tour ended with students picking apples to bring home. Each of the classrooms brought apples back to

school and created delicious snacks to

share. The aroma of apples drifted through the school as applesauce simmered in a crockpot, and apple cake baked in the oven.

November's Funventure Friday was entitled, "Pay It Forward". The K-8 students were broken into 4 groups to do various community service activities. A group of students went to Care Partners in St. Albans to do crafts and games with the clients. Another group went to the Food Shelf in St. Albans to tour the facility and help with various jobs that needed to be done. A small group of students traveled to the Ronald McDonald House and cooked a meal for families that stay



there while their children receive treatment and care at the Vermont Children's Hospital. The final group stayed at school and created supplies for the Humane Society and bookmarks for local libraries.

In December the students participated in activities that focused on "Holidays around the World: Traditions & Celebrations". They traveled to the different classrooms to read stories about holiday traditions, play a cultural themed jeopardy game, and created festive crafts from around the world.



## Big Change Roundup Comes to Soar

For the third year, Mrs. LeClair's 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade class will participate in the "Big Change Roundup for Kids". This is a fundraiser that benefits the University of Vermont Medical Center, specifically the Children's Hospital.

This year, representatives from the radio station, 98.9 WOKO, kicked off the fundraiser with a presentation to all the students and staff. Our hope this year, beginning with the presentation, is to help people more deeply understand exactly where the money raised goes, and how it is used. This school-wide presentation was held Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup>.

In addition to the students and staff acting as 'change bandits', Mrs. LeClair's class will raise money through a "compliment sale", held in the first few weeks of February. Students and staff will extend written compliments for peers and colleagues, that are then hand delivered by Mrs. LeClair's students. Staff are encouraged to donate money to purchase the compliments, and students can take as many as they'd like.

It is wonderful to see the school come together each year to help the greater community.



Mrs. LeClair, Dan Marcus (BI), and a couple of students pose next to the Big Change Roundup van, with 'Wild Bill' from WOKO's morning show.





## Art Classes

The elementary and LEAP art classes have been led by Arlene Thompson this year. Both groups of students have been extremely busy. Some of the projects they have completed are: charcoal and pencil drawings, work with craypas oil pastels, Halloween decorations, scratch art, Thanksgiving crafts, water color flowers, clay ornaments, jewelry making which also served as holiday gifts, stamping projects, and optical art.

Art History is a new course offered in our high school. This course is being taught by behavior interventionist, Ni-koa Kmetz-Derr. The curriculum has students studying art throughout history, beginning with prehistory art, such as cave paintings. They have also learned about a variety of art styles including buildings, frescoes, sculpture, and etching. Through listening, reading, watching videos, and hands-on projects, students are gaining experience with all of these art forms!

## Recipe Corner

### CAJUN CHICKEN PASTA

#### Ingredients:

- 4 oz. linguini
- 2 boneless chicken breasts  
(sliced into thin strips)
- 2 tsps. Cajun seasoning
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 red bell pepper, chopped
- 4 fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 green onion, minced
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 1/4 tsps. dried basil
- 1/4 tsps. lemon pepper
- 1/4 tsps. salt
- 1/8 tsps. garlic powder
- 1/8 tsps. ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. grated parmesan cheese

#### Directions:

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, add linguini, cook until al dente, drain.
2. Place chicken and Cajun seasoning in a bowl, toss to coat.
3. In a large skillet over medium heat, sauté chicken in butter until no longer pink and juices run clear (about 5-7 minutes). Add green and red peppers, mushrooms, and green onions; cook for 2-3 minutes. Reduce heat and stir in heavy cream.
4. Season the sauce with basil, lemon pepper, salt, garlic powder, and ground pepper. Heat through.
5. In a large bowl, toss linguini and sauce. Sprinkle with parmesan.



## *Students at Work*

The Culinary Program continues, for the 9th year, to provide delicious lunches every Friday. On average, 35 meals are prepared and delivered every week. To the left, you will see one of the recent menu items. In the program, there are currently four students, two of which are currently training at local restaurants. They are busy bussing tables, washing dishes, and doing prep work. They are being paid through Vocational Rehab, but will hopefully be hired this spring.



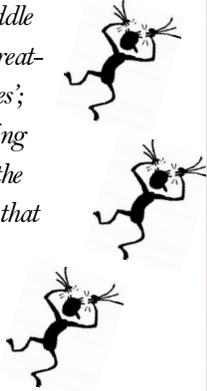
*Above: Vocational Coordinator, Claire Thompson, and a high school student take a brief break from kitchen duties.*

This past summer, 16 high school students participated the work program. Between jobs and training in both the school and community, students worked day, evening, and weekend hours. Tractor Supply, TJ Maxx, Maplefields, and Leader Evaporator are a few of the community businesses where our students have worked. Currently, 2 students from LEAP, and 3 high school students are working/training, while being paid through grant money. There are also 2 students with interviews to hopefully join this incredible opportunity.

# Student Corner



*Right: A middle school class created 'Pet Peeves'; student writing pieces about the many things that can be more than just a nuisance.*



I hate it when...

People say they didn't do something but they actually did it. I get a horrible present for Christmas such as notebooks with girl stuff on them. I get pushed off a ledge in Call of Duty by one of my teammates. I get blamed for something I didn't do. It rains on my birthday. I have to eat the school lunch. My sister keeps changing channels. Someone cuts in front of me in line. Recess is cancelled! I get a paper cut. I study hard for a test and miss a lot of problems. A taco breaks apart on the first bite. Somebody pulls my hair. I get something stuck between my teeth.



## Kurma

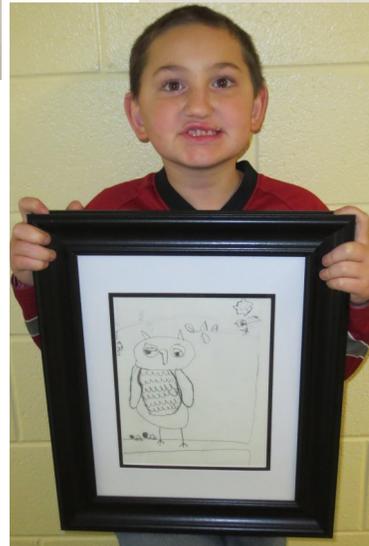
Kurma is a turtle and is the second god of Vishnu. The gods lost their immortality and went to Vishnu for help.

Vishnu turned into Kurma and used his strong turtle shell to balance the mountain



*Top Right: A high school student's poster about a Hindu god, Kurma*

*Left: A high school advertisement, selling a medication that would help you 'live forever', was created to go along with a novel*



*Left: An elementary student holds his framed artwork that was displayed at NCSS main office buildings.*



## Longevity

Feel young & healthy

FDA Approved



Take 2 capsules a day and you will be feeling young and alive!



"We took Longevity and we still feel as young and healthy as when we first took it. Get it now!"

Advice from long term Longevity users.

Sign the Declaration, agree not to have children, and you can live forever. Longevity is a drug that restores your body and keeps you young and healthy.

Free shipping!!

There are strict guidelines for this drug, for more information, call 1-800-Longevity



My hard work

*Right: A middle school 'I Am' poem, written at the beginning of the school year*

## Student CPR & First Aid Certifications

Knowing crucial safety and life saving techniques is an incredibly valuable skill to have, especially as a student. In October, many of our students were provided the opportunity to become certified in CPR, first aid, and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED). Seventeen eighth through twelfth graders spent five hours learning about what to do when someone is hurt or experiencing breathing difficulties. Kathleen Berard-Brown, a nurse through NCSS, shared her knowledge and skills when it comes to saving lives and preventing serious injuries. There is more to first aid though than just knowing how many chest compressions to give a person. There is the safety of the surroundings, making sure to call for help, and the importance of bringing a sense of calm to the injured person and situation. These students are certified in these areas for three years.



I AM POEM  
 I am a dog lover and relaxed  
 I wonder if aliens exist  
 I hear the calming breeze  
 I see dinosaurs taking over the world  
 I want a billion dollars  
 I am a dog lover and relaxed  
 I pretend the moon is made of cheese  
 I feel Saturn's rocky rings  
 I touch the future  
 I worry that the winter will be long  
 I like animals  
 I am a dog lover and relaxed  
 I understand everything  
 I say vanilla is better than chocolate  
 I dream about having a Corvette  
 I try to do my school work  
 I hope for a pet dinosaur  
 I am a dog lover and relaxed

# Student Corner

Staff organized the first Soar Trivia Bowl, a half-day event for the high school. Students were divided into teams, and for nearly three hours, competed to answer fun trivia questions about hunting and fishing, weird science, engine mechanics, TV and movies, popular music and more. The questions were written by high school staff and presented in a Jeopardy-style format with 10 categories, and 20 questions each. Prizes were awarded to the first, second and third place teams. Students and staff had a great time in this friendly competition!



The pictures above and below are from the 2015 summer programs. Photographed are students and staff meeting players and at the Lake Monster's Game, learning archery at Pelkey's, enjoying a day on a ropes course, and taking a hike through VT scenery.



I was on my way home from school when something happened. It was raining and I began to feel like someone was watching me. I look back and there is nothing. I look forward and ran, ran as fast as I could. At this point I was only a couple blocks away from home where I knew I couldn't get hurt. Suddenly I hear kind of a thumping sound behind me; I didn't dare look back so I ran faster. I began to feel something on my shoulder sort of like a hand, that's all I remember...



Above: A seventh grader wrote this 'cliffhanger' paragraph to demonstrate writing skills that set a specific mood and leave the reader wondering "what happens next?"



## A Special Thank You!

This newsletter was written with the help of several staff members. Everyone works hard during their day to provide the very best services to our students, so going above and beyond to assist with the newsletter is greatly appreciated.

Thank You: Lee Trombley, Thomas Hamlin, Erika LeClair, Deana Paquette, and Ann Browning.

