

# ELO Hub Newsletter

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH US:

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Well we knew this day would come and we close out the 2016/2017 school year with some wonderful memories. This year has been a year of strengthening our community. Our work is only possible when we are all working together to give students an experience that truly enriches their lives. Through project-based learning, transition work such as college visits and completing ELOs, as well as working on social emotional skills that will carry them through their lives, students have been able to see the potential that we see in them everyday.

As we get ready for the summer I would like to say thank you to special education directors and coordinators who work tirelessly to support students through all the ups and downs. This group is sometimes easy to forget when we deal with the day to day, but without them and their support our students would not be part of this wonderful community. It is sometimes easy to give specific people credit for a student's success, but the reality is, there are so many working hard to keep students engaged. Our parents and guardians pick up the pieces every night and every morning. They are there when we call and without our relationship and connections with them we would struggle in supporting our students. It takes a community to help students see that hard work, perseverance, and positive relationships lead to options in life. This year we are honored to be part of two graduation ceremonies honoring the completion of a long path that will guide them to the next evolution of their life. I had many conversations with students and seeing the success of others becomes contagious. I speak on behalf of the staff in saying we truly cannot wait to see every student graduate. I would also like to say on behalf of the staff- thank you for your help in making 2016/2017 a year to remember. I wish everyone a safe and wonderful summer. We cannot wait to see everyone in the fall!

-Mr. Newell

## ARMSTRONG STRIKES A CHORD WITH STUDENTS

Go! Boom! Do! Boom!



Those were the words and sounds echoing through the halls of the Canal Street Mill recently. When Artist in Residence, Randy Armstrong, visited our students to create a symphony of multicultural sounds and rhythms on his collection of worldly instruments. With Randy's guidance, students got to practice West African rhythms on the traditional djembe and create an orchestra of melodies using instruments from North Africa, including the oud and the tar drum. Randy Armstrong is no stranger to the Strafford Learning

Center and has been engaging students in multicultural music for years. His unique blend of involving the audience with the music of many countries and teaching a brief history of the significance of the instrument, whether it be woodwind, percussion or string, offers a learning experience like no other. As the last drum beat resounded off of the old mill walls, we were left with a better knowledge and appreciation of a much bigger world than any of us could ever explore alone.

## LOOKING BACK ON OUR SCHOOL YEAR

As the curtain closes on the 2016-17 school year, I have had the chance to reflect back on the strong community connections that we have made over the course of the year. These connections will continue to bear fruit for our program and our students not just in their schooling, but in their lives outside of school.

Student internships at places like Wayne Chaloux's Auto World, the New Hampshire Children's Museum, Seacoast Early Learning Center and Strafford Learning Center's John Powers School have given students a first taste of potential future careers. We also had students connect with Loud Canvas Media to support a computer coding course, Parma Recordings in North Hampton, NH for a music production course, Todd's Touch in Somersworth for an audio science course and local artist Brian Cartier, who worked with a student on both art and music.

These are just some of the community connections that our ELO students have successfully connected back to their coursework. We are also so fortunate that the businesses in the community see the value in what we are doing to the point where we were able to receive donations from area restaurants Strafford Farms, Rogers, Tuckers, Chilis, 99, Street and Kendall Pond Pizza.

My role as ELO Coordinator, and my roles as Co-chairman of the statewide Extended Learning Opportunity Network and as a member of the Greater Dover Chamber of Commerce Education Committee, will allow me to continue doing my best to support all of your students to pursue their passions and plan their futures. The program has been so successful that I have been asked to speak at the National Center for Learning Disabilities in Washington DC this August about how ELO's support learners in New Hampshire.

Thank you to all of you, for your support. Thank you to all of our business partners, and above all, thank you to our fantastic students for a great year.

- Terrill Covey



Here we are at the end of another great school year in the ELO Hub. To end our school year on an extraordinary note, our students showcased their hard work and creativity in our first ELO Exhibition on the afternoon of Wednesday, June 14. Family members, community members, and staff gathered here to see the variety of student projects that make Extended Learning Opportunities so personal to a student's education. Guests were treated to a non-traditional Japanese Tea Ceremony, which highlighted the formality and ritual of Japanese culture. Another student presented on his experience at a recent internship in town and how it enhanced his understanding of the business side to the automotive industry. Yet another student presented her life-size models of prehistoric organisms, comparing the size, habitat and diet of these organisms to modern-day ancestors of these once-living giants. Finally, another student showcased her choreographed hip-hop dance, which was a different perspective of dance that she had not yet explored before her ELO.

Although these were just a few of the highlights of the afternoon's exhibition, it only touches on the amazing work all of our students have completed in the Hub this semester and this year. This has been a unique and beneficial learning environment for all of our students who have had the time and freedom to learn what they want to learn. My job as the ELO teacher this year has been to guide these students into exploring possibilities they could not possibly explore in a regular educational setting. Although my job was to be their teacher, it is I who have truly been the student, learning alongside these talented and knowledgeable students throughout their diverse and imaginative ELOs. Thank you for a great year!

-Joshua Shawver