



# REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

**NIE** NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION

March 11, 2026

## 5 students win Emerging Arts honors

By Stephen Hagan

» Staff Writer

MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA — Several Cape Ann art students have come home with awards from a university’s “Emerging Arts Competition.”

Five Manchester Essex Regional High School visual arts students won awards at the 2026 University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Emerging Artists Competition. The event is a 13-year tradition at UMass Dartmouth that celebrates “the exceptional artistic merit of New England high school students.”

“We are extremely proud to announce the list of MERHS students who juried into this competition,” Manchester Essex art educator Tamera Burns said. “It is remarkable for a school of this size to have students who qualify for juried competitions such as this.”

The Manchester Essex students selected for the exhibition are:

- Riley Mckinnon for “The Selkies.”
- Grayson Harden for “Uphill Battle.”
- Luke Renzi for “Field of Dreams.”
- Parker Woodman for “Under the Star.”
- Felix Wood for “The Beauty in Negligence.”

The competitive online juried exhibition received submissions from more than 550 young artists this year, which were narrowed down to 100 for the exhibition by the jurors, college Deans Denise Baxter and Ann Kim.

“We are so proud to see the talents of our students recognized as some of the best in the region,” Manchester Essex Principal Julie Sgroi said. “We are proud to foster an arts



“The Selkies” by Riley Mckinnon

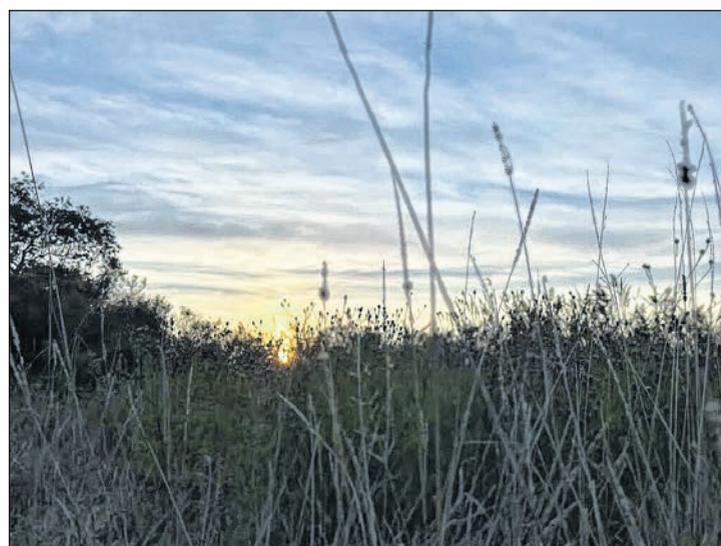


“The Beauty in Negligence” by Felix Wood.

MERSD/Courtesy photos



“Uphill Battle” by Grayson Harden.



“Field of Dreams” by Luke Renzi.



“Under the Star” by Parker Woodman.

education where students feel they can express themselves and pursue storytelling through creativity. This achievement is a testament to our art educators and entire student body

and we extend our congratulations to all.”

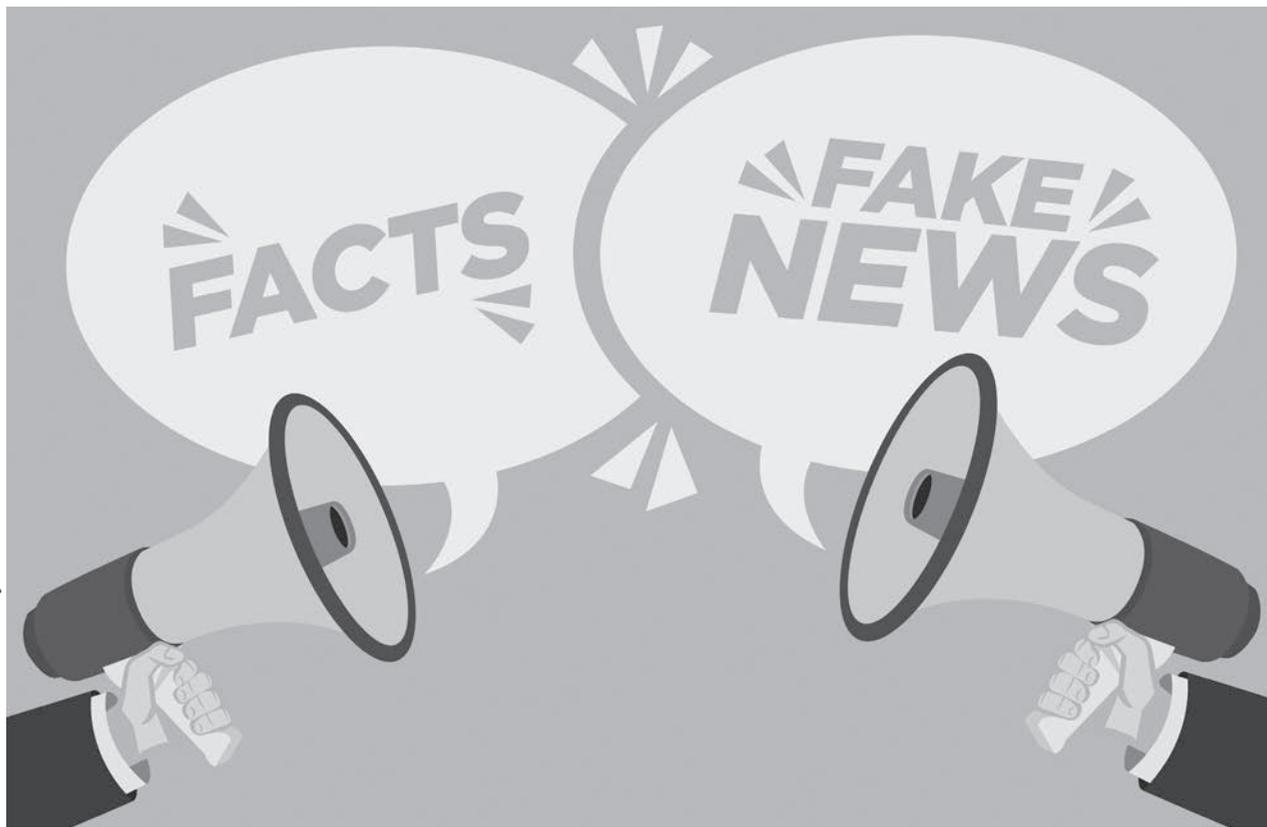
Award winners exhibited their works in the UMass Dartmouth College of Visual & Performing

Arts Campus Gallery through Feb. 22, which was accompanied by an awards ceremony and reception.

An online showcase of the selected pieces is available at

[www.umassd.edu/cvpa/explore/emerging-young-artists](http://www.umassd.edu/cvpa/explore/emerging-young-artists).

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## Looking to combat fake news?

Here are some resources to help you determine if what you've read is true:

» **PolitiFact** is the Pulitzer Prize-winning fact checking operation run by the nonprofit Poynter Institute. The site fact-checks statements by politicians and debunks myriad Facebook hoaxes.

<https://www.politifact.com/>

» **FactCheck.org**, run by Annenberg Public Policy Center, performs much of the same tasks, and also let's you ask questions of the fact checkers. An example question: Did the Supreme Court rule that it is illegal to take the oath of office with anything but the Bible? (The answer is no.)

<https://www.factcheck.org/>

» **Snopes** is the original fact-checking website. Use the site's search bar to get to the bottom of political statements, viral videos and urban myths.

<https://www.snopes.com/>

» **A Google reverse image search** is the best way to find out if that photo you saw making the rounds on Twitter or Facebook is real. This story from PC Magazine walks you through how to do it on your desktop or your phone.

<https://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2492468,00.asp>

» **Still need help?** Contact us at the Gloucester Daily Times or Salem News, and we'll get the answer for you, no matter the topic. Email Gloucester editor Andrea Holbrook at [aholbrook@gloucestertimes.com](mailto:aholbrook@gloucestertimes.com), or Salem editor John Castelluccio at [jcastelluccio@salemnews.com](mailto:jcastelluccio@salemnews.com)



## REAL NEWS IN SCHOOLS

### How the program works

Your school can have access to local, trusted journalism from The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times on a daily basis. We report on news throughout the North Shore and Cape Ann, covering all things local — from schools, to sports, to government, people profiles, business, entertainment and more. You get the facts — the real news — from experienced reporters, photographers and editors you can count on at no cost to your school.

Here are the basics of the program:

**What is it?** The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times partner with local businesses to provide free digital access to our newspapers to anyone within a school in our coverage area at no cost to the school. This access encourages students to value the vital news coverage being produced by The Salem News and Gloucester Daily Times. They will build awareness and gain critical thinking skills in the process.

**Who can participate?** This program will benefit teachers, students, and others in the school community.

**Where does it take place?** You can access our newspaper online. Teachers can incorporate the program into their curriculums, even having reporters, photographers and editors visit your class.

**When can we start benefiting?** As soon as we have your commitment to participate in Real News in Schools we will go to work to find a local business who wants to sponsor you. Once we have one, we will work with your IT Department to get the program up and running.

**Why is this valuable?** There's a lot of fake news out there on social media and elsewhere. The Salem News, founded in 1880 as The Salem Evening News, and the Gloucester Daily Times, founded in 1888, both award-winning publications, have long track records of fair and accurate reporting that cuts through the misinformation.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**  
[SALEMNEWS.COM/REALNEWS](http://SALEMNEWS.COM/REALNEWS)  
[GLOUCESTERTIMES.COM/REALNEWS](http://GLOUCESTERTIMES.COM/REALNEWS)



Senior Guywintz Jules, podcast host Jackie Burns, and Art and Digital Media Teacher Doug Cabot on the set of the SHELL We Talk About It podcast.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Salem High seniors Annie Thornett and Kai Gillis sit down with Instructional Social Studies Coach and podcast host Ann Whitney to talk about their experiences as student leaders and peer mentors.

# ‘SHELL We Talk About It’?

Salem High podcast explores student experiences, ways to improve learning

By Michael McHugh  
» Staff Writer

SALEM — Salem High School educators from the district’s Instructional Coaching team are looking to learn more from students about their experiences and ways teachers can improve classroom learning through a recently launched podcast.

The podcast is part of an effort by Salem High teachers to focus on new ways to elevate the classroom experience through an opt-in professional development program called the Salem High Educator Learning Lab (SHELL). Since the launch of the initiative in spring 2024, 43 educators have opted-in to the program launched by Ann Whitney and Jaclyn Burns, members of the district’s Instructional

Coaching team.

“Teachers obviously have a lot on their plates, but some are really interested in improving their practice and learning more,” Burns said. “So we were able to develop this community within Salem High where teachers can do research, try some things in their classroom, and then reflect about how it’s going.”

These new approaches to teaching include things like content area literacy, which encourages educators to use evidence-based strategies for listening, speaking, reading, and writing, such as concept mapping or summarization across different disciplines. With each subject having its own vocabulary, text styles, and ways of thinking, content area literacy teaches students how to adjust to those differences across different subjects.

The podcast, titled “SHELL We Talk About It?” sits down with students to hear about their experiences and ideas for improving classroom

learning, as well as to reflect on which of these new approaches are working, and which are not.

One example of this type of discussion can be seen in episode 3 of the podcast, where Whitney asks Salem High senior Annie Thornett about the value she has seen in teachers making a specific effort to introduce subjects at the start of the school year with content area literacy.

“No matter the class, I think going over the language or how things will be phrased in the readings is really helpful in setting you up for the whole class,” Thornett said.

Since its launch in January, the podcast has had three episodes (with the third split into five separate parts) in which 11 students were interviewed about their extracurricular activities, involvement in different mentorship or pre-college programs, and how those experiences have compared and contrasted to their in-classroom learning.

Episodes one and two are focused on Rylan Workman and Guywintz Jules, two Salem High seniors who spent two weeks at sea over the summer conducting ocean research with the SEA Expedition High School and Pre-College Program.

Asked about his experiences with classroom learning in AP Biology and the SEA Expedition program, Jules said both provided the opportunity for research-based and project-based learning in ecology that he will use in college.

“AP Biology taught me many things about how life works in general, different organisms, cells, and how everything is in balance,” Jules said. “Having that knowledge helped me improve with my other science classes. And we were also taught how to efficiently learn from research papers so we could gain the necessary skills to be successful in college.”

According to Burns, these experiences provide valuable insight into how teachers can adjust their curriculum with experiential learning and other techniques to better prepare them for college and future careers.

“We have so many kids involved in a range of activities outside of the classroom, and we really want to think about the opportunities that we have to then connect those experiences to their classroom learning,” Burns said. “How can we make connections to what students were able to apply on the ship, to how things are going in our classes? (We ask) what are we doing a good job with? and where could we be improving their learning experiences at the high school?”

The creation of the podcast is used as a learning opportunity for students — they are involved in many aspects of production including filming and editing.

The next collection of

interviews is planned to focus on what steps the school can take to improve student agency around their own learning.

“(We’re asking) how Salem High is providing opportunities for students to really own their own learning,” Burns said. “Knowing that teachers are really working on elevating agency (we want to know) how that’s landing for them.”

While timing on episode releases is based on the school’s capacity to train and keep students as involved in the production process as possible, Burns said they’re hoping to stick to publishing one episode a week.

The most recent episodes of SHELL We Talk About It are available online at [spssalemhs.salemk12.org/news/s-h-e-l-l-we-talk-about-it-podcast](https://spssalemhs.salemk12.org/news/s-h-e-l-l-we-talk-about-it-podcast).

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COURTESY PHOTO

Rylan Workman, a Salem High School senior, was at sea from June 30 to July 11 on the sailing school vessel "Corwith Cramer," conducting research and familiarizing himself with the many duties life on the ocean.

# On expedition

Salem High seniors spend 2 weeks conducting research on sailing school vessel

By Michael McHugh

» Staff Writer

SALEM — Two Salem High seniors alongside roughly 25 students and crew from around the world spent two weeks at sea over the summer conducting ocean research with the SEA Expedition High School and Pre-College Program.

As the first Salem High students to be accepted into the program, Rylan Workman, who was at sea June 30 to July 11, and Guywintz Jules, who was at sea Aug. 1-12, immersed themselves in research and life on the ocean, working in teams with students they had only just met.

The two conducted research, observed weather and ocean swells, steered the ship — the sailing school vessel Corwith Cramer — and even washed dishes, working through the night in accordance with the regimen of six hours on, 12 hours off shifts.

"With six-hour shifts at random periods of the day, it took a lot of determination to commit myself entirely to my duties," Workman said. "I remember when a student on my shift fell asleep, and we were not relieved from our dawn shift until 2 a.m., one hour after expected. But still, we stood there,

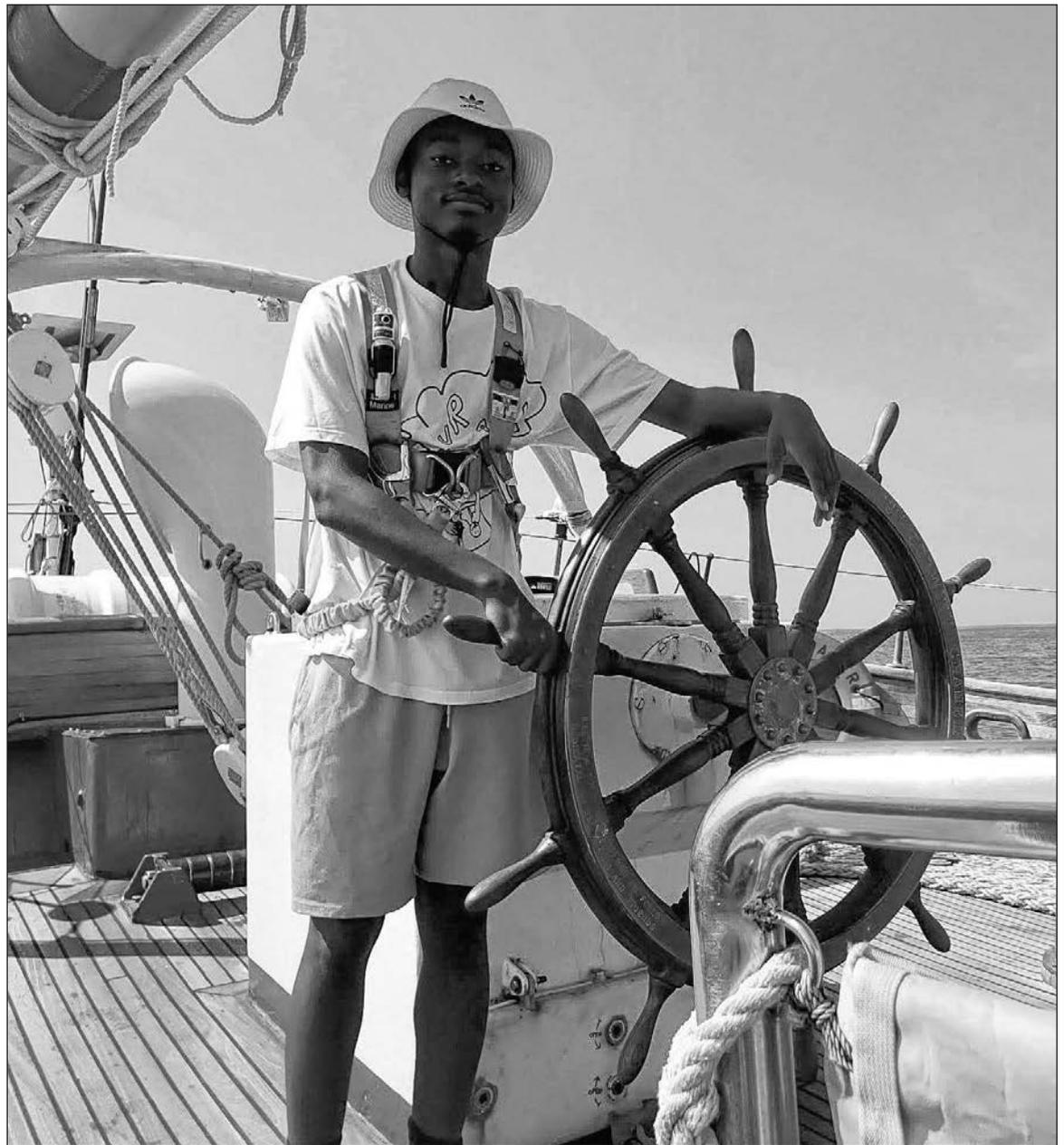
performed our duties, and pushed on. A boat cannot run itself, so the SEA expedition demanded collective effort."

While neither Workman or Jules plan to study ocean research — they will pursue environmental engineering and pre-medicine with a focus on neurology, respectively — they agreed they will take the experience with them.

"I explored my curiosity during the SEA Expedition, with me and my new friends spending time after watch, categorizing zooplankton and phytoplankton," Workman said. "I read engineering manuals for scientific equipment, and focused on every learning experience. This really allowed me to get the most out of the program, and I will be sure to maximize my education in the future."

"I learned how to adapt to my environment in a short amount of time and I learned how to collect different kinds of data that will help future research or diagnosis."

SEA Expedition is a two-week offshore summer program for rising high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors, as well as recent high school graduates. Students sail the nearshore and offshore waters of Cape Cod and New England, gaining skills in navigation and sail handling, while also



COURTESY PHOTO

Guywintz Jules, a Salem High School senior, was at sea from Aug. 1-12, researching plankton, steering the ship, and working all through the night.

conducting scientific deployments.

Past SEA Expedition voyages have explored Cape Cod Bay, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, the Gulf of Maine, and George's Bank, according to the company's website.

The research conducted on the Woods Hole-based SSV Corwith Cramer focused on plankton — microorganisms such as jellyfish, krill and small crustaceans that are vital to the ocean's ecosystem and food chain.

After hearing about the opportunity by Salem High science educator Graeme Marcoux, Workman said it was the research component of the program that encouraged him to apply and earn acceptance

for the trip. Jules credited his AP biology class that covered different ecosystems and organisms as his impetus.

Marcoux said he knew both students would both benefit from an incredible, immersive science experience like that being offered by SEA.

"Both Rylan and Guywintz had proven themselves to be exceptional students in their science classes and as a result had an excellent foundation of theoretical and lab-based science understanding," he said. "Jaclyn (Burns, Salem High's instructional science coach) and I both agreed that the experience offered by SEA would vastly amplify what both students already

brought to the table."

Both Jules and Workman were awarded scholarships through the Norman H. Read Trust.

"I am so happy that they both eventually applied and were selected for the program and I look forward to offering this opportunity to other science students at SHS," Marcoux said.

"As someone who was lucky enough to participate in similar science expeditions as a student I can say, without a doubt, that our students will remember these experiences for the rest of their lives."

Michael McHugh can be contacted at [mmchugh@northofboston.com](mailto:mmchugh@northofboston.com) or at 781-799-5202

# Austin Prep's new Center for Integrated Learning expands support for students

By Tyler Fleming

» Austin Prep

Earlier this academic year, Austin Prep opened the Richard J. Meelia '67 Center for Integrated Learning, an expanded learning program meant to meet students where they are and help them understand how they learn best. The Center supports Austin Prep's mission, helping every student take advantage of their unique gifts while growing in confidence, purpose, and skill.

The Center for Integrated Learning expands the existing learning support system that is available for Austin Prep students. Students with learning differences account for nearly 25% of the United States K-12 population and Austin Prep is no exception. In launching an expanded integrated learning program, the Austin Prep community is truly living out its Catholic, Augustinian values by recognizing the inherent value of every student.

## Dedicated leadership and trained faculty support students who learn differently

The Center for Integrated Learning is led by Jennifer Brogan, M.Ed., who was hired specifically to develop and lead this new program. She is supported by a full-time team of seasoned professionals who have devoted their careers and their training to supporting students who learn differently. Austin Prep "Saint Ambrose Fellows" are teachers specially trained to walk with students on their learning journey. This distinguished group helps students who learn in different ways, need extra support, or seek guidance to grow in confidence and skill. Like St. Ambrose, who guided St. Augustine, Fellows mentor, listen, and encourage students to discover their own path to success.

"The Center for Integrated Learning at Austin Prep is dedicated to creating programs that honor and value each student's unique potential and support their needs with compassion and expertise," Brogan said. "Our team's purpose is to inspire every learner to discover their strengths, rise to challenges,



Jennifer Brogan leads the new Center for Integrated Learning at Austin Prep.

COURTESY PHOTO

take ownership of their growth, and be empowered to thrive in ways that enrich every part of their lives. In partnership with families, we create a path that not only supports student's learning needs but also celebrates who they are becoming. It is a privilege to walk alongside them on that journey."

## Individualized accommodations and family partnerships remove barriers to learning

For students with documented learning differences, faculty at the Center develop individualized Austin Prep Accommodation Plans detailing the reasonable accommodations to support the student's meaningful access to the curriculum. Supports may include accommodations such as extended time, reduced distraction testing spaces, preferential seating, and access to reference materials. These accommodations are maintained from sixth grade through 12th grade.

Collaboration between families



COURTESY PHOTO

The new Center for Integrated Learning at Austin Prep.

and the Integrated Learning team is key to every student's success. Parents are encouraged to reach out early to discuss their child's learning needs so that staff can provide the most effective support from

the start. Students with learning differences or diagnosed disabilities can share relevant documentation — such as an IEP, 504 plan, or neuropsychological evaluation — when applying to Austin Prep. This

information helps the staff determine the most appropriate level of support, which may include developing an Austin Prep Accommodation Plan, providing individualized or specialized support through our Learning Support Offerings, or connecting students with additional learning opportunities and resources. Early communication allows us to build a partnership that promotes a smooth, supportive, and empowering transition for every student.

## Purpose-built spaces and Augustinian values shape the whole student

In addition to the Center's staff training and curriculum development, a brand new physical space for the Center was thoughtfully designed with the assistance of an architect who specializes in instructional spaces. The 1,000-square-foot inviting Center features numerous one-to-one tutoring spaces, individual testing rooms, areas for collaborative work and a meeting area.

The work of the Center is deeply connected to the School's Augustinian mission. Students learn to look inward and understand their learning profile. They experience care and encouragement as they take on challenges. They pursue truth with the knowledge that they are not alone on the journey. These habits shape not only how they learn, but also who they are becoming.

"Success at Austin Prep is not a single moment. It is a formation of the heart and the mind," said Head of School James Hickey, Ph.D. "The Center for Integrated Learning plays an important role in that formation, helping students develop the confidence to present, the resilience to persist, and the kindness to serve."

"When students recognize their strengths and receive the right guidance, they discover that persistence matters more than perfection," Brogan added. "We want each student to know that each of them has something meaningful to contribute."

On January 30th, our community suffered a tremendous loss. Gloucester, MA based Fishing Vessel, Lily Jean, went down to the sea, along with her seven-member crew. Gloucester, proudly recognized as America's Oldest Seaport, has served as a cornerstone of the fishing industry for more than four centuries. Those who work these waters demonstrate unwavering courage and commitment, undertaking significant risks to provide for their families and ours. In the wake of this tragic loss, the Community has responded with remarkable generosity and solidarity. As a result, the GFCPF established the Lily Jean Fund. **All proceeds will directly benefit the families of the lost crew members.** Please consider donating at [fvlilyjeanfund.org](http://fvlilyjeanfund.org) or at any Cape Ann Savings Bank or BankGloucester branch location and help us spread the word by sharing this message. Our hearts go out to the family members of the Lily Jean. Please know that our community is here for you.



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President  
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