



# *Juntos* together

Spring 2010

The quarterly newsletter  
of KIPP Academy Lynn

## From Executive Director Josh Zoia

Friends,  
It is with excitement that I introduce our new quarterly newsletter. We decided on the name *Juntos*, which means “together” in Spanish. The name represents our multicultural KAL family, which includes: kids, parents, teachers, staff, donors, volunteers, and friends. Please let us know if you have any suggestions; we want to keep you informed and inspired!



Executive Director Josh Zoia  
with 8th Grade Students

As I look back on the past few months, it seems amazing to me all that has happened to propel us towards a very exciting future, one that has been made possible with your help, the hard work of our kids and teachers, and our community. Here's a quick recap:

### **December: Charter Amendment Approved**

Will allow KAL to expand to 750 students in grades 5 – 12, beginning with the first 9th grade class in 2011.

### **January: New Education Reform Bill Passed**

Doubled MA allowance for charter schools, increasing the cap from 9% to 18% in the lowest performing districts. This positions KAL for growth and future expansion not only in Lynn, but into greater Boston.

### **February: Purchase and Sale Agreement Signed for Land in Lynn Highlands**

Will be the site of our new Middle and High School Campus, slated to open in fall 2012.

### **March: MIT Study published on KIPP Academy Lynn**

Analyzed KAL students over the past five years. Helped dispel the myth that KAL “skims” the best students, and highlighted the gains made by KAL students.

### **April: KAL in the National and Local News**

We were featured in *TIME Magazine*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Lynn Item*, and *The North Shore Connector*.

### **May: First Annual Drama Club Production**

KAL students performed “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” and received rave reviews!

Even amidst all the excitement, our KIPPsters are focused and working hard. MCAS and MAP testing began in March and will conclude for all grades in May. Out of 352 kids, 250 earned school trips and they will be on the road in June. As we close out the school year, I am thankful that together, we have taken one more step to ensuring that our kids are successfully “climbing the mountain to and through college”.

With appreciation,

Josh

## Calendar of Events

### **Every Friday until June 11**

Songfest, 1:30pm—2:30pm  
Open to everyone—come join us  
for song, dance, and inspiration!

### **May 16—21**

7th Grade Trip: NYC

### **June 1—11**

6th Grade Trip: Utah

### **June 2—11**

8th Grade Trip:  
Mid-Atlantic & Southern States

### **June 7—11**

5th Grade Trip:  
Washington, D.C.

### **June 17 (Thursday)**

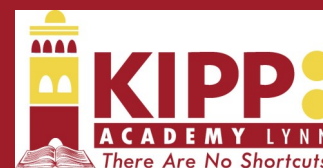
Last Day of School

### **June 19 (Saturday), 11AM**

8th Grade Promotion Ceremony  
St. Mary's High School

### **August 16—September 6**

Mandatory Summer Session,  
8AM—2PM



### **Phone**

781.592.1937

### **Email**

wgrace@kipplynn.org

### **Address**

25 Bessom Street, Lynn MA 01902

### **Website**

www.kipplynn.org

## Feature Article

### MIT Study: “*Who Benefits from KIPP?*”

#### The study

In March 2009, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) performed a study on KIPP Academy Lynn (KAL). The study examined the demographics of KAL students and evaluated their MCAS results over their four years at KAL.

Some researchers have claimed that charter schools are successful because their students have the most involved parents who “self-selected” their children into charter education. This is called the “self-selection bias.” Researchers compared all students who entered the blind KAL lottery across five years. The study looked at students who enrolled at KAL versus those who went to Lynn Public Schools, based on how their names were drawn in the lottery.

Because both groups of students had parents who wanted them to come to KAL, the self-selection bias did not exist. Thus, by comparing the MCAS scores of these two groups, the study could determine what impact attending KAL had on a student’s MCAS scores.

#### The students

The study’s results dispel the myth that KAL hand-selects, or “skims” the highest-performing students. Results showed that, in fact, KAL’s student population is equally if not *more* at risk than the general Lynn Public School population.

#### Compared to their peers in the Lynn Public Schools, KAL students have:

- A higher percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced price meals (87%) than Lynn Public Schools (77%)
- A higher percentage of Latino and African American students than Lynn Public Schools
- The same percentage of students classified as special education (18%)
- A comparable percentage of English Language Learners (17%)

#### The results

For context, a student who improves one standard deviation is equivalent to that student moving from the 25th to the 75th percentile on a test.

- In Math, KAL students improved 1.2 deviations in their 4 years at KAL.
- In English, KAL students improved .5 deviations in 4 years.
- Our English Language Learner students (ELL) had the greatest gains over 4 years, improving 1.8 deviations in Math and 1.5 deviations in ELA.
- SPED students at KAL showed the second-highest gains over 4 years at KAL. They improved 1.8 standard deviations in math, and 1.2 deviations in ELA.

#### MIT Translation:

The MIT researcher who led the study said that he would not have believed the results if he had not conducted the study himself.

#### KAL Translation:

Our kids really kicked butt 😊

**Results of the MIT study confirm that KAL’s program,**  
based on high expectations, a customized educational program, excellent teachers &  
a strong community of learning...**WORKS**

*There are no short-cuts. There are no excuses.*  
*With your help, we are proving the possible every day.*

## Precious Parker



### NAME & GRADE

Precious Faith Parker, 6th Grade  
(Class of 2016)

*KAL grades are named by the year they will matriculate to college.*

### HOMEROOM

Brown University

*KAL homerooms are named for the graduating college of the homeroom teacher.*

### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Principal's list two times  
Honor roll too many times to remember...

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

JV Basketball, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Tae Kwon Do, Chorus, Talent Show

## Student Profile: Precious Parker

### Precious (Adjective):

Held in great esteem for admirable qualities, especially of an intrinsic nature (*Webster's Dictionary*). There is no better way to describe Precious Parker than the very definition of her name. Her admirable qualities are many, and she gives *everything* she has to *everything* she does. She is one amazing 12 year old.

### How have you changed since coming to KAL?

At my other school, I really didn't have a plan for myself. At KAL, I am introduced to new ideas every day and now I have a plan. I have learned a lot of new things, have met new people, and the teachers care a lot.

### What is your favorite class?

Science, because there are a lot of categories (life science, biology, astronomy) and so many ways you can use them.

### What is your favorite thing about KAL?

The trips! At my old school we only went to the fire station and it was right across the street. Last year I went to Washington, D.C. and this year I am going to Utah. There were kids I went to DC with who I didn't even know during the school year, and we all became really good friends.

### What would you say to someone who is coming to KAL as a 5th grader?

I would say listen and follow the rules; they know what they are talking about. It will be hard, but you won't regret it. It is worth it.

### What do you want to do after you graduate from college?

I want to be a doctor. At first I wanted to be singer but I changed my mind because I want a good education and I want to do something I can do for the rest of my life. I'd like to attend Harvard or another Ivy League school.

### What do you do when you are not at KIPP?

I read Japanese books mostly. They are really cool—you read them backwards and it's all in bubble letters. They are written in English, and at first it was hard for me, but now I read them a lot. I like Japanese culture and animation too.

## Student Work: Winner of Poetry Slam 2010

### "A Wise Man Knows What He Wants"

Ricky DeOleo, 8th Grade

Don't leave. Cus You're my oxygen, without you I won't breathe.  
You're everything I want, need. For you I wear my heart on a short sleeve  
I need your love like the winter needs cold. I'll never lose the grip on the hand that I shall hold.  
You are my school work, between us there is Chemistry. We are independent, no one had to come and set us free.  
Me plus you equals 2, aced my scores in math. If I don't have you how can I even exceed the path? To college.  
My love for you is my one and primer knowledge. She will be my queen, I will be her king.  
Baby, you complete me, you're the feathers to my wing, always and forever, passion and eternity  
If our hearts detach then my heart will bleed internally. I know we fight, World War II style  
I could smell the beauty of your soul like a thousand miles...Away.  
If you are not there I won't stay. If you don't love I won't say. Without you there's no day. There's no "I" between us.  
We won't fight and won't fuzz, from this point you're my lady. The one and only I think about daily.  
Fly into space with my love, but only if maybe...Call up your phone and say "what's happenin' baby?"  
Easter like bunny...Sweeter than Honey...Is the feel of your touch  
I carry pounds of shelves because my love is too much. I made this long for no sensible reason.  
I know in a year we live life through 4 seasons, but what I feel for you is nothing new  
3 simple short words, I love you  
Don't go. How I live my life without you? I just don't know.

## Donor Profile: Joel Abramson

Philanthropy is not new to Joel Abramson and his wife Mary. They have been generous supporters of many organizations in the local community for many years. A Lynn native and successful entrepreneur, Joel understands what it takes to build and sustain a business. For this reason, Joel is not only a financial contributor to KAL, but also a huge advocate for KAL in the community. He has introduced us to many people including donors, politicians, business owners, and volunteers. He is a 'connector', a generous philanthropist, a business consultant, and an invaluable friend to KAL.

### What inspired you to become part of the KAL family?

I grew up in Lynn and I know what an important role education plays in giving our kids the tools they need to succeed. I believe education is key to solving all problems, from racial strife to financial issues. I wanted to do whatever I could to help the kids from my hometown access the resources that kids from affluent communities have.

### How did you first find out about KAL?

My wife Mary (who heard about KAL through one of *her* friends), began donating gift baskets to KAL families during the holidays through her "Basket Babes" charity. Mary told me about the school, and I called Josh Zoia and asked for a tour to learn more.

### When you first walked into KAL, what was your first impression?

I could not believe how polite, organized, and positive all the kids were, and how clean the school was. The kids were all focused and engaged, and even opened the door for me! The way they were being taught was very different from when I was in school, and I could see it was working.

### What do you tell people that you think should become involved with KAL?

First we talk about issues and problems with public school education and how critical it is to educate youth because they are our future leaders. Then we talk about the demographics of the kids, the challenges they are facing, and finally what they accomplish in spite of these challenges. Then I invite them to come and see it for themselves and make their own decision . . . and they do!

### What makes KAL different from other causes you support?

It's all about kids. There are tangible results that you can see, feel, and touch by going to school on a regular basis. You see the kids when they enter in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and the transformation when they leave in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. They are really going on to high school and then on to college. You know you are helping kids change their lives – and have a lasting impact. Not just for one kid in one family –but for generations.

## Joel Abramson



Joel Abramson with KAL 6th graders  
Abigail Mariano and Jassy Kim

**NAME:** Joel Abramson

**HOMETOWN:** Swampscott, MA

**YEAR HE BECAME INVOLVED WITH KAL**  
2007

### PROFESSION

Entrepreneur  
Flagship Travel, J&J Sales and Marketing, and Sundancer's Restaurant in Cape Cod

## Letter from a KIPP Student

Dear KIPP,

I am eternally grateful for all you have done for me and all you continue to do. I appreciate the fact that you have all stayed in my life past my time at KIPP. I will always stay in contact! I will also never forget you and all that you did. My memories will never fade with all you have done for me. Thank you for everything!

Sincerely,  
Kelsey Mullen  
class of 2012  
Kelsey Mullen



## Joel Hector



**Joel Hector with KAL  
7th grader Serena High**

**NAME:** Joel Hector

### **TITLE**

Director of Special Education Program, Grades 5-8

**HOMETOWN:** Salem, MA

**YEARS AT KAL:** 5

## Teacher Profile: Joel Hector

Mr. Hector came to KAL in 2005 after teaching special education (SPED) in elementary school in Shrewsbury, MA for seven years. He earned a Masters degree in Special Education from Simmons College in Boston, where he met his wife Laura (also a SPED teacher and the mother of their two daughters Mae, 2 years old, and Louise, 6 weeks.) As Director of SPED, Joel oversees 3 teachers and personally works with students. The department serves over 75 students.

### **How does the KAL SPED program differ from other SPED programs?**

At KAL, there is a high level of program collaboration among all teachers, including those who teach SPED. We also purposely integrate our SPED students as much as possible into mainstream classrooms. In other programs, SPED students and teachers are often isolated, and the SPED teachers are solely responsible for their students' success. Our overall approach is to support our SPED students both in the classroom and in outside instruction and activities. That comes directly from the leadership of the school. Josh has always said we are *all* responsible for our kids' success together- and it has worked.

### **What has been your most rewarding KAL experience?**

Seeing some of our SPED students be accepted into, and earn scholarships to private and independent high schools when they leave KAL. When they walk in the door in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, often times their parents believe they may not even make it through middle school, let alone high school and college. We have proven that they can excel if given the opportunity. The researchers from MIT [see story, p.2] said they were amazed at the range of achievement, but would not have believed it if they didn't see it for themselves. That speaks to the collaborative process and the work of the kids and all of our teachers.

## Event Recap

### **First annual spring play**

Directed by SPED teacher and drama lover Elizabeth Macari, "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" was performed on May 1st to a packed house of friends, parents, faculty and staff. Twenty-eight 5th and 6th grade students were involved. Everyone was fully entertained, and people are still talking about it! Requests for our next play are already filtering in!

### **7th Grade Science Fair**

Led by 7th Grade science teacher Jennifer Startek, eighty-four seventh grade students competed in the KAL science fair this year with great results. Ten of the 34 projects qualified for the Regional Science Fair, which took place at UMass Lowell on May 8th. KAL 7th grader Sean Keith won a first place award at the regional competition, and will compete in the state fair in June.



**Some of the cast of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"**



**7th and 8th Grade Boys Team**

### **KAL Sports Continue to Lead**

Both the varsity boys and the varsity girls basketball teams dominated on the court this season. The boys team won the Charter School Cup Invitational Tournament and the girls team won both the MA Charter School Basketball League tournament and the Charter School Cup. Go KAL Basketball!

### **Special Guest Visits KAL**

Gubernatorial candidate and long time Swampscott resident Charlie Baker visited KAL in April to meet the kids, learn more about the school, and reinforce his belief in educational reform – touting the amazing results of KAL students.



KIPP Academy Lynn  
25 Bessom Street  
Lynn, MA 01902

