



Juntos together

Spring/Summer 2011

*The quarterly newsletter
of KIPP Academy Lynn*

From Executive Director Josh Zoia

Team and Family,

It is hard to believe that spring is really here – both because of the tough New England winter we all just endured, and because it means we are already nearing the end of another KAL school year. Our kids and families will soon be one year closer to going to and through college and living their future lives filled with choices that a college education offers.



Zoia with two of his Tae Kwon Do students

I know we all look to the future to inspire us, patiently (or impatiently) awaiting the results of our hard work. However, this job has taught me to enjoy the climb, to pause, and take time to savor the small victories each step of the way. With so much focus on the new high school, hiring additional staff, and our future growth plans throughout Massachusetts, I thought it would be a good idea in this edition of *Juntos* to stand still and recognize the present. Celebrate the routines, struggles & successes that happen *every* day in *every* moment at KAL.

I hope our compilation of some of what happens in a day in the life of the 371 students, 200 families, 34 teachers and 17 staff members currently residing at 25 Bessom street in Lynn – brings you joy- today.

With respect and appreciation,

Josh

Upcoming Events

Fridays, 1:30pm—2:30pm: Songfest

Open to everyone, no appointment needed.
Join us for song, dance, & inspiration!

May 1: Walk for Hunger

Forty KIPPsters will be selected to participate in the Walk For Hunger on Sunday, May 1st. Kids will submit essays detailing why they want to walk & offering a creative solution to end hunger. If you would like to volunteer to chaperone, email Lauren Leonardo at lleonardo@kipplynn.org.

June 6—17: End of Year Trips

For those who earn them (based on yearlong pay-check averages), each grade will embark upon an end-of-year trip. Trips last anywhere from 4 days to 2 weeks. KIPPsters will visit the following locations:

5th Grade: Washington DC

6th Grade: Utah

7th Grade: New York City

8th Grade: Multi-State (East Coast)

June 23: Last Day of School

June 25: 8th Grade Promotion Ceremony

This year's promotion ceremony will be particularly exciting, as many of the graduating 8th graders will be part of the founding 9th grade class of the new KAL Collegiate High School.

July 5—July 28: Rites of Passage

Rites of Passage is a manhood and womanhood training program designed to help KIPPsters become responsible young adults.

August 15—September 2: Summer School



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A Day in the Life at KIPP

Although no day at KIPP is the same, *every* day at KIPP is filled with creativity and active learning, both inside and outside the classroom. On any given day, here is what you might see:

7:00AM Breakfast and Advisory Time

When you walk into the school building this morning, you might see The Penguins gathered in the corner of the cafeteria, or The Polar Bears meeting in a vacant classroom. These are not groups of zoo animals – rather, they are the team names of different advisory groups at KIPP, small groups of kids led by KIPP teachers & designed to act as a “second family” at school. Advisory groups meet at least twice a week, and do everything from sharing their highs and lows with each other to discussing school culture to engaging in campus-wide cleanups to hosting bake sales for charity. Each student has the same advisor for his or her entire career at KIPP.

8:00AM—The “Symbiosis Talk Show”

The sixth graders in Ms. Nakajima’s science class aren’t watching TV this morning. But if they were, and they tuned in to Oprah or Dr. Phil, chances are good they might hear a discussion or two about relationships – which ones are healthy? Which are not? Today, 6th graders at KIPP are answering these very questions by playing *Symbiosis Talk Show*. Ms. Nakajima presents the class with different pairs of “guests” who come on the show describing their relationships (hint: two of the guests are a dog and a tick.) As a “studio audience” the kids debate & vote on whether these relationships are examples of healthy mutualism (jellyfish and algae), or unhealthy parasitism (the tick and the dog). When test time arrives, kids won’t have to memorize note cards; they’ll simply remember the *Symbiosis Talk Show*.



Above: A KIPPster shares her poem with a teammate

9:00AM—Poetry Cafe

Walk into the classroom next door, and you’ll encounter a small, civilized buffet of snacks and drinks, with a gaggle of poets quietly reciting lines to themselves & each other. You may think you have stumbled upon a trendy coffee shop (minus the coffee), but you have actually stepped into Ms. Hsu’s 5th grade writing class for “Poetry Café.” KIPPsters gather in small groups to recite their work as their teammates listen and give feedback, all while munching, sipping, and using their “classy restaurant voices.” Each budding poet then performs for the class, and the winner will represent the 5th grade at tomorrow’s school-wide Poetry Slam.

11:00AM—Lunch and Learn with the Community

On some days, lunch is just lunch. But on other days, lunch is a time to learn even *more*, with optional lectures and discussions for KIPPsters who earn the privilege. On one day, you might see a group gathering to hear a talk about Judaism, in preparation for an Interfaith Seder they are attending. Or you may hear a teacher making a presentation to a packed room about Black History Month. Or you may see a doctor, lawyer, or writer speaking about his or her career. Every minute of every day – including lunch time – is an opportunity to learn.



12:00PM—Travel Abroad

Sometimes it is hard to tell whether you are still in a church building in Lynn, or if you have landed in a far-away place like India or South America. Walk into Mr. Saavedra’s 8th grade Social Studies class, and you will be transported as you read first-person travel journals written by KIPPsters putting themselves in the shoes of famous explorers. You might then hear the distant sound of drums as you walk across the hall to see the 6th graders in Ms. McPhail’s class try their hands at African Drumming to kick off a unit on Africa. For these Social Studies teachers, the sky is the limit. As McPhail says, “my curriculum is – literally – the entire world.”



Above Left: A guest speaker gives a career presentation on the medical field.

Above Right: A KIPPster dances with a community member at the Interfaith Seder, hosted by the Anti-Defamation League.

A Day in the Life...continued

2:00PM—7th Grade Science Fair

Twenty four seventh graders in Ms. Startek's room are putting the finishing touches on their science fair projects, which they will bring to the Regional Science Fair at UMass Lowell on April 30th. Of the 36 projects submitted by eighty four seventh graders, ten teams qualified to move on to the regional competition. Topics ranged from the effects of yacht clubs on water quality to the effects of car pollution on the Lynnway to the ways in which optical illusions affect thinking. Said Startek: "At first I wasn't sure about the optical illusion project – it was a little different than your typical science fair topic, but that team made the case for it, and the project ended up being one of the strongest." Just another example of how both initiative and creativity are encouraged at KIPP.

3:00PM—Tutoring Block

"If a teammate needs help, we give. If we need help, we ask." This is just one of a few mottos at KIPP that comes to life every day. For four days a week, every KIPPster has a tutoring block built into the day. You might see an 8th grader getting help with algebra homework, or a 5th grader participating in a reading group tailored specifically to his or her targeted areas of improvement. Volunteers from the community come to offer individual homework help, and even KIPP alumni participate, helping younger kids organize their binders. As part of the *KIPP Through College* program, alumni also receive tutoring & homework support themselves. At KIPP, no one is afraid to ask for, or offer, help.



Left: A student receives individual homework help



Below: An alumna helps a younger KIPPster organize his binder

4:00PM—Electives



Above: Participants in the Knitting elective display the blanket they made

During electives hour, every square foot of the campus is full of KIPPsters writing, dancing, knitting, singing, running, acting, or playing. Walk outside at 4pm and you'll see a parking lot transformed into a basketball court, with KIPPsters hard at work preparing for a tournament in New York after impressive showings at the Charter School Cup. Wander into a classroom and you will see the Girls Step Team perfecting their latest routine which recently won them first place at a step competition in Virginia. Walk down to the cafeteria and you will be transported to a Tae Kwon Do studio, with Executive Director Josh Zoia ("Sense Zoia") leading the way and his students deep in concentration mode, building discipline and strength. Electives offer students the opportunity to express themselves in new ways and build deeper relationships with both teachers & peers.

7:00PM—Adult Education

Our kids may be done with school at 5pm, but the school building is still abuzz with people who want to learn. They are the parents and families of KIPP, and the community members of Lynn, who gather at 25 Bessom Street three nights a week to study topics such as English, computer literacy, and citizenship. Walk into a classroom, and you might see participants huddled behind laptops, sending messages to each other from the new email accounts they just obtained for the first time. Head across the hall and you'll see a Level 1 English class putting on a fashion show where students use the new English vocabulary they learned to describe what their classmates (i.e. the "models") are wearing. Every night our adult KIPPsters continue the tradition of learning embraced every day by our kids.



Above: Adult students in an English Class work together

Louise Kraft



TITLE:

ELL Program Coordinator
5th Grade Writing Teacher

HOMETOWN:

Philadelphia, PA

YEARS AT KAL: 2

Teacher Shout Out

If you follow a week in the life of Louise Kraft, you will most certainly be inspired, and you might need a rest. In just the two short years since she graduated from Cornell with a degree in English and Psychology, Kraft has become whatever her students need her to be, from tutor to teacher to advisor to counselor. In any given week, Kraft will: spend hours of one-on-one and small-group time with non-native English speakers, both inside and outside the classroom; collaborate with teachers from multiple subjects and grade levels to best support ELL students; lead 6 skill-specific book groups; teach 6 class periods of 5th grade writing; lead 2 small-group advisory sessions, and be available by cell phone until 9pm (like all KAL teachers). As if this isn't enough, Kraft is also a Teach for America corps member, earning a Masters in Education at Boston University.

Kraft has taken the lead in building KAL's first formal English Language Learner (ELL) program tailored to serve kids of all levels, from completely non-English speakers to those who need minor supplemental support. (In the past, before KAL

reached full capacity, ELL students received support from the Special Education team.) Kraft cares about every aspect of her students' development, from language to self-esteem. She is a quiet, warm, and poised leader, and her students are clearly at ease in her presence, motivated to do whatever it takes to overcome any language barriers they may face.

What do you like about working at KIPP? I love seeing how much progress our kids can make in such a short time. We see so many success stories here, and I think that's because our kids work *so hard*, and because the teachers are willing to put *all* of themselves into helping kids make up for the time they lost before KIPP. It's a climate of collaboration here — every adult is on the same page & wants the same for our kids.

How do you keep kids from getting discouraged? For any kid who enters KIPP behind grade-level, but especially for English Language Learners, there is huge potential for frustration and learned helplessness. A big part of the ELL program is helping the kids build confidence and reduce anxiety. We give them a lot of positive reinforcement and detailed progress tracking, so they feel encouraged when they make even slight progress. I also do a lot of previewing; I'll meet with the ELL kids first thing in the morning and give them a preview of the topics and vocabulary they will be learning in each class that day. That way, when they enter the classroom for the real lesson, they already know the basics. It increases their class participation and confidence.

Are there any success stories you can share? Last year, I had a 5th grader who didn't speak or write a word of English. At first, she and I had to communicate with gestures, because I don't speak Spanish. For almost all of last year, I worked with her individually for at least three class periods a day, sometimes more. Now she is in 6th grade and I'm so proud of her — she is working independently, passing all of her classes, and having social conversations with friends. It's definitely worth it when I see how confident she has become, and how much progress she has made. We had another 5th grader last year who came in reading at a 2nd grade level and now, as a 6th grader, she is reading at an 8th grade level. She improved *six* grade levels in less than two years. That's a team effort.

In this newsletter you see snapshots of the **passion, creativity** and **hard work** our kids, families, teachers, donors, and friends display every day.

The path *to and through* college is a long one, and our KIPPsters can't do it without your support.

To make a donation, visit www.kipplynn.org/donate.

Donor Shout Out

Eric and Sarah Svenson *walk the walk*, both *with* us and *for* us. From the time they first visited KAL, they became engaged with our KIPPsters, and continue to do so on so many levels. Not only are they generous financial donors, but they have chaperoned field trips, mentored alumni, donated Celtics tickets for KIPPsters who earned it, and even introduced their family to us. Always smiling, willing to do whatever they can, and truly genuine in their commitment to KIPP - Eric & Sarah epitomize our motto: **Work Hard. Be Nice.**

Eric & Sarah Svenson



HOMETOWN:
Weston, MA

FAMILY:
Two daughters: Alida (4),
and Juliette (2)

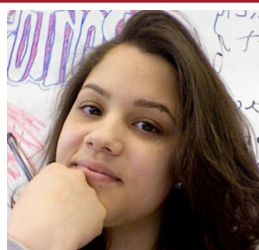
**INVOLVED AT KAL
SINCE: 2010**

What was your first impression when you visited the school? We were blown away by the discipline of the kids. They were all so energized & engaged. Though the facility was a compilation of trailers & small older buildings (unimpressive physically), the place felt very warm and full of positive energy. All of that energy was coming from the kids & teachers. We were also awestruck by the confidence of the students, which is something that continues to really impress us.

What inspired you to get involved? When we visited the school, we felt an immediate and strong connection. We saw a group of students really ready to learn and an amazing group of teachers excited about teaching. Once we heard the statistics and looked at the data, it was clear that KIPP is *working* and that there are so many more kids who need to have access to it. It was impossible not to ask, "What can we do to help?" Now we're just excited to continue building our relationship with KIPP, finding ways we can help, and sharing our experience with those willing to listen.

Why did you invest in KIPP? The students. It starts with the students. These kids have a desire to learn and a passion to improve themselves. It takes great teachers and administrators to tap into that part of them, but it is in there for each and every student. We see it in them, and we want to do whatever we can to help foster it. These are brilliant future leaders. There will be many KIPP faces on the cover of *Time Magazine* one day.

Yaritza Grullon



GRADE & SCHOOL:
Junior, Salem High School

CAREER INTERESTS:
Psychology, Criminology,
Social Work

**EXTRACURRICULAR
INTERESTS: Softball**

Student Shout Out

With a full course load at Salem High School, a part-time job as a manager at a fast food restaurant, college application season approaching, and a few college credits already under her belt, Yaritza Grullon knows what it means to work hard. She is self-reflective, mature beyond her years, and she will be the first to tell you her path wasn't always a smooth one—but she is a true example of what it means to never give up. She wants to pursue social work or psychology, and her goals are crystal clear: to help others the way the teachers and counselors at KIPP helped *her*.

How do you think you have changed since you first came to KIPP as a 5th grader? I've changed a lot since I first came to KIPP. I got in trouble a lot my first few years, but no matter what, my teachers were *always* there for me. They helped me realize that I didn't need to dwell on bad decisions I made in the past. They encouraged me and helped me move on and look to the future. By the time I was in 8th grade, I had built some really close relationships with my teachers and advisors. I saw how much they cared about my education and how much they pushed me to succeed. Now I'm more determined and persistent in everything I do. KIPP showed me that hard work *does* pay off.

Is there anything you learned at KIPP that you still use today in your everyday life? Definitely. I remember all of the fun songs we learned in class. I still use those songs sometimes when I'm working on math problems. I also always use PETSys [*Please, Excuse me, Thank You, Sorry, You're Welcome*]. Whenever I take a bus or interact with people in public, I say "Good Morning" and look them in the eye. KIPP taught me that, and now it's just a habit. It's a great skill to have.

What would you tell someone who is a new 5th grader at KIPP? I'd tell them there's definitely going to be ups and downs, but stick through it. At the end of the day it's all worth it.



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