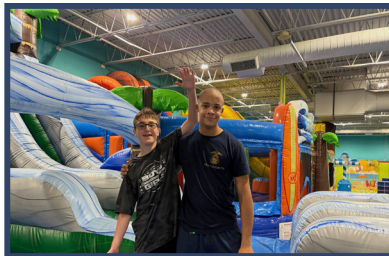




Gaining Momentum

■ Page 2: Bikes, skateboards, scooters, Valley Elementary students are wild for wheels!



Trying New Things

■ Page 3: From field trips to clubs, this year saw lots of new offerings at the Transitional Programming at Valley Middle/High School.



Hitting the Road

■ Page 6: 30 Individuals in Valley's Adult Services programs and three students recently traveled to San Antonio, TX to see the sites and visit lots of attractions.

Let the Good Times Roll



DR. ANTHONY J. BENT, EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONSULTANT; DR. CHRIS A. SCOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE; LINDA A. BALFOUR, ACADEMY FACILITATOR, OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING, VALLEY COLLABORATIVE

Dear Students, Staff, and Families:

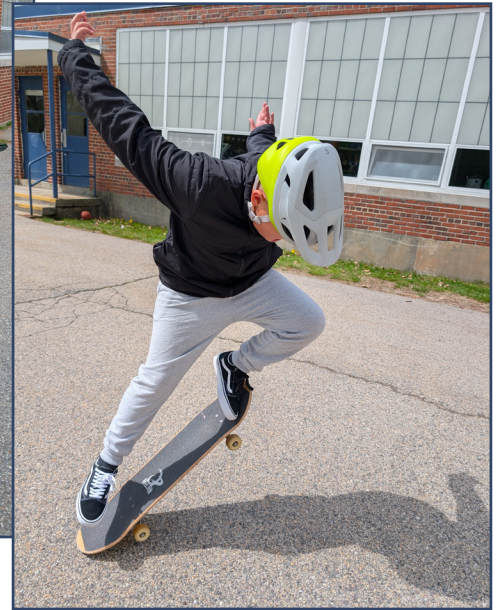
As we close out another successful school year at Valley Collaborative, it is the perfect time to reflect on all that our students, staff, and families have accomplished together. This year has been filled with growth, resilience, learning, laughter, and countless moments that remind us why Valley is such a special place. Our students and DDS clients have continued to inspire us every day with their determination, creativity, and willingness to embrace new opportunities. From achievements in the classroom to social and emotional growth, we have watched our students and DDS clients thrive in

ways both big and small. None of this would be possible without the unwavering dedication of our incredible staff and the continued partnership and support from our families.

As we turn the page into summer school, the excitement continues. This summer promises to be filled with adventure, exploration, and hands-on learning experiences for our students and DDS clients. They will have opportunities to visit beautiful state parks, explore mountains and hiking trails, spend time on farms, and engage in enriching community-based activities that bring learning to life beyond the classroom walls.

Elementary School: Wheel's Up!

With the arrival of warmer weather, our students have been making the most of the sunshine. During recess, gym class, and any chance they can, students get outside to ride bikes, scooters, and skateboards. They are full of smiles and laughter while developing balance, coordination, and confidence in a fun and engaging way. It is especially exciting when a student learns to ride without training wheels for the first time. A few students have hit this milestone already this year! Whether cruising around, practicing new skills, or enjoying the fresh air with peers, it's clear that the good times are rolling at Valley Collaborative Elementary School!



ABOVE: THIRD GRADER MATT TOBIN TAKES A SPIN OUTSIDE VALLEY ELEMENTARY; RIGHT: BRIAN BOLCOME, FIFTH GRADE, SHOWS OFF HIS SKATEBOARD SKILLS.

Appreciating Valley Elementary Staff

During the first week of May, we celebrated Staff Appreciation Week with the generous support of our Parent Advisory Group. Throughout the week, staff enjoyed a variety of sweets, treats, and thoughtful gestures of appreciation.

One particularly meaningful moment came on May 4th, when parent Cassie Dzerkacz surprised our staff with an incredible display of over 100 homemade, professional-quality cupcakes. Along with her sweet contribution, Cassie shared a powerful and heartfelt story.

Her son, Jimmy, had just begun attending Valley the week before. Cassie described his first week as the first full week of school he has attended since October—without disruptions, crisis calls, or the need for her to support his online-learning at home. For the first time in months, she found space to focus on her own well-being, returning to the gym and engaging

in her passion for baking. In gratitude, she wanted to give back to the staff who made that possible by sharing her talent with us.

Cassie also shared how she discovered Valley. Her sister-in-law, Katie Novak of Novak Educational Consulting, visited our school to present during a professional development day. After seeing our classrooms, meeting staff, and learning about our programming, Katie immediately encouraged Cassie to consider Valley for Jimmy. Following a referral from the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District and a tour of our program, Jimmy quickly became a part of our school community.

Today, Jimmy is a valued Valley student, and Cassie is a valued member of our parent community. We are grateful for their trust—and for the reminder of the meaningful impact our work has on students and families every day.



PARENT CASSIE DZERKACZ RECENTLY SURPRISED VALLEY ELEMENTARY STAFF WITH AN INCREDIBLE DISPLAY OF OVER 100 HOMEMADE, PROFESSIONAL-QUALITY CUPCAKES.

Transitional Programming at Valley Middle/High School: We're On a Roll

This year saw the addition of a number of initiatives at Valley Transitional Middle/High School. When we asked staff to talk about what they thought went well this past year, they had lots to say, but everyone agreed, when it comes to helping our students grow, we're on a roll!

Meaghan Norris, Transitional High School Teacher: new clubs

"This year we offered a variety of clubs for students to explore their interests and develop their leisure skills. Students have enjoyed opportunities to try something new such as craft, multi-media, and knitting clubs and have had meaningful discussions in the book club. The boy's and girl's groups have also been great ways for students to make connections with peers along with the opportunity to talk about some of the common issues they face as teens and young adults. My students have been very engaged in and motivated to participate in the clubs."

Kathryn Nutile, Physical Therapist: expanded swimming program

"Swimming moved to The Beede Center this year and that has been a hugely successful transition. They have been so accommodating and offer a consistent schedule for us. We have had five different rotations of classes go through for swimming and all of the students have enjoyed the opportunity to do something they don't often get to do, especially through the long winter months. It has been a fun way to get students to participate in aerobic exercise and strength training."

Taylor Pitari, Special Education Assistant: field trips

"The field trips have been very successful this year. Students have shown a lot of growth in the way they use and access the community to make purchases. Watching a student who was a bit shy be able to talk to community helpers independently now and seeing students master the skill of budgeting for their lunch has been pretty awesome."

Joanna Bond, Occupational Therapist: expanded job opportunities

"This year we changed up the job structure of the Bistro to expand the job opportunities for students and promote independence with job skills. With an OT on site we have been able to analyze and adapt job tasks for workers at all levels. We've also been collaborating with multi-media to create visual lunch menus as well as visuals for the students to help with their executive function on the job. This year a few of our students obtained internships at the Ninety-Nine Restaurant, where they transferred the skills they learned from working in the Bistro into real world skills and community-based employment."



STUDENTS NORA BAILEY, BRITTANY DORNEY, AND AIDEN RUSSELL POSE IN FRONT OF BOSTON HARBOR ALONGSIDE TEACHER LESLIE AYERS AFTER A SUCCESSFUL TRAVEL TRAINING SESSION ON THE MBTA.

Aiden Russell, Student: new job sites

"Village Food Hub is a new job site this year. I like working there because it feels good to package food for people. It feels good to have a purpose and food is important. People need food."

Hannah Barry, Special Education Assistant: new curriculum

"The reading and math curriculum has been a game changer for my students. In iReady they can see where they're at and the progress they are making. The immediate feedback is a huge motivator for them to see their scores go up."

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Alternative Programming at Valley Middle/High School: Moving Up, Moving On

The end of the school year is a time of transition as students prepare for what's next.

At Valley Alternative Middle/High School, eight middle schoolers will be moving up to high school, while 17 graduates are headed off to post-secondary opportunities.

Elijah Tong-Rousseau is one of the incoming freshmen. He admits that he was feeling a little nervous about the transition. Then he had a chance to visit the high school. "Now I'm not that nervous," says Elijah. He says he's excited to attend a bigger school where students have more freedom and more access to technology. "The math class looked nice," says Elijah, noting that he's especially looking forward to taking algebra.

Assistant Principal Kathleen Berry says that she couldn't feel more proud of Elijah. "Since he came here in sixth grade he's made incredible progress and is increasingly independent." At the start of the school year, Elijah shared with Kathleen that he wanted to attend the Alternative High School. "He had that goal and he's crushing it," says Kathleen.

While Elijah hasn't decided upon an academic focus vs. a vocational one, for graduating senior Tyler Marchand, the choice was clear since he arrived at Valley two years ago. "I've always been interested in working with my hands," says Tyler, who took advantage of Valley's extensive vocational programming to learn new skills, including furniture restoration in the Wood Shop.

"Tyler is one of our all-star vocational students," says Brittney Hynes, Lead Social Worker at the Alternative High School. "He really

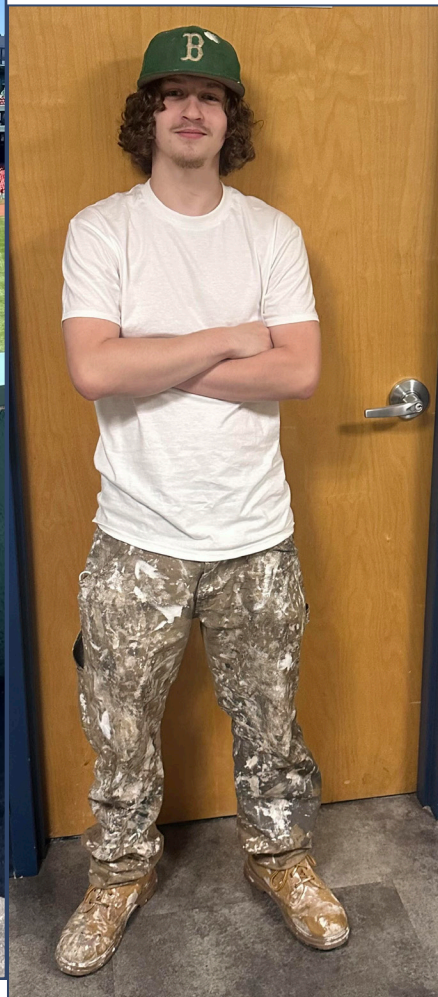
trying different things."

When a painting company approached Valley about the opportunity for an outside internship, Principal Nick LeClair says that Tyler was the obvious choice. "Since the moment we met him, Tyler has been driven to find success after graduation. He has a terrific work ethic, an easy going personality, and a talent for hands-on-projects." Concludes Nick: We know Tyler will be successful because he is willing to learn,

and has the ability to make genuine connections with those around him. We are very proud of the work he put in over his time with the Alternative High School."

Now that his time at Valley is at an end, Tyler plans to keep working for Heron Painting on interior and exterior projects. "Even though the work gets messy sometimes, I really like it," says Tyler.

Congratulations to all Valley students who are moving up or moving on. We're proud of you!



LEFT: EIGHTH GRADER ELIJAH TONG-ROUSSEAU AT FENWAY. HE'LL BE MOVING ON TO VALLEY ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL NEXT YEAR; RIGHT: TYLER MARCHAND IS GRADUATING THIS YEAR AND ALREADY HAS A JOB LINED UP WITH A LOCAL PAINTING CONTRACTOR.

Let the Good Times Roll

**continued from cover*

These experiences create lasting memories while helping students and DDS clients build confidence, independence, and connections with the world around them.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to every member of Valley Collaborative’s Board of Directors for their continued dedication, leadership, and support throughout the year. In particular, I would like to recognize Board Chair, Dr. Jay Lang, for his steadfast guidance, unwavering support, and deep commitment to the Valley community and its mission.

This year also marks an important transition for two highly respected members of the Valley Board of Directors. We extend our sincere gratitude to Dr. Michael Flanagan and Ms. Brenda Theriault-Reagan as they retire from the Valley Collaborative Board of Directors. Their years of dedicated service, thoughtful leadership, and commitment to our mission have played a significant role in shaping and strengthening our organization. Their impact on our students, DDS clients, staff, and families will be lasting, and their

presence will be deeply missed. We thank them for all they have contributed to Valley and wish them continued happiness and success in their retirement.

I want to personally thank every member of the Valley community for the support you have shown throughout the year. Your commitment, trust, and partnership are what make our programs so successful. Whether you are a staff member who goes above and beyond each day or a family member who supports our mission at home, please know how deeply appreciated you are.

As we head into summer, I hope everyone finds time to relax, recharge, and enjoy the many adventures ahead.

Let the good times roll!

My best to you,



Chris A. Scott, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Valley Collaborative

We’re on a Roll!

**continued from page 3*

Lori Escolas, Transitional High School Teacher: foundational skills

“This year in the School and Vocational Training classroom we started using NextUp Transition Curriculum with great success. The lessons have tremendously benefited our students by providing foundational skills such as employability, self-management, job searching, safety, self-advocacy, interviewing, financial literacy, and independent living. The content is highly relevant, with topics such as ‘Buying Your First Car’ and ‘Prepar-

ing to Leave High School,’ and they are motivated to participate in the lessons because it meets them where they are currently in life.”

Kristen Davidson, Speech Language Pathologist: training for life

“In the School-to-Work class we have been practicing taking the bus and train and the students have done very well with navigating the different environments, meeting the social/behavioral expectations of the community, and transitioning from one place to another on time.”

Special thanks to the generous donors who support our Student/Adult Services Activity Fund:

- \$5,000.00 - Rockland Trust Bank
- \$500.00 - Fritz Deguglielmo, LLC
- \$500.00 - Jonathan and Celeste Marston
- \$300.00 - Sun Specialties INC.
- \$300.00 - Barrow Lent, LLP
- \$100.00 - J.P. O’Connor Hardware Inc.
- \$100.00 - Anthony J. Bent
- \$100.00 - Pro Electrical Services Inc.

- In Kind Donations:
Altitude Merrimack, NH 60-minute Pass (4)
Market Basket \$50.00 Gift Card



TRANSITIONAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LUKE MURPHY PREPARES PIZZA WHILE WORKING IN THE BISTRO.

Adult Services Annual Trip, 2026 Destination: San Antonio, Texas

For the last 13 years Valley has led a trip for students and adults with the goal of providing them with an opportunity to see different parts of the country, and world! This year the group traveled to San Antonio, Texas for a week in the sun. With the lore of the trip growing year over year, this version saw Valley support the largest number of individuals ever with 30 adults making the journey, along with an additional three students. Joe Venskus and Lia Metrakas have been spearheading the annual trip for over a decade, providing students and individuals with the opportunity to experience the rich history different places can offer, all while lending daily support to ensure everyone has the best time possible.

Leading a trip with a combination of 30 individuals and 3 students is no small task. Joe and Lia rely on the support from a number of other staff who volunteer to go on the trip to ensure our individuals are provided safety and support. All this while being given the chance to experience different cultures and historical landmarks. When asked where he finds passion to run this annual trip, Joe Venskus responded:

“I think for me it has been about giving an experience to the individuals and students to empower or show them what they are capable of. Often times, the individuals and students we support daily are looked upon differently just because they have a disability. They have dreams, goals and wants just like the rest of us. We take the lessons we teach them every day in our program from life skills, budgeting skills, having conversations, and travel training and apply



MIKE KOCZAN, JOE SEPE, KYLE COSTAIN, MARCUS MENGISTAB AND LUCAS COSTAIN AT THE SAN ANTONIO ZOO, A HIGHLIGHT OF THIS YEAR'S ADULT SERVICES TRIP.

them all during the trip. We have often received many compliments on how our individuals behave, how nice and considerate they are etc. It is truly awesome and inspiring to watch how over the course of a week these students and individuals become a family and have experienced life to its fullest. To support that and be a part of a team of professionals that want to empower our students and individuals find their way is a blessing.”

On this year's trip to San Antonio, the group had a full schedule of tours and events. (See list at right.) Beyond these planned activities, the group also had plenty of time to shop for souvenirs and enjoy the local, and legendary, San Antonio cuisine. Apparently, the brisket is excellent!

*continued on next page

2026 Valley School Trip to San Antonio Tours and Events

Tour of the Alamo

San Antonio Zoo

San Antonio Missions minor league baseball game

River cruise

Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch and Cavern tour

Ripley's Believe it or Not Museum

Annual Trip: San Antonio, Texas

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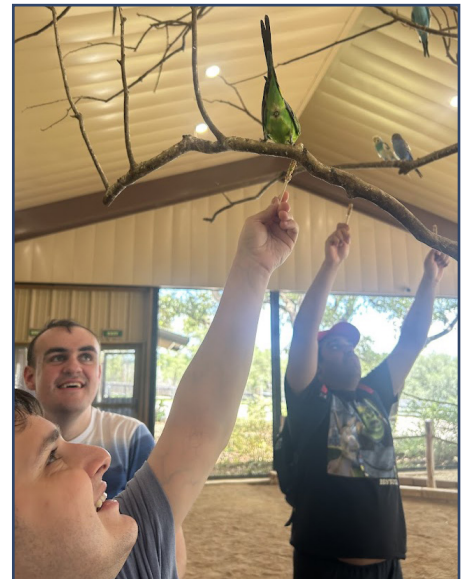
This year’s trip to San Antonio earned rave reviews from the Valley travelers. Here’s a sample:

Ken Bonnell, 7th trip: “I like getting to explore new places and meet new people. It feels nice to get to connect with staff and my peers and to connect more deeply outside of the worksites we usually go to.”

Matt Booth, 1st trip: “The trip was awesome. It makes me want to go on more trips and explore how the food is in other places and to explore the whole wide world.”

Jess Sherman, 1st trip: “I really liked the new scenery around me. We had such a good time in San Antonio and going to all the different places. I think my favorite part of the trip was going to the zoo and a cave walk.”

Melaina Chaput, 7th trip: “I love going on all the trips because they are fun and it’s great to go on vacation. It was my first time learning all about the Alamo and San Antonio and I would love to go back!”



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JAYSON PRESTIA AND ARUN MAUDGAL AT THE SAN ANTONIO ZOO; JAYSON PRESTIA, ANDREW BLAIS AND ARUN MAUDGAL FEEDING THE BIRDS; SHARIFAH NAMIGADDE, MATT MURGO, KEN BONNELL, MELAINA CHAPUT AND ALYSSA LAWLER VISIT THE ALAMO; MIKE KOCZAN NEARLY LOSING HIS HEAD AT THE ZOO; MATT BOOTH ABOUT TO ENJOY SOME BBQ AT THE MIS-SIONS GAME.

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