

**Massachusetts  
Organization of  
Educational  
Collaboratives**



Joanne Haley Sullivan,  
Executive Director

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Media Contact: Alia Spring

Phone: 617-993-0003

Email: [alia@jgpr.net](mailto:alia@jgpr.net)

**The Education Cooperative Holds  
Successful St. Patrick's Day Luncheon at  
Norwood Council on Aging**



*From left: Norwood COA staff member Christine Behn serving food with students Kyle Bradley, Jonathan Boenig and Aleksander Greenwald. (Photo Courtesy The Education Cooperative)*

WALPOLE — The Education Cooperative (TEC), a member of the [Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives](#) (MOEC), is pleased to announce that TEC held a successful Saint Patrick's Day luncheon at the Norwood Council on Aging last week.

On March 18, more than 200 seniors gathered to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day and dine on Irish cuisine. The food was prepared by 11 students from TEC Phoenix Academy's culinary arts program. They were directed by Chef Andrew Bevilacqua and Culinary Aide Diane Holloway-Carnes, who oversee the commercial-grade kitchen at the COA, and their instructors.

The three-course meal included corned beef, cabbage, potatoes, and a specially prepared green and gold parfait dessert.

Along with the food, attendees enjoyed live Irish music by the Black Velvet Band.

TEC has partnered with the Norwood Council on Aging since 2004 to provide students with unique culinary experiences, including serving seniors on holidays and throughout the year.

The event could not be held in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. TEC students prepared 200 boxed lunches for pick-up or delivery. The last in-person Saint Patrick's Day luncheon was on March 10, 2020, one day before schools and businesses were shut down.

"Thank you to all the students who worked hard to make this event such a success with their delicious creations. We all had a great time celebrating Saint Patrick's Day and the attendees were so happy to have students serving them in-person again," COA Executive Director Kerri McCarthy said.

"With restrictions around the pandemic lifting, we are excited to be shifting away from remote learning and offering our students hands-on opportunities in the culinary industry," TEC Executive Director Liz McGonagle said. "This Saint Patrick's Day luncheon provided students with an authentic, hands-on vocational experience through which they developed skills needed to prepare and serve a hot lunch to hundreds of people."

Through experiences like this, students are able to practice teamwork, work ethic, hospitality, and the technical abilities required for working in a professional kitchen. They also learn important skills that allow them to acquire certifications, including the OSHA certification for General Industry and Food Handling Allergen Awareness, the state Allergen Awareness Certificate, and a ServSafe Licensure, and provide a pathway to future employment.

"Events like these are so special because not only are we able to connect with the community, but we also learn skills that are crucial for our career paths," said student Anthony Viau.

TEC's Phoenix Academy also will hold luncheons in celebration of Thanksgiving and Christmas, Easter, on Red Sox Opening Day and for a Kick-Off to Summer.

Along with these special events, culinary students help serve seniors at the COA weekly. Boxed lunches were provided during the height of the pandemic. In-person

serving resumed in December 2021.

To learn more about collaboratives with similar learning programs in your region, please visit MOEC's website [here](#).

## About The Education Cooperative

[TEC](#) provides an engaging and supportive learning environment for students with complex learning needs. Talented, experienced and caring educators work as an integrated team to empower students to embrace their dreams and goals, take control of their lives, and be actively involved in their own learning process in order to reach their full potential.

At [TEC Phoenix Academy](#), experienced, certified classroom teachers and special educators provide students in Grades 7-12 with an academic curriculum aligned with the Curriculum Frameworks. The Academy offers vocational training in culinary arts, which are supported by community involvement opportunities. Phoenix Academy's sending communities are Walpole, Westwood, Boston, Framingham, Randolph, Sharon, Franklin, Dover-Sherborn, Ashland, Canton, Norton, Medway, Norwood, Falmouth, Waltham Wellesley, Milton, Attleboro and Millis.

## About Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives

[MOEC](#) represents the Commonwealth's 25 educational collaboratives. MOEC serves as the voice of its members and works to develop a full appreciation for and understanding of educational collaboratives at the state, regional, and local levels. MOEC is the Commonwealth's primary advocate for collaboratives and the critical role they play in the Massachusetts educational system.

###



*Hundreds of seniors enjoyed lunch served by culinary arts students from The Education Cooperative Phoenix Academy. (Photo Courtesy The Education Cooperative)*





*From left: Student Noah Pickering, Phoenix Academy Principal Sheila Thomas and student Anthony Viau at the Saint Patrick's Day Luncheon. (Photo Courtesy The Education Cooperative)*

---

## **A message from the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives**