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Laconia High School students and staff participated in 'I Am College Bound/I Applied.' The initiative is designed to increase the number of high school seniors submitting college applications. From left are Laconia High School Principal Michael Fredericksen, Christina Schofield, Nolan Benoit, Phil Reed and Mollie Greely. (Courtesy Photo)

Navigating the road to college

BY MOLLIE GREELY
LACONIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Laconia High School seniors were fortunate to participate in "I Am College Bound/I Applied", an initiative designed to increase the number of high school seniors submitting college applications. This event happens at over 34 public high schools across New Hampshire. This is part of part of the state's "I Am College Bound" month celebration in November.

On Nov. 19, seniors had the opportunity to submit at least one college admissions application with the assistance of representatives from admissions offices from various New Hampshire colleges/universi-

ties during the school day at Laconia High School. Application fees for New Hampshire colleges and universities were waived for this specific day for all participating students.

The "I Am College Bound/I Applied" campaign provides assistance to all applying students, including students who may be the first in their family to attend college, low-income students and others who may be unfamiliar with the college application process. It also offers the opportunity for students to expand their college list and potentially have a greater range of colleges to choose from when award letters are issued



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Christmas at Canterbury will feature activities for the whole family. (Courtesy photo/Joe Reardon Photography)

Experience the spirit of Christmas at Canterbury Shaker Village today

CANTERBURY — Christmas at Canterbury will take place on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 3 to 8 p.m. Sing Christmas carols during the lighting of the village Christmas tree; enjoy a cup of hot cider; or take a selfie with Father Christmas. The classic holiday event has fun for the whole family.

Shaker Village will have decorations including Shaker-inspired garlands, trees, wreaths and lights, and brims with festive activities like crafts, music, shopping, and food.

Candlelight Tours offer another opportunity to

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and critical decisions are made based on programming, size, location and cost of attendance. As part of the initiative, students receive information about the additional components of a college application, college financial aid process and filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form.

At Laconia High School, nearly 85 seniors submitted nearly 100 applications to NH higher education institutions. Seniors who participated in the event and submitted an application were also entered into a raffle for a \$500 scholarship. Laconia High School counselors supported the event in conjunction with outstanding volunteers, including Kate Guyotte from the Educational Talent Search; Alexander Boudreau from Plymouth State University Admissions Department (and an LHS Alumnus); Beth Beaulieu from Plymouth State University Admissions; and Jacquelyn Tremblay from Southern NH University.

As we progress through the year, the Laconia High School and the LHS School Counseling Department, in collaboration with community partners, will continue helping students move through the college application and selection process. Many students will continue applying to colleges through the early winter, and after receiving their acceptance letters, try to figure out what school is the best choice for them. As this decision almost always includes a financial component, the NH Higher Education Assistance Foundation will provide a student/parent night in March called Paying for College 101—Understanding Your Award Letter. This presentation provides useful information on

understanding what is included in the student's financial aid package and how to be aware of different vocabulary and wording used.

The final aspect of students progressing towards their postsecondary aspirations is awareness and completion of college scholarship applications. Students can seek further financial assistance from a range of scholarship opportunities, including local organizations such as the Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation (LRSF). This organization gives away thousands of dollars each year to deserving high school students from Laconia and surrounding towns. To further support students completing and submitting scholarship applications, the LHS school counselors will host a scholarship event in the early spring, providing students the opportunity to explore and complete applications with the assistance of school counselors and local partners, such as LRSF. This event includes pizza and raffles and helps students get through this last challenge of becoming a college student.

Laconia High School is proud of the seniors who have been working hard to complete and submit college applications that reflect their successes and efforts towards engaging in a rigorous high school education. Although the college application process can feel cumbersome and/or confusing, through support of professionals at LHS and the community, students are navigating this process well, gaining self-advocacy skills and moving towards the future they envision.

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Mollie Greely is director of school counseling at Laconia High School.

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