

**Merrimack College Hosts the Merrimack Valley
Special Needs Resource Fair**

The School of Education was proud to support this informative event.

On an otherwise quiet holiday weekend on campus, The Sakowich Student Center at [Merrimack College](#) was buzzing with activity on October 6th as the School of Education, along with Christine DeAmbrose and Kate O'Malley, presented the first *Merrimack Valley Special Needs Resource Fair*.

Nearly sixty exhibitors were on site such as [Canine Companions for Independence](#) and [Treble Chorus of New England](#). Additionally, over 200 attendees were welcomed to learn about the varied fields represented including: medical and therapeutic services, assistive technologies, educational supports, social skills programs, financial planning, horseback riding and more.

DeAmbrose is a special education teacher and O'Malley is the parent of a special needs child who, together, spearheaded this event. The support offered by Dr. Dan W. Butin, Dean of the School of Education and the School of Education was invaluable in making the fair a reality.

"When I called Dr. Butin, he was completely open to the idea, he loved it," said DeAmbrose. "He felt that it would be very valuable, not just for the community but also for his students to start learning

about all of the amazing resources that are right here in their backyard."

Merrimack College was pleased to be the venue for the Resource Fair, which was supported by undergraduate students in the Education Club as well as by several graduate students in the

Community Engagement Fellowship Program. Information on Merrimack College's disability resources, Educational Resource Center, Education Club and the School of Education was also available.

The turnout for this event was a great start and DeAmbrose and O'Malley look forward to teaming up again with Merrimack College to grow what they have created. They foresee a future focus on guest speakers and family-fun activities as well as business to business connections, which were a particularly positive outcome of the October 6th event.

"Hopefully, this is the beginning of a long community relationship," said DeAmbrose. ■

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