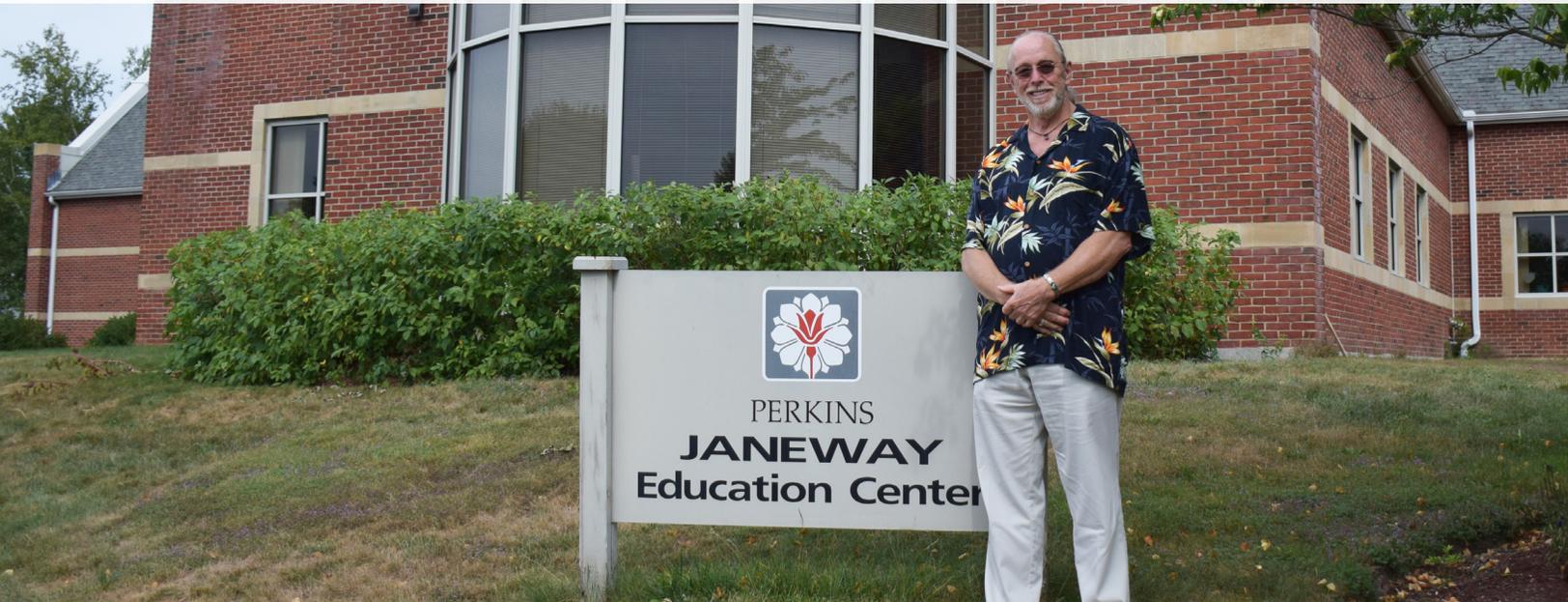




Perkins PULSE

A mini summer edition of our newsletter

August 2020



So Long, Mr. Cande

Perkins bids farewell to beloved teacher

With most schools closed since March, Rick Cande hadn't left the classroom (even through the pandemic) – until he said goodbye to students and faculty last week as he heads into retirement.

An August 21 socially-distanced parade, punctuated with a banjo performance by Mr. Cande himself, was a celebratory conclusion to a rich career teaching Perkins students of all ages since 1982. “We All Need a Little Kindness in This World,” and “This Land is Your Land,” were the songs he chose to leave Perkins with. After a challenging spring and summer of socially distanced learning, the selection was just right. In a Facebook post highlighting the farewell event, dozens of people commented on Mr. Cande's retirement. One parent called him “a great teacher and mentor who brought a lot of positivity to (my son),” adding, “we are grateful.”

Many students and fellow teachers were left wondering how they'll carry on without Mr. Cande in the hallways. Kim Nadeau, Mr. Cande's fellow 9th-grade teacher, is one of them. In the decade Ms. Nadeau has taught at Perkins, she's come to know him as an amazing teacher, coworker, and friend. It was Mr. Cande who was her cheerleader at work as she went through cancer treatment

recently, Ms. Nadeau said, and his way with students is truly a gift. She always appreciated his animated reading to children, and how he's shared his musical talents with students, encouraging them to perform too. “He's a very caring man, and he knows how to relate to the kids.”

As long as Mr. Cande's been a Perkins teacher, he's been working in special education even longer. As a new graduate of what was then Fitchburg State College in 1977, he worked first within the state special education system. Mr. Cande joined the Dr. Franklin Perkins School five years later, recognizing the work-life balance to be had at a job one town over from his hometown of Clinton. Mr. Cande's own children were entering school, and he appreciated that Perkins honored the family commitments of its employees. “The employee was really cared about. We were treated fairly, and like family.”

Pursuing his calling in special education was also a draw. Though he once considered applying to public school teaching jobs, he knew he would be happiest staying at Perkins. Over the years, Mr. Cande has taught students at all levels, from elementary through high school. He's found great fulfillment in helping students develop skills they were missing in public school settings because of their unique learning styles and challenges. “These are brilliant children, and basically they're playing a game of catch up.”

Bill Carrier, Perkins music teacher and fellow member of the Back Porch Band that Mr. Cande heads up, has many fond memories of running an annual Perkins Summer Festival for many years with his friend and colleague. Between that and the many annual school concerts Rick helped him orchestrate, they've played more than 100 shows together, always working to involve students. Students would frequently participate in vocals, for example, or showcase their talents in a Star Search-style talent show. “Rick's been able to help a lot of kids feel comfortable in the spotlight.”

“It's the people here who become your family, who deeply care about you, who love you...”

Looking ahead, Mr. Cande is planning to volunteer to play in some Perkins shows. He also hopes to spend time in classrooms, reading to young students. Outside of Perkins, Mr. Cande plans to spend time with his family, including two children and three grandchildren, as well as focusing on playing bluegrass, country and folk music at regional music festivals, and gardening.

“It's going to hurt like the dickens to give up a classroom here,” Cande said. “It's the people here who become your family, who deeply care about you, who love you... but I think I'm ready to pack away my alarm clock.”



Breaking Ground

Middle school project to break ground in September

In a multi-phase undertaking designed to enhance programming, improve accessibility, expand capacity, and create efficiencies, Perkins is excited about a major capital expansion project in the works for our Lancaster campus.

A brand new middle school, student residence, and an addition to the existing Janeway Education Center are elements of the first project phase. Construction is slated to begin simultaneously on all three projects in mid-September, as well as cutting a curved, one-way roadway in front of the Manor to improve traffic flow.

The new, L-shaped middle school will be sited in what is now the side parking lot of the Janeway building. A new wing will be added to the north side of Janeway, mirroring the architecture of the library. Through a series of sidewalks, all academic buildings will seamlessly connect and create a defined academic zone of campus. In a future construction phase, the existing Wyman Middle School will be razed.

The new residence will be built on the rear side of campus, adjacent to Pappas Home, and will accommodate up to 12 residents. It is expected to be ready for occupancy next summer.

Over the past year, Perkins has worked closely with architects from Peterman Architects, to carefully envision and formulate a new campus blueprint. When complete, the improvements will add much needed space – from academic, to administrative, to residential and even to parking – designed to maximize success for Perkins students and residents. In addition to financing, Perkins will work to partner with people and foundations that support our mission to help meet the costs.

Open Positions

Do you know someone looking to make a difference? Join the Perkins Team!

Night Awakes (Adults)

We are seeking caring and compassionate individuals to be a part of our team providing support for individuals with disabilities in their home. Our adult residents may have cognitive, emotional, medical, and psychiatric challenges and range in age from 18-65. Our program design is based on our philosophy of valuing each client and resident's right to independence, satisfying work, family ties, and social/community connections.

Residential Counselors (Adults)

The Residential Counselor is responsible for the daily implementation of activities and individual client treatment plans, the development and maintenance of therapeutic relationships with individuals. Full supervision and support of individuals with complex needs including this with medical, gait issues, limited speech and who require personal care.

Visit perkinsprograms.org/careers/job-openings/ for more information or email hr@perkinschool.org



Perkins

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Our mission is to promote meaningful and sustained well-being for children, youth, and adults facing educational, developmental, or mental health challenges.

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Do you have a Perkins story you'd like to share? We'd love to hear from you. Email us at nleblanc@perkinschool.org.



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