

RESIDENTIAL

Every child deserves a childhood. We don't just say our tag line at Spaulding, we live it.

Life has not always been easy for the children who come to live with us. Children are placed at Spaulding for a variety of reasons, but for us – first and foremost – we seek to provide a safe, nurturing environment for the kids so they can flourish and be successful for whatever comes next on their childhood journey. Inside five of our residential facilities, every child has a private room – their own space – where they can live secure in the knowledge that they are safe and looked after by a dedicated and well-trained residential staff.

But living at Spaulding is more than that. Much more. Every cottage has a kitchen where the kids can make snacks and meals and participate in setting menus. Outside the cottages, there are activities galore. Our amazing residential staff are full of ideas for events that engage the kids, so that their childhood is full of fun and adventure.



One activity that the kids have been enjoying this year is a Roadside Attractions contest. The kids in each cottage are competing with each other to visit unique and often out-of-the-way destinations. The contest has taken them to such locales as the world's longest candy counter, the Meredith statue walk, covered bridges, the USS Albacore and the castle ruins in Chesterfield. In all, the challenge includes finding – and providing photographic evidence of – 25 places of interest. The

competition has been fierce, and a lot of fun! Some of our explorers have even wandered off track and “discovered” fascinating landmarks, such as the Stone Face, an eight-foot-tall stone depiction of the Greek muse of comedy, which used to adorn the façade of the State Theater in Manchester (we'll leave it to you to figure out where it is now). In addition to the wonderful prizes the cottages can win, the kids are having fun, bonding with their “team” and learning a lot!

Another recent activity that our kids enjoyed was the Sensory Party, organized to commemorate World Autism Awareness Day. The kids had a blast learning about sensory challenges using water tables, rice and bean buckets, a sand art table, and – bystanders beware! – a shaving cream table. Once again, a fun activity but one filled with learning and camaraderie.

On April 8th, the kids enjoyed donning their solar eclipse glasses and sat outside with their House Managers and residential teams to watch the moon eclipse the sun. It got a bit darker and a lot colder, but the children were fascinated and asked a lot of questions.

In the category of What's Next: Prom! Last year, Spaulding hosted its inaugural prom for our kids. It is hard to overstate how popular this event turned out to be! Last year's event was themed “Under the Sea” and it was a huge success. We were able to assemble an entire store filled with prom attire – dresses, tuxedos, shoes – you name it. Staff dressed up alongside the students and helped with hair and make-up. An anonymous donor even provided a limo to drive the kiddos around campus. This year's “black & white” themed prom is fast approaching, and the anticipation is palpable. We continue to inventory formal clothing and are accepting donations for this year's event. **To donate, contact Courtney Constant, Director of Development and Community Relations, at CConstant@SpauldingServices.org**

So, there is no end to the fun and activities that go on at Spaulding. We strive every day to make sure that the kids get the childhood that they deserve. The fun comes from our amazing staff and the care that they provide, and at the end of the day we hope that the child is happy and secure in the knowledge that they're surrounded by people who care and that they are safe.



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NEWSLETTER



SUPPORT

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3. Contact the Development Office

603-286-8901 ext.107 or
CConstant@SpauldingServices.org

Spaulding Academy & Family Services is a private, 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, and we are grateful to our many donors and sponsors who support our mission. If you would like to discuss creating a custom package to support your professional or personal giving goals, please contact Courtney Constant at 603-286-8901 ext. 107.

Our Mission: Supporting exceptional children and families toward a successful future.

Learn More: 603-286-8901 or SpauldingServices.org



COMMITMENT

Staff Spotlight: Salena Durette

We shine a well-deserved light on Salena Durette, the dedicated House Manager of Lambert Cottage, who has been an invaluable part of our team for the last five years.

Salena's journey with us began as a residential assistant on overnight shifts at Young House. During this time, she was also a student at Plymouth State University finishing her BA in Elementary Education and student teaching at Plymouth Elementary School. Over time, her exceptional dedication and leadership skills led her to roles including shift manager at Young House, and ultimately, house manager at Lambert – a position she has excelled in for the past four years.

Not only is Salena a crucial member of our staff, but she also heads our Activities Committee, breathing life into our campus through engaging events. She spearheaded our first-ever prom event in 2023, which was a resounding success that brought joy and excitement to our Spaulding campus. Salena has also orchestrated other memorable gatherings such as the Sensory Party for Autism Awareness Day, Summer Block Party, and the annual Choose Love Talent Show.

Salena's commitment to learning and development is remarkable. She has been an ALICE instructor since its introduction to campus last year and has been teaching PCM (Professional Crisis Management) techniques and procedures for three years. Recently, she completed the RBT (Registered Behavioral Technician) training, enhancing her understanding of behaviors, particularly for the neurodiverse student population on campus.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Salena enjoys playing softball in three different leagues, solving puzzles, and exploring the outdoors through travel and concerts. She has a penchant for mystery-themed shows and shares her home with her two stepdaughters and three cats.

Salena beautifully sums up her experience at Spaulding: "This is the place where you grow with your family and your friends." Her dedication, leadership, and enthusiasm enrich our community daily. Salena, thank you for all that you do – we are incredibly fortunate to have you as part of our team at Lambert Cottage.

ARTS BUILDING

There's an old wives' tale about the cobbler's children who have no shoes.

At Spaulding, this superstition might have applied to the Howe Arts Building were it not for the amazing work that occurred within the confines of the building or the incredible talent that our art teacher, Robyn Allen, brings to the creative work of her students. This spring, we decided it was time to give the Arts Building the renovation that it deserved – and to no one's surprise the results are spectacular. While the exterior of the building still awaits its facelift (stay tuned), the interior of the building has been completely transformed! Not only have the rooms been totally reconstructed with new equipment and configurations, the colors and the interior painting designs are, well, a masterpiece.



ACADEMIC

Teachers are special. And teachers at Spaulding Academy are extra-special.

We know it takes a special person to be a teacher. How many of us reflect on our lives and end up thinking about our teachers – who we had in fourth grade or the coach in junior high school or the algebra teacher in high school? Much of who we are today was helped shaped by who we had in school. For the kids at Spaulding Academy, the teachers and the paraprofessionals shape lives like no other. The students that we work with are special in so many ways and while the job can be challenging, the rewards are enormous.

These are difficult times. The work that we do is in great demand but unfortunately the supply of teachers is dwindling, affecting not just Spaulding but at all schools. For us, the kids that we serve can't always be lumped into another class, and class sizes can't be simply expanded. The education and the care that we provide is tailored to the student in a very focused way. While an article in our quarterly newsletter is usually used to extol the many successes and activities that we have going on, this article is piggybacking on a story that we wrote for our fall 2023 newsletter about how we are creatively addressing the teacher shortage. As we reported then, we are aggressively pursuing various avenues to elevate our current staff to certified teaching status. We offer generous professional development

options and provide onsite-based learning plans... and it's working. We are excited that we have several talented staff in the pipeline who will soon earn their special education teacher certification.

But it's not enough. To meet the demand for the students that we serve today and into the future, we need even more teachers – teachers who want to work in a state-of-the-art environment and want to make a difference. The academic staff at Spaulding Academy are extraordinary individuals who are committed to a single goal: helping and improving the lives of the kids who go here. Over 40% of our staff have been here at least five years; over 25% of our staff have been here more than 10 years.

For the past year we have been following the Choose Love curriculum, advancing the precepts of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). The impact on our students has been nothing short of dramatic, as test scores have skyrocketed and behavioral issues have plummeted. Visitors to our school consistently remark on the quality of our staff, our facilities and the positive behavior of our special students. This doesn't happen by accident – our teachers are simply the best and our facilities are unmatched.

A few brief reflections from some of our teachers:

From MH - "doing the job I love"

I began working at Spaulding as a para for my first real job as a college graduate. Having a job with benefits was important now that I was on my own. The reason I stayed at Spaulding is because of the kids and the staff. I was able to work up from a para to an associate teacher after a couple of years. As the previous librarian was preparing to retire, she had started to mentor me to eventually be the next librarian. Spaulding was very supportive in furthering my education paying for all my Library/Media classes. I was able to work in the library while finishing my certification. I truly enjoy my work here at Spaulding and even after 15 years I am never bored and doing a job that I love.

From MW - "passion for teaching"

My journey to becoming a teacher began when I joined the Spaulding community as a paraprofessional. While I had previously worked in speech therapy, there was something uniquely fulfilling about being in the classroom and engaging directly with students. It was during this time that I discovered my passion for teaching. When I expressed my interest in becoming certified as a special education teacher, I was met with an extraordinary amount of support and guidance from the school's leadership team. Their belief and support not only provided me with the opportunity to transition into a teaching role, but also equipped me with the necessary tools and resources to do so with confidence and knowledge. Over the past two years teaching at Spaulding, I have had the privilege of witnessing tremendous progress among my students. This journey of growth and achievement is a testament to the supportive and collaborative culture fostered within our school community. The collaborative spirit at Spaulding has played a significant role in my professional and personal development. Whether it's through the mentorship I received from school leadership, or working collaboratively with our team of experienced educators and service providers, I have continually found myself surrounded by individuals who are dedicated to nurturing both student and teacher success.

From TT - "can't imagine being as fulfilled or happy any place else"

After 20 years of being a teacher at Spaulding I still can't imagine being any place else. I started at Spaulding when my oldest daughter was just over a year old so that I could have a schedule more aligned with her daycare and eventual school day. I had not expected to stay in this field for over two decades, but I found my efforts and time had never been better spent. Working at Spaulding, I have

students who struggle to be successful in a standard public school setting. I found that connecting with these students resulted in a huge impact to their behavior, relationships, their growth as citizens, and as learners. I now can't imagine being as fulfilled or happy any place else. Connecting with students who historically struggle to make connections affords them the ability to open up the window and fly! Seeing kids who haven't experienced much success succeed is life changing, for them and me!

From JS - "if it's good for the kids, do it"

The Choose Love initiative is a great example of using the best research-backed methods for teaching. In the past two years it has changed the culture of the school, nearly eliminated seclusion and restraints, and dramatically boosted test scores. I think all of this success is due in large part to the fact that we have the best leadership team we've ever had. They are very student centered and incredibly supportive of staff. When I asked to build a giant ropes course, suspended by 50' phone poles they said, "if it's good for the kids, do it." When I wanted a machine-built flow trail for mountain biking, and a tree house with universal access, they said, "if it's good for the kids, do it." I should point out that this phrase isn't just limited to my program. When a lot of people on campus wanted to build the best adaptive playground in the state, guess what they said?

These reflections are heartfelt and widely shared. If you have any thoughts that you might want to teach, if you want to drive home every day with a sense of satisfaction that you have made a difference, if you want to provide a student with the same sense of wistful remembrance that you have for your teachers in years past, then consider talking to us at Spaulding. We'd love to introduce you to our program and to offer you a career that you will love.

