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SPRING 2025

NEWSLETTER

SUPPORT

Donate Today in Three Easy Ways

We appreciate your consideration in helping to support extraordinary children and their families toward a successful future. Contributing to Spaulding Academy & Family Services is as easy as 1-2-3.

1. Online

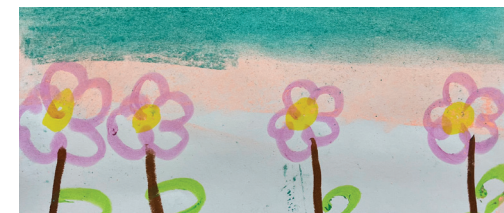
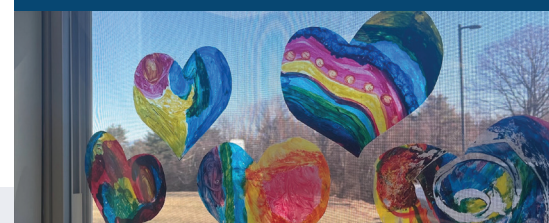
SpauldingServices.org/Give

2. By Mail

72 Spaulding Road
Northfield, NH 03276

3. Contact the Development Office

603-286-8901 ext.107 or
CLEighton@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 Leighton 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

ANNUAL TALENT SHOW

Student Talents Demonstrate Pillars of Choose Love



On February 14, 2025, students and staff took to the stage to sing, dance, tell jokes and put on a great show! Their talents were showcased in our 3rd Annual Choose Love Talent Show, which brought the four pillars of Choose Love to life in a joyous way.

Our Valentine’s Day talent show has been a favorite annual tradition at Spaulding for years. When we began teaching Choose Love as part of our curriculum in 2022, we were excited to reinforce our campus-wide practice and expand awareness of Choose Love through the beloved talent show.

This year, we were honored to have Choose Love Founder Scarlett Lewis and Shannon Desilets, Program Director for the movement and the Community Wellness Administrator at NH Department of Health and Human Services, in the audience. Scarlett and Shannon were incredibly moved and inspired by our students, telling us they laughed, they cried and had a fantastic time.

Student performances were grouped to illustrate the Choose Love pillars: Courage, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Compassion in Action. For example, one student exemplified courage by overcoming her fears to tell jokes. Other students sang songs together to emphasize compassion. A wild breakdancing set showcased forgiveness. And a student wrote and read his own poem to beautifully express his gratitude.

Residential Daytime Manager Salena Durette – who took a lead role in organizing the talent show – was a wonderful master of ceremonies. Other staff members got the audience up and moving with fun dances throughout the show and a glow stick finale. We are already looking forward to next Valentine’s Day for this very special event!

COMING SOON

A New Adaptive Treehouse



We have been dreaming of bringing the magic of a treehouse to campus for a few years, and we are pleased to announce that it will become a reality soon! Thanks to funding from a generous donor and the hard work of Jason Sterner, our outdoor education coordinator, we hope to

break ground on an adaptive treehouse this spring.

A site has been selected in the woods directly above the mountain bike trails behind the Community Center. A large, covered platform will be elevated on pressure treated posts and surrounded by a railing. The treehouse will be tucked in trees but located next to a hill to provide ramp access.

The treehouse will support a range of activities, from nature-based play and relaxation, to balance challenges, outdoor classrooms and meeting space. Members of Spaulding’s maintenance staff, and Dave Moore, who worked in Spaulding’s outdoor education program years ago, will be working with Jason to build the treehouse. We can’t wait for all our students to be able to enjoy the classic childhood experience of making memories and forging friendships in a treehouse!

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Gym Renovation Update



It was a long winter without the use of our gym while the floor was being replaced, but it was worth the wait! The new floor features a rubber-backed surface with a wood overlay that is an amazing upgrade. Next steps include new doors, fresh paint, window repairs and upgraded basketball hoops.

We are excited to provide a brighter, better space for our kids as our top priority. When the dust settles, we also plan on constructing a new employee fitness area (our most requested staff space).

New Website

We are revamping our website to tell our story more effectively and make it easier for families and visitors to find information. Watch for handy new features such as an interactive site map and quick access to important resources when the new site goes live soon.

EMPATHY AND COMMITMENT

Staff Spotlight: Kelly Hopler



As Lead Clinician/Clinical Mentor in our community-based program, Kelly Hopler is constantly on the go. She logs hours on the road each week as she travels to homes and community sites to work with children, youth and families referred by New Hampshire’s Department

of Juvenile Justice Services (JJS) and Division of Children Youth and Families (DCYF). Back at Spaulding, she mentors clinical colleagues and teaches a mental health first aid course to promote a supportive work environment. At the end of the day, she goes home to an active household with her two young adult children, a 21-year-old stepson, and her husband.

Kelly is energized by her work, even during the hours she spends in the office coordinating and communicating with professionals from other organizations as they collaborate to support children and youth who have experienced significant trauma and neglect. “My goal is to be a positive force to help support change and help keep families together and intact. Being here at Spaulding is the best opportunity to do that,” she says.

Kelly’s own lived experience led her to her calling. Adopted as a child, she rebelled in her teens as she sought to find her path in life. She was expelled from high school and was eventually sent to a behavior modification program that was later profiled in a Netflix docuseries for its corruption and abuse. Through Kelly’s hard work, as well as support from her adoptive parents and an aunt that became her mentor, she gradually found her footing.

Kelly wanted to help others find their footing as well and knew that education would be the key to helping her fulfill that mission. She quickly earned her GED, then a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Saint Anselm College, followed by a master’s degree from the University of New Hampshire in human development and family studies. She is currently working on a second master’s degree in marriage and family therapy from Plymouth State University.

Kelly joined Spaulding as a permanency specialist in 2021 before becoming a community-based clinician in 2022 and our lead clinician/clinical mentor in 2024. Her empathy and commitment to being a positive force is clear in everything she does.

“To me, success is when a youth wants to remain healthy and continue to work on themselves. If I can plant that seed and help a family work together to move forward, that is the entire reason I am in this field,” she says.

