

Spaulding Academy Newsletter · Edition 69 · November 2025

Family Services Leadership Retreat

A leadership retreat offers a fun and refreshing chance to escape the daily grind — fewer emails, more flip charts, and maybe even a breadstick or two. It's a time to swap office chairs for games and explore leadership skills in a relaxed (and occasionally competitive) environment. Between laughter-filled activities and team challenges that test everything from communication to creativity, participants often learn as much about themselves as they do about each other.

Beyond the learning, a retreat is the ultimate bonding experience—part team building, part comedy show. There are always those moments, like when the group tries (and repeatedly fails) to complete a task that seems so straight forward, that remind everyone even leaders have their limits. But that's the magic of it: shared laughter turns into connection. Before long, people who once only exchanged polite hallway nods are cheering each other on in a game of Office Feud. By the time everyone heads home, they've gained not only new leadership insights but also a few inside jokes that will keep the spirit of teamwork alive long after the retreat is over.

Doris Theberge, Clinical Supervisor

Learning



Student Art

Fall Art

This month in the art room we are having a Jack-o-lantern coloring contest! Each student has submitted a drawing and will be voting for best Jack-o-lantern!

Robyn Allen, Art & Music Teacher





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Tips for a Healthy Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a special time for us to enjoy family, friends, and food. With so many delicious foods, it is very easy to overeat. The average Thanksgiving meal contains 3,000 to 4,500 calories. The tips below will help lighten up your meal.

Trim where you can!

Avoid packaged and processed foods which are higher in sodium.

• Try reducing the sugar in your recipe by one quarter. This can save 200 calories for every 1/4 cup.

 Add natural sweetness and reduce fat. Replace oil with equal amounts of yogurt or applesauce.

 Roast your turkey instead of deep frying. Brush your bird with olive oil instead of butter.

• When making mashed potatoes, use skim milk instead of whole. Add low fat sour cream or low-fat cream cheese instead of butter.

 Avoid "saving calories" for the big meal. Don't go to Thanksgiving dinner overly hungry

 Plan ahead for treats and decide which ones you will pass up. Will you choose the pie or cake? This helps you limit impulsive choices because it ALL looks good!

Fill half of your plate with veggies! Eat your veggies first to keep you full so you don't over eat other foods.

 Have a to-go box to hand out to guests and freeze what is left over if you are hosting

hosting.
Include healthy choices on your menu like roasted vegetables in place of vegetable casseroles.

• Bring a healthy dish to share.

Lesley Robie, RDN, CNSC Registered Dietitian

Nutrition 4



Halloween Hype Takes Over Spaulding

Each year, Spaulding takes Halloween to the next level and this year's annual Halloween hype was no exception! The campus came alive with creativity, laughter, and spooky spirit as both students and staff showed off their most imaginative costumes.

From butterflies and spices to ghouls and vampires, the variety of costumes was nothing short of spectacular. Staff competed in a costume contest, bringing out their best looks and plenty of friendly competition, while students enjoyed trick-ortreating across campus, collecting candy and smiles along the way.

Halloween at Spaulding isn't just a day on the calendar, it's a celebration of fun, community, and the joy of self-expression. With decorations, music, and laughter filling the halls, it's easy to see why this might just be the most loved holiday on campus. Here's to another year of frightful fun and festive spirit at Spaulding!

Nicole Desharnais, MA Board Liaison & Communication Specialist



Happenings





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Getting Through the Holidays



The holidays, while often portrayed as a time of joy, can be a season of stress for both adults and children. A busy schedule can lead to feelings of anxiety, especially for kids who thrive on routine. Added to this are the pressures to have a "perfect" holiday, financial strain, and navigating complicated family dynamics, which can bring up old feelings or conflicts.

For children, witnessing adults' stress and dealing with unfamiliar social situations can be overwhelming, and it's okay for them to feel sad, angry, or anxious. For the whole family, the key to a more peaceful season is managing expectations and understanding that it's okay for things not to be perfect.

Some helpful tips are:

- Set expectations. Prepare children by talking to them about what to expect at holiday events, who will be there, and how long the event will be. This helps them feel more in control and less anxious. At big family events, it's good to have a special place you can go if you feel overwhelmed. This could be a quiet bedroom, a comfy chair with a blanket, or even just going outside for a few
- Promote gratitude. Encourage families to shift focus from material gifts to gratitude and connection. A simple activity like a "gratitude jar" where family members write down what they are thankful for can be a positive tradition. You don't have to be a superhero. You don't have to be everything to everyone! Remember what is important to you and your
- You can hold multiple feelings at once. It's okay to hold space for both love for your family and frustration with their dynamics. This is not a sign of failure, but a sign of emotional honesty. Make sure to take care of yourself!
- Look for the good stuff. Some things about the holidays are great! Focus on the fun stuff, like decorating cookies, watching a movie, or doing a special activity with someone you love.

Remember, your feelings matter and you can't change the past. By taking care of yourself, you can help make the holidays a little

Sarah Smolen, MS Clinician

Why We Practice Season & Weather Awareness Behavioral



At Spaulding, we use everyday experiences like changes in the seasons—to teach important life skills through ABA. Learning about weather isn't just about recognizing that it's cold or hot outside; it's about building independence and safety. Through visuals, hands-on lessons, and daily discussions, students learn how the environment changes and how to make appropriate clothing choices. For example, when it's chilly, we might practice putting on a jacket, hat, and gloves; when it's warm, students learn that shorts and sunscreen keep us comfortable and safe. These small routines help students build understanding, flexibility, and self-advocacy—skills that transfer to community outings and home life. By connecting learning to real-life situations, our behavioral team helps each student recognize patterns, make choices, and prepare for the day ahead—all while celebrating the beauty of New Hampshire's four seasons!



Nicole Hilliker, Behavior Specialist



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National Child Safety and Protection Month

This month, in recognition of National Child Safety and Protection Month, focus on safeguarding your child in every environment. This includes home, vehicles, and the community. Making a conscious effort to review safety practices can help prevent the many unintentional injuries that children face each year.

Here are a few ways to keep your child safe:

- Prioritize home safety: Lock up all cleaning supplies, medicines, and chemicals in childproof cabinets. Keep small, choking-hazard items out of reach, and test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors regularly.
- Prevent accidental injury: Take steps to prevent falls by installing safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs for young children. Secure heavy furniture and televisions to the wall to prevent tip-overs.
- Practice car safety: Always ensure your child is in the correct car seat or booster seat for their age and size. Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle.
- Establish water safety rules: Supervise children closely when they are near water, including pools, bathtubs, and lakes. Consider enrolling children in swimming lessons.
- Be proactive about online safety: Teach older children about online dangers, such as giving out personal information, and set clear rules for internet use.
 Keep computers in common areas and monitor their online activity.
- Build an emergency plan: Have a family fire escape plan and practice it regularly. Teach your child how to get help and to be cautious of strangers.

Sarah Smolen, MS Clinician

Pumpkin Decorating Extravaganza

Thanks to the generous donation of a pallet of pumpkins from PFG, Spaulding students once again enjoyed one of our favorite fall traditions — the annual Pumpkin Decorating Extravaganza! This much-anticipated event invites students to express their creativity in festive ways, from painting and tracing to carving their own unique designs. The afternoon is filled with laughter, imagination, and plenty of pumpkin pride as students and staff join together to celebrate the season.

Each year, this event brings our campus community together, blending tradition, creativity, and fun. The sight of colorful pumpkins lined up across the tables and cheerful faces hard at work captures the very spirit of fall at Spaulding.

A heartfelt thank-you to PFG for their continued support in making this seasonal celebration possible. Your generosity helps create lasting memories and brings joy to our students year after year.

Nicole Desharnais, MA Board Liaison & Communication Specialist

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