SPAULDING
ACADEMY & FAMILY SERVICES

Spaulding Family Connections

Spaulding Academy Newsletter · Edition 81 · November 2026

Learning

Hands-On Learning:

Creativity, Tech, and Empathy in Action

Creativity, technology, and kindness are coming together across our classrooms. In one project, students used a 3D design software and 3D printers to create custom fidgets to give to their peers. Beyond learning the technical steps of designing and printing, students got to practice compassion by making something thoughtful specifically for someone else.

Meanwhile, another class has been partnering with Wellness Educator Katherine Rork to create informative videos about internet safety. The students took full ownership of the project - writing their own scripts, choosing the cast, and filming their scenes in the Innovation Room. They got a behind-the-scenes look at the production process, learning how studio lighting and cameras work, how green screens can transform background sets, and how video editing brings it all together. Best of all, these videos will be used to help teach digital safety to future Spaulding students for years to come!



We're so proud of these students for putting their skills and big hearts into projects that benefit our whole community.

Brendan Donahue
Digital Learning Assistant

Student Art

Exploring Value: Young Artists Bring Apples to Life Through Shading

This month in the art room we have been learning about value and shading. Students have been working on identifying and using colors that range from light to dark. These apples are proudly displayed inside the school to show our students understanding of light and dark.



Robyn Allen
Art & Music Teacher

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Nutrition

Fuel Your Journey: Healthy Holiday Travel Tips

With the holidays approaching, you may be traveling. It can be a challenge to eat healthy with unpredictable schedules and limited access to nutritious foods. It is easy to chose foods that are convenient while your healthy habits lapse. We know that eating healthy helps support our energy level, mood and overall well-being. Here are some tips to support healthy eating if you are traveling.

Stay hydrated: Travelers may avoid drinking to limit bathroom breaks. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, headaches and negatively impact blood sugar. Bring an empty water bottle to refill through your travel.

Pack nutrient-dense snacks: Trail mix with unsweetened dried or freeze-dried fruits, roasted nuts or seeds, roasted chick peas or edamame and whole grain cereal; whole grain crackers or pretzels with pre-portioned hummus or nut butter, Babybel cheese; pre-made protein-rich wrap or sandwich; low-sugar instant oatmeal with nuts and/or dried fruits; low-sodium meat sticks with fruit leather and popcorn; protein bar with a piece of fruit like a clementine; cut and washed veggies with hummus or Greek yogurt dip; chia pudding or overnight oats; salads—layer dressing, protein and veggies in a deli container; premade energy balls with see/nut butter, oats and fruit

Pack a cooler if road tripping: Include no or low calorie drinks. You will save money and avoid making impulse buys of high sugar beverages.

Healthy holiday travel is possible with planning. By planning ahead you can stay hydrated and nourished, reduce travel stress and feel at your best to celebrate!





Lesley Robie, RD, LD, CSNC
Registered Dietitian

Happenings

Spooktacular Spirit: Students and Staff Celebrate Halloween Week Across Campus

Throughout the week, students jumped into hands-on autumn crafts, showcasing their artistic talents with colorful pumpkin painting sessions. The festivities officially kicked off mid-week with an exciting community Trunk-or-Treat, where staff and guests decorated vehicle trunks in elaborate, fun-filled themes and handed out treats to all who attended. On Friday, the excitement reached its peak with our traditional campus-wide trick-or-treating, giving students the chance to proudly show off their costumes at every stop.

Our staff was just as spirited as the students! Teaming up by house and department, staff members went all-out for their annual Group Halloween Costume Contest. From iconic movie characters to clever group themes, their energy and enthusiasm brought an extra layer of magic and laughter to the entire week.
Take a look at the photos below—which staff group costume gets your vote for best dressed?







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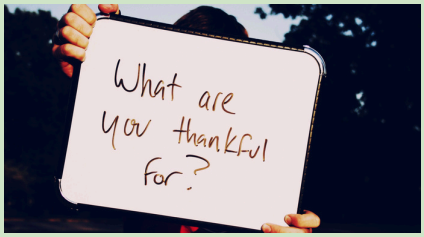
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Clinical

Honoring Every Emotion:
Building Connection and Resilience Through Gratitude

As Thanksgiving and the holiday season approach, we are often encouraged to reflect on what we are thankful for. From a mental health perspective, gratitude is more than simply saying "thank you", rather, it is a practice of recognizing moments of connection, kindness, growth, and hope, even during difficult seasons. The holidays can bring joy and meaningful family traditions, but they can also bring stress, grief, loneliness, and complicated emotions. It is important to remember that practicing gratitude does not mean ignoring difficult feelings or pretending everything is okay. Instead, it allows us to acknowledge our challenges while also making room for the positive moments that exist alongside them. For children, teens, and caregivers, expressing gratitude can be a meaningful way to strengthen relationships, encourage emotional awareness, and build a greater sense of connection. This holiday season, try asking, "What is one thing that brought you comfort, made you smile, or helped you feel supported today?" Remember that gratitude looks different for everyone and should never be forced. By modeling genuine appreciation and allowing space for all emotions, we can help children and families build resilience, strengthen relationships, and discover that even small moments of kindness can make a meaningful difference.



Liz Lowrey, M.S CMHC
Behavioral Health Clinician

Behavioral

Taking Skills to the Streets:
Community Trips in Action

Community trips are a great way for families to practice skills outside of the home while having support from a Behaviorist. Whether it's going to the grocery store, grabbing a snack, visiting the park, or trying a new activity, community-based parent training gives families the chance to practice strategies in real-life situations.

During these trips, a Behaviorist can help with things like waiting, transitions, accepting "no," making choices, communication, and safely navigating the community. The goal isn't a perfectly smooth outing—it's helping families feel more confident handling the bumps along the way while giving students opportunities to practice their skills in the places they use them most.



Nicole Hilliker,
Behavior Specialist

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Permanency

Planning, Flexibility, and Connection: Supporting Your Child During Holiday Visits

The Thanksgiving and holiday season can be a meaningful opportunity to help children in residential treatment stay connected to their families, maintain important relationships, and participate in traditions that bring a sense of belonging. Whether your child is able to join your family for a few hours, spend the day together, or enjoy a full weekend visit, even small moments of connection can make a difference. From a permanency perspective, planning ahead is one of the best ways to support a successful and positive visit. Reach out to your child's permanency worker early to discuss holiday plans, review any treatment or safety considerations, and work collaboratively with the treatment team to develop a plan that meets your child's needs. This may include coordinating transportation, establishing clear expectations, planning activities, and communicating with nursing in advance to ensure medications are prepared and any medication-related instructions are addressed before the visit. Early communication gives everyone an opportunity to prepare, ask questions, and help your child feel supported throughout the holiday experience.

Just as important as planning is remembering to remain flexible. Holidays can bring excitement, changes in routine, sensory overload, family stress, or unexpected emotions. Your child may need extra breaks, a quieter environment, a shorter visit, or a change in activities. A successful visit does not have to follow the original plan perfectly. Work with your child and the treatment team to identify coping strategies, supportive responses, and a plan for what to do if your child becomes overwhelmed. Consider building downtime into the schedule, keeping expectations realistic, and focusing on connection rather than perfection. If your child's needs change, adjusting the plan is not a failure; it is an opportunity to respond with understanding and compassion. By planning ahead, communicating openly with the treatment team, and allowing room for flexibility, families can create holiday experiences that prioritize emotional well-being, strengthen relationships, and remind children that they remain an important part of their family traditions.

Liz Lowrey, M.S. CMHC
Behavioral Health Clinician



Residential

Fall Fun Festivities: October Campus Highlights

October was a vibrant, activity-packed month for our residential students! Crisp, sunny days and peak autumn foliage provided the perfect backdrop for seasonal outdoor recreation, campus celebrations, and festive Halloween traditions.



Throughout the month, students took full advantage of the cool fall weather by exploring our campus trails, hanging out on the playgrounds, and participating in classic autumn activities like pumpkin carving. The highlight of the month was our annual Fall Fun Fest, where students gathered outdoors to celebrate the season. Highlights included:

- Delicious Seasonal Treats: fresh apple cider donuts, campus games
- Friendship & Connection: Time spent socializing outdoors with peers and staff.

As Halloween approached, anticipation across campus grew with a full schedule of festive events:

- Trunk-or-Treat & Campus Trick-or-Treating: Students dressed up in their favorite costumes and trick-or-treated across decorated campus stations.
- Wednesday House Movie Night: A cozy evening featuring seasonal movies, fresh pizza, and snacks.
- Cottage Decorating Contest: The residential cottages went all-out with creative themes and decorations, competing fiercely for the coveted first-place.



From outdoor autumn fun to Halloween festivities, October offered endless opportunities for our residential students to build positive memories, connect with staff and peers, and enjoy the best of the fall season together.

Carol Sanborn