



News & Views from SPAULDING YOUTH CENTER

Every child deserves a childhood.

Winter/Spring 2012

“I’m Your Friend”

Author John Elder Robison Inspires Connections

The room was full. Students were squirming in their chairs looking around with excited energy and curiosity - ready to meet *New York Times* bestselling author and ‘Free Range Aspergian,’ John Elder Robison. Having read Robison’s memoir *Be Different* in advance of his visit to Spaulding, one teenager asked Robison about his cars and motorcycles, another about his rock band and building exploding guitars, and a third student wanted to know why Robison had dropped out of school.

Casually sitting on a table in the midst of the students, Robison answered questions and candidly spoke of his experiences growing up as an ‘odd child’ – an outsider unable to grasp social cues, viewed by teachers as a failure in school and often ostracized and bullied by his classmates. In one of many poignant moments, a girl listening intently to Robison talk about his lack of childhood friends, loneliness and isolation growing up in a time when special education supports in schools were minimal at best – raised her hand and said, “I’m your friend.”

John Robison explained how his life changed when he came to understand and to appreciate his neurological differences. His unique gifts and skills have allowed him to succeed in doing what he loves – running his own business fixing foreign cars and sharing his life experiences through writing and speaking. He advised the students to be responsible for their own behaviors and to respect and understand their own differences.



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“...Students opened up and expressed themselves through personal writing, most for the first time. It was powerful!”
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Robison and Spaulding student compare iPads.

Inspired by Robison, some students chose to write memoirs about their family, life and personal challenges for Spaulding’s annual Authors Tea project.

Students in teacher Gina O’Leary’s class were asked to include the best piece of advice they have received on how to live their lives. The young writers

heartfelt words of wisdom included: “treat others the way you want to be treated; stay in school; move on from the past and you will succeed in the future; don’t give up, there’s always hope; and just be yourself.”

Robison’s public event, hosted by Spaulding, *A Conversation with John Elder Robison*, drew an audience of 200 professionals, self-advocates and family members to Concord to learn about Robison’s experiences and his insights into the challenges individuals on the autism spectrum have with transitions in life. Spaulding students attending his presentation felt both proud and special when Robison mentioned his ‘friends’ at Spaulding.

According to O’Leary, “John Robison touched students who typically don’t make those connections. He set the stage for them to feel like it was cool to write their own life stories. Our class was a judgment free zone. Students opened up and expressed themselves through personal writing, most for the first time. It was powerful.”

OUR MISSION: Spaulding Youth Center is dedicated to improving and enriching the lives of emotionally and/or intellectually challenged children, youth and their families.



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News & Views is published to present information about Spaulding Youth Center, its programs and services. We encourage you to visit our website at spauldingyouthcenter.org or contact Joanne Piper Lang, Marketing and Communications Director, 130 Shedd Road, Northfield, NH 03276-4607; (603) 286-7500, ext. 534; jlange@spauldingyouthcenter.org.

Editor: Joanne Piper Lang
Photos: Gail Mayhew

From the Hill

Dear Friends of Spaulding Youth Center,

There's always something happening at Spaulding! With a steady focus on creating a "normalized" environment for children, to complement Spaulding's stellar academic program and evidence-based behavioral approaches which help our students learn independent living skills, social skills and study skills, we devote a lot of time to special activities and projects on campus and in the community. And all of us, students and staff alike, have a lot of fun while we are learning and demonstrating new skills.

For example, the annual Multicultural Celebration inspired teachers and students to use multiple media – student-produced videos, plays, songs, food, poetry, dance, props, and artwork – to share their knowledge of selected holidays around the world. None of us will forget the sight of students joyfully dancing on their improvised Mardi Gras float as they tossed necklaces to eager recipients. Or Caitlyn's beautiful magenta birthday cake book she crafted for Authors Tea. Or Chris confidently crooning a duet with staff member Catrina at the talent show. In fact, we would have to create a daily edition of this newsletter to share with you all of the remarkable "happenings" at Spaulding.



Clearly, the foremost "happening" on campus these days is the construction of the new school which began last April. Completion of construction and the move into the new school building, a much-anticipated event, is imminent. **It is no surprise that students can barely contain their excitement as they imagine attending school in a place of wonder, a place for discovery and a place for success.**

Stay tuned for news about the momentous March move to the new school and the building dedication and celebration scheduled for June 13th. It will be a "happening," I guarantee.

Susan S. Calegari
 Susan S. Calegari, *CEO and President*



Multicultural Celebration

Happenings...



The indoor climbing wall was popular with students at the Winter Fest Hawaiian Luau, which included beach volleyball, hula hoops, dancing and healthy snacks for students and staff.



Dr. Mancini, Concord optometrist examines a student's vision for *Opening Eyes – Healthy Athletes*, a program of the Lions Club and Special Olympics – NH.

Foster Care PROFILE

Moving On - A Boy's Journey into Adulthood

When Tom* came to Spaulding as a residential student he was 12 years old – angry and aggressive, with inappropriate behaviors at home and school.

During his time in Spaulding's academic and behavioral program, Tom learned to be successful in the classroom and an enthusiastic participant in community service and vocational projects. He became a popular student with his teachers and his peers. Tom excelled as a Special Olympics athlete on Spaulding's

Shooting Stars soccer and floor hockey teams.

At 15 years old, Tom was matched with a local foster family through Spaulding's ISO (Individual Service Option) Foster Care Program, while maintaining contact with his birth parents and he transitioned from

being a residential student to a day student. Through Spaulding's career development program, Tom was exposed to a variety of vocational opportunities.



Notably, the Facilities Manager at the Pines Community Center became a mentor who inspired Tom's interest in learning more about carpentry and maintenance.

Last summer, Tom graduated as a model student and a mentor to others in his class. He is a proud, happy and accomplished 19-year-old, interning at Concord Hospital – learning vocational skills while working in the hospital's Facilities' Department. Tom values his social relationships and with his strong work ethic and charismatic personality his journey into adulthood is headed in the right direction.

He recently led his foster parents on a tour of the Concord Hospital grounds proudly showing them all over campus using the shortcuts he has discovered. Tom loves his work as a 'fix it guy' – wearing a uniform and steel toe work boots – being safe, responsible, respectful and moving on.

**Pseudonyms used to protect the privacy of the children.*

There are many children in need of homes. Please consider opening your heart and your home to a child.

For information on becoming a foster parent or to sign up for foster and adoptive care training at Spaulding, contact Carol Sanborn at 603-286-8901, ext. 203 or carolsanborn@spauldingyouthcenter.org.

■ **We have LAUNCHED a new updated website:**

www.spauldingyouthcenter.org

Please visit our new site for more Spaulding photos, videos and stories.

■ **Spaulding E-News** is coming soon.

In addition to our regular newsletters, you can receive ongoing news and happenings via email! Sign-up on our website or email: jang@spauldingyouthcenter.org. Subject: E-News.

■ **Please make a note of our new mailing address:**

Spaulding Youth Center/Foundation
130 Shedd Road
Northfield, NH 03276

GIVING & RECEIVING

Spaulding Sunshine Society*
Leadership Circle of Giving



DONOR PROFILE: KENT AND MARY ALICE WARNER

16 Years of Passion for Spaulding...

“Spaulding has enlarged our life. When you see the kids responding, it is so fulfilling to know that you have been involved in helping make that happen, it’s just great.”

~ Kent and Mary Alice Warner

Hannah, an 8-year-old budding philanthropist, is following in the very big footsteps of her grandparents, Center Harbor residents Kent and Mary Alice Warner. Her thoughtful donation of her allowance to Spaulding’s *Success Under Construction* capital campaign to build a new school is a tribute to the values and passion that run deep in her family.

Hannah’s grandparents moved to New Hampshire in 1995. Within months, Mary Alice joined Spaulding’s Board of Trustees, and the Warner family connection was established.

Mary Alice, a former counselor who has seen what happens when children do not have stable childhoods was impressed by the programs and services offered to children with special needs.

Retired mechanical engineer Kent joined the Foundation’s Board of Directors in 1998 and was smitten from day one. “Never have I felt so emotionally invested

and involved as a Board member. All that is offered during a child’s time at Spaulding, plus a new school, will keep Spaulding in the forefront of special needs services. We are so up there – a caring Board, Susan Calegari’s leadership and a great staff.” With unbridled enthusiasm, Kent wants to introduce everyone to Spaulding, “because once they come to visit, they won’t get over what they see.”

The Warner’s express their love for Spaulding in many ways. In addition to Board service, they give generously as members of Spaulding’s Sunshine Society, have established a supporting charitable lead unitrust and are leaders for Spaulding’s new school campaign. The joy and passion Kent and Mary Alice have for Spaulding and the children entrusted to its care is a legacy with enduring promise as evidenced by Hannah’s heartfelt determination to help future generations of children who will attend school at Spaulding.

Audrey Hillman Fisher Foundation’s \$100,000 Grant Leads the Way for Business and Foundation Support of New School Construction

The Board of Trustees of the Audrey Hillman Fisher Foundation of Pittsburgh, PA recently approved a grant of \$100,000 in support of the Spaulding Youth Center Foundation’s Capital Campaign, *Success Under Construction*, to fund the construction of a new school facility at Spaulding.

Other businesses and foundations who have given generously to support the capital campaign include: AutoServ of Tilton; Ann De Nicola Foundation; EPTAM Plastics, Ltd.; Franklin Savings Bank; Helen C. Frick Foundation; Arthur Getz Charitable Trust; IPG Employee Benefits; Jack Williams Endowment for Wednesday’s Child; Lyon Foundation, Inc., Meredith Village Savings Bank; NH Charitable Foundation; and Taylor, Cottrill, LLC.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Nurturing A Child’s Potential

There are a variety of ways you can support a child in need of special services that match your personal financial goals and at the same time provide opportunities for hope and joy.

For information about charitable giving options, contact Laura Chaney, Vice President for Development, at (603) 286-7500 ext. 530 or lchaney@spauldingyouthcenter.org.

Details on all giving options including online donations can be found on the Giving section of our website: www.spauldingyouthcenter.org.

*Honoring Annual Fund donors giving \$1000 /+ for five consecutive years.

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July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011

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An extra round of applause for...



Physical education teacher Brian Doyle

...who earned the Outstanding Professional for Adapted Physical Education award from the New Hampshire Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. He was nominated for the award by Principal Colleen Sliva for transforming the physical education curriculum, implementing innovative ways to engage students in physical education and playing a key role in Spaulding Youth Center's campus-wide commitment to promote healthy lifestyles.

Award-winning PE Teacher Brian Doyle pictured with Spaulding Principal Colleen Sliva

Community Organizations who made the Holidays Merry and Bright for Students:

...Christmas Village, Laconia; Meredith Bay Colony Club; Manchester Harley Owners Group (HOGS) Chapter 1294; Nationwide, Salem; Plymouth State University – Community Service Learning Center, Angel Tree Project; Sovereign Grace Fellowship, Boscawen; and the Spaulding Angels as well as many, many staff and other individuals.



Trustee Chair Jim Clements and Santa (Board Member Art Franson) join Spaulding students for Christmas breakfast.

Students at Spaulding for giving back all year-long by participating in career exploration and communities volunteer activities

...Gina O'Leary's class volunteered weekly preparing meals for the Salvation Army and making repairs, cleaning windows and helping with food preparation at the Pines Community in Northfield, as well as ringing the bells for the Salvation Army during the holidays. Denise Luneau's class cleaned the kitchen and dining room at the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen two days a week and for the holidays made blankets for the Salvation Army.



Spaulding students made blankets to donate to the Salvation Army.



Members of Spaulding Youth Center's Sunshine Society attending the 53rd Annual Celebration

...**Town of Northfield** for receiving the Arthur H. Nighswander Community Partner Award at Spaulding's 53rd Annual Celebration in recognition of the valuable community partnership between the Center and the Town in providing competent, courteous and helpful assistance throughout the planning and permitting phases for the new school building construction. Town Administrator Glen Smith noted, "We appreciate the recognition and are grateful to be reminded of the exceptional work that occurs at Spaulding Youth Center."

...**Members of the Spaulding Youth Center Sunshine Society** were recognized with the 8th annual 'You've got a Friend Award' for their philanthropic leadership in contributing significantly to the annual fund and making a difference in the lives of children. Sunshine Society members were serenaded by students expressing their thanks with the song 'You Are My Sunshine'.



**SPAULDING
YOUTH CENTER
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Dedication Celebration of the New School
■ Wednesday, June 13, 2012, 1pm-3pm



2011 Golf Tournament Winners: Southern New Hampshire Services Team
Spaulding Youth Center Foundation's 6th Annual Bette Davis Cup
Monday, June 4, 2012
Lochmere Golf & Country Club, Tilton, NH

For further information visit www.spauldingyouthcenter.org or contact
Gail Mayhew, 603-286-7500, gmayhew@spauldingyouthcenter.org