



SPRING 2022

every child deserves a childhood

VIRTUAL REALITY HEADSETS PROVE A GAME CHANGER

Technological advancements continue to positively impact special education, and Spaulding Academy students are experiencing this firsthand with the classroom integration of virtual reality (VR) headsets. Thanks to a generous grant from the Flutie Foundation in 2020, Spaulding Academy purchased ClassVR headsets, which were selected for their ability to use customized content to meet specific classroom and student needs.

The Spaulding VR implementation team includes Charley Suter, Digital Learning Specialist, and Jen Benjamin, Occupational Therapist. Using grant funds, they obtained additional equipment that enables them to create individualized content targeted to improve the classroom experience for Academy students.

"Our main ideas centered around physiological and sensory regulation, emotional regulation, skill-building, social interaction, and transitions (new places or experiences) - all of which tend to present significant challenges for our students," Suter explains. "After exploring the myriad ways of approaching each one with collaborative problem solving, we identified students and content creation strategies that would best fit their individual situations - to much success!"

One of these success stories includes a student with limited mobility who craves movement and speed. Suter spent a day filming 360-degree video content with Jason Sterner, Spaulding's Outdoor Education Coordinator. By uploading the footage to a ClassVR headset for him, the student has been able to virtually experience skiing, mountain biking, and ropes courses - on the same slopes, trails, and courses as his peers.

This is an exciting development for Spaulding and is positioning the organization as a leader in VR for special education. Todd Emmons, President & CEO/CFO, shares there has been much interest statewide and from the Flutie Foundation about Spaulding's successes. And Suter is leading the way on campus and beyond the state as an Avantis Ambassador, who provides input and ideas to the manufacturer, and as the Digital Learning Specialist Chair on the Board of Directors of the NH Society for Technology in Education.



CHECK OUT the full article here: bit.ly/classvr-spaulding

FOCUS ON NUTRITION: An Organizational Priority

Spaulding Academy & Family Services has always provided nutritious food to its children living and learning on campus. Food Services Manager Holly Rios consulted regularly with the Nursing staff and UNH Cooperative Extension to develop well-rounded menus. Now, she has a dedicated nutrition partner on campus with the recent hiring of Registered Dietitian Brittany Rozen, RDN, LD. The pair is collaborating closely on a variety of exciting new initiatives to further improve dietary options and integrate nutrition education campus wide.



Some changes have already been implemented, including removing high-sugar juice from the cottages and replacing it with fruit-infused water. Low-sugar yogurts and cereals have been substituted for the previously available high sugar options, and a new daily snack program at Spaulding Academy is providing children with healthy, less processed snacks. Examples include peanut butter and oat balls, fruit and yogurt parfaits, ants on a log, chocolate hummus with veggies, and homemade trail mix, and the children's feedback has been extremely positive.

Once the school expansion is complete, Holly and her team look forward to additional changes, including the possibility of offering a hot breakfast. Discussions are underway on how to safely reopen the salad bar and daily soup offering to provide even more variety and nutritious offerings. In addition, a campus community garden is in the early stages of development with the intention of integrating into the classroom. With a registered dietitian on campus, creative nutrition education plans are easier than ever to implement, and Spaulding staff is excited to help the children develop lifelong healthy eating habits.

TO LEARN MORE about Health and Wellness on campus, visit SpauldingServices.org/health

OUR MISSION: Supporting exceptional children and families toward a successful future.

SPRING 2022 *every child deserves a childhood*

SPAULDING ACADEMY Integrating Evidence-Based Practices

Spaulding Academy is currently implementing intensive educator training of the 22 High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms. These proven, research-based practices are recommended by the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Center and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). They offer practical strategies that are effective in inclusive classrooms.

The Academy's leadership is providing the training to staff to improve organizational flexibility and responsiveness to admit and successfully instruct students within integrated classrooms. Educators will soon be able to teach students with neurobehavioral, medically intensive, and intensive needs in the same classroom.

Based on a gap analysis, Academy leadership identified cognitive and metacognitive strategies (High Leverage Practice #14) as its starting point. The training also incorporates best practices promoted by the IRIS Center, a national organization that works to improve education outcomes for children using evidence-based practices and interventions.

This important instruction will expand opportunities for children and families while further developing educator skillsets. The Academy is proud of this forward-thinking approach and is grateful for the wonderful resources available to make it a reality.



TO LEARN MORE about Spaulding Academy, visit SpauldingServices.org/academic

FAMILY SERVICES Professional Development a Core Value

Spaulding Academy & Family Services is committed to providing ongoing training opportunities to its staff. The teams who support our families have already been enjoying a variety of in-person and virtual professional development events in 2022.

Nearly 30 members across the Behavioral Health and Individual Service Option (ISO) Foster Care Program teams participated in a Family Therapy Training Series with Ashleigh Mondoux, MSW, LICSW of Counseling Services of Keene in January and February.

The Residential, Behavioral Health, and ISO teams were invited to participate in a one-day, virtual direct care summit offered by the Association of Children's Residential & Community (ACRC) services in February. Those unable to attend online will be able to access the recorded training.

An eight-week Zoom training focused on the 3-5-7 Model[®] of providing grief support to children is also underway at this time.

These occasions for learning, collaboration, and skill development help Spaulding's Family Services staff members increase their capacity to successfully support the children and families with whom they work daily. With input from staff, Spaulding actively seeks applicable and timely trainings that deliver the most beneficial resources.



TO LEARN MORE about our dedication to professional development, visit SpauldingServices.org/credentials

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. Donate online at SpauldingServices.org/give



2. Mail a donation to 72 Spaulding Road Northfield, NH 03276



3. Contact the development office at 603-286-8901 ext. 107 or donate@SpauldingServices.org



Thank you for supporting the children and families of Spaulding Academy & Family Services

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 Lara Woytowich at 603-286-8901 ext. 133.

HEALTH SERVICES Expanded Campus Health Services Center Now Open

The Health Services team at Spaulding Academy & Family Services has a newly renovated, centralized location for its Health Services Center on the first floor of Williams Hall. Thanks to the hard work of the Spaulding Facilities team, the new Health Services Center has two large, well-designed rooms that allow for on campus medical treatment and lab testing.

The Health Center is equipped with the same supplies as a physician's office, including an examination table, hospital bed, and lab chair, which empowers the team to care for Spaulding's children on campus. It also helps lower anxiety levels for children when they visit medical providers off campus by normalizing the process in a familiar setting.

The entire Spaulding nursing staff is now located at the Health Services Center, including nurses trained to draw blood for lab testing.

Spaulding's lab services are certified with a CLIA waiver that allows the organization to perform certain lab tests, including COVID-19 and strep, speeding diagnosis and treatment for children without their leaving campus.

This comprehensive, one-stop Health Services Center is making a positive difference in the health care and comfort of Spaulding's children, and the Health Services Team is thrilled with this strategic and thoughtfully planned achievement.

TO LEARN MORE about Health and Wellness on campus, visit SpauldingServices.org/health



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT Making Impactful Connections: Nicole Keefe

It's been nearly four years since Nicole Keefe responded to a Spaulding Academy & Family Services job posting on Indeed.com seeking a paraprofessional - and she hasn't looked back. Nicole holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Studio Art from Saint Anselm College. She always enjoyed working with children and had a passion to help at-risk youth. After being hired as a paraprofessional, Nicole eventually moved to the switchboard for a year-and-a-half before transitioning to her current role as Board Liaison and Communications Specialist.

Nicole works closely with Spaulding's Board of Directors and leadership staff, including Todd Emmons, President & CEO/CFO (and fellow Anselmian), and the entire leadership team of the organization, providing vital support and offering valuable insights as she goes about her day-to-day tasks. In addition to supporting their work, Nicole assists with campus and event photography, graphic design projects, and development initiatives.

"I love the flexibility of Spaulding and its emphasis on having a work/life balance," Nicole says. "I've also built many wonderful, lifelong connections here, including meeting my best friend and roommate."

Nicole looks forward to evolving in her position as she expands her skillsets and takes on additional responsibilities. She feels energized by the important work happening at Spaulding and her bright future helping to advance its mission.

TO LEARN MORE about incredible Spaulding staff members, visit SpauldingServices.org/family



IT'S HAPPENING: Adaptive Playground in the Works!

Spaulding Academy & Family Services is excited to share an update on its fully adaptive playground which will provide everyone equal opportunities to play, interact, and just be kids. The final design plan is complete and is slated to be one of - if not THE - largest and most adaptive playgrounds in New England! Located behind Lambert Hall, the playground footprint will be larger than a football field. All playground equipment has been ordered and installation work should begin by the end of April. Additional details will follow - please stay tuned for updates and photos!



If you would like to contribute to our new adaptive playground, please visit SpauldingServices.org/give and choose Adaptive Playground for how to allocate your gift.