

Winter Carnival

LEARNING

Spaulding's annual Winter Carnival sled derby was a spectacular success this year, bringing together students and staff for an afternoon filled with excitement, creativity, and winter fun hosted by our amazing EChO Team.

With a survival theme guiding this year's designs, participants showcased an incredible array of sleds, including pirate ships, bomber airplanes, and Choose Love courage sleds. As each sled raced down the hill, testing its durability, speed, and ingenuity, the air was filled with cheers, laughter, and the spirit of friendly competition.

To warm up after the thrilling races, attendees enjoyed delicious hot cocoa and cookies, courtesy of our fantastic Food Services team. The event was a true celebration of community, creativity, and winter joy, leaving everyone with wonderful memories and eager anticipation for next year's derby!

Nicole Keefe
Board Liaison & Communications Specialist



Hearts

STUDENT ART

This month in the art room we have been making all sorts of Valentine's Day creations! We have practiced drawing hearts, cutting hearts, and of course made Valentine's Day cards. We also learned about Chris Uphues, an American artist who creates murals with a repeating theme of hearts with faces! We decided to create our own "heart arch" in the art room inspired by his murals. Pictured here is a collection of several students hearts.

Robyn Allen,
Art & Music Teacher



Reducing Added Sugars

NUTRITION

Daily sugar intake for children 2-18 years of age should be limited to a maximum of 6 teaspoons, or 25 grams of sugar per day. Rather than focusing on grams and teaspoons, focus on reducing added sugars by limiting products containing them.

Common Sources of Added Sugars:

Sugar-sweetened beverages (soda, fruit punch, energy drinks, some coffee and teas)
 Sweetened cereal
 Candy and chocolates
 Flavored yogurt
 Baked goods (cakes, cookies, snack cakes, pastries)
 Some that may surprise you...
 Granola bars, protein bars, cereal bars
 Instant oatmeal
 Frozen foods
 Pasta sauce
 Dried fruits, canned fruits, applesauce and fruit juices
 Baby foods
 Barbecue sauce, ketchup, salad dressing and other condiments

Benefits of reducing added sugars:

Improves oral health
 Supports weight management
 Can improve your mood and how you feel

Tips to reduce your intake:

Check product ingredients lists and Nutrition Facts, choose brands without added sugar
 Try using naturally sweet fruits and vegetables when baking
 For beverages, choose plain water and milk for children over 12 months
 Add fruit like orange, lemon or lime slices or fresh herbs like mint to water for extra flavor.
 Watch your portion when you do treat yourself to dessert. The serving size for a brownie or piece of cake is the size of a dental floss container. The serving size for ice cream is ½ of a baseball.

Lesley Robie, RDN, LD, CNSC
 Registered Dietitian

Source: American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Courage on the High Ropes Course

The EChO and Residential departments collaborated in the fall to host two high ropes days for Spaulding's Residential students. Over 30 students were able to spend a whole day rock climbing, swinging, and conquering the high ropes elements while showing tremendous courage and support for their peers. Many of the students had never been able to climb on a rock wall or high ropes course before and were uplifted by all the students and staff present. Students acted as a team throughout the day, especially during the group activities like the 'swing shot' and 'flying Squirrel' where they lock into the rope and hoist other students into the air. High Ropes Day proved to be a courageous, collaborative, and fulfilling event for both students and staff which would not have been possible without the amazing support of Spaulding's EChO program, Residential staff, and weekend supervisor, Tonya Splett. We are hoping to continue collaborating with the EChO program for winter activities like sledding, skiing, and snowshoeing.

Hannah Hayes,
 Residential Milieu Counselor



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Training from Within

Clinicians have been working with our supervisors to identify new trainings that will continue to enhance our knowledge base, and to better serve the community we work with. In a recent clinical collaboration meeting, Sarah Smolen, Clinician, provided the team with a training on wellness and how to avoid burnout when working in a helping field. The training included activities to help de-stress and identify a community, as well as information on how to spot warning signs of burnout before they happen. The Clinical team, with support from our supervisors and Family Services Leadership, has been working to create an internal student-teams meeting to collaborate on cases and identify different approaches and treatment options that may be present for identified students. This has been a great way to offer and receive case feedback and grow our treatment for the clients we serve.

Liz Lowrey, M.S. CMHC
Behavioral Health Clinician

CLINICAL



Continuing Education

Recently the Behaviorists embarked on an exciting journey to New Orleans, where we had the privilege of attending the 19th Annual Autism Conference hosted by Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI). The weekend was not only enriching, filled with insightful speakers, but also a wonderful chance to connect with fellow Behaviorists. We enjoyed meaningful conversations, shared delicious meals, and experienced moments of true team bonding. We are genuinely excited to bring back the knowledge and connections we've gained, and we're grateful to Spaulding for providing us with this incredible opportunity. Thank you for helping us grow as a community dedicated to making a difference.

Nicole Hilliker,
Behavior Specialist

BEHAVIORAL



Strengthening Supports

Change brings opportunity, and with transitions come learning and growth! Recently, our Case Managers officially became Permanency Specialists, marking an important shift in how we support the individuals and families we serve.

This transition was driven by a commitment to building stronger, more consistent relationships – both within our teams and with the families we work with. By minimizing the number of individuals on a case team and ensuring that the same Permanency Specialist remains involved from start to finish, we are creating a more seamless and supportive experience for those in our care.

With an increase in referrals and shortened residential stays, our focus has shifted toward permanency and aftercare. To enhance this effort, Permanency Specialists have been given reduced caseloads, allowing them to dedicate more time to building meaningful connections with families.

Additionally, the Permanency department will continue expanding its expertise, attending trainings alongside Clinicians and our ISO team. This collaborative learning approach ensures that all team members grow their skillsets together, further strengthening our ability to provide high-quality, comprehensive support.

By embracing these changes, we are reinforcing our commitment to permanency and ensuring that every individual we work with receives the best possible care and continuity.

Liz Lowrey, M.S. CMHC
Behavioral Health Clinician

PERMANENCY



Choose Love Talent Show

On Friday, February 14th, Spaulding hosted its annual Choose Love Talent Show, filling the room with joy, encouragement, and endless support. Held on Valentine's Day, the event truly embodied the spirit of love – love for self-expression, love for creativity, and love for our incredible students.

Students from both our residential and day school programs took the stage, demonstrating incredible courage as they performed in front of a packed crowd. Among the many special guests were Scarlett Lewis and Shannon Desilets from Choose Love, who joined in celebrating our students' talents.

From singing and dancing to comedy acts and even a blind taste test, the performances showcased the diverse skills and creativity of our students. Every act was met with cheers and applause, creating an uplifting atmosphere where students felt supported and celebrated.

The Choose Love Talent Show was more than just a performance—it was a reminder of the power of community, confidence, and connection. We are so proud of our students for stepping onto the stage and sharing their gifts with us all!

Nicole Keefe,
Board Liaison & Communications Specialist

RESIDENTIAL

