



Spring 2021

Coming out of COVID

What a whirlwind of a year it has been! COVID has changed the landscape of so many things and by no means are we at the end of our journey, but I do see a sunrise on the horizon.

I joined Growing Places in early December, during the peak of the pandemic. Being home with my children for that previous summer made me stop to think about the most important things in my life. Although we were in the midst of a global pandemic and the world around us was “shut down”, my eyes became open to the things that had been taken for granted and slipped through my fingers for the past years. My family was forced to spend the quality time together that we needed and we were out enjoying the natural wonders of our surroundings. We enjoyed daily walks and time playing in the woods while the ocean and lakes became our playground.

Throughout those summer months I was reminded of my roots and what truly is important in my children’s lives, which is family and nature. I began to think about this in relation to my career and what I wanted for myself and my family for the years to come. When I learned about the Executive Director position at Growing Places I felt like the vision for myself and my family had come full circle. The philosophy and atmosphere at Growing Places were exactly what I needed in not only in my professional career but for myself as a person.

When professionals apply and interview for positions a certain amount of “selling yourself” has to happen. Although I listed my qualifications and previous experiences, I decided I was going to do less selling of myself and just be honest about who I am and what I was looking for in my life. Needless to say I was thrilled when I learned I would have the opportunity to join the Growing Places community.

Early Education and Youth Recreation

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Each week that passes I am thankful to be part of an organization that thrives on caring for each other, their community and their natural environment. Joining Growing Places was the beginning of my personal sunrise and turning point for coming out of COVID. With 88% of our staff vaccinated, our children spending more time outside, staffing and enrollment ramping up, Growing Places' sunrise is on the horizon.

Rest



Amanda Toupin, M.Ed.

Executive Director

Growing Places Early Education and Care



*Amanda with her wife Caitlin and children;
Callie and Emma (14), Paxton (6) and Brody (3)*

***Special thanks to our Board Members for all of
their support!***

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President; Brian Veroneau, Treasurer; Erin
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What's Up at Woodside

At our Woodside location we have been working hard behind the scenes to finish up our ASQ assessments for each child and get them out to the parents. We were excited to meet with some of our families last week at our parent teacher conferences. We do look forward to being able to meet in person again rather than via Zoom!

Over the next few months the curriculum will encompass the warmer weather and the many changes that spring brings including more outside time. The children have already begun to plant a few spring crops of sugar snap peas and carrots. They will continue to plant and maintain the garden beds throughout the spring. Fingers crossed that the first crop will be ready for eating before the school year comes to a close. Being able to offer many of our indoor activities outside in the nicer weather gives the children a whole new experience. We also recently purchased some new outdoor equipment to challenge each child's skills and keep them moving.

Shane Krafton

Program Director –Woodside

Operations

I am so happy the warmer weather is here and we are gearing up for Summer! Our summer programs are filling up and are so excited to see lots of returning kiddos! We made the switch to Procure for our tuition billing this spring. It went well and hope to utilize more of their features for families soon!

Sarah Nason

Operations Manager



Playing at Pinkham

Pinkham is in the midst of some springtime explorations. The past week Preschool has been observing caterpillars in their classroom in hopes to see first hand the process of caterpillar to butterfly. Our center has also been exploring with dirt and seeds. PreK is even growing their own grass! We have also welcomed Tracey to our Pinkham community. She joined our Infant team and has been loving every minute, getting to know all of our smiley babies. June 21st marks the first day of our summer program! Many of your children will be making the transition to their next classroom at that time. We are also starting to welcome new families that will be joining our Growing Places community, which means new friends!

Bailey Coish

Program Director—Pinkham



Our Time Updates

Move over Uhaul because Our Time kiddos are the new moving experts in town! We have relocated from Moharimet to Oyster River High School, over to Mast Way, and now finally back home to Moharimet! We have said goodbye to staff and welcomed new teachers and caregivers. I am constantly amazed by the resilience of the students at Our Time as they face countless changes. These children are adaptable, hysterical, creative, and highly intelligent! This spring we are looking forward to a multitude of enrichment opportunities. We look forward to using the beautiful outdoor spaces that Moharimet has to offer to create bird feeders, identify trees and flowers, and play on the playground. We also look forward to S.T.E.M opportunities such as creating a tiny boat that can float on water, constructing a dam, and building a habitat for a bird. We also look forward to some spring inspired art activities such as drawing a still life of flowers, creating a seascape, and making impressions in clay with natural objects. As always, Our Time also values that each child is a student and we will continue to offer ample time to complete homework if needed. We are happy to be home!

Erin Evans

School Age Program Director



Want to get involved?!!

Growing Places has many opportunities to support our programs!! Whether it is through a monetary donation, volunteering, donation of goods or services, or being an advocate for early education, your involvement is essential in the success of our organization. For more info contact Emily Kluun at emilykluun@growingplacesnh.org

Marketing and Outreach

Save the Date for Growing Places first Virtual 5K for PLAY! June 24-28th get outside with your family to run, walk, or bike while supporting play-based learning at Growing Places. Follow us on Facebook @growingplacesnh for updates, suggested routes, and more information.

And speaking of Facebook... in April we launched a new #MeettheTeamTuesday series. Each week we will be highlighting one of our incredible educators, program directors and behind the scenes staff, so that you can learn a little bit more about who we are, and we love Growing Places!

Emily Kluun

Director of Marketing and Outreach



Thank you to our sponsors!!! Your support is essential in the success of our organization!!



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