



Spring 2023

Hello Growing Places Supporters!

All of our sites have been embracing the spring weather. Mud season is arguably the most exciting season for our kiddos. Our mud kitchens are in use, our feet are bare and our creativity is in full swing. One of the best parts of my day is observing children play and be fully embraced outside. I am always in awe of how peaceful and busy they all are while exploring nature. There is so much problem solving, collaboration and communication that happens in their play. I encourage everyone to take a moment and observe children in nature. I think you will be surprised how inspiring their play can be.

In this Spring 2023 edition of the GP newsletter we are featuring our board members. These folks volunteer their time to help our organization meet goals and fulfill our mission. All of our members have utilized Growing Places for their own children and have a committed interest in helping our kids thrive. Without their commitment we could not do the work that we do.

Enjoy,

Amanda Toupin, M.Ed.

Executive Director

Growing Places Early Education and Youth Recreation

Early Education and Youth Recreation

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Durham | Lee | Madbury



Meet the Growing Places Board of Directors

Our board of directors is committed to carrying out the mission of Growing Places. They are responsible for planning and policy decisions, for financial stability and development, and for the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the work of the organization.

Alyssa O'Brien

GP Board President



I am a resident of Durham NH and a Clinical Associate Professor of Nursing at UNH with a background in family and pediatric nursing. A graduate of UNH in 2003, I have always considered the Oyster River community home. As a member of the GP Board since 2018, I have been in many roles including secretary, vice-president, and for the last few months, president. However, I have been a GP parent for even longer. My oldest son George, is currently enrolled in the Our Time after school program, but began as a preschooler in Durham. My youngest son Henry, is in the Pre-K classroom in Durham but began as an infant at our Lee location. As a Board member I know that Growing Places works hard to ensure safe and engaging learning environments, has high standards for teaching and administrative staff, and values a collaborative relationship with our Growing Places Families. As a parent of GP kiddos I know that I honestly trust my kids teachers and have kids who are thriving, learning, and socializing while feeling supported and happy! As a nurse and as an educator I know that Growing Places offers developmentally appropriate programming that meets the social-emotional, cognitive, and physiological needs of children across age groups and classrooms. As a family focused non-profit we value the engagement of Growing Places families and the community, it is because of this collaboration that Growing Places has been able to provide such fantastic programming for children for so many years.

I live in Wakefield NH with my husband and three children ages 16, 11, and 8. I am currently a second grade teacher at our local Elementary school. My journey with GP began in 2004 when I took the program director position at the Durham location. Over my almost 20 years with GP I held several positions including, program director at both the Lee and Durham locations, education coordinator, and early childhood educator for few years. Being in so many different roles gives me a unique perspective as a board member. Adding one more layer to that perspective is that all three of my children were in care with Growing Places from infancy through school age. My love of GP and my desire to provide families with the quality care they need and deserve has drawn me to stay with the organization as a board member. I look forward to meeting our new families and I can't wait to see some of the many families I worked so closely with over the years.

Shane Krafton

GP Vice President



Leigh Perret

GP Board Secretary



Hi! My daughter, Charlotte started at Growing Places in 2015. She and her sister, Alexandra, established strong friendships during their time at the Durham location. They loved walking to the Book to Art program and swim lessons. They now love volunteering at Growing Places events! I enjoy learning from the other board members, and working with Amanda, Sarah, and the administrative staff to solve the many challenges of early childhood care. One of my favorite things about being on the board is the opportunity to give back to the community where my children thrived.

Earl Murphy

GP Board Treasurer



Hello! I live in Lee with my wife, Audra, and our two kiddos. Both are enrolled at the Lee location. Cora (4) has been at Growing Places since she was 2 years old and William (2) since he was 4 months old. I have served on the GP Board of Directors for two years and I am currently the treasurer. My background is in finance and economics, and I currently work for Salesforce, a large software company.

Kathryn Mone

GP Board Member

I am a past board president, who took a hiatus before recently returning to the Board. My two sons age 12 and 9 attended prek and preschool at the Durham location and then various school age programs. The Mone family has valued the positive impact that Growing Places staff has had on their family and is happy to be part of the continued involvement in the organization's success. I am looking forward to the upcoming 5k, partnering with Durham Rec, meeting new GP families and reconnecting with alumni families.



Greg Merrell

GP Board Member



I was born and raised in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. I have a background in construction, property management, and real estate development. In July 2021, my wife, Rachel, our two children, and I moved from Wyoming to Madbury. Josie (5) is a Growing Places alum and currently in Kindergarten at Moharimet. Pierce (2) is in preschool at the Durham location. Impressed by the teachers and program at Growing Places, I was happy to join the board in February of this year and am looking forward to helping with oversight of the construction project at the Lee location and becoming more involved with the Growing Places community. I enjoy wood working, skiing, restoring antique furniture and spending time outdoors with my family.

Andy Welch

GP Board Member



I have been a member of the Durham community since 2020 after living in the seacoast for most of my life. My daughters, ages 4yrs and 2yrs attend prek and preschool at the Durham location. My youngest daughter is in the infant room at the Lee location. My family and I enjoy regular visits to the library and taking outdoor walks on the many trails around town. I am an avid golfer, enjoy playing baseball, cooking and love checking out local restaurants. With a family background in education, I am committed to furthering the Growing Places mission and ensuring the best environment for learning.



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



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FRIDAY
JUNE 2, 2023
6:00PM
OYSTER RIVER
HIGH SCHOOL

Race shirts for first 100 5k
registrants to sign up by April 21st

\$10 Tideline gift card given to
first 200 5K registrants

Post race awards and after party
at Tideline Public House

We are excited to be partnering with Durham Parks and Recreation on the first ever Durham Day Dash! Runners and walkers of all ages and abilities are welcome and encouraged to participate! The race will be run on a certified 5K course with the start and finish at Oyster River High School. There will be a Mini Dash 1/2 miler and Mini Dash 1 miler for our younger runners and families. After the race, join us at Tideline Public House for awards & post race after party!

Sign Up at

<https://runsignup.com/Race/NH/Durham/DurhamDayDash5k>

