



SPRING-MAR COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

Panda Post



Issue No. 10 | Sept. 2025

from the DIRECTOR

It's time for another fun school year at Spring-Mar!

Our cooperative model, play-based curriculum, and incredible community keeps families and staff coming back. I'm excited for you and the children in our community to experience the adventures of this school year.

It can be easy during the busyness of daily life with little ones this time of year to get bogged down in logistics, to-do lists, and expectations—often with limited time and sleep and an ever-changing landscape of needs and commitments. You might be intimidated by the co-oping role, worried about how your child is adjusting, or simply overwhelmed.

I hope you'll take some time during these first few weeks to enjoy some of the little moments. Engage in play with the children when you are co-oping, reflect with your child about one silly thing they did at school, connect with another parent who is on this crazy parenting ride with you. Take advantage of our community as a resource for your child and yourself. And enjoy!

Learning through play is not just for the kids—it's how we grow and learn as well!



Sara Mitcho

Director, 2025-2026

IMPORTANT DATES

- SEPT. 23 NO SCHOOL
- SEPT. 27 **Family Fun Day**
- OCT. 2 NO SCHOOL
- OCT. 13 NO SCHOOL
- OCT. 18 **Bake Sale**
- OCT. 20 NO SCHOOL
- OCT. 28-29 **Fall photos**
- OCT. 30-31 **Halloween Parades**

SOCIAL MEDIA



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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



WELCOME BACK to another wonderful and fun-filled year at Spring-Mar!

For those who don't know me, my name is Briana. This is my first year as Board President, for which I'm very excited! I will do my best to do justice to our fantastic former President, Chelsi!

This is also my third year at Spring-Mar. My son graduated last year and my daughter is starting this year. I'm looking forward to her getting to enjoy Spring-Mar as much as my son and I have, and getting to know all of you and your kids!

A few quick reminders to set you up for a successful year:

- Check and DOUBLE-check the co-op calendar!
- You MUST be available to be called in on your scheduled on-call days.
- You cannot swap or cover someone's co-opping day when you are also scheduled as the on-call family.
- Always, always, ALWAYS read the Panda Post newsletter! It is how we communicate all our important information, noteworthy dates, and upcoming events.

I fell in love with Spring-Mar my first year, and am excited for everyone to become part of this amazing community. Spring-Mar is truly a gem; we have the most wonderful teachers and staff, and all of our members put so much into making it an amazing place for our kids to learn and grow!

I hope you will all become a part of the community and have as many wonderful experiences as my family and I have had over the years. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions!



Briana Raines
President, 2025-2026

Fall Photo Day



Get those smiles
ready for our
fall photo day!

Tuesday, October 28
(Explorers A, Pioneers,
and Inventors A & B)

Wednesday, October 29
(Explorers B and Navigators A & B)



MEMBER
SPOTLIGHT
AWARD



Every month, the board votes to recognize a member of our school who has gone above and beyond.

This month, our Member Spotlight is on

Kristin Wallace

from the Hospitality Committee! As a dedicated member of the Hospitality Committee, Kristin jumped right in to help with our first event of the year, the teacher move-in lunch. We are so grateful for her flexibility and timely support, which were key to making the event a success and showing our teachers how much we appreciate them. Thanks, Kristin, for making Spring-Mar such a wonderful place to be!

-Board of Directors

Spring-Mar Presents

FAMILY FUN DAY & PICNIC

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025
10 AM - NOON

10125 Lakehaven Ct, Burke, VA 22015

Learning Through Play

Current members, we need your help to make this a successful event! Sign up to help!

tinyurl.com/Family-Fun-Day-2025



Order pizza to have as your picnic!

RAFFLE for a reserved parking space for the 2025-2026 school year! Pre-order and Pay here:

tinyurl.com/Panda-Packs-2025

We're placing our first Scholastic book order of the year!
Orders are due by Sunday, September 28, 2025.



Every order earns points to help us get free books and supplies for Spring-Mar!

Order from Ms. Mitcho's online book club here: <https://orders.scholastic.com/H664Z>

Books will be sent home with your child about two weeks after the deadline.

Want more options? Browse all flyers by age here: <https://clubs.scholastic.com/all-flyers/>

Thanks for supporting our school and encouraging reading!

Still Enrolling for 2025-26!



We have limited openings in **Explorers A, Navigators** and **Inventors B (3-day)** for the current school year!

While Pioneers and Inv A are currently full, we welcome applications for the waitlist. Please help spread the word—whether you're at the park, playground, gym, or community classes!

We're accepting:

- **2-3 year olds** (1 spot left! Birthday between October 1, 2022 – September 8, 2023)
- **3-4 year olds** (birthdays between July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)
- **4-5 year olds** (birthdays between October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021)

Play School



Have you heard about our Playschool?

Do you or someone you know have a 12-24 month old child born between September 7, 2023 – September 15, 2024?

Are you looking for a way to introduce your child to school with you alongside them?

Spring-Mar's playschool is a parent and child class that meets for an hour and a half on Monday mornings. Participants experience a shortened Spring-Mar day full of activities and fun. Registration for the 2025-2026 school year is open now for our 11:00am-12:30pm class!

For more information or to get on our email list about registration, please email playschool@spring-mar.org.

PARENT ED CONNECTION

As a reminder, ALL CO-OPING ADULTS are REQUIRED to complete **4 hours** of parent education each year. Each month, you will find some highlighted resources right here in the Panda Post! These will address specific topics our school wants to emphasize and are a great way to complete this requirement.

Megan Brown
Parent Education Coordinator

Resources

- [Unruffled Podcast by Janet Lansbury](#)
- [@BigLittleFeelings](#)



WE'D LOVE YOUR FEEDBACK!

If Spring-Mar Cooperative Preschool has been a special part of your family's journey, please take a moment to leave us a review! Your stories and support help other families discover our warm, nurturing community.

👉 [Leave a Google Review](#)

👉 [Leave a Yelp Review](#)

Thank you for being part of the Spring-Mar family! ❤️



SCHOLASTIC ONLINE!

Spring-Mar subscribes to Scholastic Big World magazine. Did you know that in addition to the print issues we send home with our students, they have **extra online content** for each edition, including **videos, games, and fun lessons**?

Simply [click here](#) to visit the special editions page! You can also view past issues through the navigation tabs.

Follow the prompts, selecting 'Log In', then select 'I am a student', and enter Spring-Mar's class code, which will be provided by your class teacher!

Enjoy exploring and learning with your little one!

SEPTEMBER



Back to school with sunny skies, crisp fall air, outdoor fun, and the joy of reuniting with old friends while making new ones - the perfect start to a new school year!



Meet the Teachers



Sara Mitcho
Director

Hi! My name is Sara Mitcho, but the kids call me "Ms. Mitcho." Our days at Spring-Mar are busy and you'll often see me in the office or moving around the school to help in various ways, but

please feel free to come to me with questions or concerns or just to say hello! It's important to me that I can be a resource to you!



Claire Read
Teacher - Inventors B

Hi! My name is Claire Read (Ms. Claire) and this is my fifth year as a lead teacher at Spring-Mar. I'm excited to be teaching the Inventors B class this year! With a background in science, I love

to do experiments with the classes and explore science topics with the kids in fun and new ways. I look forward to the new school year!



Marisa Dittmer
Teacher - Navigators B

Hello! My name is Marisa Dittmer (Ms. Marisa) and I am thrilled to be the Navigators B teacher this year! It's my first year as a teacher at Spring-Mar after a long teaching hiatus.

I'm so happy to be back in the classroom! As a former Spring-Mar parent, it's wonderful to be welcomed back into this supportive community!



Alison Heald-Webb
Teacher - Inventors A

Hi, I'm Alison Heald-Webb (Ms. Alison) and this is my fifth year as a lead teacher at Spring-Mar, and my first teaching the Pre-K class.

I love to sing and play ukulele both at home

and all around our beautiful school.



Sarah Abernathy
Teacher - Navigators A

Hi! My name is Sarah (Ms. Sarah) and I am super excited to start my fifth year teaching at Spring-Mar. After spending all my years in the blue room, I am moving to the green room this year to teach

Navigators A. In my free time, I love reading, and I can't wait to share some amazing books with my class this year!



Elli Davou
Teacher - Pioneers

Hi! My name is Elli and I am very excited to teach the Pioneers class this year! Although this is my first year as a teacher at Spring-Mar, I've been part of this wonderful community since 2019, when

my oldest daughter joined playschool. I'm excited to step into this new role and look forward to a school year filled with laughter, learning, and lots of play!

Meet the Teachers



Emily Chitnis
Teacher - Explorers A & B

Hi! I'm Emily Chitnis, and I'm looking forward to teaching the Explorers classes this year! I love getting to know all of the amazing Spring-mar families and watching the kids explore and grow.



Michelle Brenner
Playschool Leader

Hello! My name is Ms. Michelle (aka Miss Chelle given to me by some of my former kiddos.) I have taught Navigators for a year and Pre K Inventors for the last three years. This year I will be

facilitating the playschool class so I can spend more time at home with my new puppy. Playschool is near and dear to me since it is where both my boys started their journey of learning at Spring-Mar. I will be popping in to sub throughout the year and look forward to seeing familiar and new faces!



Patti Barber
Art Teacher & Aide

Hello! My name is Patti Barber, and I have been teaching in the Art room since 2005. In my room, you'll find the best homemade play doh, lots of glitter, and kids getting messy creating fun, artistic

projects. I'm excited for another great year creating memories with the Spring-Mar families.



Laura Davis
Movement Teacher & Aide

Hi! My name is Ms. Laura and I am excited to be the Movement teacher and Tuesday/Wednesday aide. This is my third year teaching at Spring Mar. I can't wait to jump, wiggle, move, and groove

with all the classes! I'm looking forward to having fun and getting creative with all the kids this year.



Linda Cooper
Music Teacher

On a rainy day 44 years ago, I was parent helper in the block room with a "frisky" group. I peeled off the DO NOT PLAY tape on Spring-Mar's piano and got the kids to start singing easy songs with me.

The Director came in and suggested I try out for the music job and made that one of the best days of my life!



Liza Strydom
Aide

Hello! My name is Liza Strydom and I will be the Monday, Thursday and Friday aide this year. I love to read and do all kinds of crafty things as well as spending time with young children, so

Spring-Mar is a very happy place for me. I am looking forward to seeing all the returning families again and also meeting all the new ones.

2025 - 2026 Board of Directors

..... **Executive Board**



Briana Raines
President



Kayla Wilkinson
Vice President



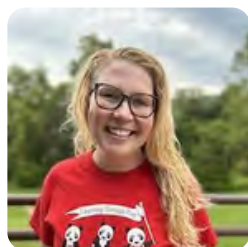
Tara Wyzik
Treasurer



Caitlin Quincy
Secretary

Spring-Mar's Director serves on the Board of Directors as a "non-voting member".

..... **Committee Chairs**



Alexis Centers
Hospitality



Aisha Toor
Hospitality



Brittany Clark
Human Resources



Puneet Kaur
*Marketing &
Communications*



Thien Huong Ton
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Communications*



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Membership



Adam King
Membership



Emily Cottrell
Property



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Property



Jamie Farley
Special Events



Audrey Smith
Special Events

In the Neighborhood



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