



SPRING-MAR COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

Panda Post

Learning Through Play



Issue No. 19 | MAY 2026

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Spring-Mar Families,

As we wrap up another wonderful year, I just wanted to thank each and every one of you - all of our staff and families. My first year as President has been a whirlwind, and I have even more appreciation for the time, energy, and dedication that all of you put in to making our school such a special place for our children to learn and grow.

To our families, thank you for everything you've done to help support our classrooms and community. Every one of your contributions, big and small, helps to create the welcoming, supportive environment that defines Spring-Mar.

I hope that your children had a wonderful time this school year! If you are returning, we can't wait to see you again next year. If you are graduating, we will miss you and are excited for your children and families to move on to new adventures!

To our teachers, thank you for the care, patience, and enthusiasm you bring each day. Your guidance, encouragement, and love for our children make a lasting impact and are deeply appreciated by all of us.

It has been a joy to watch our children flourish through the friendships, learning, and sense of community we build together. Thank you all for being such an important part of our cooperative family!



Briana Raines

IMPORTANT DATES!

- May 21 Inventors Graduation
- May 22 End of Year Celebration
- June 1-5 Summer Camp
- June 7 End of Year Work Party

THANKS FOR ANOTHER WONDERFUL YEAR, SPRING-MAR!





from the DIRECTOR

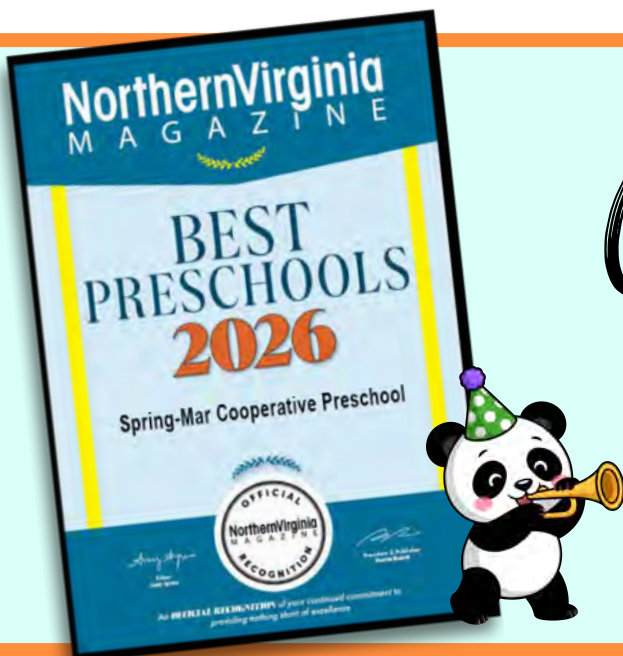
May is often busy and packed with end of school year tasks to remember. Many of us are looking ahead to the summer months when we might enjoy some well-deserved rest and warm weather adventures.

Summer is a perfect time to work in some unstructured play and make space for your child's growth and your relationship with them. As you plan out your vacations, fun outings, and time outdoors, I encourage you to work in some of these moments as well:

- **Open-ended invitations to explore:** Set out some supplies or loose parts and see what your child comes up with. Don't overthink or overplan! Resist the urge to focus on or control the outcome. Take photos and document the process and the time together and remind yourself that the process is the product!
- **Moments of curiosity:** Wonder together about why things fall, what floats, what happens when you mix colors or materials together. Voice your own curiosity out loud and your child will follow.
- **Judgement-free opportunities to develop independence and skills:** Day-to-day tasks like wiping down the table, sweeping the floor, and matching socks can be fun for young children. Practicing self-care tasks like zipping zippers, fastening buttons, and putting on shoes can go a long way in fostering independence. Resist the urge to reclean the table your child already cleaned in front of your child or fix the missed button on their shirt. Their sense of accomplishment will encourage them and they will master the little details in time.
- **Time to be heard:** Give your child a few extra seconds to share their thoughts. Instead of jumping in to respond, ask them a follow up question and give them even more time to share. Take advantage of these rare unrushed summer moments!

Summer can offer a few extra moments of unstructured time, more daylight hours, and more opportunities to slow down and enjoy time with your child. While we can't entirely escape everyday demands and stresses, I hope this summer is full of lots of little wonderful moments!

Sara Mitcho



Congratulations!

Spring-Mar was named as one of **Northern Virginia Magazine's 2026 Best Day Cares and Preschools!** The list will be on newsstands July 24, 2026.

Thanks to everyone who voted!



This year, we proudly present the **Golden Bamboo Award** to

Alexis Centers



Our incredible hospitality chair, Alexis, has been a reliable cornerstone of our community for years—both as class parent for multiple classes and through coordinating countless events. Her consistent presence and dedication have been something we could always count on.

Thank you, Alexis, for all you've done for Spring-Mar!

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:

Carly Onopa

We want to extend a huge thank you to Carly Onopa for her incredible efforts in making our recent Teacher Appreciation Lunch a resounding success! Her dedication and hard work allowed our teachers to truly relax and feel celebrated. Thank you, Carly, for your generous spirit and for all you do to support our preschool community

Larissa Rosenberg

Larissa Rosenberg has been a big help on all of our in-person events this year, including entertaining as Pickles the Panda, jumping in to make things happen; cook, clean, bake, sell - whatever we needed, she was there! Thank you, Larissa!

Sincerely, - the Board of Directors



Inventors Class Field Trip to Frying Pan Farm



**WE'RE
HIRING!**

PRESCHOOL TEACHER WANTED FOR 2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR

Do you have a passion for teaching young children? Do you enjoy working in an organization that respects every individual and believes in learning through play? Do you enjoy involving parents in your teaching and classroom?

Spring-Mar is seeking a part-time teacher for the following position:

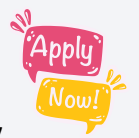
2 days/week - 2-3 year olds

**Working hours are 8:45 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Tuesdays and Thursdays**



Candidates should be flexible, organized, and enjoy working as part of a team. Experience in early childhood education is preferred.

These are great opportunities to work in an environment that fosters caring, collaboration, and creativity. **If interested, send your resume to hr@spring-mar.org.**



Still Enrolling for 2026-2027



We have limited openings in most classes for the upcoming school year. Explorers currently has plenty of openings, so please help spread the word—whether you're at the park, playground, gym, or community classes!

We're accepting:



2-3 year olds
(birthdays between: October 1, 2023 – September 15, 2024)



3-4 year olds
(birthdays between: May 1, 2023 – November 30, 2023)

Have you heard about our Playschool?

Do you have a child who will be 12-24 months old in September? 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 2026-2027 school year opens this summer. For more information or to get on our email list about registration, please email playschool@spring-mar.org.

ALL SCHOOL summer PLAY DATES

- Thursday, June 11 | 10 AM-12 PM**
New Members Playdate
📍 Spring-Mar Lower
New families meet and mingle! Returning members welcome to join and say hi.
- Saturday, June 13 | 10:30 AM-12:30 PM**
All-School Playdate
📍 Burke Lake Park –
Playground near Picnic Shelter A
Shaded playground, restrooms, and fun extras like a train and ice cream.
- Saturday, July 18 | 4 PM-6 PM**
All-School Playdate
📍 Huntsman Lake Playground
(off Dorothy Lane, Springfield)
A cozy, shaded playground—
perfect for summer fun!
- Thursday, August 6 | 2PM-4 PM**
All-School Playdate
📍 Clifton Historic Playground
(off Chapel Rd, Historic Clifton)
Wrap up the summer at this charming spot
near shops and Peterson's Ice Cream!
- Thursday, September 3 | 10AM-12PM** **Popsicle Playdate** 📍 Spring Mar Lower Playground



WE'D LOVE YOUR FEEDBACK!

If you've enjoyed your time with us, a quick review on Google, Yelp, or Facebook helps other families feel confident choosing our school. Many new families join after hearing from current or past parents, so **your personal recommendation means a lot.** If someone you know is exploring preschools, sharing your experience—or leaving a short review—helps our small community grow. *Thank You*



Community Hours



REMINDER

Don't forget to log your community hours! Each family is required to complete **8 hours** for the **Spring semester** by **May 22**. Not sure where to help? Reach out to your committee chairs—there are always opportunities to earn hours!

Have any questions? Contact Caitlin at: secretary@spring-mar.org.



END OF YEAR WORK PARTY

Toy cleaning! Paint Scraping! Mulch leveling! Dirt scrubbing! And so much more!

June 7
2:30-5:30

Sign up today!

All Spring-Mar families are required to attend at least one Work Party each school year.



MAY



Our kids have been having so much fun learning, exploring, and making memories together this month! From creative activities to outdoor play and special classroom moments, there has been plenty of laughter and excitement all around.



CONGRATS

happy GRADUATION



We're excited to celebrate the achievements of our **Inventors classes**

Date: Thursday, May 21st

Time: 11:30am (arrive as early as 11:15am)

Location: The sanctuary (upstairs) at Spring-Mar

Duration: Approximately 30 minutes

At the end of the ceremony, **graduating students will be dismissed to their families** to continue the celebration.

Explorers A and **Pioneers** classes will have a **regular school day**.

We look forward to honoring our young graduates and hope you and your families will join us for this special occasion!

All Spring-Mar families are invited to join us for a special

End of Year Celebration

on Friday, May 22nd, from 9:30AM -11:30AM

Instead of our regular class schedule, come enjoy a morning of outdoor fun with the Spring-Mar staff! Activities will include:

Games, Bubbles, Balloon animals...and more!

*Please note: **Children must be accompanied and supervised by a parent or guardian at all times.***

While our official event wraps up at 11:30 AM, families are welcome to **bring a picnic or snacks** and stay to enjoy time with their Spring-Mar friends.

We can't wait to celebrate another fun-filled year with you!



The **Rita's Ice & Custard Truck** will be at Spring-Mar from **10:00 AM to 11:30 PM!** Graduates and all staff will receive a ticket for one free treat. All other guests are welcome to purchase their own.



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2026 SPRING-MAR GRADUATES!



'WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?'

"a mom"
– Stella

"an astronaut"
– Harliv

"a tooth fairy"
– Lizzie

"a race car driver"
– Mikaal

"a veterinarian, writer,
artist, and teacher"
– Cecilia

(wants to work at an ice cream
shop and the paper)
– John

"a gardener
or planter"
– Irida

"a teacher
and a mom"
– Raya

"a mom"
– Iris

"a teacher, ballet dancer,
singer and performer"
– Mehrish

(wants to work
at a toy store)
– Enzo

(wants to work
at a fish store)
– Clara

"a veterinarian"
– Adelyn

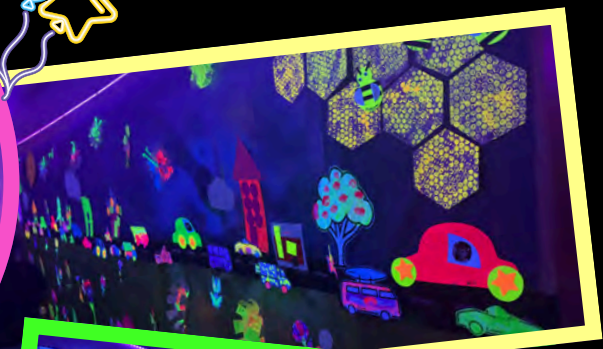
"an astronaut
and a mom"
– Devin

"an astronaut and an
ice cream man"
– Russell

(wants to work at
a donut shop)
– Ryan

Glow & Show Art Night

Our Spring-Mar teachers and little artists have been hard at work and created a wondrous, glowing world of flowers, bugs, jellyfish, and even launched into space. Lots of fun was had as families enjoyed snacks and a dazzling show!



In the Neighborhood



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- NEWBORN
- FAMILY
- SENIOR
- WEDDING

Owned by a former Spring-Mar parent & our school portrait photographer!
www.lovestruckimages.com



Rita's Ice Truck is serving up delicious Italian Ice and Frozen Custard throughout Alexandria and Woodbridge! Perfect for parties, schools, and events—book the truck and bring the flavor to you.

 Alexandria & Woodbridge, VA
 Open 7 Days a Week
 703-261-9034
 Info@RitasVA.com
 www.ritasice.com


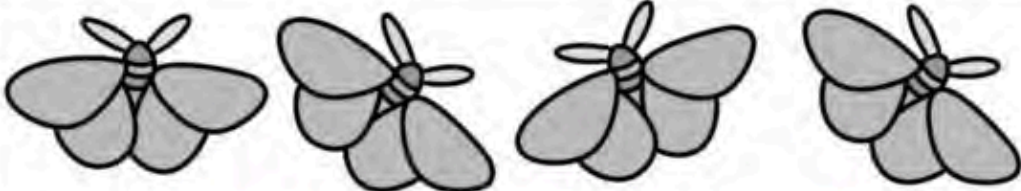





Want to advertise with us?
 Contact us today at: Newsletter@spring-mar.org!

Name:

Date:

May Counting!

Cut on the dotted lines and glue each number to its matching row.

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