



SPRING-MAR COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

Panda Post

Learning Through Play



Issue No. 19 | Sept. 2026

from the DIRECTOR

Welcome to another school year at Spring-Mar!

As you settle into the school routine, you might worry whether your child is learning the academic skills they'll need. You might be surprised to learn that among the most important things your child can learn during their preschool years are social and emotional skills and self-regulation. These include things like being able to express emotions and preferences, adaptability, conflict resolution, relating to others, sharing, and turn taking. And just like reading and math skills, these skills don't come to any of us naturally. They need to be learned and practiced!

While we practice these skills at Spring-Mar, you can practice social and emotional skills with your child at home. Identify your own emotions out loud, like anger and sadness, and talk about how you are coping. Take turns with your child. Provide visual reminders to help your child remember routines. Practice patience and frustration tolerance.

Learning about and practicing these skills isn't a matter of gaining children's compliance to make room for "real" learning. Helping children build social and emotional skills they can successfully use on their own **is** real learning! Thank you for partnering with us to help your children face the world with self-advocacy and relationship-building skills, empathy, patience, flexibility, and compassion.

Here's to a great school year!

Sara Mitcho

Director, 2026-2027



IMPORTANT DATES



SEPT. 21 - NO SCHOOL

SEPT. 22 - Spiritwear Store Opens

SEPT. 23 - Restaurant Fundraiser

Oct. 3 - Family Fun Day

Oct. 10 - Bake Sale

OCT. 12 - NO SCHOOL

Oct. 29-30 - Halloween Parades

Nov. 2 - NO SCHOOL

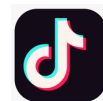
SOCIAL MEDIA



**Spring-Mar Cooperative
Preschool**



springmarcooperative



springmarcoop

FOLLOW US



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 second year as Board President, for which I'm very excited! This is also my fourth year at Spring-Mar. My son graduated previously and my daughter is in Nav this year and having a blast already. I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you and your kids this year!

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-oping day when you are also scheduled as the on-call family.
- Always, always, **ALWAYS** read the President Emails and 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, 2026-2027

SUMMER PLAYDATES



Summer playdates were a success! We connected with old friends and welcomed new families at playdates throughout the community. Although heat and wildfire smoke forced us to cancel one event, we ended the summer with popsicles, friendship, and excitement for the new school year!

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

William Gooch

Have you ever seen such clean bathrooms? We owe a big thanks to William Gooch for scrubbing the bathrooms top to bottom during the move in work party this year. The grout is brighter and so are our smiles!

-Board of Directors



SPRING-MAR PRESENTS

FAMILY FUN DAY & PICNIC

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD, 2026
10 AM - NOON**

10125 Lakehaven Ct, Burke, VA 22015

Learning Through Play

To make this a successful event, we need your help! Fill those community hours and have fun at the same time!

Please sign up to help: [Sign Up Here!](#)



To make the most of your day, don't forget to pre-order your "Panda Pack" picnic by Thursday, September 26th, so you can enjoy a delicious meal while you're here.
Order your pizza picnic and enter our Raffle:

[Order Now!](#)





SPRING-MAR PRESCHOOL'S

SPIRITWEAR SALE!



CONTACT US

spiritwear@spring-mar.org
for questions

ORDER SEPT 22
THROUGH OCT 4TH

[spring-mar.org/
spiritwear](http://spring-mar.org/spiritwear)



CHIPOTLE

MEXICAN GRILL

FUNDRAISER FOR SPRING-MAR

GOOD FOOD. BRIGHT FUTURES.

25% OF SALES

TIED TO OUR FUNDRAISER
WILL COME BACK TO
SPRING-MAR, SO THIS IS
AN EVENT YOU WILL
NOT WANT TO MISS!



**WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 23RD**
4:00 PM – 8:00 PM



CHIPOTLE
6230 Rolling Rd
West Springfield, VA 22152

FOUR WAYS TO SUPPORT

1



Show the cashier
a digital flyer
(attached to this email).

2



Print the flyer
to bring with you and
show the cashier prior
to paying for your order.

3



Order online

(on the Chipotle app or website)
and pickup at Chipotle by using the
Promo Code WXYW8RZ
on the Chipotle app or website.
Fundraiser online ordering is only valid through pickup during
our scheduled date, time, and assigned restaurant.
Ordering delivery for fundraisers is not permitted at this time.

4



Simply mention
the fundraiser
to the cashier prior
to paying.



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING SPRING-MAR!

GOOD FOOD HELPS GREAT LEARNING HAPPEN!

Fall Photo Day



Get those smiles
ready for our
fall photo day!

Tuesday, October 20

(Pioneers, Inventors A, Inventors B)

Wednesday, October 21

(Explorers, Navigators A, Navigators B)



Still Enrolling for 2026-27!



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

While other classes 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** (Birthday between: October 1, 2023 – September 15, 2024)
- **4-5 year olds** (Birthdays between: October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022)

Play School



Have you heard about our Playschool?

Do you or someone you know have a 12-30 month old child?

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 is open now for our 9:30am-11:00am class!

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

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 sixth 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 second 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 sixth year as a lead teacher at Spring-Mar, and my second 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 sixth year teaching at Spring-Mar. I have had many roles at Spring-Mar over the years but am thrilled to be teaching Navigators A

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



Emily Chitnis
Teacher - Explorers & Pioneers

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

and watching the kids explore and grow.

Meet the Teachers



Michelle Brenner
Music Teacher &
Playschool Leader

Hello! My name is Ms. Michelle (aka Miss Chelle given to me by some of my former kiddos.) I have been at Spring-Mar since 2017 as a parent, board member, and teacher. I have taught

Navigators, Pre K Inventors, and facilitated Playschool. This year I will continue facilitating Playschool and start a new chapter as Spring-Mar's new Music teacher. I am excited for this new adventure and getting to see ALL the preschoolers at Spring-Mar.



Laura Davis
Movement Teacher & Aide

Hi! My name is Ms. Laura and I am excited to be the Movement teacher and aide. This is my fourth 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.



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.



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.

2026 - 2027 Board of Directors

..... **Executive Board**



Briana Raines
President



Jenny Goebel
Vice President



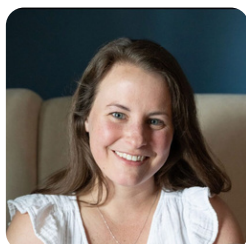
Ana Dreeze-McIntosh
Treasurer



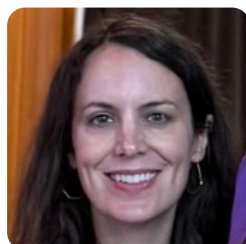
Caitlin Quincy
Secretary

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

..... **Committee Chairs**



Carly Onopa
Hospitality



Kristin Wallace
Hospitality



Brittany Clark
Human Resources



Marzia Monty
Marketing & Communications



Nicole Wright
Marketing & Communications



Jamie Farley
Membership



Adam King
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Emily Cottrell
Property



Audrey Smith
Special Events



Jamie Shabanowitz
Special Events

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Little moments, forever memories.



www.AlexisCentersPhotography.com

LOVESTRUCK
images



- NEWBORN
- FAMILY
- SENIOR
- WEDDING

Owned by a former Spring-Mar parent & our school portrait photographer!

www.lovestruckimages.com



Contact us at
Marketing@spring-mar.org



