

Local News

PSU, Littleton School District to host open house for prospective graduate residency program applicants

PLYMOUTH — The Holmes Center for School Partnerships and Educator Preparation at Plymouth State University (PSU) is accepting new applications for its innovative Graduate Residency Program at the Littleton, New Hampshire School District / School Administrative Unit (SAU) 84 for students pursuing master's degrees in Special Education. On Friday, Feb. 2, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., the Holmes Center and Littleton School District are hosting an open house at Lakeway Elementary School in Littleton for prospective applicants to explore what the program has to offer, including newly renovated housing in downtown Littleton.

Open house attendees will meet current graduate student residents, mentors and teachers as well as tour the provided housing, which is located at Rail Trail Village apartments on Beacon Street, within walking distance from all Littleton schools.

"We're looking forward to welcoming the third cohort of this successful program," said Holmes Center Director Brian Walker. "The PSU Graduate Residency Program in Littleton is a model for how community school districts can partner with higher education to create the next generation of educators



Plymouth State University's Holmes Center for School Partnerships and Educator Preparation is accepting applications for its innovative Graduate Residency Program for Special Education in Littleton, with an open house event at Littleton Schools on Friday, Feb. 2. Pictured here is the current cohort of graduate student residents, along with the participating general education co-teachers and special education mentors. In the back row, from left is Laura Read, Jenny Burke, Kelli Samson, Kerrey Allaire, Sheryl Louis, Olivia Panzini, Samantha Parke and Kristi Johnson. In the front row, from left, is Nicole Freligh, Ashley Winters, Makenna Allen, Hannah Topolosky, Emily Wallace, Rheanna Stone and Amber Rochon.

while filling immediate needs in our most rural districts. Plymouth State students in this program gain invaluable experience with co-teaching and engage in current best practices in inclusive education."

A total of six graduate student applicants will be selected to participate in this coveted program, where they will become immersed in the district's K-12 schools for the 2024-2025 school year, while they work and learn under the guidance of a licensed special education mentor and general education teacher. The selected students will receive full tuition, a \$1,000 monthly living stipend and lo-

cal housing and utilities for the duration of the 10-month program.

"It's been such a joy to have this program here in Littleton for the past couple of years," said SAU 84 Director of Teaching and Learning Kristen Moreland. "There are so many benefits for everyone involved. Our students, of course, are receiving additional support, and the partnership among the teaching teams creates a strong environment for learning and growth. Everyone learns from one another. The experience is different for each of the PSU graduate students, and we encourage them to visit each others' classes to learn

even more."

PSU and Littleton kicked off this unique partnership in spring 2022. So far, the first cohort of program residents have graduated, with many securing teaching jobs in New Hampshire and beyond. A second cohort is currently engaged in the program and will graduate in May.

"Traditionally, students get their teaching experience in more restrictive settings, but we're fortunate that Littleton aligns with the best practices around inclusive teaching policies," said PSU Assistant Professor and Special Education Coordinator Sara Scribner. "This prepares the next generation of educators to not only know how to teach students with disabilities in general education settings, but also bring those best prac-

tices with them should they become employed with other schools in the future."

Amanda O'Leary, originally of Northfield, New Hampshire, was one of the first graduates of the residency program who co-taught in kindergarten and now works as a grade K-2 case manager and special education teacher at Bristol Elementary School in Bristol, New Hampshire.

"Having this experience really prepared me for the job that I have now," O'Leary said. "Being a case manager and a special education teacher is honestly like two jobs in one. And having this experience and being so immersed really helped prepare me for that and helped me not feel so overwhelmed."

Fellow Littleton residency graduate Mollie

Kirwin of Manchester, New Hampshire, said she has always wanted to be an art teacher and to help students with special needs. At Littleton she worked on improving math and English skills for high school students with an individualized education program (IEP).

"Through that experience, I learned how to incorporate art into everything I taught, even math and geometry," Kirwin said. "Since I worked in the alternative program, I worked specifically with kids with behavioral disorders and learning disabilities, so it really taught me patience and empathy with these students, which are necessary attributes for any special education teacher."

Kirwin said she is still in touch with her mentor at Littleton and talks with her every week. Kirwin is currently employed as a grade 3-12 art teacher at Milestones Day School, a private school for students with special needs, in Waltham, Massachusetts.

Applications for the third Graduate Residency Program cohort are due no later than March 15. The priority deadline is March 1.

Registration is available online for those who wish to attend the Feb. 2 open house.

To learn more about Plymouth State University, or to apply for the Graduate Residency Program, visit www.plymouth.edu.

Tony Award-winning "Blithe Spirit" coming to the Opera House!

LITTLETON — Theatre UP will continue its 44th season with the classic comedy "Blithe Spirit" by British playwright, Noël Coward. Performances will be staged at the historic Littleton Opera House from Feb. 16-25.

What happens when "Til Death do us Part" no longer applies? Gathering material for a new book, Charles Condomine, invites local medium Madame Arcati to conduct a séance. He gets more than he bargains for when she conjures up his dead first wife, who wants him back. The problem is... Charles has remarried, and only he can see his late wife's ghost. Tables flip and vases fly in this fast-paced play full of British humor and theatre magic.

Noël Coward wrote this play during World

War II in a time when he wanted people to come out for pure entertainment at the theatre, leaving their troubles behind. We could all use a laugh or two today, so join us as we bring this delightful show to the stage.

Directed by Artistic Director Andrew Lidestri, Blithe Spirit features a fantastic team of talent. Charles Lafond plates Charles Condomine caught between his live wife Ruth (Madalyn Sheehy)

and dead with Elvira (Kristjar Nielson). All this is brought about by the medium Madame Arcati who is hilariously portrayed by Deborah Osborne. Rounding out the cast are UP familiars Jonathan Verge, Sage Couture and Audia Feagler.

Performances on Fridays & Saturdays, Feb.

9, 10, 16 & 17 will be at 7:30 p.m. There are two Sunday matinee performances on Feb. 11 and 18 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$22 for adults and \$18 for children and seniors. All seating is reserved and may be purchased in advance online by visiting www.theatreupnh.org or by calling the box office at 603-707-4615. Please join us for an evening of laughter & entertainment.

Stay tuned over the next few weeks for information on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/theatreupnh) and Instagram account (www.instagram.com/theatreupnh/) as Theatre UP will showcase clips of our rehearsals and other entertaining & informative posts.

Theatre UP is a not for profit community theatre company, serving the North Country with quality theatrical experiences for 44 years. The company's mission is to "create exceptional theatre in the community setting," making theatre accessible to interested thespians and audiences at the Littleton Opera House.

Noël Coward's "Blithe Spirit" is presented through special arrangements with Concord Theatricals. All authorized performance materials are also supplied by Concord Theatricals. www.concordtheatricals.com

Passumpsic Bank announces election of Greg Eastman as board Chairman

ST. JOHNSBURY, Vt. — Jim Kisch, Passumpsic Bank President and CEO, announces that businessman Greg Eastman of Littleton has been elected as Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Directors for Passumpsic Bank and Passumpsic Bankcorp ("Passumpsic"). Eastman, the President and CEO of Hunkins & Eaton Insurance Agency, has served on the Passumpsic Board of Trustees and Directors since 2014.

In a statement, Passumpsic President and CEO Jim Kisch said, "We are grateful to Greg for agreeing to serve as Board Chairman. During his nine years on our board, Greg has served the bank in a variety of roles, including currently as Chair of the Board's Loan Committee, while also serving presently as a member of the Board's Facilities and Information Technology Committee. Taken together, his business and bank experience give him deep insight into Passumpsic's operations and strategic vision. We are fortunate to

have him continue serving the bank in this key position."



Greg Eastman

Passumpsic Board Chairman Greg Eastman added, "I am honored to serve Passumpsic in this important role. Community banks like Passumpsic are the lifeblood of the communities they serve, and play an essential part in supporting local families, small businesses and nonprofits. I am excited for the work ahead and look forward to working with the Passumpsic team to continue serving those needs in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, Central Vermont and Northern New Hampshire!"

Eastman has served as President and Owner of the Hunkins & Eaton Insurance Agency since 1991. In addition to his business, Greg vol-

unteers his time in the community serving on the Boards of the North Country Home Health & Hospice Agency, and the Northern Community Investment Corporation, and he serves as a Trustee on the Board of the Community College

System of New Hampshire. He is the immediate past President of the Littleton Industrial Development Corporation, the former Chairman of the Board or the New Hampshire Association of Insurance Agents, and he served as President of the Board of both the Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce and the Littleton Rotary Club. He lives in Littleton with his wife Tonya and has three children.

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