

**Alexis Scangas, Preschool 1 Teacher,
Woodside**



Alexis is originally from Peabody, MA moving to Durham with her family at the age of 12 to run a local restaurant. She attended Saint Anslem's College in Manchester and earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology in 2005.

Alexis began working at Growing Places while she was a college student. She worked over the summers and holiday breaks, providing the agency with excellent seasonal teaching support. After Alexis graduated from college she was offered a teaching position at the Infant Toddler program. She was a toddler teacher for three years and then became a preschool 1 teacher at Woodside in 2008.

Anyone who has seen Alexis in action as a teacher can clearly see the joy she gets from interacting with and teaching young children. Alexis offers a warm, consistent and happy classroom environment. This is what Alexis has to say about teaching at Growing Places: "The children, parents and staff of Growing Places are like a big extended family and it is truly an amazing thing to be a part of. Watching the children learn and grow everyday is a joy. By working in this nurturing environment, you come to see that it's the little, everyday accomplishments that matter the most and that learning, for both teachers and children, can happen in the most unexpected and inspiring ways. We all work together for the common goal of supporting the development of happy, healthy children and we sure do have a lot of fun along the way! Ultimately, there is no better reward than having a parent thank you for helping to raise their child."

Alexis has a close knit family that enjoys traveling together. Alexis currently lives in Portsmouth.

Becca Kelly, Preschool 1 Teacher, Woodside



Becca Kelly has taught at Growing Places since 2004. She has her BS in elementary education from Plymouth State College, and has over 12 years of experience in child care. Becca lives in Somersworth with her husband and daughter Allison, who is a student in the Preschool 2 classroom at Woodside. She loves cooking, gardening and spending time with family and friends.

Becca loves working with the high caliber of teachers at Growing Places, and also loves the opportunity she has had to really get to know families at the Center over the years. Becca enjoys facilitating outdoor play & sensory experiences for the children, and offers very process oriented art activities in her classroom. She can often times be seen snuggling with a child sharing a story book. She loves the rate at which children grow in their young years. She loves watching them explore the world around them.

**Emily Hoagland, Preschool 2 Teacher,
Woodside**



Born in Chicago and raised in Providence, Emily Hoagland first came to Durham in 1999 to attend the University of New Hampshire as a marine biology student. She began working for Growing Places the following spring as a teacher aide at the Our Time after school program and Forest Park Preschool and discovered her love for working with children. Two years later on a break from school Emily joined Growing Places full time as an infant teacher. In the 9 years that Emily has worked here she has worked with every age group that Growing Places serves. Currently she teaches in the Preschool Two Classroom at Woodside.

Emily says that her favorite thing about her job is the opportunity to see children experience joy through learning. "I love watching the wonder and amazement in a child's eyes when they accomplish or learn something new!" Emily continues to work on her own education as well, taking classes in Early Childhood and Behavioral Sciences at Granite State College.

Emily has a very calm happy demeanor in the classroom, and her leadership qualities, as well as a great sense of humor, help children feel safe and secure in her presence.

Emily feels fortunate to work at Growing Places because of the amazing people and connections she has made over the years. "I have made lifelong friends among my coworkers and the families that I have worked with. I have seen children I knew as infants get off the school bus for the first time and children I met in elementary school move off to college. Being a part of the Growing Places community has truly helped to make New Hampshire my home"

**Sarah Matheson, Preschool 2 Teacher,
Woodside**



Sarah started working at Growing Places in August. Sarah is originally from Southern Maine and came to New Hampshire for college. She loves New Hampshire and has made it home. Sarah lives in Somersworth with her boyfriend Josh and two cats, Cooper and Felix.

Sarah obtained her bachelor's degree in Child Development from Southern New Hampshire University. She has worked with children from six weeks to five years and has been a lead teacher in a toddler and preschool classroom. Sarah loves working with children and helping them achieve their goals and watching them grow.

Outside of the classroom Sarah enjoy spending time with family and friends. In the winter, skiing and snow tubing are favorite sports. In the summer Sarah spends a lot of time at her family's camp in Boothbay, Maine. She also enjoys camping, kayaking, and fishing. On those rainy days she can be a television junky, but also likes to curl up with a good book. ☺

Celeste Hume, Pre-Kindergarten/Kindergarten Teacher, Woodside



Celeste grew up in New York, but has called New England her home for 25 years. She lives in Dover with her husband and daughter Erika.

Celeste has a tremendous amount of experience teaching young children, having been in the field for over twenty years. Growing Places was lucky to recruit Celeste in 2003. She currently teaches Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten at the Woodside site.

Celeste's love of teaching is evident as she talks about the children's progress in her class, and the families she has enjoyed being a part of over the years. She considers her teaching colleagues a part of her extended family and feels that their level of professionalism and dedication is outstanding.

Here's what Celeste says about her experience at Growing Places: "I love teaching and nurturing my class. I can't think of anything else I'd rather do. The children's accomplishments are a real joy to me and I thrive on their energy and enthusiasm for learning."

An avid Red Sox fan, Celeste also treasures her time with family and friends; and enjoys reading, music movies and the beach.

Hillary Hughes Program Director at Growing Places Woodside



Hillary Hughes began her career at Growing Places as an intern in 1998. She was hired to join the professional teaching staff and taught preschool at Forest Park until 2001. She took time off to be with her young children, and in 2002 was hired as the Program Director at Forest Park. She was instrumental in developing the beautiful new center at Woodside on UNH Campus, and is now the Director of this program. Hillary graduated from the University of Maine at Farmington with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education.

Hillary is the proud mom of Cody (age 12) and Saige (age 11) who attended Growing Places programs. Hillary's husband Todd teaches middle school math. Both kids are active in sports and school. The entire family enjoys time together hiking, going to the beach, playing with dogs and they are avid Red Sox, Celtics and Patriots fans.

Hillary sees that each day is an opportunity for children to learn and grow. She is known for providing environments for children to explore and learn at their own pace, vital to young children's development. Outdoor learning and experiences are highly valued. Hillary has built

a culture at Woodside in which a fun loving atmosphere is created every day for children and adults, and all learn and grow together. She has found, with her experience, strong team of teachers and full classrooms, that Woodside is a “home away from home”.