



Her work in the Valley has taught her a lot about the spirit of New England and what makes the Valley a unique place. "There's a real hardiness of the people who live here and a resilience that I admire," she began. "There's nothing like the emergence of Spring and the colors of Fall. I love living somewhere where there's a thousand different hiking trails and always something to do outside. There's a real love of education and respect for teachers here that I haven't felt living anywhere else."

That respect is reflected in the success of Megan's new business, The Community Classroom, a service in Florence that offers customized and flexible tutoring for all ages. After working in the non-profit sector in Washington, DC, for the last four years, she was let go in 2020 due to the lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. But instead of rebuilding slowly and working with what she had, Megan decided to go for it all and start her own business. "I don't mind calculated risk. Putting everything into this business idea and making mistakes, whatever happens along the way—it doesn't bother me. It's all great learning."

"It all started from some virtual parent support work I'd been doing in partnership with Lexi from High Five Books. She told me they were moving to a new space so I happily took their old space off their hands and went all out on my business plan. We currently have 27 certified teachers as a part of our tutoring and academic coaching team. Students from Pre-K through 12th grade. It's amazing to be a part of helping kids to fall back in love with learning by matching them with the perfect teacher. Parents and caregivers are under a lot of stress right now so to be able to provide some relief that also builds confidence, content knowledge, and helps kids through this time has been the best."

Ultimately, Megan cherishes her time spent in the Valley and loves the supportive community she's gotten to know over the years. "I like to host local free events for families. We've hosted two Story Walks in Florence and one Interactive Math Walk in downtown Northampton recently where we organized local businesses to each have a page of a book or a math problem on a sidewalk to solve, so as you walk around and visit each location, you slowly complete the book or math tasks like a scavenger hunt." Good old-fashioned family fun. And this is what she's all about, bringing the community together and making lasting memories for caregivers and children alike.

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