

**Scituate kids featured on tonight's episode of 'Wahlburgers' TV show**

By Jessica Trufant

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SCITUATE – A group of Scituate students with special needs will make their Hollywood debuts on tonight’s episode of the Emmy-nominated reality show “Wahlburgers.”

Now in it’s third season on A&E, the show is about the Hingham burger restaurant run by chef Paul Wahlberg and his celebrity brothers, Mark and Donnie. The docu-series looks at the family’s humble beginnings and the challenges of running a fledgling family-owned restaurant.

The new episode that will be shown at 10 tonight features six children in grades 1 through 6 who participate in the Scituate CORSE program. (CORSE is short for Community of Resources for Special Education.)

Led by parents, teachers and volunteers, CORSE provides academic, social and recreational experiences for children with learning and physical disabilities.

Tracy Johnston, who co-founded CORSE in 2006 after her son was diagnosed with autism, said Paul Wahlberg opens Wahlburgers early on a Sunday every few months so children in CORSE can get a hands-on look at running a restaurant.

“He loves bringing the kids in,” Johnston said. “He makes a point to be there when the kids go.”

Film crews joined the children during one of their trips to Wahlburgers in the fall of 2013 and captured them working in the kitchen and taking orders. Johnston said the footage was put in the archives, but she recently got notification that it will be in tonight’s episode, which is titled “Should I Stay Orr Should I Go?”

The episode also shows hockey legend Bobby Orr joining Paul and Jim Wahlberg for a round of golf, and Donnie going house hunting with their mother, Alma.

“Paul really is how he is on the show,” Johnston said. “He’s so nice and generous and considerate. He was doing this with us well before the show was developed, and for him to say, ‘While they’re here, let’s have the crews come in,’ is really special.”

While being featured in a famous TV show is exciting for any child, Johnston said it’s a huge deal for children with special needs.

“It definitely has a special meaning for the families, and the kids will get a kick out of seeing themselves on TV,” she said. “They’re over the moon about it.”

Johnston hopes to plan a post-release screening so Scituate families can get together to watch the episode.

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