

THE SOULARD SCHOOL

COMMUNITY NEWS

Notes from the Leadership: Sarah Christman, Executive Director and Co-Founder

ROOTING FOR THE STARS

Next time you travel through Soulard, look at the buildings and you will notice **iron stars used to secure and support the homes in this historic neighborhood.**

It is **our intention to provide structure, stability and inspiration for our families and community**, so it was only natural that the star should become the symbol of The Soulard School.

The connection to stars is both literal and metaphorical. Every day as educators, along with our students, **we reach for the stars.** **We are drawn together** by the gravitational pull of community and belonging. **We align in our work**, as stars do in constellations, shining bright as individuals and brighter still together. This is the legacy of The Soulard School, is something we can physically see throughout the building and is the result of much thought and practice throughout the history of the school.

We are filled with **gratitude for all of the bright spots in our school community** - the families that encourage us and the children who inspire us. Today we are rooting for our stars. As we have traversed an enormous amount of change, and continue to do so, we do it as a community with strong roots and brightly shining stars. **Thank you, for supporting the school, your students and each other.** I have always wanted our Parent Association to rename themselves the Stellar Association, an astronomical term for a cluster of stars that share a common origin, because our community is just that - stellar.

As we seek to create a safe and welcoming space for our stars to shine, we will be reflecting on our roots. This year we will be working with **The Education Equity Center of St. Louis to conduct an equity audit.** This process will start in November with surveys and group interviews and will continue in the future as we begin to engage at all levels: parent, staff and boards. We promise to share more about this effort in the coming weeks.

Rooting
for our
Stars

OUR STAFF AND STUDENTS, BACK IN THE BUILDING, ARE GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER EVERY DAY AND CREATING CONNECTIONS AND UNIQUE MOMENTS TOGETHER.

Our biggest fundraising event of the year returns in 2021 and is right around the corner. **CLOVERS & STARS, 9TH ANNUAL IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE FESTIVAL, PRESENTED BY MCGURK'S**

features incredible musical performances, Irish dancers, highlights our kiddos' strings and performing arts abilities and includes an **AUCTION** of great local goods and services for you to bid on. The event will be **IN-PERSON AND LIVE STREAMED** on our website.

New! A **FAMILY FRIENDLY STARGAZING PRE-PARTY.**

Bring the kids and join us early for a free, outdoor event before the show on The Sheldon's Steward Family Plaza from 5:30 - 7 p.m. *Ticket not required for Pre-Party.*

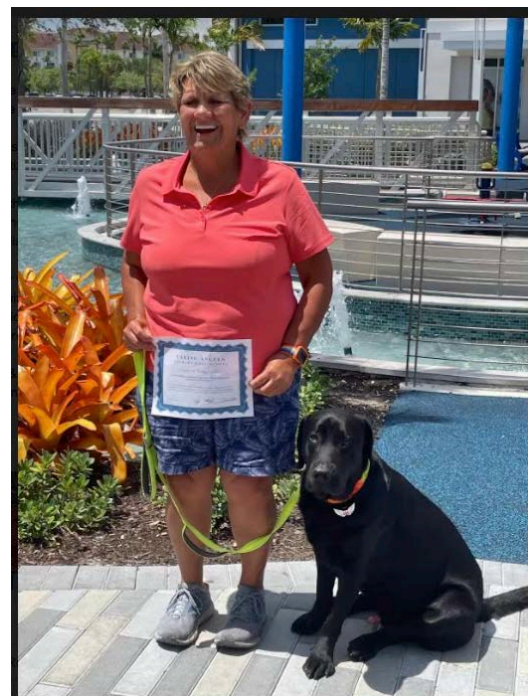
- ✦ To reserve a free ticket to the concert visit: www.soulardschool.org/events
- ✦ For Sponsor Information Contact: Samantha.Fisher@SoulardSchool.org
- ✦ For Silent Auction Donations Contact: Kimberly.Shead@SoulardSchool.org
- ✦ Proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test will be required before entering the Sheldon.

OUR CALENDAR

OCT	
10/30	Soulard Swap 9-11AM
10/31	Trick or Trot fun run
NOV	
11/3	Tour for Prospective Families 5PM
11/5	End of 1st Trimester School CLOSED – Records Day Clovers & Stars Fundraiser
11/11	PA Meeting 7PM (Tick Tock Tavern)
11/13-14	Book Fair (in-person) @ Subterranean
11/19	Lunch of Thanks
11/23	Conferences (PM)
11/24	School CLOSED – Conferences
11/25-26	School CLOSED – Thanksgiving Break
DEC	
12/9	PA Meeting 7PM
12/16	TSS Board Meeting 1PM (Zoom)
12/17	School CLOSED – Professional Dev.
12/20-31	School CLOSED – Winter Break
JAN	
1/1	School CLOSED – Winter Break
1/3	School CLOSED – Professional Dev.
1/4	STAR Testing (Elementary)
1/13	PA Meeting 7PM
1/17	School CLOSED – MLK Day
1/27	TSS Board Meeting 1PM (Zoom)

Visit with Cooper

The Soulard School teachers and students had a wonderful time visiting with Kathy Allen and her wonder therapy dog, Cooper! Each of our classes got to visit with Kathy and Cooper. There were many laughs, cuddles and tons of doggie treats the entire day.



From Kathy Allen:

"Cooper Duke Allen is a 2 year old, black Labrador Retriever. Cooper was born with severe arthritis & elbow dysplasia which would require an expensive surgery and post surgery physical therapy. I met Cooper and we immediately bonded. I knew when I got him he was meant to be shared with others and I could not just train him to be a service dog for me but a therapy dog to bring comfort & joy to all!"

Cooper is so smart he was recognized as "Client of the Month" at Sit Means Sit & we knew he was a rockstar. Recently with the COVID guidelines lifted, Cooper was able to finally take his test to become a Caring Angels Therapy Dog!

Cooper & I are so excited to visit Soulard School as a Caring Angels Therapy Dog. We are both grateful for this opportunity and we hope the kids and staff enjoy him! Thank you so much!!"

BOOK FAIR WITH SUBTERRANEAN BOOKS

subterranean
BOOKS



Looking for a unique way to support the Soulard School? Why not show your support through our upcoming book fair. You can add directly to your child's classroom library or our school library by participating in our book fair. In partnership with Subterranean Books, this year's Soulard School Book Fair will be A WEEK-LONG ONLINE affair AND A WEEKEND IN-PERSON celebration! Titles are available for purchase

ONLINE and IN-STORE Nov. 8th - 14th!

In addition to stocking the Wish List books and making them available for purchase and donation,

Subterranean Books will be giving back to The Soulard School 20% of all qualifying purchases made IN-STORE the Weekend of Nov. 13 and 14.

SOULARD SCHOOL STAFF 2021 - 2022

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM



Sarah Christman, Executive Director & Co-Founder

When I began my career in education I started with the youngest age group, preschool. I knew then, and now, how vital and meaningful this foundation was and felt it would be a place to make a positive impact. Little did I know when I found my way to this community years ago what an opportunity for impact I was walking into. As a Co-Founder of The Soulard School, I am delighted every day to see all that we have

become, together. It has been an educator's dream to be a part of building a school that has layers of community, integrated curriculum and innovative approaches. I value the relationships built in our close community of students, staff and parents and know what we are accomplishing reaches well beyond our school. Becoming a Soulard School parent has been a special experience, my daughter Jude is in the Jr. Pre-K class and I love seeing her playing and learning with friends. I can't forget a shout-out to my husband, Paul Nordmann, and his amazing photography that you can see throughout the school's website perfectly capturing the Soulard School experience.



Shenika Bishop, Principal

I am extremely excited to continue my journey for the second year at the Soulard School. I am a St. Louis native and the 2021-2022 school year will mark my twelfth year in education. I received my bachelor's degree in elementary education from Missouri State University in Springfield, MO. I began my teaching career at Confluence Academy-South City, teaching third and fourth grade. I later moved on to the Kirkwood School District, where I served as a teacher, building and district mentor, and professional development

facilitator. I developed a passion for leadership during my time in the Kirkwood School District. Administration came as a natural transition throughout my experiences as an educator. For this reason, I attended Lindenwood University where I received a master's degree in education administration and an educational specialist certification. I am excited to share in The Soulard School community's dedication in caring for our students daily while providing them with a meaningful and inclusive learning environment. It is my goal as principal to continue to foster lifelong learning in our students, inspire and challenge our teachers to continue to be passionate about teaching, embrace change, and lead from a place of compassion and wholeheartedness.

I am a proud parent of a daughter (Zariyah, 12). She keeps me very busy when I am not at TSS! Outside of school, I enjoy spending any extra free time with my daughter, our fur baby (Nippy), and my family!



Amy Cross, Soulard Education Center Program Director

I joined The Soulard School community during the 2012/2013 school year in the Quietude classroom. Much of who I am as an educator was shaped over the next eight years where my time was divided between pre-k and kindergarten. Even our youngest learners need to feel ownership of their own learning, and at The Soulard School I was able to facilitate a student-center curriculum where individuals are valued contributors of an amazing community. This

year, my journey has led me to a new role as Program Director. In this new position I will be able to grow as a leader while supporting our dedicated teachers as they move forward on their own paths. I earned a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education, and my master's in Educational Administration from the University of Missouri St. Louis. Before coming to The Soulard School, I lived and traveled in Europe, Asia and Latin America teaching English to students of all ages. While living in the Dominican Republic, I oversaw the early childhood program at Punta Cana Cana International School as an Academic Coordinator. That is when I saw the impact an administrator can have on the teaching community. I stayed there four years before returning to St. Louis to start my own family. Now that my children are older, my oldest a Soulard School alumni, I have the time to dedicate myself and return to an administrative position. I look forward to working side by side with teachers and parents this year as we create a sense of inclusiveness and belonging that empowers our children and nurtures strong self-identities.



Eleanor White, Communications & Operations Director

I am a St. Louis native, growing up just around the corner from the school, in Lafayette Square. I attended Bard College, then received a Master's in Education Policy Studies from the University of Wisconsin. Returning to St. Louis, I continued my education, receiving my certification in Elementary Education from Fontbonne. After a few years of teaching elsewhere, I discovered the Soulard School, a place that looks just like the progressive elementary school I attended and

loved as a kid. I can't believe this is my fifteenth year with the Soulard School! When I began, I taught kindergarteners and toddlers, but I've been in the office since 2010. My son Emmett is a TSS alumni at McKinley and Theo is in 5th grade - this is my last year as a TSS parent! I live in Shaw with my husband Brad, the kids, a big brown dog named Rufus and our little beagle princess, Sadie.



Kate Brothers, Special Education Director

I am thrilled to be a part of the Soulard School Community. As a professional in the field of education for over 30 years, I consider it an honor to work with a school which values diversity, culture responsiveness, and the unique learning needs of all children. I have served many roles throughout my career including: General Education Teacher, Special Education Teacher, School Counselor, Special Education Process Coordinator, SSD Area Coordinator, and Director of Special Services. After retiring from public education, I began work as an Adjunct Professor

at St Louis University, where I focus on inclusive practices and building systems to support this model. One of the biggest highlights of my career was the work I did with teachers from Saudi Arabia's Transformation 2020 initiative. This gave me the unique opportunity to share the inclusive practices we are so fortunate to have in the United States with another culture. In addition to working for Soulard School as Special Education Director, I continue to teach for SLU and assist other charter schools with their federal programs. In my free time I love to run, hike, and spend time with my granddaughter.

grateful

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

**Samantha Fisher, Development Director**

The Fisher family came to The Soulard School in 2015 when our oldest, Stella, was a Kindergartner. We quickly realized the lessons here aren't just for the students. We learned a lot that first year about our kiddos and ourselves - we continue to learn more every day. I am proud to be a part of this community not only as a parent but now as part of the Soulard Education Center Development Team. I bring nearly 20 years of communications, cause marketing and

event production experience to my role as Development Director. I start every morning with a "few" cups of coffee and a chat with the plants in the garden of our Southwest Garden Neighborhood home. I share my life with my husband, Darin, and a wild and wonderfully unruly brood of three children, Stella, Evie, and Crosby, two polydactyl cats, and Ozzie the dog.

**Patsy King, Development Manager**

I joined The Soulard School community twenty years ago when my daughter, Isabel, started in the Nursery at what was then called "the Little School." A few years later she was followed by her sister, Kate. I thought their new school was dynamic and inspiring and warm and wonderful. It still is. I spent their early/elementary years helping out wherever I could – PA President, Open Houses, the newsletter... you name it. It's great to still be connected to the school.

Though I'm originally from St. Louis, I spent several years in Chicago (B.A., Loyola University) and Madison, Wisconsin (M.A. in Public Policy/Policy Analysis, U of W-Madison). I've had the good fortune over the years to have jobs I've loved - stay-at-home parent, bookseller/operations director, family law paralegal, and now The Soulard School! My husband, Steve Sherman (former Soulard School Board President -- it's definitely been a family affair!), and I live in the Central West End. In my free time I love to explore the city, ride my bike, check out new restaurants and movies, and travel to the East Coast to visit my college-age daughters.

**Kimberly Shead, Events Manager**

I am a native to St. Louis but have had the wonderful pleasure of residing in great cities such as Dallas, Charlotte, Nashville and Los Angeles, where I gained invaluable experience in the nonprofit, television and marketing industries. My midwestern sensibilities and love for family compelled my move back to the Gateway City. I was blessed to be raised in a very loving and supportive home by my aunts who instilled a strong work ethic and spirit of

volunteerism in me. I saw how they worked tirelessly in the field of education to better the lives of children and youth, as well as gave any extra time to volunteering and serving our community. I believe these values are what influenced my decision to seek out an organization such as The Soulard School. It fills my heart with joy to know that I am doing work that will truly make a difference in the lives of children and our community. I am currently pursuing my bachelor' degree in Events & Hospitality Leadership.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

**Kristen Hood, Student Support Coordinator**

I am so excited to be going into my third year at The Soulard School! Prior to coming on board at The Soulard School, I worked as a trauma-focused therapist for multiple Children's Advocacy Centers in Missouri and Illinois. I love being able to create safe spaces for people who may be dealing with a variety of challenges and feelings. I am thrilled to be able to continue helping kids at The Soulard School develop skills to cope with difficult situations. Prior to

beginning my career as a therapist, I attended Greenville University and Southern Illinois University.

I live in St. Louis with my husband, Nathan, and my two boys, Clayton and Kiante. Nathan and I are licensed foster parents and may or may not have additional amazing children in our home at any given time. I love to run, play tennis, golf, ride my bike, go hiking, and spend time with my family in Illinois and Montana.

**Lauren Hofer, Special Education Teacher**

I am so excited to be part of The Soulard School team and family this year! I am a University of St. Louis Missouri graduate with certifications in special education, elementary education, and early childhood education. I also was born and raised in Southern California. I moved to St. Louis with my native St. Louis area husband after his time in the services. We have a son and two golden retrievers. In my personal time, I enjoy traveling, crafting, and continuously

learning new things. Lastly, the reasons I chose special education as my landing spot are because I believe my students help create a greater learning experience for all students, and I love seeing the hard-earned breakthroughs and confidence growth made by my students.

**Jayme Shadowens, Schoolwide Intervention Specialist**

I'm so happy and honored to begin my career at The Soulard School. After receiving my Bachelor's in Psychology from Truman State University in 2017, I decided to pack my bags and fly to South Korea to teach Elementary English. It's an adventure that I'll always treasure, and one that ultimately led to my decision to return home and continue my education. I received my Master's in Educational Psychology from the University of Missouri-

St. Louis in 2020 and am in the process of completing my Ed.S in School Psychology. Every day at TSS solidifies in my heart that I've made the right choice to work in order to improve outcomes for students and their families!

In my spare time, I enjoy reading, writing, hanging out with my cat Lou, and couponing (yes, really).



DeVonshae Person, Instructional Support & Beforecare Teacher

I was born and raised in St. Louis. I graduated from Lindenwood University with a bachelors in Human Service Agency Management and from Fontbonne University with a Masters in Teaching, Specialization in Special Education. I have over 20 years of experience working with children and adults who have special needs. In my spare time I am an independent film actress, author, poet,

publisher, radio host, certified lash technician, belly dancer and love making pottery. I engage in silent retreats and sound baths on a regular basis to help keep me calm. I run a community writing club for adults with autism and other exceptionalities. I have an artsy personality and am excited to be at Soulard School.

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS



Maury Browning, Jr. Pre-K Teacher (Sprouts)

I am thrilled to join the fabulous crew at The Soulard School. I was born and raised in the diverse Tower Grove East neighborhood of St. Louis, then moved to New York City at the age of twenty-three to study Studio Art at Brooklyn College and Yoga at Jivamukti Yoga School. I fell in love with teaching kid's yoga and got certifications from both Karma Kids Yoga and Little Flower Yoga. After almost a

decade in NYC, I moved to Asia. First I lived in South Korea where I taught English as a Second Language and Yoga to young children. Then, I moved to Malaysia for the next six years where I co-ran a dog rescue NGO and boarding facility in addition to tutoring children in English and teaching yoga. While living in Southeast Asia, I furthered my educational studies and obtained a CELTA (Cambridge English Language Teachers) certification through Cambridge International in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

I was grateful to move back to my hometown two years ago to look after my parents, and I was overjoyed to find The Soulard School and loved how well my own yogic practice and teachings complimented the school's philosophy.

"Our task regarding creativity is to help children climb their own mountains, as high as possible, no one can do more." Loris Malaguzzi



Amber Rodriguez, Jr. Pre-K Teacher (Sprouts)

My name is Amber Rodriguez, mother of 2 boys and 1 step-son. I've lived in St. Louis my entire life and graduated from Webster University. I've been in the education field for 8 beautiful years, full of adventure and growth. Early childhood education is my Passion. Teaching is a beautiful balance of art and science. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to know children, in every aspect of their development and learn what

they love about life. Childhood deserves to be fostered; I value the collaboration and shared love teachers exude each day to do so. I love my career and all the love involved within each day.



Jessica Braggs, Jr. Pre-K (Sprouts) and Aftercare Assistant

This would be my second year here at The Soulard School. Last year I graduated from Harris-Stowe State University with my Bachelors in Sociology with a concentration in Social Justice. My senior year I spent time as a fellow at ACLU-MO learning non-profit management and helping with projects such as writing grant proposals for School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) and Transgender Education Advocacy Program (TEAP). I also work at the YMCA in their

Youth and Family department. I have been working with children for about 5 years. In my free time I love to spend time with myself, reading books on self improvement, and going to the movies. I can't wait to tackle this school year with each individual and Soulard families.



Jane Webster, Sr. Pre-K Teacher (Quietude)

I am so excited to begin my first year at The Soulard School in the Quietude classroom! I graduated from Truman State University with my Bachelor's in English. During my undergrad I took classes in Elementary Education, but ultimately decided to return to St. Louis to pursue a Graduate degree in Early Childhood Education at Webster University. It was during this time that I was first introduced to The Soulard School and became friends with my co-teacher,

Maggie. I completed my student teaching in the Kindergarten Mums classroom while working as the Nursery Aftercare teacher. In 2018, I had the opportunity to go to Reggio-Emilia, Italy and study their approach to early childhood learning first-hand. This experience greatly impacted my own teaching philosophy. After graduation I worked for two years elsewhere as an Infant/Toddler specialist. I am grateful to be back at Soulard School and can't wait to see what our class will discover together this year!



Maggie Hurst, Sr. Pre-K Teacher (Quietude)

I'm so excited to begin my third year at my dream job in the Quietude room! Seven years ago, as an Occupational Therapy student at SLU, I observed in this classroom and realized that teaching preschool was my true passion. After that first encounter with the school, I supported as a literacy tutor, subbed all grades, and taught at the Nursery. In May 2019, I graduated from Webster University with my Masters in Teaching Early Childhood Education with

an emphasis in Special Education. While at Webster, I also studied the Reggio Emilia approach to early education. After graduation, I was able to visit Reggio Emilia, Italy to learn new techniques and observe in their preschools. I believe every child has infinite potential and I can't wait to see what we can accomplish together as a community this year in Quietude.

I live in Soulard with my husband, Hugh, our cat, Rex, and our puppies, Zoomy and Cricket. We love spending time exploring local parks and hiking spots. When the school day ends, I run a small hand embroidery business and am pursuing a certification in Early Childhood Mental Health from the Erikson Institute.

ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM TEACHERS



Jenna Morrison, Kindergarten Teacher (Mums)

I am beyond excited and grateful to have the opportunity to continue my adventures in teaching at The Soulard School! This is my 9th year working at TSS, though my first year in Kindergarten. I earned my Bachelor's degree in Child Development and Education from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Throughout my time at Mizzou, I was a teacher in a Montessori classroom and in the University's Child Development Lab. Additionally, I completed my student teaching experience at The College School in Webster Groves, where I discovered the school's Reggio Emilia inspired curriculum. Having been exposed to these various curriculums has helped me to develop my own unique teaching philosophy, which I have been able to put into practice and expand upon in the classroom. I strive to pass on my love of learning to the children by encouraging them to explore their individual interests through our play-based, inquiry-based curriculum. I am now working towards my Early Childhood Certification and Master's Degree at UMSL. In my free time, I enjoy going on new adventures around the city with my fiancé' Dan and our children Maeve, 4, and Beau, 2, or having dance parties, playing with our dogs Moose, Pippa and Carl and spending time together outdoors. The Soulard School is like a second home to me, and I'm ready to take on my ninth year here in a new position!



Bethany Burress, Kindergarten Grade Teacher (Mums)

I am incredibly grateful to begin my ninth year of teaching at The Soulard School. The Soulard School's philosophy and view of education is what initially attracted me to this community, and I am thrilled to be a part of such an innovative and imaginative environment. I have my Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education with a concentration in Family and Child Studies from Eastern Illinois University. I have been teaching young children for over 13 years,

and I love that every day is a new adventure for both myself and the kids. Outside of teaching, I love spending time with my two daughters, Holland and Harper, and my husband, Joe. We enjoy camping, dancing and gardening together. I look forward to getting to know each and every family and working together to ensure the children thrive and blossom in the Mums classroom. I feel incredibly fortunate to be a part of the Soulard School community, and I am excited for the new adventures this year will bring!



Anna Austin, 1st Grade Teacher (Enigma)

I feel so lucky to be beginning my ninth year at the Soulard School. I was introduced to this school during my student teaching while getting my Master of Arts in Teaching degree from Webster. I spent the fall of 2011 in the Mums kindergarten class and was able to return in 2013 to teach those same students as second graders. Being able to teach in this community has been so incredible. Before starting my teaching

career, I earned my undergraduate degree at Mizzou (Go Tigers!). I have been married 4 years and have an 11 year old stepson, Luke, and a one year old, Henry. Our favorite things to do together are to travel, go to the pool, create art, and play games. I am looking forward to learning, growing, and laughing our way through first grade this year!



Kelly Daniel, 1st Grade Teacher (Enigma)

Soulard School, where have you been all my life? I am excited to be joining the Soulard School this year! I received my MA in Human Resources Development and Management from Webster University and my MAT in Elementary Education from Fontbonne University. I have worked in various school districts and I can truly say that I am glad to be a part of this community. I am a widowed (warrior) mother to three teens that keep me active:

Darius II, 16, Kamille 13 and Kelsy 13. In my spare time, I love to go dancing and going on new adventures. I am looking forward to this new journey at The Soulard School and am stoked to discover what this year brings.



Julia Knarr, 2nd Grade Teacher (Alchemy)

I'm so excited to be returning for my third year at The Soulard School. I have lived in St. Louis my whole life, and I have called University City home for the last five years. I attended Lindenwood University where I graduated with a BA in elementary education and early childhood. This is my sixth year teaching, and I have taught at both the preschool and 2nd grade levels. During the pandemic, I became part of the PBS broadcast team for Teaching in Room

Nine. I'm incredibly passionate about early childhood education, and I strongly believe in the importance of building and maintaining close relationships and creating a warm, loving, and safe classroom climate. When I'm not in school I love traveling, eating amazing local food, drawing and lettering. I can't wait to discover and create together in second grade this year.



Lauren Wadsworth, 2nd Grade Teacher (Alchemy)

This will be my fourth year teaching at The Soulard School, and I'm so excited to continue to get to know my students and learn alongside them. Prior to beginning my journey into education, I worked with a performing arts company based out of South Africa where I coordinated and taught drama workshops to Middle and High School students. I graduated from Missouri Baptist University in 2017 with a

degree in Elementary Education. Though from Memphis, TN, I now call Tower Grove home. When I'm not teaching, I'm taking walks around Tower Grove Park, experimenting in the kitchen, or snuggling my dog, Tsitsi.

thankful



Rob May, 3rd Grade Teacher (Explorer)

Born and raised in Kansas City I attended the University of Missouri-Kansas City earning a Bachelor's degree in Studio Art. After years of working as an artist and a musician I decided to switch gears and become a teacher with the hope that I could be an instrument for positive change in the world. I moved to St. Louis in 2012 and enrolled in the teacher education program at Webster University. I

completed my Master of Arts in Teaching and was offered a full-time teaching position at the Soulard School in 2016. As I begin my sixth year of teaching at TSS I look forward to new adventures and opportunities for growth alongside our students.



Elise Chriss, 3rd Grade Teacher (Explorer)

I am so happy to be beginning my first year of teaching at the Soulard School. I began my college career by studying Deaf Education in central Illinois but eventually found my home in elementary education, earning my bachelors degree from the University of Missouri - St. Louis. I love being a part of the Soulard School community and I cannot wait for the exciting things to come!



Phillip McFarlane, 4th Grade Teacher (Mosaic)

I am very proud to be a part of the experienced and capable team at the Soulard School. In the past, I have been a professional actor working primarily with children's educational programs, violence prevention, AIDS education, and children's literature. I have worked as a Montessori educator for 15 years, working with both elementary and middle school students. I was also a theater director for 8 years

during which I wrote, produced and directed 3 operettas with 70 little Montessorians. I have my BA in Applied Behavioral Science from National Louis University and a certificate of study from NAMTA in the Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies. In the spring, I will be receiving my Masters in Arts in Teaching from Webster University. This is my eighth year teaching at the Soulard School. When not teaching, I enjoy playing the guitar, gardening, adding to my vinyl collection and working as an advocate for children.



Holly Laws, 4th Grade Teacher (Mosaic)

I'm grateful to be starting my third year here at The Soulard School with this amazing staff and community. I was born and raised in St. Louis and graduated from Nerinx Hall High School (go Markers!). I earned my bachelor's degree in Elementary Education at Loyola University Chicago. As a teacher, I love watching students flourish through inquiry and project-based learning.

My first priority is always to create a safe and loving classroom space where students feel comfortable making mistakes and growing because of them. Outside of school, I work as a professional musician playing Irish and rock music in several bands. I also love cooking new foods, reading a good book, and hanging out with my cat, Cici. I'm looking forward to a new and exciting year with my fourth graders!



Brad Gordon, 5th Grade Teacher (Thrive)

I can't reiterate enough how happy I am to be part of The Soulard School. I have taught for 18 years now, and I can honestly say that this is the most caring and nurturing environment for kids I have ever been part of.

I grew up in Southern California in the suburbs of LA. I moved away and graduated with a degree in Elementary Education from the University of

Tennessee. From there, I spent nearly a decade teaching in Las Vegas. I have been in St. Louis for eight years now, and have grown to love it here. I live across the river in Collinsville with my wife, Lorrie, and our kids (Scott, Ryann, Ethan, and Emma).



Anna Elwood, 5th Grade Teacher (Thrive)

This is my sixth year as part of The Soulard School community, and I absolutely love being a teacher in the Thrive classroom! I feel extremely privileged to teach, grow, and learn alongside our fifth grade students. I love project-based learning and focusing on the uniqueness of all learners, and I am always excited to continue my own lifelong learning journey! I have BAs in Elementary Education and Spanish from

William Jewell College, as well as a Master's degree in Elementary Education with a focus on Reading from UMSL. After finishing undergrad, I was fortunate to teach abroad for two years in southern Spain. It was amazing, and I love incorporating my travels into the classroom! I have been back in St. Louis teaching elementary-aged students since 2011.

I am married to my best friend and the love of my life, Nathan! Our newest and cutest adventure yet began in April of 2020: our sweet baby Hazel! I love spending time with the two of them, and with our adorable pup, Raven. In addition to spending time with family and friends, I also love speaking Spanish, traveling, and cheering on the Cardinals. I look forward to new adventures awaiting us this year at The Soulard School.

Rooting for our Stars

WE ROOT FOR THOSE THAT HAVE GRADUATED AND ARE IN NEW SCHOOLS OR EVEN FINISHING COLLEGE!

EXTENDED CORE TEACHERS



Lisa Berman, Physical Education Teacher

This is my ninth year as The Soulard School's physical education teacher. I have an M.Ed. in Literacy, Language and Cultural Studies and have taught for more than 20 years in both formal and informal settings including the first K-12 charter school in Massachusetts and at the St. Louis Zoo. I am also the Director of USA Sport Stacking and the Head Coach for the USA Sport Stacking Team and all State Teams. When not with my family, at Soulard School or in my home office doing work related to sport stacking, I can be found volunteering at Concordia Gymnastic Society in South City where I sit on the Board, teach sport stacking, and ninja classes, and am the director of Camp Concordia. My kids, Holly and Darius, are Soulard School graduates. Holly is a senior at Metro Academic and Classical High School and Darius is in 8th grade at Grand Center Arts Academy. My husband, Alex, is a Wash U Physician in the Neurology Department. We live in the Shaw Neighborhood.



Alex-Anne Troxel, Strings & Performing Arts Teacher

As a second generation musician and third generation youth educator, I'm so glad to be a member of The Soulard School staff as Strings and Performing Arts Instructor. I received my Bachelor of Music in viola performance in 2014 from Southeast Missouri State University. Post-graduate studies in the Suzuki Violin Method include registered training for Books I, II, and III at the University of Memphis (2014-15) and Book IV at Otterbein University (2016). In August 2018 I also became certified in Elementary Education.

I live right across the river in Caseyville with my wife Nicole and our daughter Tallis, who will be three in December and is a member of the Jr. Pre-K class here at school. Our family's favorite activities are spending time outdoors, reading, social activism, and trying out new restaurants.



Jacci Ross-Hertel, Studio Arts Teacher

I first learned about the philosophy and teaching methods at the school through a former Soulard School family and am so excited to be working at TSS for my fourth year. I look forward to collaborating with the classroom and other extended core teachers, as well as the creative minds within our student body.

Originally born in St. Louis, I grew up in Columbia, Missouri. I came back to St.

Louis, getting my Masters in Ed at Fontbonne. I then moved to St. Petersburg, Florida to teach art at an elementary school, and then back here to St. Louis working in a variety of art education positions. I have worked with Springboard St. Louis, taught summer and afterschool programs, taught private art classes, and continue to be on the staff of The St. Louis Art Fair. Additionally, I am on the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion + Belonging subcommittee at Soulard, which allows me to intentionally support our

commitment to creating a community that supports ALL students, families, and staff of our school.

Outside of my passion for the arts, I love to travel, try new restaurants, see live music, and exercise. Other than that, I am usually chasing my rambunctious preschooler around the house, watching my daughter's fashion shows, or collapsing in exhaustion with my husband.



Courtney Keefe, STEAM Teacher

I am incredibly excited to tackle the role of STEAM Instructor yet again this year! Collaborating closely with classroom teachers and students alike, I am looking forward to the awesome learning experiences and projects we will be creating together as we continue to embrace the Makers Movement as we engage in both Design Thinking and the Engineering Process. Think, Design, Make, Build, Tinker, Improve!

It's hard to believe that this is my tenth year with The Soulard School and my eighth as the STEAM instructor! I feel extremely lucky to be a part of this special community and have the opportunity to work with such remarkable children. I attended undergraduate at Loyola University in New Orleans where I received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. After Hurricane Katrina, I migrated to Miami for two years before returning to St. Louis to attend graduate school at Lindenwood University where I received my Master of Arts in Teaching in Elementary Education.

One of my goals as an educator is to inspire a love of learning in my students, as I share my passion for learning with them. I believe that teaching is more than a sacred responsibility; it is a privilege. When I am not at school, I can be found spending time with my family, friends, and beloved canine companion Jewel, curled up with a good book, tending to my garden, trying out new recipes, or exploring anything that piques my curiosity.



THE 3RD, 4TH, & 5TH GRADERS ALONG WITH ALEX-ANNE HAVE WORKED VERY HARD TO PREPARE FOR THEIR STARRING ROLES DURING THE UPCOMING CLOVERS & STARS IRISH MUSIC AND DANCE FESTIVAL ON NOVEMBER 5TH.

Please show your support and join us, more information at www.soulardschool.org/events



Sarah Kate Buckles, Culinary Arts Teacher

This will be my seventh year teaching at The Soulard School. I have worn many hats during my time here and this is my third year in la toque blanche as Culinary Arts and Nutrition Instructor. I love cooking delicious, healthy, from-scratch meals with your kiddos as they explore the world through food. I work very hard to incorporate the social-emotional program into our time in the kitchen and lunchroom, and to watch our kiddos' self-confidence grow as they build skills that will last a lifetime.

My background is very diverse. I have a degree in Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management, but I spent ten years working with not-for-profits in many different capacities. I've been a roller derby league president, a booker for an all-ages nightclub and art gallery, and a grocery co-op manager. I have worked as a caterer, a camp director, and a restaurateur. All these different jobs have given me an appreciation for the ever-evolving organism that is the city of St. Louis and a strong drive to be involved in changing this city for the better and helping bring colorful and exciting events to the community.

I live in Fox Park with my husband Matt Thenhaus, our son and TSS alumnus Joss, and Charlie the dog. I love reading, painting watercolors, and cooking for my family. You can also find me on Cherokee Street divining the future at The Fortune Teller Bar, the fine local watering hole my husband and I own.



Erin Turner, Culinary Arts Assistant

I have been a bit of a jack-of-all-trades in my career with jobs centering in or around the kitchen. After helping out in the TSS kitchen as a volunteer and spending time in the halls, I knew this was the place I needed to be. As I begin my third year at the school I have learned so much about what it means to teach children and be a part of a community. I have discovered that it is more than just cooking food to eat. This is about crafting skills for a life to truly live.

I have two children, Adelaide and Arthur. We spend our time exploring the St. Louis area and love snuggling while watching a movie with a big bowl of popcorn coated in brewers yeast with the hot sauce close by for sprinkling.



Joe Ploch, Aftercare Coordinator

"I'm tired and my beard hurts!"
As a St. Louis native and father of four awesome kiddos who attend(ed) TSS, I am proud to have had the opportunity to assist in various afterschool clubs and activities over the years. While finishing a degree in education, I am in the role of aftercare coordinator. I also assist in Pre-K with transitions and classroom quiet times and occasionally pitch in elsewhere as a general sub.



Cass Blackwood, Aftercare Assistant

This is my third year working at the Soulard School and I cannot express how wonderful it is to have found such a remarkable and supportive community. I have become a much better parent and teacher since joining this community and intend to continue that journey for a long time. Ames, my wonderful partner of 12 years and I live in Fox Park with our kiddos. Owen is in first grade and Arlo is in Pre-K, both thriving at the Soulard School. My

background includes a degree in Studio Art and decades working in design and technical theater. I'm a huge animal lover, all the way down to the bees, spiders and caterpillars in the yard. I enjoy spending time doing all types of crafting, building, cooking and gardening and I love that those skills have all come in handy while I'm working aftercare, Camp Soulard, and filling in all over the school.



Kori Mitchell, Extended Core & Aftercare Assistant

"Team work makes the dream work "
I am a senior in college from Chicago. This is my first year at the Soulard School and I absolutely love being a part of the team. I assist with both extended core and aftercare. I am always willing to give a helping hand wherever I am needed.

Poet A.T. McWilliams beautifully captures the stability that comes when we root for each other.

When I Say I'm Rooting For You

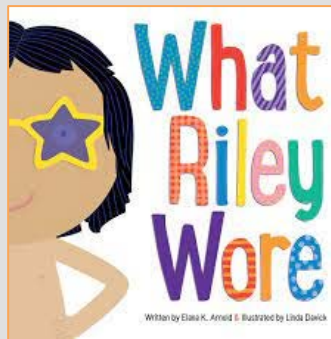
I mean I'm planting my feet like seeds until they sink beneath your soil (as if our friendship is fertile ground) and stretching my roots like our arms before they embrace. That's why, when we hug, I hold you the way roots hold the earth- tender and tight and silent, because roots and hugs don't need words to say I'll always be here to

Help you Grow.

USING PICTURE BOOKS TO INTRODUCE

BIG

TOPICS IN QUIETUDE



WHAT RILEY WORE by Elana K. Arnold

Some phrases we often hear from young children are things like “those are boy shoes” or “that’s a girl shirt.” This book helped us explain to the class that **CLOTHES ARE FOR PEOPLE AND WE CAN WEAR WHAT MAKES US HAPPY!** It also allowed us to introduce the idea that we are in charge of our choices and other people are in charge of theirs.

IT FEELS GOOD TO BE YOURSELF by Theresa Thorn

To round out our discussions about identity, a student read this book to our class. It Feels Good to Be Yourself gave them the opportunity to explain different gender identities and new words like transgender, cisgender, and non-binary. Many other students were able to discuss how it related to people that they know in their own lives and it **HELPED THEM ALL TO FEEL MORE CONNECTED!**

We partner with you, We learn from you, We belong ...

The teachers at Soulard often describe themselves as facilitators, learning next to and from their students. Our traditional Fall study of personal and family identity took on special significance this year as several students shared about their own or a family member’s gender identity as part of class discussions. Our little friends in the Quietude class have **TAUGHT US SO MUCH ABOUT INCLUSIVENESS AND HOW IT ALLOWS FOR SELF-EXPRESSION.** Partnering with Quietude parents, the Pre-K teachers offered early childhood families a time to come together, be vulnerable, ask questions, and expand our sense of belonging. Two parents of the class, who have also been involved in the Safe Zone Project, led a conversation over Zoom around awareness of the LGBTQ community. After an open share time, Quietude **TEACHERS PROVIDED FAMILIES WITH RESOURCES TO SPEAK TO THEIR CHILDREN IN DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE WAYS** about gender and identity. In total, thirteen families were represented at the Zoom, comprised of teachers, parents and administrators, partnering, learning, and belonging.

PERFORMING ARTS CORNER

Our annual Clovers and Star benefit show has something for everyone: favorite bands like Switchback, amazing Irish dancers, and everyone’s favorite sea shanty, “The Grumpy Pirate!” But this year includes a **UNIQUE NEW ADDITION TO THE PROGRAM:** the work of **A CENTER FOR CREATIVE ARTS RESIDENCY WITH OUR THIRD GRADE CLASS. THE GOAL IS TO PRESENT A PIECE OF PERFORMANCE ART THAT WILL REPRESENT THEIR IDEAL CLASSROOM COMMUNITY AND IN TURN, THE SOULARD SCHOOL!**

Already a dynamic group, the class has thrived under the instruction of Teaching Artist Roxane McWilliams. TSS was very happy to welcome back Roxane, a friend of the school who has worked with several classes and teachers in past years.

Roxanne has this to say about the project: *“There are so many elements coming together as we build this piece of performance art. The enthusiasm and collaborative energy from the 3rd grade Explorers flourish with the support and guidance from Alex-Anne, Rob, and Elise. It is very exciting to be a part of this work. I feel there is a wisdom in the way young people perceive the world, and to be able to share in their creative process is always a privilege.”*

The final performance will be filmed onstage at the Sheldon Concert Hall, and premiered at Clovers and Stars (and streamed live online!) November 5th. We hope to see you there!



PA FALL EVENTS
WATCH FOR DETAILS!



PASTA SALES COMING SOON

TEE & SWEATSHIRT SALES



COMING SOON



SOULARD SWAP

Saturday, October 30
9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Join us for the first Soulard Swap!

It's time for all those too-small clothes, coats and boots to bring joy to new families this winter. Bring gently used outdoors clothes and sporting gear to the school playground where you can trade-in and trade-up.

Volunteers will sort items out by size so you can easily shop. Go home with free gear your kids need! All remaining items will be donated. Nothing to donate? No worries, you can still shop the swap.

PA FUNDRAISING UPDATES



Ascension CHARITY CLASSIC
presented by EMERSON.

Thank you Parent Volunteers for your help making our newest fundraiser a huge success. Soulard School parents and staff volunteered at the Ascension Charity Classic for the PGA TOUR Champions and raised nearly \$7,000 for our school. The PA was able to use some of those funds to replace the school basketball hoop.



Oktoberfest returned to Soulard this year and our volunteer crew jumped right back into the swing of things. It was a fun weekend staffing the Soulard School beer tent and we raised more than \$800 in tips and are hoping our percentage of sales will be around \$3,000



Our next PA fundraiser will be announced soon with the annual Pasta Sale with our partners at Midwest Pasta Company. Please stay tuned for more information coming soon.

P A R E N T ASSOCIATION
Who's Who 2021-22

OFFICERS

PA President	Samantha Fisher
PA Vice President	Brandee Zahner
Treasurer	Nicole Johnson
Secretary	Tia Tucker
Social Events	Angela Wildermuth
	Laura Jacobson
Sports Coordinators	Brett Maricque
	Rodnica McGee
	Brad White
Room Coordinator Lead	Zinnia Ron-Ferguson

ROOM COORDINATORS

Jr. PreK / Sprouts	Erin Prange
	Joy Swanson
Sr. PreK / Quietude	Anne Kraus
Kindergarten / Mums	Madeleine Hayden
	Anne Kraus
1st Grade / Enigma	Zinnia Ron-Ferguson
	Sarah Moore
2nd Grade / Alchemy	Brandee Zahner
	Casey Zona
3rd Grade / Explorers	Christine LaBarbera
	Liz Frymire
4th Grade / Mosaic	Annie Lehrer
	Shawna Climer
5th Grade / Thrive	Laura Jacobson

THE PARENT STARS HAVE JUMPED BACK INTO VOLUNTEERING AND WHO HOLD IMPORTANT ROLES IN OUR PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS. THANK YOU!

Rooting for our Stars

Recently, we were awarded the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) In Action grant from the NoVo Foundation, Education First and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, which is allowing us to expand our current SEL programs, including Buddy Circles.

Through this multi-year grant, we will be working to expand our Buddy Circles in three different ways. First, we have set goals to gradually increase the number of students that we are able to have in Buddy Circles each year. **We would like to eventually see each child in our school being able to participate in a Buddy Circle each year.** Anna Elwood (5th Grade Teacher) and Phillip McFarlane (4th Grade Teacher) will begin training more teachers to lead Buddy Circles, which will allow more students to participate. With their help, we will also develop some staff Buddy Circle-like opportunities.

Additionally, the grant will allow us to begin including support for parents through our Buddy Circle program. Laura Grace (5th Grade Parent) will be our first parent liaison and will be working to provide opportunities to educate parents more about what Buddy Circles are, while also coordinating parent support groups and lessons based on emerging themes in student Buddy Circles.

We are so excited for this opportunity to see how our social emotional learning programming can expand through Buddy Circles to more students, staff, and parents in the upcoming school years.

Supporting the adults in our environment also supports our students!



The
**ROCKEFELLER
FOUNDATION**

Some quotes from buddy circles so far this school year

"A buddy is someone that stays on your side no matter what you are going through."

2nd grade student



"If you see someone feeling sad, you can find out what they need and either go comfort them or give them space. It depends on what the friend needs."

5th grade student



"A buddy means to be with that person when they are going down, and to help bring them back up."

5th grade student



"A buddy is when somebody is bullying, you stand up for them. A buddy is being nice, being friends with people, and having teamwork."

2nd grade student

THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING

"THE SMALLEST ACT OF KINDNESS
IS WORTH MORE THAN THE
GRANDEST INTENTION."

- OSCAR WILDE

The 2021 Volunteer Rally was a great success - because of YOU, our wonderfully supportive, talented and resourceful community. Our goal since the school was founded is 100% family involvement. Your investment of time demonstrates to your children the importance of giving back and the significant role each of us plays in building a community.

Thank you to everyone who has signed up for volunteer roles and to everyone who has already jumped into the work. Signature programs like Culinary Arts would not be possible without the help of our dedicated volunteers and we appreciate you very much!

RECIPE CORNER

with Chef Sarah Kate

Pesto Sauce is a Northern Italian staple made from fresh herbs and greens and toasted nuts. Traditionally, pesto is pounded in a mortar and pestle until pasty, then thinned with olive oil before being tossed with pasta, spread on fresh bread, or used as the sauce base for wood-fired pizza.

THIS PESTO RECIPE IS A FAVORITE AT THE SOULARD SCHOOL.

We use it on pasta, pizza, in spaghetti sauce, and on Sugarfire Smoked Chicken for our crowd-pleasing Pesto Chicken Sliders. Since it's made in a food processor, even our youngest friends can safely help. Here's my basic pesto recipe and some variations for you to try at home.

NOTE: Any nut can be substituted for sunflower seeds. Pine nuts are traditionally used, but they are expensive.

INGREDIENTS:

- ✦ 1 cup fresh Basil leaves, stems removed
- ✦ 3 cups fresh Spinach leaves, stems removed
- ✦ Sunflower Seeds, shelled
- ✦ ½-¾ cup Olive Oil
- ✦ 2 cloves Garlic, peeled
- ✦ Salt and Pepper

DIRECTIONS: Put the garlic and sunflower seeds in a food processor and pulse until finely ground. Turn food processor on low and feed the spinach and basil leaves in a few at a time. Slowly drizzle in olive oil until the pesto is smooth and can be scraped into a bowl. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

VARIATIONS:

- ✦ Add a tablespoon of lemon juice with the salt and pepper for a tart pesto.
- ✦ Substitute kale or swiss chard for the spinach.
- ✦ Substitute cashews for the sunflower seeds.
- ✦ Mix in ¼ cup grated parmesan, asiago or romano cheese at the end.

Pesto freezes beautifully, but needs to be used within a few days if refrigerated.



harvest party

The Soulard School Parent Association says, thank you, to everyone who helped with and attended our annual Harvest Party. The planning committee did a spook-tacular job with games, treats and costume contests.

It was extra special to see past graduates attend this much-loved event!





BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY 2021

