

THE SOULARD SCHOOL

COMMUNITY NEWS

Notes From The Leadership: Shenika Bishop, Principal

#SoulardStrong

My heart is filled with immense pleasure as I have witnessed students, teachers, and our community navigate uncharted waters and show a force of resilience through this ever-changing process. One thing for sure that I've found with education is that **change is inevitable, evolving is deemed necessary in the process, and through discomfort there is growth.** We remain firmly committed to providing our staff and students with the tools necessary to foster and maintain good relationships and find creative ways to meaningfully connect with one another.

The unwanted disruption accompanying the pandemic has created new ways for us to lean on one another as a staff and community. As a staff we are embracing this new level of connections by creating equitable space for all voices during decision making, opportunities to learn from one another through staff-led professional development, and by sharing tips and strategies during distance learning. **Each student's academic success is also at the forefront as we begin to use adaptable assessments and additional data to improve upon our already dynamic instruction.** We will be looking at student progress in new ways as we look to continue to improve distance learning instruction and consider reopening plans in the coming months.

While the school year began in an unnatural and unwelcome way in this unprecedented pandemic, we have embraced necessary changes together. We are essentially building from ground zero and improving on new structures as we rethink education as a whole. The Soulard School is a community that is progressive and forever evolving. **We are a community dedicated to working together to ensure our school and community is strong, safe and proactive.** Now, that commitment to each other extends further than ever. Although what we all are experiencing is still new, we continue to be flexible with our approaches, open with our communication, and transparent with each message to build an even better school community.

Recognition of our outstanding educators, exceptional students and supportive parent communities is necessary, and with mindfulness of the ongoing pandemic crisis, I believe this recognition of the invaluable contributions of our educators and the tenacity of our students is more important than ever.

We are forever changed and we miss our normal circumstances, but I encourage you to lean into the discomfort and be courageous enough to welcome new challenges as we grow together stronger than ever before.

We are #SoulardStrong

- Shenika



This time last year, The Soulard School was abuzz and our Student Orchestra was preparing for their performance in Clovers & Stars, the annual Irish music and dance festival hosted by McGurk's to benefit our school.

We certainly could not have foreseen what was ahead of us. Fast forward a year — our world and our ways of coming together as a community have drastically changed. However, we are not deterred! Clovers & Stars is a celebration of our students' talent and our school's strength.

Though we cannot gather in person this year, we are excited to have an opportunity to virtually showcase our school alongside amazing local and international performers.

This year, in lieu of us gathering at The Sheldon Concert Hall, **WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH AS WE MOVE OUR EVENT ONLINE.**

Clovers & Stars will be the **ONLY MAJOR EVENT FUNDRAISER** to occur this school year as our annual Soulard Soiree will not be carried out as scheduled.

OUR CALENDAR

- 10/8 Parent Assoc. Meeting 7PM | Zoom
- 10/15 TSS Board Meeting
- 10/16 CLOSED – Prof. Dev.
- 11/1 Daylight Savings Time
- 11/6 End of 1st Trimester
- 11/6 CLOSED – Records Day
- 11/7 Clovers & Stars | Live Online
- 11/12 Parent Assoc. Meeting 7PM | Zoom
- 11/19 TSS Board Meeting
- 11/24-25 Parent Conferences
- 11/26-27 CLOSED – Thanksgiving
- 12/10 Parent Assoc. Meeting 7PM | Zoom
- 12/17 TSS Board Meeting
- 12/18 CLOSED – Prof. Dev.
- 12/21-1/30 CLOSED - Winter Break
- 1/4 CLOSED – Prof. Dev.
- 1/14 Parent Assoc. Meeting 7PM | Zoom
- 1/18 CLOSED – MLK Day
- 1/21 TSS Board Meeting



SAVE THE DATE(S)!

November 16 - 22

This year's Book Fair will be held VIRTUALLY, the week before Thanksgiving, with our friends at



subterranean
BOOKS

Stay tuned for more details.

2020-21 PARENT ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| President | Samantha Fisher |
| Vice President | Annie Lehrer |
| Treasurer | Heather McCorkle |
| Secretary | OPEN |
| Social Events Co-Coordinators | Angela Wildermuth
Samantha Kirby |
| Lead Room Coordinators | Jim Noonan
Megan Power |

ROOM COORDINATORS

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Nursery / Sprouts | Jacci Ross-Hertel
Gabrielle Cole |
| Pre-K / Quietude | Anne Kraus |
| K / Mums | Shannon Williams
Jen Fuller
Zinnia Ron-Ferguson |
| 1 ST / Enigma | OPEN |
| 2 ND / Alchemy | Sierra Volaski
Sarah Sodko |
| 3 RD / Mosaic | OPEN |
| 4 TH / Explorer | Jim Noonan
Kelsey Power |
| 5 th / Thrive | Morgan Cameron |

PA FALL EVENTS

WATCH FOR DETAILS!



MEET OUR SOULARD SCHOOL 2020-21 STAFF

ADMINISTRATION



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 Nursery 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 a St. Louis native and the start of the 2020-2021 school year will mark my eleventh 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 thrilled to begin my administrative career at The Soulard School. I am excited to share in the 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 learners 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) who is also beginning a new journey as a middle school student. Outside of school, I enjoy spending time with my daughter, our fur baby (Nippy), and spending time with my family! I am looking forward to my journey at the Soulard School.



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 fourteenth year

with the Soulard School! When I began, I taught kindergarteners and toddlers, but I've been in the office for the past ten years. My son Emmett is a TSS alumni at McKinley and Theo is in 4th grade. I live in Shaw with my husband Brad, the kids, a big brown dog named Rufus and our hedgehog, Rose.



Haley Biehl, Assistant Principal
Every child learns differently, and it is our charge as educators to show regard for and to reflect on how students express themselves academically, socially, and emotionally. In turn, we adjust our approach and interactions to ensure the child is feeling supported and respected. Now entering into my ninth year here, I am thrilled to continually support and grow with this community.

While my initial bachelor's degree is in journalism, I started my journey in education at the Illinois Center for Autism, and quickly learned that nurturing the development of my students was far more rewarding than working as a freelance journalist. I returned to school and received my Master's in the Art of Teaching in Special Education, and continued as a teacher at ICA before joining the Behavior Support team in Belleville, IL, where I taught 1st through 3rd grade. I found my way to The Soulard School when I married my wonderful husband, Jason, and made St. Louis my home. We are parents to a very inquisitive three-year-old, Autumn, who loves to play and explore at the Nursery. Outside of school, I enjoy teaching fitness classes at CC Fly Fitness, spoiling our new puppy, Willow, and getting into misadventures with my sisters.

DEVELOPMENT TEAM



Kimberly Shead, Development 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.

Thank you



Patsy King, Development Assistant

I joined The Soulard School community nineteen years ago when my daughter, Isabel, started in the Nursery at what was then called "the Little School." She's now a college Junior. 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. I'm thrilled to be back!

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, 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 just moved to the Central West End. In my free time (when we're not in the middle of a global pandemic) I love to explore my new neighborhood, travel, ride my bike, check out new restaurants and movies, and volunteer with a nonprofit that brings authors and books to underserved schools.

STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM



Kristen Hood, Licensed Clinical Social Worker

I am so excited to be going into my second 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 continue to see adults and children as a therapist in Creve Coeur, outside of my time at The Soulard School. 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 currently live in St. Louis with my husband, Nathan, and my cat, Newton. Nathan and I are licensed foster parents and may or may not have 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.



Stephen McGinnis, Instructional Specialist

I am super-excited to be joining the teaching staff at Soulard School as an Instructional Specialist in the 2020-2021 school year! Prior to coming to Soulard School, I was working as a special education teacher in Riverview Gardens for the past four years. Overall, I have been working in education for ten years--six years as a special education teacher including two years in a K-8 private school, and four years as a paraprofessional working with middle school students in the Special School District. I earned my teaching degree from Fontbonne University in

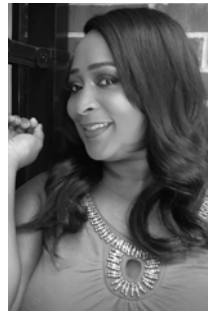
2012. Before entering the field of education, I studied Theology at St. Louis University (2006 graduate) and Journalism at Southeast Missouri State University (1999). When I am not teaching, I love to explore the parks and waterways of Missouri with my wife, Catherine, and our three boys--Francis (6), Benedict (3), and Zachary (2).



Hannah Florence, Occupational Therapist

I have had the amazing opportunity to be part of The School School staff for two years now and am excited to see what this year has in store. I am a born and raised St. Louis City resident and would not change it for the world. Since becoming a registered and licensed Occupational Therapist, I have been working with numerous charter schools to provide services. Prior to obtaining my license, I worked in the public and charter school settings since high school and have had a front row seat to all of the changes and progress occurring in schools locally. There is always room to grow, improve,

and learn new things. It is my hope that I will be able to provide students, staff, and families with resources aimed at overall success for the children and their futures. I absolutely love being able to see progress in students and cannot wait to see what the future holds for myself and all of those in The Soulard School that I have come to know and build relationships with.



DeVonshae Person, Instructional Support

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 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.

NURSERY TEACHERS



Jessica Thenhaus, Infant/Toddler Teacher (Sprouts)

I am originally from New Orleans and have called St Louis home for more than twelve years. It was not easy to leave New Orleans but I was lucky enough to find a second home in St Louis. I have many years of experience working with kids ages birth-10 yrs including owning an in-home daycare. I began at The Soulard School as the Pre-K aftercare teacher and summer camp assistant. I am now in my third year as a Nursery Teacher. I am proud to be a part of The Soulard School, a school that has such a strong connection to the people within its community. In

my spare time I love to be exploring outdoors with my husband and two dogs.



Kathie Mallman, 2s Teacher (Sprouts)

I am so incredibly thrilled to begin my fifth year at The Soulard School. This is my second year teaching the amazing two year olds at the nursery and I'm looking forward to seeing what this year will bring to me. I'm so lucky to be teaching with my own kiddo, Louie, for the second and final year before he moves up to the Pre-K class. I absolutely adore watching him make friends and learn so much from our amazing community. I received my Bachelor's Degree in Education from Webster University in 2014. After spending a few years working in an early

childhood center, I found my true passion for engaging little ones through problem solving experiences and watching them explore new things for the first time! Outside of school, I love spending all of my time with my family-- my husband Mike, bonus kid Aiden (11) and Louie (3). We enjoy spending

time at our country house in Southwest Missouri, searching for hidden treasures at garage sales and antique stores, and watching any kind of funny movie there is. I am beyond grateful to be a part of such a strong and beautiful community, and I am thrilled to see what this year has in store for me!



Malena Amusa, Nursery Assistant/Aftercare Teacher (Sprouts)

I am excited to join the Soulard School community this year to support the Nursery team. I have a long background in dance and journalism, including founding Addlife! African Dance Company and writing for major national and global publications. After my return to St. Louis, I taught African dance and drums to students around the city while directing Amusa Communications into an in-demand firm. At the Nursery, I am joined by my dear daughter Mazi, who is loving meeting her new

friends. Every moment is an opportunity to nurture, guide, and love our babies. I indulge that opportunity every chance I get! When not at the school, I am an avid home-schooler and writer, currently completing my third children's book.

PRE-K TEACHERS



Jenna Morrison, Pre-K Teacher (Quietude)

I am beyond excited and grateful to have the opportunity to continue my adventures in teaching Pre-K at The Soulard School! 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 Quietude 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. In my free time, I enjoy going on new adventures around the city with Dan and our children Maeve, 3, and Beau, 1, or having dance parties, playing with our dogs, 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 eighth year here as part of the Pre-K team!



Dorie Ranheim, Lead Pre-K Teacher (Quietude)

Young children come as they are, full of curiosity and wonder, ready to begin a journey of discovery in the world. I feel privileged to be their guide, learning right alongside them, always inspired by their fearless authenticity. This is my second year at The Soulard School after graduating from Saint Louis University with a doctorate in Education. During my time at SLU, my research focused on teaching strategies for early childhood, including the creation of a blog, playfulinvitations.com, meant to inspire adults to playfully teach foundational math skills

using natural materials. While at SLU I also supported undergraduate students as they learned about early childhood education and I continue to work closely with SLU faculty to provide teacher training. My recent work includes joining the first Anti-Racist Early Childhood Educator Collaborative in St. Louis with SLU and Soulard School colleagues. Before pursuing my degree at SLU, I spent six years as Education Program Manager at The Magic House where I created art, music and education programs for young children

and families. I am certified in Missouri to teach Early Childhood Education, and hold a Masters Degree in Child Development (Erikson Institute), and a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology with a focus in Child Development (Loyola University Chicago). My entire career has been spent working with children and families in a variety of settings including hospitals, children's museums and schools. I live in the Shaw neighborhood with my daughters, Inga (6) and Freya (4.5), my musical husband, Bjorn and our Vizsla, Ginger.



Maggie Hurst, Pre-K Teacher (Quietude)

I'm so excited to begin my second year at my dream job in the Quietude room! Six 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 Haley 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 puppy, Zoomy. We love spending time exploring local parks and hiking spots. When the school day ends, I run a small hand embroidery business and love to relax outside with a book.

ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM TEACHERS



Amy Cross, Kindergarten Teacher (Mums)

I joined The Soulard School community during the 2012/2013 schoolyear. I began my journey in the Quietude room, and this will be my fifth year in the Mum's room. I have a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and will finish my master's in Educational Administration from UMSL in May. Before coming to The Soulard School, I lived and traveled in Europe, Asia and Latin America by teaching English. During my time abroad I taught middle school, kindergarten and adults. While living in Dominican Republic I oversaw the early childhood

program at Punta Cana International School as an academic coordinator. I stayed there four years before returning to St. Louis to start my own family. Currently, I am enjoying my continued growth within an amazing environment where I see children being inspired and encouraged to live in such a positive, respectful way! In all my travels I found the uniqueness of individuals is what makes the world wonderful. I look forward to teaching in a way that helps students discover their own potential while recognizing and learning from the potential in others.

grateful



Julie Radin, Kindergarten Teacher (Mums)

Joining the community at The Soulard School seven years ago was a dream come true for me. In my years as a teacher, I have learned the value of allowing student curiosity to guide the curriculum, so I am happy to be a part of a school that embraces this philosophy. I have over 25 years of teaching experience at various grade levels. I earned my Bachelor of Science in Education from Missouri Baptist University. I have continued growing as an educator through professional development workshops and participating in professional learning communities. As

a teacher, I love reading with my students, listening to them discuss big ideas and finding ways to do our learning outdoors! In my spare time I enjoy taking long walks through city neighborhoods, catching up with friends in coffee shops, and reading with my dog curled up beside me.



Bethany Burress, 1st Grade Teacher (Enigma)

I am incredibly grateful to begin my eighth 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 10 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 Enigma 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 eighth 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 3 years and have a

10 year old stepson, Luke. We are expecting our first baby this October and are so excited for that new adventure! 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, no matter how it may look!



Julia Knarr, 2nd Grade Teacher (Alchemy)

I'm so excited to be returning for my second year at The Soulard School! I have lived in St. Louis my whole life, and I have called University City home for the last four years. I attended Lindenwood University where I graduated with a BA in elementary education/early childhood and dual certification. This is my fifth year teaching, and I have taught at both the preschool and 2nd grade levels. In addition to classroom teaching, I was a preschool summer camp director and taught the children's programming at a local religious

organization for three years. With the school closures in the spring, I became part of the PBS broadcast team for Teaching in Room Nine, and I continue that work this fall. 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 third 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. Currently, I call Tower Grove home, and when I'm not teaching, I enjoy snuggling my pug, Tsitsi, playing the ukulele, and cooking

yummy food.



Rob May, 3rd Grade Teacher (Mosaic)

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

fifth year of teaching at TSS I look forward to new adventures and opportunities for growth alongside our students.



Phillip McFarlane, 3rd 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 18 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 degree from NAMTA in the Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies. When not teaching, I enjoy playing the guitar, gardening, adding to my vinyl collection and working as an advocate for children.





Brad Gordon, 4th Grade Teacher (Explorer)

I can't reiterate enough how happy I am to be part of The Soulard School. I have taught for 17 years now, and I can honestly say that this is the most caring and nurturing environment for kids I have ever been a 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

seven 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).



Holly Laws, 4th Grade Teacher (Explorer)

I'm grateful to be starting my second 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 degree in Elementary Education at Loyola University Chicago and decided to move back home after graduation to be close to my family. 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 fiddle player and in non-pandemic times, you can find me playing at many of the Irish spots around town with my band, Lore. In my free time I love to bike, play with my two pups, and babysit my toddler nephew, Sage. I'm looking forward to a new and exciting year with my fourth graders!



Anna Elwood, 5th Grade Teacher (Thrive)

This is my fifth 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 this year: our sweet baby Hazel! I love spending time with the two of them, and with our adorable pup, Rogue. 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 and hope to ask questions, take risks, and dream big with everyone at The Soulard School.



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EXTENDED CORE TEACHERS



Lisa Berman, Physical Education Teacher

This is my eighth 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, DANCEPL3Y and Ninja classes, and am the director of Camp Concordia. My kids, Holly and Darius, are Soulard School graduates. Holly is a junior at Metro Academic and Classical High School and Darius is in 7th 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).

I finished my Elementary Education certification in August 2018, and in June 2019 completed Orff Schulwerk training at UMSL.

I live in Affton with my wife Nicole and our adventurous daughter Tallis, who turns two in December. Our family's favorite activities are spending time outdoors, songwriting, reading, and social activism.



Sarah Kate Buckles, Culinary Arts Teacher

This will be my sixth year at The Soulard School. I have worn many hats during my time here and this is my second 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 second year at the school I am learning so much so quickly about what it means to teach children. 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.



Jaci 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 at The College School, taught private art classes, and continue to be on the staff of The St. Louis Art Fair. I also studied Kids Yoga and Mindfulness through Southtown Yoga studio, which has enabled me to incorporate intentional mindfulness practices into Studio Art.

Outside of my extreme 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 toddler around the house, watching my daughter's living room performances, 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 ninth year with The

Soulard School and my seventh 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.





OUR GARDEN IN BLOOM

The Soulard Gardens, both in the elementary schoolyard and in the nursery schoolyard, are once again in full bloom. Phillip and Lauren have been busy keeping the garden alive and well over the summer, making sure that it was chock-full of a variety of plants. **In the garden you can find corn, tomatoes, kale, cucumbers, tomatillos, zucchini, garlic, potatoes, beets, carrots, radishes, peppers, cilantro, dill, lettuces, arugula, okra, beans, watermelon, mint, thyme, and cantaloupe!** This year we even took up some space on the playground to grow some pumpkins! It was fun to see the pumpkin vines meander through the yard and climb the fence while providing beautiful yellow blossoms which would soon give rise to many orange pumpkins! You can see them in the main hallway at school!

Some of the classrooms will use them in the exploration of parts of plants at school. **The outdoor gardens are not only used in connection to classroom curriculum but also in the nutrition program, and provide opportunities for study, exploration, reflection and meditation.** You may have noticed that because of our limited space, we have utilized the fence near our parking pad. We have hung planters to create a vertical garden on the fence! Here we grow smaller things like lettuces and herbs as well as plants that like to climb like peas and cucumbers. We also have a compost area that we use to support our garden. We often have volunteer plants that come back through the compost. This year we saw butternut squash growing.

The garden is a great opportunity for the Soulard School students to connect and explore plants in a tangible connected manner.

CURRICULUM NIGHT & STUDENT SUPPORT WORKSHOP

Thank you to the parents who joined teachers in September for our virtual Curriculum Nights. We want parents to feel connected to the school and supported in their child's learning from home. Curriculum nights were a chance for parents to hear and ask questions about how distance learning should look. Teachers discussed goals for the year, special projects coming up, and how the individual needs of students are being met during this time. Families met by grade level and in smaller groups where they could discuss what has been working and give feedback on challenges they are facing.

Through these discussions and Parent Association Zoom meetings, a common concern was raised. **How do we keep our children engaged?** While our teachers are offering exciting hands-on lessons, students can become distracted and unmotivated when learning from the solitude of their own home. The Soulard School would like to offer parents another time to come together and learn from one another. **Kindergarten teacher Amy Cross and a parent volunteer will be holding a student support workshop on October 21st.** Some of the topics being covered include creative and positive reinforcement at home, how to put your "teacher hat" on, encouraging a growth mindset, and avoiding power struggles.

Watch for a signup and more information in Friday Notes.



Our virtual Curriculum Night looked different than we're accustomed to, but we are so grateful for the flexibility from teachers and parents as we adapt and move forward.

DOCUMENTING OUR EXPERIENCES

Our Pre-K Students Investigated Their Connections

After six long months away from school the Quietude Pre-K classrooms were so excited to be back together! Many children shared their time away from school and a recurring theme was spent with family. Together, we discussed how members of a family are the same and different, and used the book "Our Class is a Family" by Shannon Olsen to make our classroom connections within a family. We realized that



in a family, people

may look different, like different foods, or wear different clothes, but we still take care of each other, play together, and show each other kindness. The children decided that this is exactly what we should be doing at school! They then brainstormed and came up with our classroom agreements. These discussions then led children to explore their own identity. One ongoing project is to create self-portraits that reflect how our children see themselves, including their unique skin color, hair, and eyes.



Drop It Like It's Hot!

Our Fourth and Fifth Graders Tackle Egg Protection

We may be starting the school year from a distance, but that doesn't mean group experiments aren't possible! Our Explorer (4th) and Thrive (5th) friends participated in the classic egg drop experiment as a cross curricular project with a STEAM connection. Students were given parameters for their devices and their completed projects were dropped from the roof of the school. Students had to implement a range of problem solving skills when designing their contraptions and the diversity of each student's thought process shown through in their finished projects. Materials used ranged from pillow fluff and popcorn cushioning to leafy greens for padding and suspension with string for impact absorption control.

The Drop was recorded by the teachers so that students could watch the fate of their eggs from the comfort of their own home with their families. Students were egg-static to see their classmates' designs and predicting whether or not they would survive the fall! The eggs had an approximate 70% survival rate. Pretty impressive! Was it the strength of St. Louis raised chicken eggs? Was it the ingenuity of the materials utilized in their designs? "Omelet" you decide.



1/ Teachers Anna, Courtney, Holly, and Brad prepare to execute the launch.

2/ Fifth grader Stella used toilet paper rolls for exterior protection. Result: Survived!

3/ Fourth Grader Holly suspended her egg as a means to absorb the impact. Result: Survived!

4/ Fourth grader Remy mimicked the nesting Russian doll technique by placing his egg within another egg! Result: Survived!

5/ Stella and sister Evie on Zoom, celebrating Stella's successful design!

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"Omelet" you decide.



Emoji Pancakes

from the TSS Kitchen

Our Culinary Arts teachers have been busy at school, making lunch for the in-person learners, but that doesn't mean they're not still teaching ALL our students.

Here are some photos from the latest live lesson, and the recipe for delicious pancakes!

2 cups Flour, SIFTED (don't skip the sifting, it helps make the batter smooth)
 1/4 cup sugar
 1 Tbs baking powder
 1 tsp salt
 2 eggs, beaten
 2 cups milk
 2 Tbs melted butter
 food coloring
 3 squeeze bottles for "drawing"
 non-stick spray for the griddle

Whisk together the first 4 ingredients. Add eggs and milk. Mix until fairly smooth, add melted butter and stir to combine. Divide into three bowls, add desired colors and mix well, then transfer to squeeze bottles (a small funnel works best to help with this). Draw the pancakes of your dreams!

Tips:

Keeping the heat on your griddle or pan low will slow the cooking process, giving you more control and time.

Start with the details first, then layer the background batters on top of them.

Even your mistakes will taste delicious!

