

OCT  
2022

# THE SOULARD SCHOOL

## COMMUNITY NEWS

*A message from Shenika Bishop, Principal*

**“WHAT WE KNOW MATTERS BUT WHO WE ARE MATTERS MORE.”**

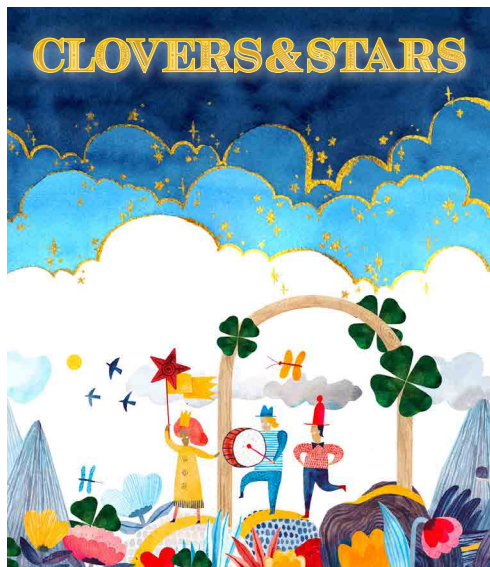
*Brene Brown*



The 2022-2023 school year at Soulard School has just begun, and already we are seeing themes of restoring connections while rediscovering who we are! I know that we have all been through a few difficult years because of the COVID-19 pandemic but we are thrilled to be able to bring back school traditions and values while creating new experiences. We have loved seeing parents back in the building regularly, helping with lunches, shelving library books, or just picking up their kids. We have seen the return of assemblies and guest speakers, as well as family style lunches! Students are engaged in clubs and sports again. We have worked to recreate the home-like feel in the building again, with couches back in our halls and flexible seating in the classrooms. Teachers are actively planning and providing cross-curricular learning opportunities for students across grade levels. We are also very fortunate to be able to resume extending our learning outside the classroom with field trips, guest speakers, and interns and observers from local universities.



This year is not just about returning to our roots and traditions that were lost in COVID, it is also about moving forward in our journey. Our board and staff are engaging in creating a new strategic plan for the school this year, and will be reaching out to parents, students, and community members for help in identifying what makes our school special, and how we can plan for growth and improvement over the next 3-5 years. We cannot paint that picture and achieve that vision alone. We need and welcome your support as we make new connections, restore all things Soulard, and embrace all of the new opportunities for the future development of our school community!



The largest fundraising event of the year benefiting The Soulard School and the Soulard Education Center is right around the corner and it is celebrating a milestone, its 10th Anniversary!

# CLOVERS & STARS

## 10TH ANNUAL MUSIC AND DANCE FUNDRAISER

presented by *McGurk's*

The evening features incredible musical performances, Irish dancers, plus our very own Soulard School Strings Ensemble; and includes an Auction of great local goods and services for you to bid on.

**TO RESERVE YOUR FREE TICKETS TO THE CONCERT**  
visit: [www.soulardschool.org/events](http://www.soulardschool.org/events)

For Sponsor Information contact [samantha.fisher@soulardschool.org](mailto:samantha.fisher@soulardschool.org)  
For Silent Auction Donations contact [amber.nelson@soulardschool.org](mailto:amber.nelson@soulardschool.org)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28TH, 2022  
10TH ANNUAL MUSIC & DANCE FUNDRAISER

presented by *McGurk's* benefiting THE SOULARD  &  Soulard Education Center

## our calendar

### OCT

28 Clovers & Stars

### NOV

- 3 Safe Zone Training
- 4 End of Trimester
- 4 **RECORDS DAY, NO SCHOOL**
- 6 PA Harvest Party
- 10 PA meeting, 7pm
- 11 PA Morning Mingle
- 11 SEC Board Meeting
- 19-20 Book Fair
- 23-25 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

### DEC

- 9 PA Morning Mingle
- 12-15 Spirit Week
- 16 **PD DAY, NO SCHOOL**



subterranean  
BOOKS

## BOOK FAIR NOV. 19-20

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 to our main school library by buying books on our class wishlists.

In partnership with Subterranean Books, this year's Soulard School Book Fair will be November 19-20. Book titles will be available for purchase IN-STORE and ONLINE.

In addition to stocking the class and program Wish List books and making them available for purchase and donation, Subterranean Books will be giving back 20% of all qualifying purchases made IN-STORE the weekend of November 19-20 to The Soulard School.

## 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 connected 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 Sr. Pre-K class and I love seeing her thrive in the school. 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

Amy Cross, SEC Program Director



I joined The Soulard School community during the 2012-13 school year in the Quietude Pre-K 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. During the 2021-22 school year, my journey led me to a new role as Program Director. In this position I was able to support

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 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.

Shenika Bishop, Principal



I am extremely excited to continue my journey for the third year at the Soulard School. I am a St. Louis native and the 2022-2023 school year will mark my thirteenth 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, 13). 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!

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

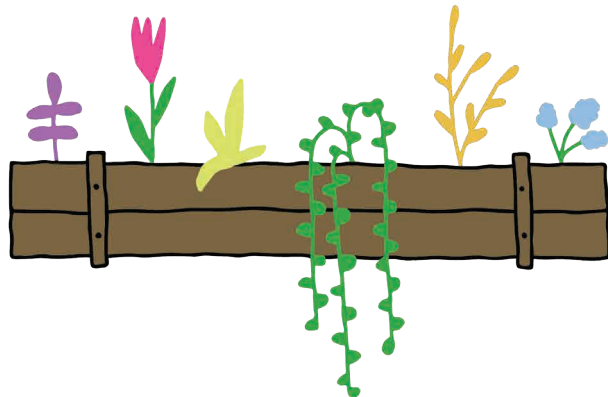
taught kindergarteners and toddlers, but I've been in the office since 2010. Both my kids are now TSS alums - Emmett is a freshman at Collegiate while Theo is in 6th grade at McKinley! I live in Shaw with my husband Brad, the kids, a big brown dog named Rufus and our little beagle princess, Sadie.

## ADMINISTRATION

Debbie Hilliard, Special Education Coordinator



I came to The Soulard School in February 2022 after working as a Special Education Teacher, Educational Diagnostician, and School Psychological Examiner for three decades. Though retired, when I learned of the opportunity to be a part of Soulard, I didn't think twice. I oversee the Special Education Department to support students, teachers and families while also ensuring that we are in compliance with the law. I am also very involved with our Student Support Team which develops and implements interventions for students outside of the special education program who have academic challenges. I often refer to Soulard School as "My Happy Place," where you can find me three days a week. Outside of school I have two grown children, Sam and Katie, a soon to be son-in-law, Matt, and a husband of nearly 35 years, Randy. We also have one fluffy friend, our cat Tess.



### 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.**

Poet A.T. McWilliams

## OFFICE / ADMIN TEAM

Laura Jacobson, Office Assistant



My journey with The Soulard School began in 2012 when our oldest child started at The Little School when he was just 18 months old, followed shortly by our youngest. Five years later we found ourselves moving to Chicago. The whole time we were away, our oldest would fondly recall his time and friends at The Soulard School and would often proclaim, "I wish I was back at Soulard School." As life would have it, last year we found ourselves back in St. Louis and he was able to graduate 5th grade with all of his friends. This is our second year back at The Soulard School and it feels like we never left. I recently joined the school staff helping out in the office and have loved growing into my new role. When I'm not at the front door greeting you and our students, I am a busy mom of 2 boys running around to and from various sports practices. The Jacobsons are Cardinals & Blues fanatics who enjoy socializing and re-exploring all the wonderful things St. Louis has to offer.

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 also 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 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.

Amber Nelson, Events Manager



I'm a new Soulard School parent and couldn't be more grateful for the welcoming community and diverse curriculum offered here. Although I was raised in St. Louis, this is the first time I've been back since leaving for college. Since then, I have lived on both US coasts while studying sustainable architecture and landscape architecture, and have spent almost a decade living in Latin America (mainly Mexico and Brazil) while creating an intentional tri-cultural family with my partner Juanjo and lovely daughters Ramona and Albira. At Soulard School I'm usually helping the Development Office with events and community communications, but I'm also often found around the school doing odd jobs, sharing our latino heritage with students, or having lunch with Ramona and all her awesome friends.

## STUDENT SUPPORT TEAM

Kristen Hood, Student Support Coordinator



I am so excited to be going into my fourth year 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. I have my Master's degree in Social Work and then went on to receive my Clinical Social Worker license. 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. 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 Kianté.

Jayne Shadowens, School Psychologist



I'm back for year two at The Soulard School with a fancy new title, School Psychologist! Also known as "the funny one who helps kids," my role is to develop plans to address skill deficits and support students' academic and emotional needs. I am so grateful to be both behind the scenes and right in the action with some of the coolest students and staff in the world.

I received my B.A. in Psychology from Truman State University in 2017, my M.Ed. in Educational Psychology in 2020 and my Ed.S. in School Psychology in 2022, both from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. In my spare time (recently reclaimed thanks to graduating), I love to read, write, travel, take extended naps, lose at trivia, and have existential conversations with my cat.

Julia Heath, Special Education Teacher



I'm so excited to join The Soulard School this year! I got my Bachelor's in Theatre from Truman State University in 2018. Inspired by years of working at resident camps, I stayed at Truman to receive my Master's in Special Education. I was born and raised in St. Louis and currently live in Spanish Lake with my partner Rhea and our pets: a dog, blue tongued skink, ball python, and foster cat. My biggest obsession lately is the HBO show Our Flag Means Death and I am a beginner bachata dancer.

Emily Schlitz, Speech Therapist



I am thrilled to have joined The Soulard School this year. When I started my career in speech-language pathology, I was driven by the belief that every child has boundless potential in school and in life, and I am more convinced of this each and every year. Here at school, I have the privilege to be a part of helping students grow and flourish in the areas of speech/articulation and language. I received my undergraduate degree from Truman State University, and my graduate degree from Saint Louis University. In my career, I have been fortunate to support students throughout all grades, including early intervention programs for children aged birth through three years, all the way up through high school seniors. These experiences have prepared me to challenge and assist TSS students, while also keeping an eye on the perspective of the "long view." I live in St. Louis City with my two children, Ben and Molly, who are both students at a local public high school, and our three chickens, Laia, Luna, and Henrietta-Petunia. We enjoy watching our chickens with their antics daily.

DeVonshae Person  
Instructional Support & Beforecare Teacher



I was born and raised in St. Louis. I graduated from Lindenwood University with a Bachelor's in Human Service Agency Management and from Fontbonne University with a Master's in Teaching, Specialization in Special Education. Currently I am working on my PhD in Counseling with emphasis in Kabbalah & Metaphysics. I have over 25 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 begin my third year at Soulard School.



## EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS

Jessica Braggs, Jr. Pre-K Teacher (Sprouts)



This is my third full year here at The Soulard School, and my first full year as a pre-k teacher. I graduated from Harris-Stowe State University with my Bachelors in Sociology in 2020. I wanted to take on the role of becoming a full time teacher because of the Soulard School. The environment was very welcoming and unstructured, allowing the child to lead and we follow. I also work at the YMCA doing many things. In my free time I love to spend time with myself, reading books on self improvement and going to the movies. This year in Sprouts we have a group of students who are new to school and I am really excited to watch them grow individually. Our kids are really sponges and absorb the many things we teach them.

Mollie O'Brien, Jr. Pre-K Teacher (Sprouts)



I am so excited to join the Soulard School this year! I am a teacher in the Sprouts room. I got my degree in political science from UMSL, where I focused mostly on community engagement. I have four years of prior early childcare experience, and also worked in a nonprofit supporting individuals with disabilities. I choose to work with children because watching them grow is so special, as they are going to shape the future. In my free time I like taking walks, writing, going out to eat, and spending time with friends. I look forward to getting to know everyone better throughout this school year.

Rachel Ripper, Jr. Pre-K Assistant (Sprouts)



Hello! I am a teacher in the Sprouts room, as well as an after care teacher. This is my second school year with the Soulard School. I was born and raised in St. Louis and received a degree in sociology from UMSL, where I focused on topics like gender and deviance. It was during my time in college that I became interested in education. When I came across the Soulard School, I was thrilled to become part of a school with ideas on education that were so aligned with my own. In my free time, I enjoy making art, taking walks, reading, and playing with my cat, KitKat. I look forward to this school year and continuing to build connections with friends and families!

TEACHING  
*is a work of heart*

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



I'm so excited to begin my fourth 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. 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 live in Tower Grove East with my husband, Hugh, our cat, Rex, and our puppies, Zoomy and Cricket. We are also expecting our first child in December of this year. 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.

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



I am so excited for my second 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, and 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!

## ELEMENTARY 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 tenth year working at TSS: 8 years in Pre-K and I am starting my second year as a Kindergarten teacher. My journey to teaching began at Mizzou, where I earned my Bachelor's in Child Development and Education. Throughout my time in Columbia, 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 two kids Maeve, 5, and Beau, 3, playing with our dogs Moose and Pippa, and spending time together outdoors. The Soulard School is like a second home to my family and I'm ready to take on my tenth year here, as a teacher AND a parent in the Mums

Maya Gross, Kindergarten Grade Teacher (Mums)



I am excited to join our team at The Soulard School as I enter my third year of teaching. I graduated from Saint Louis University in 2020 and have been a Kindergarten teacher ever since. I believe in exploratory and inquiry-based learning and am passionate about instilling a love for learning in the youngest of learners. In my free time I enjoy going to farmers' markets, finding new coffee shops and spending time with family and friends.

Anna Austin, 1st Grade Teacher (Enigma)



I feel so lucky to be beginning my tenth 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 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 5 years and have a 12 year old stepson, Luke, and an almost two year old, Henry.

Our favorite things to do together are to travel, go to the pool, create art, play games and watch movies. I am looking forward to learning, growing, and laughing our way through first grade this year!

Julia Knarr, 1st Grade Teacher (Enigma)



I'm so excited to be returning for my fourth year at The Soulard School. I have lived in St. Louis my whole life, and I have called University City home for the last six years. I graduated from Lindenwood University with my degree in elementary education and early childhood. This is my seventh year teaching - prior to coming to TSS, I taught preschool and second grade. In addition to classroom teaching, I've been a part of the PBS broadcast team for Teaching in Room Nine for more than 2 years. 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 eating amazing local food, drawing and lettering. I can't wait to discover and grow together this year!

Lauren Wadsworth, 2nd Grade Teacher (Alchemy)



This will be my fifth 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, Tennessee, I call St. Louis home. When I'm not teaching, I'm spending time in nature, experimenting in the kitchen, or snuggling my dog, Tsitsi.

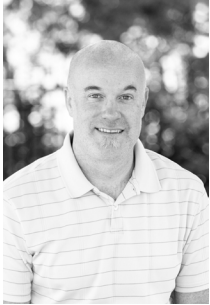
Emily Blackstone, 2nd Grade Teacher (Alchemy)



I am beyond excited to get to know the Alchemy class and everyone else in the school this year. My husband and I moved to Missouri 8 months ago and have loved every second since. After I graduated college with a degree in Exercise and Health Promotion, the chaos that was covid began. This was a difficult time for everyone, however, I feel like it gave me the opportunity to find my passion for teaching. In August of 2020 I began managing an Urgent Care in Texas which challenged me to learn how to lead different people from a variety of backgrounds. After that,

I realized that my strength shined the brightest when I was training and teaching our new hires. Once that time came to an end I began substitute teaching, and began pursuing elementary certification. I will complete this training in January. My main goal in teaching is to foster a love for learning and a respect for peers. In the Alchemy class, I am taking the lead in social studies and literacy, and looking forward to a great year.

Brad Gordon, 3rd Grade Teacher (Explorer)



I can't say enough times how happy I am to be part of The Soulard School. I have taught for 19 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 nine 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).

Katelynn Newsome, 3rd Grade Teacher (Explorer)



I am excited to be joining The Soulard School this year. While this is my first year teaching in a classroom setting, I come from an educational background. I graduated from the University of Tennessee with dual degrees in Child and Family Studies, and Family and Consumer Sciences Education with an endorsement in PreK-3rd education. Upon graduation, I worked for the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture as a Family and Consumer Sciences agent for four and a half years. I taught research-based classes throughout our community in Dyer County,

Tennessee. In December 2021, my husband took a job with the Gateway Arch National Park. Robert and I moved to St. Louis this summer with our two children, Olivia and Lucas. In our free time, we enjoy exploring the area and being outdoors.

Grace Hogan, 4th Grade Assistant Teacher (Mosaic)



I am thrilled to be joining the Soulard School community this year! I was born and raised in St. Louis, live in Tower Grove South, and will be at the Soulard School four mornings a week. I have a deep love of learning and teaching, and hold teaching certificates in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Special Education, K-12 Special Education, Elementary Education, and Secondary Social Studies Education. I've spent the last 8 years teaching 2nd-5th grade in St. Louis Public Schools. My experience and expertise includes piloting trauma-responsive

classrooms, training and coaching educators on a wide variety of topics, and bringing social justice issues into elementary-aged classrooms. I am committed to building abolitionist, decolonized education systems and helping students and teachers see themselves as powerful agents of change and justice in their communities.

Over the last few years, I've developed a passion for supporting new teachers and preventing burnout and attrition, which is why I'm now back in school! I'm pursuing my Masters in Social Work through The Brown School of Social Work at Washington University. Outside of teaching and grad school, I am first and foremost mother to two young children- Wren and Finlay. I love being with family and friends, media and art of all kinds, and helping people fall in love with St. Louis. I'm looking forward to building relationships with students, parents, and staff and supporting however I can!

Phillip McFarlane, 4th Grade Teacher (Mosaic)



I am very proud to be a part of the experienced and capable team at the Soulard School. Prior to coming to TSS, I have been a professional actor working primarily with children's educational programs, violence prevention, AIDS education, and children's literature. I also worked as a Montessori educator for 15 years, teaching 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,

a certificate of study from NAMTA in the Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies, and my Masters in Arts in Elementary Ed. from Webster University. This is my ninth 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.

Anna Elwood, 4th/5th Grade Teacher (Thrive)



This is my seventh year as part of The Soulard School community, and I absolutely love being a teacher in the Thrive classroom! 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.

Vera Judd, 4th/5th Grade Teacher (Thrive)



Originally from Boulder, Colorado, I began my passion for teaching in high school by working and teaching alongside an 8th grade math teacher while also volunteering at an Americorps program teaching art. After graduating high school I lived in various places around the US and internationally. Eventually I completed my degree in Psychology at UMSL and immediately began to work toward my true ambition, teaching math. I taught everything from 2nd to 9th grade math in East Saint Louis, and then began working in St. Louis. This year is my first at Soulard School and fourth in teaching

in general. I am currently pursuing my Master's in Elementary Education while raising two boys, ages 4 and 6. The joy I get from watching someone fully engage in learning and connect the dots is unmatched. In the little free time I have I enjoy viewing or reading anything dystopian future-related and cooking from scratch.



## EXTENDED CORE TEACHERS

Sarah Kate Buckles, Culinary Arts Teacher



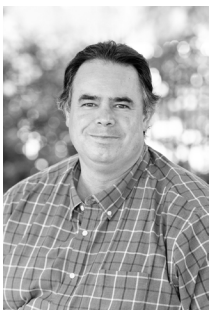
This will be my eighth year teaching at The Soulard School. I have worn many hats during my time here and this is my fourth year in la toque blanche as Culinary Arts and Nutrition Instructor. I love cooking delicious, healthy, from-scratch meals with your kiddos as they explore the world through food. I believe our work in the Culinary Arts Kitchen Classroom is based around social-emotional education and food is the lens we view it through. I'm excited to be able to expand on this during our family-style lunches and to watch our kiddos' self confidence grow as they build skills in

class 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.

Bill Dement, Culinary Arts Assistant



I am excited to begin my first year as a member of The Soulard School staff! Before joining The Soulard School, I had a diverse career, including work as a paralegal and chess instructor. Additionally, I have worked in a number of different culinary environments, including a steakhouse, a cheesecake café, and a fine foods market. A Missouri native, I grew up in the Ozarks and attended Southeast Missouri State University where I earned degrees in both philosophy and psychology. I subsequently lived in Chicago and earned my paralegal certification from Roosevelt

University. Returning to St. Louis, I attended the University of Missouri-St. Louis and earned a master's degree in psychology. I am a Soulard School parent as well - my son Gabe is in first grade. When not busy with other activities, I enjoy cooking, a bit of gardening, and reading about topics in psychology and philosophy.

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 eleventh year with The Soulard School and my ninth 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.

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. Having come from a diverse teaching background, I believe TSS creates the ideal environment for students' emotional growth, learning, and achievement.

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 completed Orff Schulwerk Level 1 at the University of Missouri in summer of 2018, and later that year became certified in Elementary Education. In my spare time you can find me escorting my daughter Tallis to gymnastics or violin class, researching obscure history, and skipping straight to dessert.



## EXTENDED CORE TEACHERS

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 fifth 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 Master's 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 or planning adventures with my daughter.

Stephanie Hayes, Physical Education Teacher



I am so grateful to be a part of The Soulard School family this year! I grew up in Georgia and completed both my undergraduate and graduate studies in Health & Physical Education at Columbus State University. While earning my degrees, I played soccer at CSU and got involved with the community through Adapted Physical Education. I have been a part of Camp Abilities, a sports camp for students with visual impairments, for 6 years now. Following my graduate studies, I taught Health & Physical Education for two years at a middle school in Columbus and coached a variety of sports (Flag Football, Soccer, Track & Field, and Basketball). I am looking forward to this year, teaching a variety of sports, and navigating new skills with all of the classes! My hope is that all students recognize their strength and what they are capable of achieving. My husband, Robert, and I are so excited to be in St. Louis and look forward to exploring the area and trying all of the incredible restaurants here!



## AFTERCARE TEACHERS

Cass Blackwood  
Aftercare Coordinator & Extended Core Assistant



This is my third year working at the This is my fourth 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 spouse and partner of 13 years and I live in Fox Park with our 2 little ones. Owen is in second grade (Alchemy) and Arlo is in Pre-K (Quietude) and both are thriving at the Soulard School. My background includes a Substitute teaching certification and a degree in Studio Art. I have had 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 love to garden, especially native plants and edibles. I enjoy spending time doing all types of crafting, building, cooking and fixing and I love that those skills have all come in handy while I'm working Aftercare, assisting in Extended Core, Camp Soulard, and filling in all over the school.

Bianka Robinson, Aftercare Assistant



My journey to the Soulard School began with a career fair at my college, Harris-Stowe State University. I was immediately drawn to the ideas of the school and the overall fact of working with children again. I am originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and came to St. Louis to attend college. I am excited to be in a new part of town and I can be proud to say that I enjoy coming to work every day. Just in the short time that I have been assisting with aftercare I have made some great connections with the students. I love the joy of feeling "young again" when I am with them. As a psychology major, I am using and growing my skills every day as the students teach me patience, how to ask questions and help them problem solve to find a common ground solution that would be best for everyone. I thoroughly enjoy working with kids and am looking forward to a great year.

Tyrah Seyss, Aftercare Assistant



I am excited to be joining the Aftercare staff this year. I am currently a student at St. Louis Community College, and am pursuing a career as a child life specialist. I have worked previously with before/aftercare programming in the area. I enjoy working with children because I love to see them learn and develop. I love teaching them new things and seeing them meet milestones. I also love making an impact on their lives that they will carry on and remember me as their fun teacher!

# 1, 2, 3, 4, 1000 books READ!

Research shows that children who read at least 1,000 books before starting kindergarten have greater success in learning to read.

In Quietude Sr. Pre-K, we tackle this challenge in many different ways! We are so happy to be able to welcome parent and family readers into the classroom this fall to bring in their child's favorite book and read it aloud to our class. It has been a wonderful opportunity to connect with home learning and give parents a look into our classroom. The Mosaic 4th grade class has also been coming to read to our students every day before rest. Each child gets their own buddy reader and together they pick out books to read! All of this is in addition to the daily read alouds we do together in our classroom. Being read a variety of books by a variety of people is the greatest indicator of reading readiness and we are so excited to work on this with so many wonderful members of our community.



A guest grandparent reads aloud to the Quietude class.

# quietude

## sr pre-k



Mosaic student reads aloud to a Quietude student.



YOU ARE NEVER ALONE WHEN LOST  
 IN THE *magic* OF A BOOK.

- Marie Lu

# MY OH MINE! EXPLORERS

On Thursday, October 13th, the Explorers 3rd grade class, headed out with their teachers and parent chaperones to visit Missouri Mines Historical Site in Park Hills, Missouri. The trip served as the introduction for the 3rd graders, as they start their study of Rocks, Minerals, the Confluence, and their Impact on the Region. We were able to explore the defunct mine, and we discussed how the old mine worked. Students were able to see the ancient machinery that was used within the 13 mile wide, underground lead mine, including the electric mine trains and shovels.

The Explorers also wandered throughout the largest rock collection in Missouri, with specimens from all over the world, including a black-lit dark room to show the colors of different minerals.

From here, a guest speaker and another field trip will provide Explorers more opportunities to learn about the confluence, as well as , hunt for geodes. Students are also working to create their own mineral using common household materials for our their very own Mineral Museum in November.



Explorers class strikes a pose outside the MO Mines Historical Site.



Explorers listen to a museum docent describe machinery that was used in the mine.

..... **DID YOU KNOW** .....

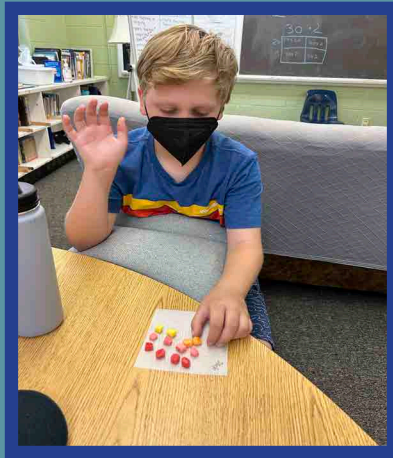
**MISSOURI HAS AN AREA CALLED THE OLD LEAD BELT?**

**This area encompassed Bonne Terre, Desloge, Park Hills, Doe Run and Leadwood between 1864 and 1972.**

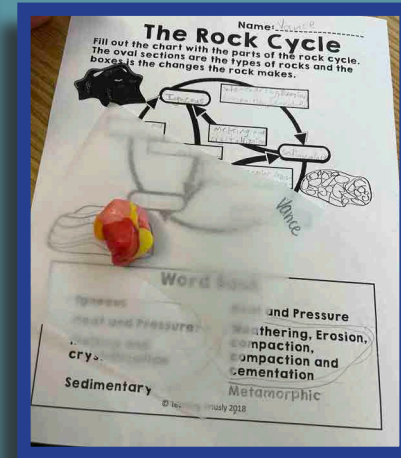
**The Old Lead Belt produced approximately more than 8.5 million tons of lead metal alone.**

# THRIVE let's rock & melt?

In the Thrive, 4th & 5th grade class, we've been exploring geology and paleontology! After learning that rocks are classified by how they are formed, we simulated the rock cycle using Starburst candies. Thrivers began with small pieces of candy to represent sediment from weathered and eroded rock.



Beginning stage of a Thriver's rock formation.



Thrivers sedimentary rock formation.

Using their hands they simulated the processes of compaction and cementation to create a sedimentary rock. Thrivers then used their hands to apply the great heat and pressure needed to change their rock into a metamorphic rock.

From there, we simulated the melting and crystallization processes using a toaster oven. Thrivers loved seeing the "rocks" transform right before their eyes!



Thrive students watch their rocks crystallize.



We also enjoyed comparing the results of different students' rock transformations, and we talked about how these differences exist in real life due to different mineral makeups and changes over long periods of time.



The varying results of the Thrive rock crystallizations.

**WE LOVE HANDS-ON LEARNING TO SOLIDIFY & EXTEND OUR UNDERSTANDING, & TO PROVOKE FURTHER WONDERINGS FROM OUR THRIVERS!**

**OUR STUDY OF ROCKS & EARTH SCIENCE WILL CONTINUE IN OCTOBER WITH FIELD TRIPS TO NIAGARA STATE PARK & ONONDAGA CAVE.**

# STREET ARTISTS



Thrive students leaving their art.

The Thrive 4th/5th grade class has been learning about different modes of "Street Art" for their first unit in Studio. We began by learning about and practicing different types of graffiti lettering then moved on to a class discussion about artists like Banksy who put their art in un-sanctioned spaces. This led to a project in which students designed, drew, cut and applied stencil designs on the sidewalk of TSS.

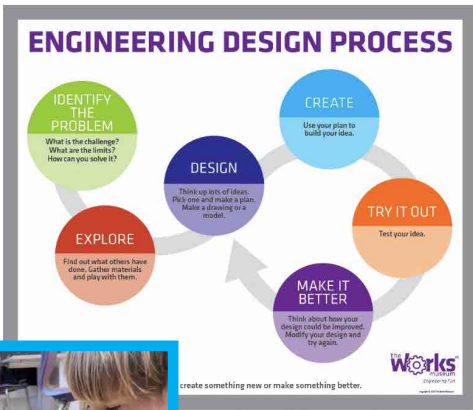


Thrive student channeling Banksy.



Thrive students testing out their art design.

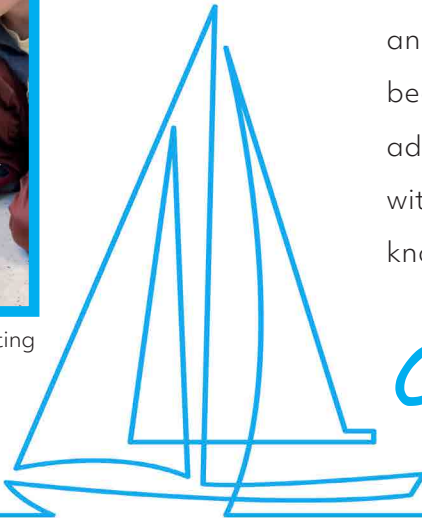
The students not only learned about safety in using exacto knives to cut, but also how to use the spray chalk to get the optimum result for their artwork. The whole school community enjoyed "discovering" the sidewalk art.



The school year is in full swing and that means lots of Project Based Learning is happening in STEAM! Here at The Soulard School, we work to have our students develop a strong sense of sustainability and environmental responsibility. Alchemy 2nd grade friends explored green energy and transportation which culminated in a Wind Powered Car design challenge. After discussing a variety of ways that sunlight, water, and wind can be converted into electricity, students were tasked with designing and creating an innovative way to harness the wind as a means of travel. We began by discussing sailboats and various sail designs. Then we added in an exploration of wheel and axles. Students were tasked with designing a mode of transportation that combined their knowledge of simple machines and wind energy.



Alchemy student inspecting their 3 wheeled axis design



# COME SAIL AWAY!



Alchemy student watches their axeled design in motion

Using the Engineering Design Process, students made their way through the steps to create prototypes that incorporated wheel and axles with different sail designs to create a vehicle that would travel the farthest distance when placed in front of a wind turbine. A table fan served as our wind turbine for the first level of testing. Students analyzed the durability of their sails and wheel and axle efficiency in front of a low wind fan and made adjustments and improvements as needed. Friends then tried their luck at the high speed station which involved testing their design in front of a blow dryer. Working through the stages of the Engineering Design Process, students build grit as they work through frustrations of failed prototypes and begin to embrace the mistakes as learning opportunities.



Alchemy student showing their unique crisscross axel design

*Design, Create, Test, Analyze, Improve, Repeat!*

**MEET YOUR PA**

--- WHO'S WHO 22-23 ---

**OFFICERS**

**Presidents**

Becky Biermann & Erin Turner

**Former President**

Samantha Fisher

**Vice Presidents**

Virgil Hall & Brandee Zaner

**Treasurer**

Nicole Chorkey

**Secretaries**

Denise Heinz & Tia Tucker

**Social Events**

Dionna Hall & Laura Jacobson

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Liz Frymire

**Lead Parent Coordinator**

Zinnia Ron-Ferguson

**ROOM COORDINATORS**

**Jr. PreK, Sprouts**

Vanity Gee & Dionna Hall

**Sr. PreK, Quietude**

Erin Prange & Joy Swanson

**Kindergarten, Mums**

Kristen Davis & Carlyn Main

**1st Grade, Enigma**

Madeleine Hayden & Anne Kraus

**2nd Grade, Alchemy**

Zinnia Ron-Ferguson & Sarah Moore

**3rd Grade, Explorers**

Brandee Zahner & Casey Zona

**4th Grade, Mosaic**

Christine LaBarbera & Liz Frymire

**4th/5th Grade, Thrive**

Annie Lehrer & Shawna Climer

**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 \$5,000 for our school.



Oktoberfest was back in all its glory this year and our volunteer crew stepped right up to the challenge. It was a fun weekend at the Soulard School beer tent.

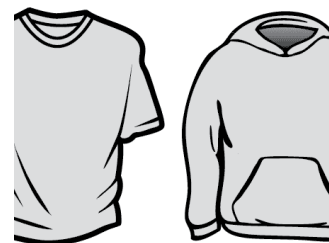
**PA FALL EVENTS**

--- WATCH FOR DETAILS ---



**HARVEST PARTY**  
SUNDAY, NOV. 6

THE SOULARD  SCHOOL  
**Tee & Sweatshirt Sales**



online shop coming soon



**Pasta Sale**  
online shop coming soon



Thank you  
for your  
support

The 2022 Volunteer Rally was a great success due to 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 and fundraisers like Oktoberfest wouldn't be possible without the help of our dedicated volunteers.

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

*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 Tbsp 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.



BIKE TO SCHOOL DAY 10/7

