August X, 2018

Hello Families!

This school year, we are fortunate to have several new staff members join us. Please welcome them into our Montessori family!

**Kirsten Fletcher, Reading Specialist**

Ms. Fletcher is a native of the D.C. area with 24 years of experience in education. She’s worked with students, ranging from Kindergarten through high school, both as a special education teacher and as a reading teacher. She has also worked as a reading coach, where she’s worked with teachers and offered them support with their literacy instruction. She received her Master’s degrees from the University of Virginia and taught in the Charlottesville area for 19 years. Ms. Fletcher moved to Arlington five years ago when she became engaged, and has been teaching in Arlington Public Schools since. She’s an avid reader and loves to share her passion for reading with children. When she’s not working or reading, she enjoys game nights with her husband and friends, traveling, and following the Washington Nationals.

**Rachel Kipperman, Special Education Teacher for the Primary Montessori Inclusion Classrooms**

Ms. Kipperman been a Primary Montessori teacher for 24 years, working here in Arlington for the last 17 years. She is returning to the Montessori program at Drew after 10 years of working at Jamestown Elementary. Before coming to APS, she worked in private Montessori schools in Maryland and Texas. In Dallas, she worked at a school for specials needs children called the June Shelton school where she later taught their specialized program, Montessori Applied to Children at Risk (MACAR). Ms. Kipperman is currently a trainer at the Northern Virginia Montessori Institute and has been for the last 15 years. She is so excited about her new role as a special education Montessori teacher for the new inclusion classrooms. She looks forward to meeting her students and working with Ms. Bruno and Ms. Kalkus. Ms. Kipperman has a 6 year old daughter who is a first grader in a Montessori school.  Together, they love cooking, exploring nature and having dance parties.

**Yolanda Nashid, Assistant Principal of the Montessori Program at Drew**

Ms. Nashid has been a Montessori instructor for eleven years in both public and private schools in the area, to include two years at Drew Model School as a Lower Elementary teacher. She most recently served as the Assistant Principal at Capitol Hill Montessori in Washington, D.C. Ms. Nashid holds an M.S. in Education from Johns Hopkins University; a certificate in Leadership for Independent Schools; an Association Montessori International elementary certificate from Loyola College in Maryland; a B.S. in Mathematics from Spelman College; and a B.S. in Industrial Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology. She is happily married and has four children, three who attended the Montessori program at Drew Model School. She is as happy to be here are we are happy to have her. Please welcome her warmly.

**Carol Oakes, Interim Primary Montessori Teacher**

Ms. Oakes was a Primary Montessori Teacher in Arlington Public Schools for 18 years, most of that time at Drew Model School. She is a Nationally Certified teacher and spent many years learning art integration approaches through the Kennedy Center’s CETA program. She is looking forward to starting the new school year with her class and looks forward to meeting you and your child and spending time with him/her in the classroom.

**Diane Reeser, Montessori Guidance Counselor**

Ms. Reeser worked in both public and private schools, in North, Central and South America. In Arlington County, she worked as a Montessori teacher at Drew from 1997 to 2008, as a school counselor from 2010 to 2015 and, most recently, as a Montessori teacher at Jamestown where she integrated mindfulness and yoga practice into her classroom lessons. In her role as our school counselor, her goal is to help all students develop competency in their academic life and acquire the necessary social-emotional skills to confidently plan their career goals. As a veteran Montessori teacher and school counselor, she believes in the “power of one” while understanding that “it takes a village” to raise a child.

Ms. Reeser is a member of the American Montessori Society and the American School Counselor Association. She holds two Bachelor degrees from Immaculata University and a Masters of Arts in Education and Human Development from the George Washington University.

**Rebecca Rubilotta, Lower Elementary Montessori Teacher**

Ms. Rubilotta joins us as a new Lower Elementary Montessori teacher this year. She is very excited to see what her class can accomplish this year. She recently moved to the area from Carroll County, Maryland and is looking forward to getting to know her students and their families. Ms. Rubilotta received her Bachelors in Early Childhood Education from Towson University. Last year, she worked in a private Montessori school as a Lower Elementary teacher. She is also a product of Montessori as she attended a Montessori School from Primary through eighth grade. Ms. Rubilotta is eager to put to use her own experiences and those of her students to have a fun and successful school year.

**Judith Voegler, Primary Montessori Assistant**

Ms. Voegler has worked as a teacher with APS for the past 19 years, 13 of those years at Drew as a teacher in VPI, a position she retired from in 2017. Upon retiring as a teacher, Ms. Voegler began working with the APS Office of Early Childhood and returned to the classroom as a substitute teacher, spending the last 3 weeks of the 2017-2018 school year as the substitute teacher in the classroom she is assigned to this year. The children will have the benefit of a familiar face and the Montessori community will get the benefit of having a well-liked and veteran teacher back within our family.

**Victoria (Viki) Walchak, Art Teacher**

Ms. Walchak is the new art teacher for the Montessori Program at Drew and is delighted to be part of this learning community!  As an art teacher, she has worked with students of all ages in a variety of schools and settings.  She is returning to Arlington Public Schools after three years away.  For two of those years, she taught at an international school in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo.  Upon returning to the States, she taught in a public school in Maryland, led expressive arts sessions for senior citizens, and founded a hand-crafted pottery business.  When she’s not at Drew, you will most likely find her happily throwing pottery at her Alexandria-based clay studio.  Ms. Walchak loves facilitating creative learning experiences in the arts for others and is thrilled to be member of the team at the Arlington Montessori Program at Drew!

We hope to see you all this morning at our Montessori Open House, from 8:30AM to 10AM!