

Welcome New Special Education and Student Services Staff!

Lisa Brogan, Knapp Elementary

Hello! My name is Lisa Brogan, and I am one of the new Autistic Support teachers at Knapp Elementary. I have worked in this classroom for the past two years as an assistant, and am excited to take on the role of the teacher. Jim Wittmer left some pretty big shoes to fill, and I will do my best to continue to grow the excellent program.



I graduated from Cabrini College with a BS in Elementary Education, and recently obtained my Special Education certification from Gwynedd Mercy University where I am currently pursuing my Master's in Special Education. I have three handsome sons, Samuel, Joseph, and Michael, ages 22, 15, and 14 respectively. My husband, Joseph, is an orthodontist with three office locations to keep him busy. In my free time, I like to travel, read, cook, and spend time with my family. My husband and I recently joined a Bocce League, and although our team has more losses than wins, we have a great time playing the game.

I am looking forward to a wonderful teaching career at North Penn!



Patty Werdt, North Wales Elementary

Hello! My name is Patty Werdt and I am a special education teacher at North Wales Elementary. This year, I will be co-teaching 4th and 5th grade. I am ecstatic to be given the opportunity to join the North Penn School District and become a member of the North Wales team! I attended Arcadia University where I graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. A few years ago, I went back to receive my masters and certification in Special Education. I began my career 9 years ago in a North Philadelphia charter school. It was then that I found my passion for helping students achieve to the fullest potential and discovering ways to make a difference in the lives of others. I am so excited to bring my passion and enthusiasm to North Penn! My husband and I welcomed our son a little over a year ago. I love being a mom and spending time with my little family.

Kristen Eiser, Nash Elementary

My name is Kristen Eiser, and I am a special education teacher with the Healing Hearts program at Nash Elementary School. My family and I moved to Lansdale two years ago, and I am excited to be a part of the North Penn School District as both a community member and staff member! I graduated from Temple University with a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education, and received my master's degree from Gwynedd Mercy University in reading, with reading specialist certification. I am also certified in the Wilson Reading System. I have a passion for inclusion and work to make sure all students feel as though they are an important part of the school community.



For the past 8 years, I have worked at the Marple Newtown School District as a learning support teacher and emotional support teacher at the middle school level. Outside of school, I enjoy spending time with my husband and children, Kaycee (3 ½) and Ethan (1). I look forward to a successful and rewarding year at Nash Elementary!

Julia Low, Walton Farm Elementary



Hi! My name is Julia Low, and I will be working as a speech-language pathologist at Walton Farm Elementary. I'm very excited to be at North Penn and to become part of the team here! I graduated from the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, VA with my B.A. in Linguistics and Psychology in 2010. I then took one semester between undergrad and grad school to teach English in Papua, Indonesia. I went on to receive my M.S. from Vanderbilt University in Speech-Language Pathology. I first worked at the Delaware County Intermediate Unit, where I worked with students with multiple disabilities as well as students in non-public schools. I then worked at the Vanguard School in Malvern, PA, where I provided speech/language services to middle and high school students. My husband and I welcomed our son, Anderson, last December, which led to my transition to a part-time position at North Penn. My days at home aren't exactly "days off", but I love every minute of it! I enjoy sports, cooking, running, and traveling. I'm looking forward to working with you all this year!

Stacey Axelsson, North Penn High School



Hello fellow colleagues! My name is Stacey Axelsson, and I'm a new Special Education Teacher at North Penn High School. In my new role, I am responsible for overseeing students in the Emotional Support program, as well as teaching Social Studies and Math in addition to managing my case-

load of students. After graduating from Temple with an undergraduate degree in English, I spent the first part of my career in the marketing and communications field. More recently, I received my Master's degree in Education from Arcadia University. I spent the first three years of my career as a teacher in Philadelphia, where I taught Creative Writing and Language Arts. I then taught 6th grade learning support at Upper Perkiomen Middle School before taking on my position with NP. My husband and I live in Bedminster with our two children, Cameron and Ava, as well as our two cats, Chooch and Marley. In addition to reading novels and being outdoors, I love visiting different Caribbean islands and the West Coast with my family.

Alicia Adnopo, Knapp Elementary

Alicia Adnopo, M.Ed., BCBA, is a certified special education teacher and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst. She received her B.A. in philosophy from West Chester University, and her M.Ed. and Board Certified Behavior Analyst Graduate Certificate from Penn State. She has teaching experience with students in classroom and community settings through the Kennedy Krieger Institute, Chester County Intermediate Unit, and Downingtown Area School District. Her experience involves adapting state-aligned curriculum to meet diverse learning needs, using the principles of applied behavior analysis to teach life skills and functional academics, as well as facilitating generalization of these skills in community and inclusive classrooms. Alicia has presented at the National Autism Conference in State College, PA, highlighting best practices for teaching language and functional skills to students with autism. Alicia is thrilled to be part of the North Penn School District's community of learners as an autistic support teacher at Knapp Elementary School.



Welcome also to Debbie Ciafrei, School Nurse, who started in North Penn midway through the 2016-2017 year. Welcome back Aisha Weston, who joins us at Walton Farm and Inglewood!

Allison O'Toole, North Wales Elementary



Hello! My name is Allison O'Toole and I am special education teacher at North Wales! In 2014 I graduated from Saint Joseph's University with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary and Special Education. I stayed on for one more year and graduated in 2015 with a Master's degree in Special Education with an Autism endorsement, and a reading certificate in the Orton-Gillingham Method of Teaching Reading program. This will be my third year teaching elementary special education. Previously, I taught both third and fourth grade learning support. I am from Weston, Connecticut but am now happy to call Pennsylvania home! When I am not in the classroom, you will find me running or reading. I am very thankful and excited for the opportunity to work for North Penn!

Anu Sampath, Knapp Elementary

Anu is a Speech Language Pathologist who is happy to join the dedicated team at NPSD. Anu graduated in 1996, from All India Institute of Speech & Hearing, after completing both undergraduate & graduate studies in Speech Pathology & Audiology. She worked at her alma mater for two years gaining experience in research and working with families needing speech, language and hearing services. After relocating to the United States in 1998, Anu completed her clinical fellowship in an Early Intervention setting in the Philadelphia area. Over the past 15 years she has primarily worked with children in a variety of settings including preschools, homes, outpatient centers and private practice. Anu has gained professional expertise in a variety of areas with focus on helping children and families from linguistically diverse backgrounds.



Anu lives in North Wales with her husband and two children who attend district schools. Her family loves to travel, meet new people, explore new places and food. She enjoys gardening during the summer and watching episodes of 'Shark Tank' on Friday nights with her family. She is an incurable optimist who tries to live by the golden rule "treat others as you would like to be treated". Anu is passionate about helping all students reach their full potential and looks forward to many fulfilling years at NPSD.

Linda O'Rourke, Bridle Path/ Nash

Hello, my name is Linda O'Rourke. I am the school nurse for Bridle Path, Nash, and Corpus Christi. I received my BSN from Holy Family University and my CSN from St. Joe's University. I worked at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children for 21 years, and I was the school nurse at Corpus Christi School for 10 years before joining the North Penn staff last year. My husband and I have 3 kids, Katie, Kelly, and Ryan, as well as a dog named Seamus, and a cat named Fergus. We love all things IRISH! I enjoy running and reading, and I am looking forward to coaching the brand new Corpus Christi CYO swim team this fall!



Mary Ward, Oak Park Elementary

Hi! My name is Mary Ward and I am so excited to join the AMAZING staff at Oak Park Elementary School. I am a North Penn High School graduate and it has always been a dream of mine to return to teach in the North Penn School District. Upon graduating from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with my degree in Early Childhood and Special Education, I taught in a variety of settings ranging from Early Intervention to High School. In addition, I am entering my fourth year as the North Penn High School Assistant Softball Coach. Ultimately, my goal is to positively impact the community that shaped me into the individual I am today!

Maureen Civitello, Hatfield Elementary/ Pennfield Middle

Hello, North Penn colleagues! My name is Maureen Civitello. I earned my Bachelor's degree from Penn State in Elementary Education in 1999. I continued my education at West Chester University and earned my Master's degree in Literacy in 2005, and my post-baccalaureate certification in Special Education in 2009. I was a Reading Specialist for 12 years before beginning as a Special Education teacher at Hatfield Elementary. This year, I am also teaching two classes at Pennfield Middle School. My passion for teaching struggling readers was what led me to want to become certified in Special Education. I have now re-enrolled at West Chester University and am planning to complete my Master's degree in Special Education in May of this school year. My husband, Mike, and I like to ski together in the winter and go to the beach in the summer. Mike is also an avid golfer.



Emily Bates, Walton Farm Elementary

Hello, my name is Emily Bates and I am the new special educator at Walton Farm Elementary. I am very excited to be here in North Penn School District! This will be my third year as a special educator. I graduated from Millersville University in May of 2015 with a degree in Early Childhood and Special Education. For the past two years, I had been working as a special educator in Maryland teaching students of all abilities. I am thrilled to finally be back in my home state of Pennsylvania and to be teaching at such a great school district! In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, running, and attempting to complete DIY projects!



Kristen Morrow, Gwynedd Square

Greetings all, my name is Kristen Morrow. I am the new Autistic Support Teacher at Gwynedd Square Elementary School. My joy in life has been working with children and adults diagnosed with an array of challenges and helping them achieve their maximum potential. I earned my Bachelor's in Special Education and Elementary Education from Kutztown University. Prior to earning my Bachelor's I worked summers and winter breaks at Allied Health Services, creating programs and educational plans for adults with a variety of disabilities. After graduating from Kutztown, I began my teaching career at the Summit Academy in Delaware. Summit is a lock down facility that helps children with the worst types of challenges we see in education. After a few years at Summit, I married my college love, William Morrow. We decided to start our lives together in Montgomery County Pa, and I took a position teaching fifth grade Learning Support within the Spring-Ford School District. I left Spring-Ford to raise my three busy and wonderful children, William(13), Joseph(12), and Madeline(9). During my hiatus from teaching, I earned my Masters in Educational Development and Strategies from Wilkes University. Although new to the full time community at North Penn, I am not new to the community. I have been a volunteer at General Nash Elementary for many years, and re-entered the work force two years ago in a support capacity at Gwynedd Square. I welcome the opportunities and challenges presented with a full time roll. Those of you who know me, know that challenges are something my family and I take head on. I am very proud to be part of the North Penn School District.

