

FACULTY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Mrs. Jeanne Vitetta, First Grade

M.S. Education, University of Bridgeport; Connecticut Teacher's Certification -Professional Educator -Elementary – Kindergarten through Grade 6; Marymount College, Tarrytown, NY (Fordham University); B.S. Interior Design (1981); Endicott College, Beverly, MA; A.S. Business (1979)

Mrs. Vitetta is no stranger to the St. Rose School halls or First grade. She taught grades 1st and 2nd here from 2006 to 2012 then went on to teach First grade at St. Joseph School in Brookfield 2012-2018 and the Multi Age (K-2) Classroom at St. Joseph Catholic Academy 2018-2020.

Watching students grow from hesitant to independent, confident readers is Mrs. Vitetta's favorite aspect of teaching to this age group. That and they are so cute! She values being part of a Catholic school community because she can let children know that God is with them always. Looking at the 2020-2021 school year Mrs. Vitetta is most excited about "being able to see my students every day in the classroom. I truly missed teaching in person after March last year. I pray that I am able to be in school with them this year and that we have fun learning together."

Teaching philosophy: *Every child has God given gifts, each just opens them at different times. As a teacher my role is to foster their potential.*

We welcome Mrs. Vitetta, her husband Bill and daughter Brooke (graduate of SJSB and Immaculate) back to the St. Rose School family.



Mrs. Tamra Russo, Fourth Grade

BS Marketing; MBA Finance, Fairleigh Dickinson University. Sixth year professional elementary education degree, University of Bridgeport; professional educator certification for grades K-6 with a cross-endorsement in business and marketing education for grades 7-12

Mrs. Russo began her teaching career in Woodbury Middle and Bethlehem Elementary schools. She came to St. Rose School in 2005 and taught Kindergarten for two years then went on to teach 4th grade for 6 years (through 2013). Over the next few years she was a reading tutor. She returned to St. Rose School last year as a First grade teacher and is excited to take fourth graders on their learning journey this year.

“Fourth grade children are very curious and love to use their imagination as they begin to question and try to make sense of the world. They are passionate about their personal goals, and I love the challenges they present to me as we discover together how they can reach their personal best by becoming more independent, self-directed, and more responsible for their own actions.” Mrs. Russo loves teaching at St. Rose, where God is at the center of everything we do on a daily basis. She finds the St. Rose community to be warm and welcoming and considers it her extended family. “We raised Gillian in this loving community, and I believe St. Rose’s solid spiritual and academic foundation has shaped the strong, independent, confident young woman she is today. Returning back to St. Rose last year felt like coming home.”

Teaching philosophy: *My students are an extension of my family and I truly believe that God put us together as a class community for reasons we realize together as the year unfolds. I strive to cultivate a fun and organic learning environment where discussion leads to inquiry, inquiry leads to discovery, and discovery leads to new knowledge.*

Fun fact: My first name, “Tamra” is a Hebrew word that means “palm tree.” Of course, my favorite place is the beach and I love palm trees, coconuts, and anything tropical! By the way, I love to sing anytime and anywhere. My voice is not great, but that never stopped me!”

It's a joy to have Mrs. Russo, her husband Len and daughter Gillian (SRS Class of 2013) in our St. Rose School family.



Mrs. Tanya Cicarelli, Middle School Math

M.A. Education, Fairfield University

Mrs. Cicarelli has held positions at St. James School in Stratford and at St. Rose School, teaching Grade 4 and Math in Grades 5-8. This is her 8th year teaching, 5th at St. Rose.

She believes strongly in Catholic education and has been a part of the St. Rose family as a parishioner, parent and teacher for a combined 22 years. She has been focused on professional development and is looking forward to integrating new technology within the curriculum to tailor the in person or virtual needs of her students. Mrs. Cicarelli believes strongly in creating a positive, safe environment along with creating meaningful experiences and connections that will ensure student success.

Mrs. Cicarelli is both an alumni and current St. Rose School parent. Her son Wyatt is a SRS Class of 2015 graduate who is entering his sophomore year at Gettysburg College. Her son Colten graduated SRS in 2017 and is starting his senior year at the Gunnery High School. Her daughter Savanna is an 8th grader at SRS. She has been married to her husband Michael for 22 years; we are blessed to have the Cicarellis in the St. Rose School family.

Fun fact : I was an avid equestrian from age 9 through grad school.



Mrs. Mary Kirlin, Fourth Grade Teaching Assistant

AS degree in Early Childhood Education; BS in Elementary Education; MS in School Counseling

Mrs. Kirlin joined the St. Rose School faculty last year as a Teaching Assistant in 2nd and 3rd grade. Prior to that she taught fifth grade for one year, second grade for eight years and third grade for two years at Huckleberry Hill School in Brookfield, CT.

According to Mrs. Kirlin, teaching is a profession that allows one to be creative, flexible, collaborative, and involved in the personal growth of children. Humor, accountability for one's actions and a sense of community are what she strives for when working with students. She looks forward to helping 4th graders build on the skills they have already acquired and reach new heights. In terms of the 2020-2021 school year she says, "This coming school year will be the likes of what no one has experienced before. It will require patience, understanding and flexibility. My hope is that, despite the necessary protocols in place, the students know that their best interest is the priority."

Teaching philosophy: *Children are their own selves who bring their life experiences, interests, strengths and weaknesses with them into an academic setting. They are also people navigating feelings, friendships, new settings and expectations as each year progresses. I like to meet them where they are, get to understand who they are and what path allows them to learn best. One size does not fit all, so varying approaches to instruction and providing opportunities to flourish may light that quest for knowledge and inquiry.*

Fun fact: *My daughters call me the CBL, for crazy bird lady, as I enjoy birds in nature and nature in general!*

Mrs. Kirlin, her husband Peter and daughters Gillian and Fallyn are a special part of the St. Rose School family.



Ms. Kathleen (Katie) Curry, Graduate Assistant, ELA

BA Communication/Minor in English, Fairfield University; currently entering second year of graduate school at Fairfield University with the Aquinas Fellowship Program. As a fellow, I get the wonderful experience of teaching in Catholic school while also receiving my Masters in Secondary Education with a specialization in English.

Ms. Curry comes to St. Rose from St. Joseph Catholic Academy where she taught Middle School ELA and History. Her favorite part of teaching is the students. “I had so much fun working with my middle schoolers last year. They always make me laugh and I learned so much from them. They have such amazing insight and offer wonderful thoughts that change the way I think about the world. I value my students most of all in my experiences.”

Teaching philosophy: *“My philosophy for teaching comes from my background in Jesuit education, which centers on care for the whole person. I believe in seeing my students as individuals first; they all have different interests and strengths that should be celebrated in the classroom. I strive to build them up as people as well as students by providing opportunities for choice and equal partnership in the classroom. By caring for students as individuals first and building lasting relationships, I believe that we create an opportunity to not just create good students, but good and moral Catholic citizens.”*

Ms. Curry is a Catholic school graduate who believes that Catholic schools create a challenging academic environment, but more importantly, they build up students to be good people.

She is looking forward to meeting a new batch of middle school students and building a space where they feel comfortable to learn and grow.

Fun Fact: *I was a competitive Irish dancer from the age of five until I graduated from high school! I travelled all over the country and competed internationally. I was a member of the Fairfield University Irish dance team (Stags Up!)*

We welcome Ms. Curry, her parents and younger sister to the St. Rose School family.



Mrs. Lisa Sweeting, Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Sweeting comes to St. Rose with a background in bookkeeping, operations management, marketing, social media, event planning, admissions and more than 13 years working with nonprofits. She has lived in Danbury for the past 16 years and has three children who attend schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport. She has worked within the Diocese of Bridgeport in many roles, including the HSA, substitute teaching, teacher aide, admissions, marketing and advancement.

“My hope for the school year is that together we can continue to be a strong community that is known for its kindness and excellent education. I am looking forward to meeting everyone and working with the students, families and faculty to ensure a safe and loving environment for all.”

Fun fact: *I love to go camping with my family and I love to bake. .*

We welcome Mrs. Sweeting and her family to the SRS community.



Mrs. Heidi Verdi, School Counselor

MSW, Clinical Social Work, Fordham University

MS, Nutrition, Oklahoma State University

Mrs. Verdi joins the St. Rose community this year as the school counselor. She has worked over the years as a clinical social worker at Silver Hill Hospital, Kids in Crisis, and the Town of Wilton as a Youth Counselor. Social work is a second career for Mrs. Verdi. She practiced as a dietitian / nutrition therapist in the field of eating disorders for many years before returning to earn a second graduate degree in social work. Heidi loves children and has two teens and one tween with her husband Curt.

Fun fact: *I love growing rare vegetables like Lemon Cucumbers, Japanese Black Trifele Tomatoes and Sunflowers in my garden, traveling with my family to remote places, hiking and practicing yoga.*

Mrs. Verdi will be at school Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays working closely with Mrs. B and students.

We welcome Mrs. Verdi and her family to the St. Rose School community.

