Welcome Lab’s New Employees, 2017–2018

FACULTY

Karen Andersen will be joining the Nursery/Kindergarten and Primary Schools Learning & Counseling team as an Academic Specialist. She taught special education in the Chicago Public schools as well as served as an MTSS coordinator and interventionist there. Karen holds a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois-Urbana and a Master’s degree from the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Tom Boyle is a new assistant teacher in the Nursery School, where he will be working in Meredith Dodd’s classroom. Tom grew up in Minnesota and comes from a large family, in which he is the fourth of eight children. Thanks to his younger siblings, he has been a passionate supporter of early learners since as long as he can remember. He comes to us from Lab’s Extended Day program and is a graduate student at the Erikson Institute, where he studies Early Childhood Education. He also has a Bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Arts degree in semiotics from the University of Tartu, in Estonia.

Veronica Bruce will be the newest member of the Fine Arts Department. Veronica holds a Master of Fine Arts in painting from the University of the Arts as well as a Bachelor of Fine Arts in art education from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. She is a working artist with an international exhibition and residency record. As a fine arts educator, Veronica has over seven years of high school teaching experience in some of the top schools in Illinois. She has also taught at the undergraduate level at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work can be found online at www.veronicabruceart.com or @vbruceartist.

Nathalie Chatelain will be a member of the Nursery School team as an assistant teacher in an Nursery 4 classroom. Nathalie joins us from Lab’s own French for Heritage Speakers afterschool program, which she created and has led since 2015. Prior to relocating to Chicago, she was a head teacher in Paris, France where she taught from N3 to fifth grade. She received a Bachelor of Business from the Ecole Supérieure de Gestion of Paris and a Master’s level diploma in early childhood and primary education from University of Paris XII.

Lindsey Cheney will be joining the Nursery School team. Lindsey joins us from Lab’s Extended Day Program where she spent the two previous years as a Late Day Nursery teacher. She has a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Resources from Illinois State University.
Aria Choi will be the newest member of the High School Learning & Counseling team. Over the past three years, she has served as a school social worker in the Chicago suburbs. Prior to transitioning to her role as a school social worker, she taught high school English and writing for six years. Aria earned both her Bachelor of Arts in education and her Master of Social Work degree at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Deb Del Campo will be working as an assistant teacher in a Nursery 3 loop team. She has been an educator for over 17 years with the last 14 years at Thomas J. Waters Elementary located on the Northside of Chicago. While at Waters School, she spent the first portion as a teacher for diverse learners that spanned grades K–8. After completing the University of Chicago Sesame Program, she became the fifth and sixth grade science teacher for the past five years. Deb majored in special education with an emphasis on learning and emotional disabilities at Bradley University. As a parent of two Lab students who is married to a Lab science teacher, she is excited about the opportunity to join this community as a faculty member.

Michael Eldridge begins a new position as head teacher in Nursery school for academic year 2017-18. He is thrilled to begin his fourth year at Lab! For the past three years Michael has worked as an assistant teacher in Nursery School. Prior to joining Lab he taught preschool through pre-kindergarten in Carbondale, Illinois at The Child Development Laboratories (SIUC). Michael has a Bachelor of Science in early childhood education, and a Master of Science in curriculum and instruction, both from Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Deb Foote will be the newest member of the Middle School Spanish faculty in the World Languages Department. Families may recognize Deb from her last three years in the Middle School as an office secretary. Prior to this position, Deb taught at St. Francis de Sales, St. Ignatius College Prep, Lab, and Columbia College. Deb has a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish language and literature from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and a Masters degree in romance languages and literatures (Spanish) from the University of Chicago.

Darren Fuller will be the newest member of the eighth grade science team. Darren joins us from George B. Swift Elementary School on Chicago’s Northside, where he taught middle school science for over 10 years. Prior to teaching in Chicago, he spent over 11 years overseas teaching in Indonesia and South Korea. He met his wife Teresa Serangeli, a fellow teacher at Lab, while serving in the Peace Corps in Tunisia. He has a Bachelor of Science from Lewis and Clark College and a Masters of Education from National Lewis University.
Meghan Gilbert will be a full-time member of the Middle School Learning and Counseling team as a learning coordinator. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in special education from Indiana University, and completed a Master’s Overseas Cultural Project in Galway, Ireland. She has spent the past 20 years working as a special education teacher, learning coordinator and private classical piano instructor for students ages four through adult in the Chicago and Great Lakes Region. Meghan is thrilled to be back in her second year as a learning coordinator on the Middle School Learning and Counseling team.

Alexandro Gonzalez has accepted the position of part-time Music Teacher. Alex has been student teaching this year at Bolingbrook High School and John J Lukancic Middle School. He is also has been a member of VanderCook music ensembles for the past 4 years. He holds a BMED from VanderCook College of Music.

Sharon Harrison will be joining the Computer Science Faculty. Sharon joins us from Central Coast Grammar School, located on the Central Coast of New South Wales, Australia where she was a computing and ICT integration support teacher for seven years. Sharon was an exchange teacher here during the 2015 calendar year, exchanging with Marty Billingsley. She has a Bachelor of Computer and Information Science, and a Masters of Education from the University of South Australia. Sharon has also recently completed Harvard’s Teaching for Understanding Course and is currently completing a Master of Computer Science.

Elizabeth Hubin will be joining our High School science department to teach biology and AT biology. After completing her Bachelor’s degree from Kenyon College, Elizabeth earned a PhD in molecular biophysics from Rockefeller University, where she was also head teacher for the university’s Learning at the Bench Program. Prior to moving to Chicago, Elizabeth taught high school biology at Ethical Culture Fieldston School in New York City.

Holly Johnston will be the newest member of the History Department and teaching Early World History. Holly taught world religions and pre-modern history and served as a class dean at the Episcopal Academy just outside of Philadelphia for the last 13 years. Holly earned a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Michigan in the School of Education and a Masters in Liberal Arts with a concentration in world religions at the University of Pennsylvania. She is a native of Pittsburgh and just recently moved to the Chicago area with her husband and two daughters.

Klaas Jan Kramer will be joining the High School Science Department. Klaas Jan joins us from the Jac P. Thijssse High School in the Netherlands, where he was a grade 9–12 chemistry and nature, life science, and technology teacher. Prior to teaching he was a
scientific researcher and worked for several research institutes like the Universities of Groningen and Wageningen in the Netherlands and Lawrence Berkeley National Lab in Berkeley, California. He has a Bachelor in chemistry, an MS in environmental science, and a PhD in mathematics and natural science from the University of Groningen (the Netherlands) and a Master in chemistry teaching from the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Treena Larson will be joining the Middle School as part of the World Language department teaching Chinese. She graduated from University of Illinois-Urbana receiving a BA in advertising. Years later after working in the marketing industry and owning her own restaurant business, she discovered she truly love working with young people so she earned a MA in education from DePaul University. Prior to coming to the Laboratory Schools, Treena spent a few years teaching Mandarin and a college readiness program in Evanston. When she is not in school, she enjoys spending time with family, cooking, and traveling.

Carin Peacock will be joining the Primary School as an assistant teacher. She was born and raised in Chicago. She has a BA in elementary education and a Master's in reading and language from National-Louis University. Carin has 11 years of experience teaching children in first through third grades in progressive schools. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family and dog. She has a passion for monarch conservation and was fortunate to participate in two summer learning experiences at the Monarch Lab at University of Minnesota.

Samantha Perrault will be the newest member of the second grade team, and will be working as an assistant teacher in Eli Johnson's classroom. Samantha joins us from Budlong Elementary School, where she was a student teacher in a first grade classroom. She was also a substitute teacher for Chicago Public Schools and charter schools within the downtown area. She has taught nutrition lessons in a second grade classroom in Maine. She received her Master's degree in teaching from North Park University and her Bachelor's in Human Nutrition and Dietetics from the University of Maine.

Patrick Philizaire, ’09, will be an assistant teacher in Jenny Araujo’s Nursery 3 classroom. Patrick, a Lab alum, joins us after serving as a long-term substitute for a second grade classroom at Lab. He has a Bachelor of Science in sociology from Eastern Illinois University and an Associate’s degree for early education.
Joshua Potter is the newest member of the Physical Education Department. Josh joins us from Perspectives Charter Schools located in Chicago, where he was a physical education and health teacher. Prior to teaching at Perspectives, Josh was part of the Lab community for two internships in the athletics office as well as completing his student teaching in the Physical Education Department. Josh has a Bachelor of Arts in physical education and sports management from Northwestern College Iowa. In addition to teaching, he will also coach the varsity boys soccer team this fall and assist with the varsity girls soccer team in the spring.

Tom Pozen will be the newest member of the World Languages Department in the High School. Tom joins us from Saint Ignatius College Prep in Chicago where he taught French and Spanish for several years. Prior to teaching at Ignatius, he taught high school French and Spanish in New York City and in Connecticut. He studied at the Sorbonne in Paris and has a Bachelor of Arts in the teaching of French from the University of Illinois at Chicago. In 2003 he earned his PhD in French literature from the University of Iowa.

Olga Richardson will join the Nursery School as an assistant teacher in a four-year old classroom. Olga joins us from the Extended Day Internship Program at Earl Shapiro Hall, where she has taught grades N3–2. She also has experience teaching first and second grades with Summer Lab, Cooking Up Culture Class. She has a Bachelor of Science in psychology/child development from Kaplan University.

Juan Rodriguez will join the eighth grade Humanities team. Juan joins us from the Putney School in southern Vermont where he had multiple roles in the span of nine years, including associate dean of students, English and American studies teacher, Spanish teacher, and admission counselor, as well as dorm head and coach. Prior to teaching at Putney, he was a Spanish teacher at Deerfield Academy in Massachusetts and St. Stephen's Episcopal School in Austin, Texas. He has taught ESOL and cultural Spanish in Houston, TX to middle schoolers. He has a Bachelor of Arts in philosophy from the University of Texas at Austin, and is working on a Masters of Arts from Middlebury College.

Lydia Milman Schmidt comes to Lab as our new part-time drama teacher in the Fine Arts Department. Lydia has been a freelance theatre director and teaching artist for seven years in Chicago and London. In Chicago, she has recently taught and directed for Northbrook Theatre, Governors State University, and New Trier High School. In London, she taught at the Sylvia Young Theatre School and was director in residence at the Rose and Crown Theatre. She holds a BA in theatre from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and an MFA in theatre directing from East 15 Acting School at the University of Essex.

Maja Teref will be the newest member of the English Department in the High School. Maja joins us from Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center, Chicago where she taught AP
English Literature and Composition as well as English 1 for six years. Previously, she taught English and ESL at Roosevelt High School and composition writing at Columbia College. She worked as a translator, newscaster, and DJ in the English department at Radio Yugoslavia. Maja is the translator of Ana Ristovic’s *Directions for Use* and Novica Tadic’s *Assembly*. Her translations have appeared in publications including the *New Yorker*. She is a guest translation outreach editor for RHINO Poetry, the founder of *Ricochet Review*, a College Board AP Lit reader, and a past president of Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. She holds an MA in applied linguistics/second language acquisition from UIC and a BA in English language and literature from Belgrade University.

**Lyneth Torres is joining the Learning and Counseling team in the Middle School as counselor.** Lyneth joins us from the Department of Children and Families in Massachusetts where she was a social worker for two years. Before that, she was a family advocate at Horizons for Homeless Children in Boston. Additionally, she was an adjunct professor at Middlesex Community College in Bedford, Massachusetts and a family partner for Lahey Behavioral Health for seven years. She has a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and an MA in community psychology with a certificate in workplace diversity from the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

**Orlando Torres will be a head teacher in the Primary School joining the first grade team.** Orlando is originally from the Logan Square area of Chicago, but spent the past decade in the Boston area. There, he was a public school educator for the past six years. An enthusiast of gardening and the outdoors, Orlando created a summer gardening program for at-risk youth focusing on the idea of being the maker and owner of one’s own food. Orlando graduated from UIC, with a BA in psychology, and from UMass Lowell with a MEd in curriculum and instruction.

**Benjamin Tress will be joining the sixth grade humanities team.** For the past three years, he taught seventh grade humanities at Sacred Heart Schools. Before coming to Chicago, he taught high school history in Washington, DC. He has a bachelor’s degree in history from Boston College and a master’s in teaching from Fordham University.

**Joan VandeVelde will be rejoining the Physical Education team at ESH after one year of retirement.** Joan taught PE in public and private schools for 37 years, the last 25 at Lab with her final three years spent at ESH. She received a Bachelor of Science in physical education from the University of Illinois-Urbana and an MS in early childhood education from National-Louis University. While at Lab, she has also coached coed varsity golf and girls varsity gymnastics.
Fionnuala Ward is a new member of the Mathematics Department. Fionnuala was previously teaching math and business studies to high school students in Dominican College, Dublin. Her home is in Donegal, a beautiful coastal part of Ireland. She has a Bachelors of Science in math and accounting from Newcastle University in the UK and a Professional Masters in Education from Trinity College Dublin.

Kiran Younus will begin a new position in the Nursery/Kindergarten as a head teacher. She has been an assistant teacher at Lab since 2013. Before Lab, she founded and directed River Garden, a Montessori program for Nursery through third grade students. She began her career in education teaching fourth graders at Charles Kozinski Academy in Hyde Park. She graduated with a double major in economics and learning and organizational change from Northwestern University and subsequently earned her MEd through the Golden Apple Foundation and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

STAFF

Lori Adams has accepted the position of Admission Associate/Project Assistant with the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid. Most recently Lori worked The University of Chicago in the Office of Event Services at Operations Assistant and the Office of Reynolds Club & Activities Offices as a Project Analyst/Assistant to the Director. She has studied management at Siena Heights University and is a board certified massage therapist.

Marta Codoner is the newest member of our High School Library taking on the role of Library Assistant. Marta has worked at the Laboratory Schools with the Extended Day program and substitute. She also brings experience from her role as Lower School Secretary at the American School of Madrid. Marta holds a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from the Universidad de Valencia in Spain.

Laura Hicks will be the AV support specialist for the IT Department. Laura joins us from Florida State University where she majored in Asian Studies while working part-time at their on-campus concert venue. She also DJ’ed at the student-run radio station, WVFS Tallahassee, and eventually worked full-time for the past two years as the AV technician for FSU’s movie theater, the Student Life Cinema. In her free time, Laura enjoys playing bass, watching movies, and screen printing.
Betsy Noel will be joining the Laboratory Schools in the new role of wellness and equal opportunity programs coordinator/deputy Title IX coordinator. Betsy comes to us from Harvard University where she worked in anti-discrimination for the university and also held a position at Harvard College in student services for the last five years. Prior to her role at Harvard, she was the manager for quality improvement in community health at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC. She has a Bachelor of Arts in anthropology from Yale University, a nursing degree from Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, and a JD from Columbia Law School. In her spare time, she is an artist and loves going on adventures with her family and dog.

Kathryn Smidstra joins us in a new role of communication content manager. She comes from the public interest communications firm Creative Change Mission where she managed print and digital content development for six years. During that time she also provided communications and program support for the 2016 National Endowment for the Humanities Moral Psychology in Education summer institute. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Grand Valley State University and a Master of Arts from the University of Chicago Divinity School. In her spare time she enjoys outdoor adventures, used bookstores, and pursuing her research interests at the intersection of mindfulness and learning, in particular, the neurobiological mechanisms that lead to long term potentiation of memory.

Michelle Tatum is joining the Middle School as Middle School Secretary after many years of being part of Lab’s Extended Day and Summer Lab Team. She has her Bachelor’s degree in English from Northeastern Illinois University, and a Master’s degree in grant writing, management, and evaluation from Concordia University. When she is not around Lab, Michelle loves to spend time going on fun adventures with her husband and son.

Lisa VandenBerg will be the admission assistant/receptionist with the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid. She recently moved to Hyde Park from Crown Point, Indiana where she was the media specialist at Robert Taft Middle School for five years. Prior to that, Lisa was a secretary at Jerry Ross Elementary School for ten years. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, golf, making beer with her husband and exploring our new hometown.
Staff - New Roles

Sarah Abella, '93, will serve as administrative & program coordinator, grades N–2 through the 2017–18 school year. Sarah has a long history with the Schools: she, herself, is a Lab lifer whose three children are enrolled at Lab. Sarah has taught Nursery/Kindergarten since 2006 and served as NK faculty co-chair. Prior to joining the Lab faculty, Sarah founded and ran a CPS contract school.

Beverly Biggs will rejoin Lab for the 2017–18 year as dean for faculty, N–2. Beverly has maintained a nearly four-decades long relationship with Lab serving in many roles including teacher, interim director, and from 1994 until 2012, principal of the Lower School. As dean for faculty, N–2, Beverly will bring her many talents and her great depth of knowledge to bear as a mentor and coach to our N–2 educators.

Amanda Lissak is now assistant director, volunteer and donor engagement. Amanda has been with Lab since December 2015 in the role of development associate in the Office of Alumni Relations and Development. In this new role, her primary responsibilities are with the office’s parent volunteers and donor stewardship.

Carla Young has agreed to serve as principal, grades N–2. Carla is nationally recognized as an early childhood educator and has served Lab with distinction in a number of leadership roles prior to becoming NK principal in 1994. She began her Lab career supervising the N–2 after school program and then directing the entire after school program. She served as assistant principal, grades N-5, until 1994 when Nursery/Kindergarten became its own division, and she devoted a year to serving as acting principal of N–4 in 2003. Carla is devoted to Lab and has been steadfast in her focus on the child as she has shaped teaching and learning for our youngest students.