

*The  
Elizabeth Ann Clune*



**Montessori**  
*School of Ithaca*

*Nurturing the hearts, minds, and spirit  
of children for 34 years!*

***Handbook***

**2013 - 2014**

Established in 1979, The Elizabeth Ann Clune Montessori School of Ithaca is a non-profit educational organization offering classes for children ages 3-6, 6-9, 9-12 and 12-14. The school is affiliated with organizations established to promote standards of excellence:

**Member:** American Montessori Society

**Member:** North American Montessori Teachers Association

**Accredited by:** New York State Board of Regents (permanent charter)

The mission of our school is to guide the development of children towards becoming independent, responsible, contributing individuals. In so doing we strive for the child to become one who seeks a personal vision and who uses their talents and skills to enrich individual and community life. We educate children in an atmosphere which promotes respect and dignity for themselves, for others, and for the world in which we live. The Montessori approach to education is a holistic one, offering not only a rigorous academic curriculum but addressing as well the spiritual, emotional, physical, and social needs of the child. We celebrate meaningful traditions. We honor the sanctity of each person's spirit. We provide the needed security to embrace challenge. We nourish the deep lasting relationship between children, teachers, and parents, which deepens the learning experience. Within the Montessori classroom children face a microcosm of the world.

## **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

*Peter Browning, Robert Clune, Peter Littman, Roberta Moudry,  
Laura Gottfried, Lisa Swayze, Jeffra Ruesink, Amy Gonzalez, Vera McLafferty*

The Board of Trustees is responsible for setting policy as well as for ensuring the financial health of the school. The Board meets regularly, and sets aside time at the beginning of each meeting for non-members to make presentations. Board members act as liaisons for families to facilitate communication during the year. Please feel free to contact them if the need arises.

Peter Browning, President	pvb3@cornell.edu	Parent of UL, and Alumna
Robert Clune, Treasurer	mjb@wclaw.net	Parent of Alumna
Amy Gonzalez	amy@movecommunity.com	Parent of UL and MS Students
Laura Gottfried	lgott10@msn.com	Parent of Alumnae
Peter Littman, Vice President	plittman@centralnylaw.com	Parent of Alumni
Vera McLafferty	vmclafferty@palisade.com	Parent of JL, UL and Alumna
Roberta Moudry, Secretary	mm5@cornell.edu	Parent of Alumni
Jeffra Ruesink	jeffraruesink@gmail.com	Parent of UL and Alumnus
Lisa Swayze	lswayze@impactdc.com	Parent of Alumnus

The Elizabeth Ann Clune Montessori School of Ithaca admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and scholarship programs.

# Introducing the Staff

## Administrative Team

**Lisa Smith- Executive Director-** is our Chief Operating Officer and is ultimately responsible for all administrative decisions. Lisa oversees finances, facilities and Admissions and is responsible for building and maintaining a strong leadership team. Lisa joined EACMSI in July of 2002 as our Business Administrator. Lisa has been a steward of the school's resources and is responsible for prudent budgeting, financial management and has overseen numerous capital projects. Over the past 10 years Lisa has worked closely with the Board of Directors and has overseen the annual budget. During that time Lisa also grew the school's enrollment. Lisa earned her B.A. in Political Science from Ithaca College and her M.S. in Applied Science from Watson School at Binghamton University. Lisa lives in Newfield with her husband Scott. Their daughter Sadie attends the University of Michigan and Emmy attends the University of Colorado in Boulder. ([Lisa@eacmsi.org](mailto:Lisa@eacmsi.org))

**Laura Gottfried-Principal-**is responsible for providing moral, intellectual and educational leadership that creates and sustains educational programs of the highest order. Laura is accessible and responsive to all constituencies: students, staff, parents, and alumni. Laura is responsible for aligning current practice with the vision of Dr. Maria Montessori. For the last 10 years she partnered with founder Andrea Riddle in shaping the philosophic and curricular vision of the school and has been a guiding force in leading EAC to adapt Montessori pedagogy to meet the needs of 21st century students. Laura served as our Montessori Learning Support Specialist for 7 years, working with students experiencing challenges in the school setting; she has extensive experience in the field of learning disabilities, assessment and intervention. Laura developed the school's Learning and Support Model in collaboration with founder Andrea Riddle. This model extends the parameters of the Montessori Method to ensure that all kinds of learners can be educated within a Montessori paradigm. Laura began her Montessori life as a Primary teacher. She earned her certification in 1995 from CMTE at the College of New Rochelle and taught at the Primary Level for 7 years. Laura then taught at the Junior Level for 3 years. She lives in Enfield with her husband Billy, daughter Meg, and dog Hope; her daughter Mia attends Mt. Holyoke College in Amherst, Mass. Laura loves Bikram Yoga, flowers and reading. She earned a B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Vermont. ([lgottfried@eacmsi.org](mailto:lgottfried@eacmsi.org))

**Anne Robbins- Director of Wellness and School Services-** Anne works with students, families and staff facilitating conflict resolution and problem solving social and developmental issues. She oversees our Special Education Services, our Health Curriculum, and the community/parent observations at school. Anne received a B.A. in English Literature from the University of Colorado, an M.S. from Pace University, and an M.S.W. from Binghamton University. Anne began her relationship with EACMSI in 1997 as our school nurse. She has been an RN and Family Nurse Practitioner since 1980. Anne is a NYS licensed social worker. She enjoys gardening, bicycling, canoeing, living downtown, being on the lake, and visiting Austin! ([arobbins@eacmsi.org](mailto:arobbins@eacmsi.org))

**Terry Cater-Cyker- Program Coordinator, Upper Elementary, Team Leader-** is responsible for school-wide scheduling and overall program quality and consistency. Terry also serves as Master Teacher liaison in support of Specialty Teachers, After-School, and Teaching Teams. Terry earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Cornell University and did some graduate work in Special Education at Mansfield College. Prior to motherhood, she worked as a school social worker and chaired the Spencer Van Etten school district's Committee for Special Education. Terry was involved in LaLeche League, serving as a leader for three years and also taught Sunday school and chaired her church's religious education committee. Terry completed her Upper Level Montessori training at CMTE/NY. Terry has three children, all who are EACMSI graduates! Now also a grandmother, she enjoys spending time with her 4 grandchildren. ([tcatercyker@eacmsi.org](mailto:tcatercyker@eacmsi.org))

## **Administrative Support**

**Rebecca Couillard** – is responsible for communicating with the EACMSI community about events and schedules, attendance and other administrative duties. She has been in the Ithaca area since coming to Cornell University in 1987. She completed her B.S. in Materials Science and Engineering in 1991 and her Ph.D. in Fiber Science in 1998 at Cornell. Her daughter, Sarah, graduated from the EAC program and currently attends Ithaca High School. Rebecca teaches scuba diving, Red Cross classes and enjoys playing her cello. ([admin@eacmsi.org](mailto:admin@eacmsi.org))

**Whitney Wiggins** - is responsible for communicating with the EACMSI community about events and schedules, attendance and other administrative duties. She grew up in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and graduated from UNC with a degree in Political Science and Public Policy. She did a year abroad in college and discovered the joys of traveling. After graduation she wanted to see the world so she hired on as a Customer Service Agent for American Airlines. She quickly moved to Software Technical Support and then to Software Product Development. She continued to travel for business and pleasure while managing internet based projects for corporate and small business travel. In 2001 she moved to Ithaca with her husband Jeff, a programmer and ornithologist. She loves her two amazing

children, Grace and Tractor, and how they thrive here at EACMSI. She enjoys reading, knitting, being outside and college sports. ([admin@eacmsi.org](mailto:admin@eacmsi.org))

## **Montessori Directors/Directresses**

**Deb Adams - *Lower Elementary*** - graduated with a B.Arch. and an M.Arch. II from Cornell University. She taught for three years at Syracuse University as an assistant professor in the architecture department, and for an additional 3 years as a visiting lecturer at Cornell. She has two sons, Nate and Zach, both of whom attend EACMSI. Over the last several years, she has been a frequent volunteer and substitute. During this time, she began to develop a deep appreciation and fascination with the Montessori philosophy. Deb completed her 6-9 training at the CMTE/New Rochelle and will begin her third year in Junior Level. ([deb@eacmsi.org](mailto:deb@eacmsi.org))

**Liz Allen – *Primary/Extended Day, Team Leader*** - graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a B.A. in mathematics. She worked for seven years in banking and then began working with NGO's giving business support. After becoming a mother, Liz was very involved in the administration and teaching at cooperative preschools in both New Haven, Connecticut and Ithaca. When her children joined our school in 1999, she frequently worked as a volunteer and substitute. She earned her Montessori certification for 3-6 year olds at Princeton Center for Teacher Education. Liz has training in the diagnosis and remediation of learning problems in mathematics from Prof. Mahesh C. Sharma. Liz lives in Ithaca with her husband, Glenn, daughter Nelle, and dogs, Osa and Linus. Their son Miles attends Lawrence University. ([lallen@eacmsi.org](mailto:lallen@eacmsi.org))

**Becky Booth - *Lower Elementary*** - grew up in Germany, attending both German and American Schools. She moved to the U.S. to attend the University of Kentucky, where she majored in Elementary Education and minored in German Linguistics. After graduating she worked in a Montessori school that only had Primary classes. It was there that she discovered her love of the philosophy. While the school made plans to expand its program to include a Junior Level, Becky went to Xavier University to get a Masters in Montessori Elementary education. She designed the Junior Level environment and curriculum for Providence Montessori School in Lexington Kentucky. She taught there until the birth of her first child and subsequent move to Gainesville, Florida. Since then Becky, her husband Jim and their three children have had the wonderful opportunity of living in Canberra, Australia, Fort Collins, CO and finally Ithaca. This year marks Becky's sixth year as a full time 6-9 teacher at EACMSI. ([rbooth@eacmsi.org](mailto:rbooth@eacmsi.org))

**Scott Daigler – *Lower Elementary, Testing Coordinator*** - is a Montessori teacher with 34 years of teaching experience at three different Montessori schools in New York State. Scott has a Bachelor of Science degree from S.U.N.Y. Empire State College, with a major in Human Development and a minor in Early Childhood

Education. He holds the Early Childhood Credential and the Elementary 1 Credential from the American Montessori Society. Along with his teaching duties, Scott is the Curriculum Coordinator at EAC Montessori. He was a presenter at the AMS National Millennium 2000 Conference and has presented workshops nationally for the Montessori Peace Academy. Scott has worked as a consultant for Montessori teacher training programs and the Native American Seneca Nation. His interests are meditation, outdoor sports and activities, scuba diving and oceanic studies, ice hockey and human development. ([sdaigler@eacmsi.org](mailto:sdaigler@eacmsi.org))

**Leah Erato – *Primary*** – has been working with children for over 15 years in a variety of settings. Her passion for Montessori was sparked while working with the inspiring staff in Upper Level as an aide. After three years at EACMSI she followed her heart, completed her Montessori 3 – 6 training, and received her Primary Certification in June 2011 from CMTE. Leah lives in Ithaca with her dancing daughter Emma and sweet son Jack. In her spare time she loves to sew, paint, bake and read. Leah and her family can often be found hiking with their pup Caper or chasing chickens around their yard. ([lerato@eacmsi.org](mailto:lerato@eacmsi.org))

**Melani Alexander Fuchs – *Lower Elementary, Movement Integration Specialist*** -holds a B.S. in Physical Education from Cortland State. Melani created and implemented the first Physical Education program at the EAC Montessori School. She then took her Montessori Primary training in 1985 at NAMPTA in Boston, and completed her 6-9 training at CMTE/New Rochelle in 2000. Melani has been teaching at our school for twenty-eight years. Recently, Melani completed initial training in Brain Gym ® and implements this work with our staff and the entire student body. In addition, Melani shares her love of movement and teaches Physical Education to the Primary classes. She co-authored Movement Matters, a Movement Album for Montessori Early Childhood Programs. Melani presents Movement Matters workshops at Montessori Trainings as well as presenting at National Montessori Conferences. Melani enjoys playing the guitar and piano and singing with the children. She is an artist and brings experience and passion for water color to the classroom as well. Her background in music and theatre support her commitment to the choreography and co-direction of the end of the year school musical. Her two children graduated from our Middle School and SUNY Cortland and are pursuing careers in musical theatre and acting. Melani lives out in the country with her husband, Tom, a professor of Physical Education at SUNY Cortland. She openly shares her home with visiting college students, two border collies, two cats, and a miniature pony and miniature donkey! ([mfuchs@eacmsi.org](mailto:mfuchs@eacmsi.org))

**Dawn Locke Grover – *Lower Elementary, Team Leader*** - began teaching in a Montessori environment in 1990. While doing her master's degree in experiential education, she accepted a summer teaching job with 3 – 6 year olds at Countryside Montessori School in Boulder, Colorado. She liked the Montessori philosophy of teaching so much that she taught at Countryside for 5 years, and then moved to Washington, DC to do her Montessori elementary training for 6 – 12 year old

children. Both desire to travel and professional opportunity have led to a variety of teaching situations for Dawn since 1990. Wanting to settle closer to their roots, Dawn and her husband, Scott moved their family to Ithaca in 2003. They feel strongly that they have finally found a community to call home. In her personal time, Dawn loves to read, hike, camp, travel and play games. She lives on West Hill with her husband Scott, her son, Cameron, and her daughter, Lily. ([dgrover@eacmsi.org](mailto:dgrover@eacmsi.org))

**Jim Hodges - Adolescent Guide, Team Leader** – joined the EAC Montessori Adolescent Program in August 2002. Prior to this, Jim spent 13 years as Lead Teacher of the Middle School at The Susquehanna School in Binghamton, NY, where he developed an integrated curriculum for adolescents and taught all subjects. Jim earned his BA in English from the University at Albany and his MAT in English from Binghamton University. He has permanent NY State teacher certification for grades pre-K through 6 and secondary English. Having taken numerous workshops and trainings in science and mathematics education, Jim has successfully prepared students to earn high school credit by fulfilling the NY State Earth Science and Algebra curricula and exams for over a decade. He received Montessori Adolescent training in July 2002 at the NAMTA Montessori Academy at Loyola College in Baltimore. Jim enjoys gardening, hiking and camping, among other outdoor activities, interests he enjoys sharing with students. He lives with his wife, Tina, and two sons at EcoVillage at Ithaca. ([jhodges@eacmsi.org](mailto:jhodges@eacmsi.org))

**Meridith Jones – Primary** - graduated from SUNY Environmental Sciences and Forestry in 2001 with a bachelor's degree in biology. She has several years of experience working for agencies in Syracuse and Ithaca that support and advocate for people with disabilities. Meridith received her early childhood Montessori certification through the Northeast Montessori Institute. She has a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education from Endicott College. Nature and the outdoors are a big part of her life. Meridith lives in Ithaca with her dog. ([mjones@eacmsi.org](mailto:mjones@eacmsi.org))

**Stephen Lenhart – Upper Elementary** - Since 1999 Stephen has been teaching in a variety of learning communities, both public and private, working with students ranging in age from three to thirty in three different countries. He studied Geography and Environmental Science at SUNY Geneseo and did his graduate work in Elementary Education at LeMoyne College in Syracuse. He is state certified K-6<sup>th</sup> grade. He has been at EAC since 2008 and is in the process of completing his Upper Level Montessori training through the Center for Montessori Education. Stephen's interests center around the exploration of connections between beings and how to most beautifully express and enhance those connections. Writing, walking, sharing food, and playing games are a few of the ways he enjoys connecting. Stephen lives at Fern Hollow with five beautiful and intelligent beings: Katri, Finn, Gavin, ZeeZee the dog and Faulkner the cat. ([slenhart@eacmsi.org](mailto:slenhart@eacmsi.org))

**Karen McCaffery – *Upper Elementary*** - holds a B.S. in Psychology from SUNY-Oswego. She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal, where she worked in environmental education. She returned to NY to study plant and soil science at Cornell University, where she earned her M.S. and Ph.D. She spent two years in the Brazilian Amazon conducting research in regeneration of slashed and burned rainforest. Karen fell in love with Montessori Philosophy in 2002 when she started her own family. She holds an Early Childhood Certification from the Northeast Montessori Institute and completed her Upper Elementary training through CMTE in 2013. Karen loves plants and ethnobotany, swimming, and the outdoors. Karen joined the EACMSI community in 2012, along with her sons, Sean and Brian Trumbore. ([kmccaffery@eacmsi.org](mailto:kmccaffery@eacmsi.org))

**Marianne Montague – *Upper Elementary*** - holds a B.S. in Early Childhood & Elementary Education from Chestnut Hill College and an MSW in Social Policy Analysis & Research from Rutgers University. For thirteen years Marianne moved between employments as an elementary classroom teacher in various educational settings, to work as a policy analyst/researcher in an education laboratory. In 1993 she fortuitously discovered the magic of a Montessori education when she enrolled her then young son in the Ithaca Montessori School. The following year she received her Montessori training at the Princeton Center for Teacher Education and ran the Toddler Program at IMS from 1994–1999. She completed her Upper Elementary Montessori training at the CMTE/New York and joined our staff in 1998. ([mmontague@eacmsi.org](mailto:mmontague@eacmsi.org))

**Marianne Pyke - *Upper Elementary*** - has been a Registered Nurse for 25 years and a Doctor of Chinese Medicine for 15 years. She holds a Master of Science degree from the Academy of Chinese Culture and Health Science in Oakland, California and a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a minor in Art from Syracuse University. She obtained Montessori Primary certification in 2005 and founded the Dryden Montessori School in Dryden, NY. During this time she consulted with the Dryden Public School District advocating curriculum enrichment and peaceful character education. The desire to work more closely with like-minded passionate professionals drew her to the EACMSI community and she is pleased and excited to be a member of the team! Marianne began her Montessori 9-12 training this summer at the College of New Rochelle. Marianne has been an artist and muralist for 25 years. She brings her experience of art instruction in her own Montessori program as well as her creativity and enthusiasm for drawing out creative expression in children and others around her. She enjoys running, swimming, horseback-riding and exploring in nature. Marianne lives in Freeville NY with her husband, her three children, 2 cats, and their new golden retriever puppy! ([mpyke@eacmsi.org](mailto:mpyke@eacmsi.org))

**Kate Salmon- *Adolescent Guide*** - Kate holds a B.A. in Biological Sciences with a minor in Chemistry from the University of Delaware, where she taught laboratory classes. Her interest in becoming a Montessori guide began while substitute teaching at Soaring Wings Montessori in Park City, Utah where her son Gray was

enrolled as a first year primary student. Gray, EACMSI alumnus, is currently a sophomore at Ithaca High School. Her younger son, Sam, is a second year student in the Upper Level. Kate received her elementary certification from CMTE/New Rochelle in 2004 and has since been a guide in Upper Level. In 2012 Kate attended the AMI-NAMTA Adolescent Orientation in Cleveland, Ohio and on the Hershey Farm School. She is a nature lover, life-long vegetarian and avid reader. Kate lives in Fall Creek with her husband, two sons, two cats and dog. She enjoys swimming, mountain sports, mathematics and a good debate. ([ksalmon@ecmsi.org](mailto:ksalmon@ecmsi.org))

**Katri Sampson – *Lower Elementary*** - Katri fell in love with the Montessori Method in 1992 soon after graduating from Trinity College with a BA in English and Fine Arts. After a year as an assistant teacher in a Montessori Primary classroom in Portland, Maine, she began her 3-6 Montessori training at the Northeast Montessori Institute. She taught at several Montessori schools before opening the Red House Montessori School in North Yarmouth, Maine in 1999. In 2005, Katri moved to Ithaca and devoted the next four years to being with her young children while getting acquainted with the local Montessori community. In 2009, when her younger son turned three, she joined the staff of EACMSI. Currently, Katri is earning her 6-9 Montessori credential at the Seacoast Center for Education in Stratham, NH. She is passionate about Peace Education, child and animal welfare, preserving natural resources and living gently on the Earth. Katri lives in an old farmhouse in Danby with her partner Stephen, sons Finn and Gavin and animal friends ZeeZee, the big white dog and Faulkner, the small grey cat. ([ksampson@eacmsi.org](mailto:ksampson@eacmsi.org))

**Donyan Shadions - *Primary*** - received her AMS certification from CMTE in 2002. She taught at the Primary Level for two years before being asked to start a Montessori school in EACMSI's founder Andrea's honor in the Caraballo Haitian Batey of the Dominican Republic. This entailed learning Spanish while living among the Dominican and Haitian people in this rural village without modern amenities such as running water and electricity. She was responsible for creating a functioning Montessori classroom using material she had brought with her, as well as hiring and training local women to assist her. Donyan trained her assistants and prepared them to run the program in her absence. The lives of the village women and children were transformed as Donyan shared the Montessori Method with them. In 2006, Donyan returned to her native state of Ohio where she worked as an Activities Director in a Residential Care Facility. She took the opportunity to implement the Montessori Method with patients with dementia and Alzheimer's to support independence and improve working memory. In addition to this work, Donyan also volunteered as a bi-lingual parent educator at Women's Network. Donyan returned to EACMSI in 2008 to teach at the Primary Level. She is interested in movement as a vehicle for learning as well as individual learning styles. Donyan attained certification in Thai Yoga Therapy in 2012 and plans to practice Thai Yoga Therapy with children to support their sensory needs. Donyan offers parent education workshops to provide parents with a fuller understanding of

the Montessori Method. Donyan lives with her daughter Zairra, a student at EACMSI. Among her many passions are empowering girls to have a positive body image. She loves yoga, Spanish and German language practice and the Montessori lifestyle. ([dshadions@eacmsi.org](mailto:dshadions@eacmsi.org))

**Virginia Spiers - *Primary*** - graduated from Wells College in 2003 where she majored in Religious Studies and minored in Spanish. That summer Virginia accepted a position in a Montessori classroom and soon developed a lifelong love of this philosophy of education. Virginia received her Montessori certification at the Princeton Center for Teacher Education in 2009. This will be her sixth year as a full time Montessori teacher with us. She lives in Ithaca with her husband James. ([vspiers@eacmsi.org](mailto:vspiers@eacmsi.org))

**Sarah Whipple – *Primary/Extended Day*** - attended William Paterson College and received her Montessori training and certification for the Primary level (ages 3 – 6) at AERCO/Ithaca in 1980. She interned and taught at the Primary level at the Ithaca Montessori School. Sarah began working at our school in 1984, serving as the business/facilities administrator for ten years. In 1996 she returned to teaching in our Primary/Extended Day program. Sarah has two grown daughters, both of whom are EACMSI graduates. She lives in Ithaca with her husband and enjoys gardening, reading, cooking, music, and going for long walks. ([swhipple@eacmsi.org](mailto:swhipple@eacmsi.org))

## **Specialty Teachers**

**Kathrin Achenbach- *Spanish, Upper Level and Middle School***-was born and raised in Germany, and studied Romance languages and psychology at the University of Siegen. Her passion for language brought her to Madrid, Spain where she taught at the Inlingua International School of Languages. She has since worked as a teacher and translator in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Barcelona Spain, and traveled extensively through Central America and the Iberian Peninsula. Kathrin has a special interest in applied linguistics and how foreign language is effectively acquired, integrated and maintained. When Kathrin is not thinking or reading about language she loves spending time and traveling with her family and exploring the process of creativity through traditional women's work including hand-sewing, weaving and storytelling. ([kachenbach@eacmsi.org](mailto:kachenbach@eacmsi.org))

**Laura Ballard – *Afterschool, Junior Level Assistant Teacher*** - Laura graduated with a BS in art education from Millersville University of Pennsylvania. Since then she has taught environmental education in the Catskills, English in Florence, Italy, and interned at a school farm and garden. Her past three years have been spent teaching studio art at North Country School in Lake Placid. Laura is excited to move to the Ithaca area and join the staff at EAC Montessori as a Lower Elementary assistant teacher and in the Afterschool program. Outside of teaching, Laura is a fiber artist focused on taking wool through the process from sheep to

finished piece of artwork. She hopes to raise some sheep and chickens once she is settled in Ithaca with her husband Zac. ([lballard@eacmsi.org](mailto:lballard@eacmsi.org))

**Allison Boex - *Latin Upper Level and Middle School***- graduated *summa cum laude* with a B.A. in Classics from Kenyon College in 2003, having also spent a semester studying Latin and ancient Greek at Eberhard Karls University in Tübingen, Germany. She came to Cornell University the following fall, and is currently completing a dissertation about Latin grave poetry; she began teaching Latin at EACMSI in 2012. When not teaching dead languages, she enjoys working and spending time in the orchards at Indian Creek Farm. ([aboex@eacmsi.org](mailto:aboex@eacmsi.org))

**Linda Chen – *Extended Day, Junior Level & Upper Level Music, Afterschool***- completed her M.A. and Ed.M in Music and Music Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Teaching, singing, and making music with children of all ages is her passion. She loves to engage with different instrumentation, singing, listening, rhythm games, improvisation, creative movement, storytelling, as well as multi-cultural experiences with students during her teaching. Linda is a registered Music Together teacher, and is also Orff Level I and II certified. She received her Kodaly Level I Teacher Certification at NYU and Dalcroze training in NYC, 2011. Linda is completing her Orff Level III training. She enjoys baking, running, playing tennis, and making arts and crafts. Linda lives with her husband in Owego. ([lchen@eacmsi.org](mailto:lchen@eacmsi.org))

**Angela Cohen- *Spanish-Extended Day and Junior Level***- learned Spanish as her second language through intensive studies in Brazil, and through professional experience working in Latin America. She has a particularly vast vocabulary including a wide range of expressions unique to each Latin American country. Angela was born and raised in Sao Paulo, Brazil. She graduated with a BA in Marketing from Anhembi Morumbi University and worked for over 13 years at BASF headquarters in Sao Paulo, Brazil. As a Business-to-Business marketing analyst, specializing in Latin American markets, Angela made periodic trips throughout South America. After a long and successful professional career, Angela retired to focus on her family and the wellbeing of her children. Angela is in the final phase of her Montessori 3-6 training and will be interning in Meridith and Leah's classroom when not teaching Spanish. Her goal in working as a Montessori teacher is to enable children to discover the world. She enjoys peaceful walks on deserted beaches with her husband and two sons. ([acohen@eacmsi.org](mailto:acohen@eacmsi.org))

**Jeff de Castro – *Extended Day & Junior Level Art, Afterschool*** - holds a B.A. from Amherst College, an MFA in Sculpture/Ceramics from Rhode Island School of Design and completed the New York State Certification program at Elmira College in K – 12 Art Education. He has been listed as one of 250 community artists in the United States Initiative called Artists and Communities co-sponsored by the Mid Atlantic Artist Foundation and The National Endowment for the Arts. He has been an artist-in-residence with numerous institutions including Sculpture Space (2003), Long Beach Island Foundation for the Arts (2000), and The Inkshop

Printmaking Center (2005). His public art projects have featured educational workshops as a major component in the process of creation and have included young artists of all ages. Very Special Arts/Massachusetts has sponsored his projects with deaf children, inner-city youth, youth-at-risk, and incarcerated teens. He lives in Trumansburg with his wife, Sandra Steingraber and two children, Faith, 15 and Elijah, 12. ([jdecastro@eacmsi.org](mailto:jdecastro@eacmsi.org))

**Marjorie Hoffman – *Art 9 - 14 year olds*** - holds a BFA from Cooper Union, an MS in Elementary Education from City College of New York and an M.S. in Special Education from Bank Street College. She is certified as an art teacher, an elementary and special education teacher. Marjorie has been working in the arts and teaching since 1970. Among the positions she held before following her daughter to Montessori are: arts educator at several children’s museums; woodworking teacher at Fieldston Lower School in NYC; and graduate instructor at Bank Street College. Marjorie is a columnist for the *Ithaca Child* and is active in the Ithaca Jewish Community. She is president of Temple Beth El, and serves as campaign chair of the Ithaca Area United Jewish Community. Marjorie feels blessed to be part of three generations of family artists. Her mother was a ceramicist and art teacher and her two daughters have continued the tradition by exploring their own artistic paths. ([mhoffman@eacmsi.org](mailto:mhoffman@eacmsi.org))

**Patrice Jennings –*Reading Support, Adolescent Enterprise, Afterschool Director*** - holds a B.A. in Community Development and Philosophy of Alternative Education from Goddard College. Patrice left her career in management in 2009 after stints managing for a number of local businesses, including General Manager of Greenstar Cooperative Market and Borders Books and Music, when she realized a life without teaching children wasn’t for her. Patrice is a native Ithacan who feels at home in Montessori classrooms being an alumna of both the Ithaca Montessori School and Ithaca’s now defunct public Montessori K-2 program, as well as having spent countless hours in her mother’s school, Montessori Country Day from 1975 through 2005; pretty much “growing up” in a Montessori environment. Patrice has training in the Wilson Reading System’s reading intervention program. She lives in Danby with her partner and their two children. Patrice enjoys helping her family can, jam, and otherwise preserve the delicious bounty of our beautiful region, researching and learning the answer to any “why...” or “how...” questions she is asked, and reading anything and everything she has time for. ([pjennings@eacmsi.org](mailto:pjennings@eacmsi.org))

**JP Nawn – *Afterschool*** - J.P. was born in Tampa, FL and graduated from high school in Seneca Falls, New York in 1999. He has an A.S. in Music Recording Technology from the FLCC, Canandaigua. He has been living in the Ithaca area for 4 years, currently living in the Fall Creek neighborhood. J.P. performs in a Roots Reggae band called Mosaic Foundation. ([jnawn@eacmsi.org](mailto:jnawn@eacmsi.org))

**Gary Weiss – *Physical Education*** - has a Master’s Degree in Physical Education, Adaptive Physical Education, and a Minor in coaching from Cortland University

and Ithaca College. He has 12 years of experience teaching and coaching in Ithaca and the surrounding areas. He has coached a number of team sports including tennis, swimming, basketball, soccer, track and softball. He is currently involved in coaching track & field and cross-country for the Ithaca Youth Bureau. Gary is an avid bicyclist, swimmer, hiker and gym rat. Wood working and all aspects of construction are a part time passion as well (something that he has done for over 38 years). He has lived in Ithaca for 35 years with his wife Erica. His two grown daughters, Laurel and Hanna reside in Florida and Ithaca respectively. Gary has been involved with the “Big Brother” organization for 23 years. Gary is currently a “Big Brother” to a 13 year old boy. The two have been together for 2 and a half years. Gary’s extended family also includes his dog, Rudy and his cat, Tango. ([gweiss@eacmsi.org](mailto:gweiss@eacmsi.org))

**Ryan Zawel - Music/Band 9 – 14 year olds** - holds trombone performance degrees from Northwestern University and Ithaca College. He has performed with the Tommy Dorsey Band, Broadway’s Miss Saigon, the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, and the Joel Rubin Jewish Music Ensemble. He has collaborated with members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, and Zappa Plays Zappa. Ryan has served on the music faculties of Hunter Campus Schools in New York City, Ithaca College, and Syracuse University. He currently directs the Klezmer Ensemble at Cornell University. Ryan’s wife, Nicki, is a fellow music educator. They have three children, Daniel, Ruby and Quincy. ([rzawel@eacmsi.org](mailto:rzawel@eacmsi.org))

## **Nursing Staff**

**Nancy Kaproth RN – School Nurse** - School Nurse - Began her school nursing career with ICSD in 1996. She has most recently been assigned to Belle Sherman Elementary and as a district roving nurse. Nancy splits her time by being at Montessori half time and continuing to rove ICSD as a support nurse in a full time capacity. Her nursing career began in St. Paul, MN in 1973. Specialties include Surgical ICU, Recovery Room, Ob/Gyn, Oncology and Pediatrics. Nancy lives in Ithaca with her husband, Mike and wonder dog, Belle. She has 3 grown children and 2 grandchildren. Nancy enjoys time with family, gardening, dog shows and anything that takes her to the lake for boating, fishing or relaxation. ([nkaproth@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:nkaproth@icsd.k12.ny.us))

**Kelly Seaman RN – School Nurse**- started her nursing career as an LPN in 1981. She went on to receive an AAS degree in nursing, and then BSN in nursing. Kelly’s nursing experiences include two summers in the Adirondacks as a camp nurse, OB/GYN and medical/surgical nursing, travel nursing and oncology. She lives in Trumansburg with her husband, Jay and her daughter, Leah. Kelly enjoys spending summers on Cayuga Lake, visiting with her large family, taking long walks with her dog Ginger, and playing piano. ([kseaman@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:kseaman@icsd.k12.ny.us))

# Whom To Contact for What

Please speak to or email the following people if you have questions concerning:

- Your child or the class:
  - the Directress or Director ([www.eacmsi.org/contactus](http://www.eacmsi.org/contactus))
  - the Main Office ([admin@eacmsi.org](mailto:admin@eacmsi.org)) to leave a message
  - Laura Gottfried ([lgottfried@eacmsi.org](mailto:lgottfried@eacmsi.org)) if teachers are unavailable, or you would like to have a follow-up conversation
- School policy:      Laura Gottfried ([lgottfried@eacmsi.org](mailto:lgottfried@eacmsi.org))  
                                 Lisa Smith ([lisa@eacmsi.org](mailto:lisa@eacmsi.org))
- Health and wellness issues and/or Special Education Services:  
                                 Anne Robbins ([arobbins@eacmsi.org](mailto:arobbins@eacmsi.org))
- Payment of tuition and/or financial questions: Lisa Smith
- Classroom observations: Anne Robbins
- After-school Program: [afterschool@eacmsi.org](mailto:afterschool@eacmsi.org)
- School Nurses:      Kelly Seaman ([kseaman@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:kseaman@icsd.k12.ny.us))  
                                 Nancy Kaproth ([nkaproth@icsd.k12.ny.us](mailto:nkaproth@icsd.k12.ny.us))
- For all other faculty and staff listings go to:  
[www.eacmsi.org/contactus](http://www.eacmsi.org/contactus)
- Transportation, contact your local district –

Ithaca	-	274-2128
Lansing	-	533-4608
Newfield	-	564-9956
Dryden	-	844-4221
Trumansburg	-	387-5610

# What You Will Find On Our Website –

**www.EACMSI.org**

We have a beautiful website; please check it regularly as it is one of the primary ways we use to let you know what is happening at school. Look for detailed information about all of our programs and different events that happen throughout the year.

Choose “**My EAC**” on the left side of the page to find all the things necessary for the school year. This includes class lists, supply lists, all required forms, this handbook, and health and wellness information.

You can access a biography of each of our staff members and their contact information under “**About Us**”.

At the top of each page you will see a link to our school **Calendar**. (Events can be downloaded to a Google calendar.)

We also encourage you to “Like” our Facebook to stay abreast of daily life at EACMSI.

# Things You Should Know

Please note that our calendar differs somewhat from the calendar of the Ithaca City School District. **If the Ithaca City Schools are closed, then we are also closed.**

**The front entrances to both the Main Building and the Annex will be open from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., and 3:00-4:00 p.m. daily.**

## Arrival

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. Teachers will arrive at school at 8:30 a.m. to welcome students as well as to prepare for the day. Parents may pull up to the front door to drop children off. **You may not pass a school bus with blinking lights or park in the Fire Lane under any circumstances as *it is against the law*. The driveway must remain clear for school buses, and it is a Fire Lane! Our driveway is a one-way circle, so you may not drive on the lower drive the wrong way.** If you are coming into the school, please park in the lot. Feel free to park behind a faculty car if necessary. Children will be met in the front hall by a teacher or assistant during the first few weeks of school. If you arrive after 9:00 a.m. please bring your child to the front office and a staff member will help your child to his/her room.

## Dismissal

Ithaca City School district buses will arrive at Montessori at 3:00 p.m. and depart at 3:10 p.m. Parents picking up children should plan to do so between 3:15 and 3:30 p.m. **You may not pass a school bus with blinking lights or park in the Fire Lane under any circumstances as *it is against the law*. The driveway must remain clear for school buses, and it is a Fire Lane! Our driveway is a one-way circle, so you may not drive on the lower drive the wrong way.** When you arrive, park in the lot and walk into the building for your child. (Feel free to double park behind any staff car.) One of our staff will get your child from his/her classroom. This will minimize disruption in the classrooms at the end of the day. If your child ever needs to leave school at the end of the day for a destination other than the usual one, or be picked up by another person, he/she must bring a note to school on that day or you may e-mail the office at [admin@eacmsi.org](mailto:admin@eacmsi.org) by noon. Any changes after that time must be by phone. **If you have not advised us of any changes the child will be sent home in the usual way. Children who are not picked up by 3:45 p.m. will be sent to our Afterschool Program and a \$20.00 fee will be charged. There will be no exceptions.**

## Attendance

If your child is sick and unable to attend school, we request that you call us by 9:00 a.m. If ever your child needs to arrive later than 9:15 a.m., please bring him/her by the front office upon arrival to have their attendance recorded.

### **After School Program**

The After School program begins at 3:30 p.m. Children are to be picked up promptly by 5:30 p.m. Families may register their child(ren) in advance for up to 5 days per week. Billing for those days will be at the end of each month and payments are expected each month. Days of use may only be changed (when staffing allows) at the beginning of a month. For example: if you used M,W,F and want to change to M,W,Th.) We are not able to have you switch days in mid month as we may not have the proper staffing. If we can accommodate your child, a daily use rate of \$20.00 per day will be charged. Please be aware that the program may be full on a given day that you need it. Call us as early in the day as you can to let us know your needs. If a child's classroom teacher feels that he or she is not yet ready for such a long day the school reserves the right to postpone enrollment in the After School Program. Children who have the assistance of one-to-one or program aides are not eligible for After School. Children must be able to adhere to the rules of After School with an appropriate level of support in order to attend the program.

### **Physical Education**

Physical Education is an important part of our school program. When it is absolutely necessary, a child may be excused from PE for 3 days upon the written request of a parent/guardian. A written statement from the family health care provider is required for prolonged exclusion from PE. This should include the reason and, if possible, the length of time for exclusion. No student may return to PE after such exclusion until the School Nurse has received a return to PE order from the health care provider. Students who are excluded from PE may not participate in Ski Club, recess or other physical activity at EACMSI. **Sneakers only** are considered proper footwear for PE class.

Students who are entering the Ithaca City School District for the first time may not participate in PE until the School Nurse has proof of a physical examination done within the last 12 months by a licensed Physician, Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner.

## **Health**

The Ithaca City School District provides us with school nurses. The School Nurse acts as a liaison between home, school and community. If there is a problem concerning a student's health, the parent/guardian is encouraged to contact the Health Office. The School Nurse will be glad to help in any way possible.

## **Illness**

First aid is given to protect the life and comfort of students until authorized treatment is secured. Further treatment or diagnosis becomes the responsibility of the parent/guardian. The principal and school health personnel must be able to contact parent/guardian in case of an accident or illness in school. Therefore, it is essential that parents/guardians make certain the school has the ability to contact them. The school must have the parent/guardian home phone number, work phone numbers, beeper or cell phone numbers, and the names of two relatives, friends, neighbors or co-workers who can act for the parent/guardian in case of emergency. When a student becomes ill at school, the parent/guardian will be called and they are responsible for seeing that the ill child gets home safely. All parents/guardians need to have a plan to care for sick children. Do not send a sick child to school. Children with minor illness will not be excluded from school unless:

- The child has a fever (oral temperature of 100 or greater); students must be fever free for 24 hours
- The illness prevents the child from participating in school activities
- The child requires more care than the school staff can provide
- The child has lethargy, difficulty breathing or signs of serious illness

When your child is ill, it is helpful for you to report his/her diagnosis to the School Nurse. The Ithaca City School District has a policy that prohibits students from attending school with a communicable disease or condition. If you have a question about whether your child can be in school with a specific diagnosis, please contact the Health Office. In the event of serious illness or injury the School Nurse can help coordinate your child's educational needs and plan for a safe and successful re-entry into school.

## **Medication**

When it is necessary for students to have medication (prescription or over-the-counter) during school hours, the following procedure must be followed:

- A written order must be received from the doctor stating the name of the medication, time to be given, effects of the medication, duration or order and side effects.
- The parent must send a written, dated request for medication to be given.
- The medication must be in the original container. If it is a prescription, the pharmacist will give you an empty labeled container for school.
- The long term medications must be renewed annually.

The Ithaca City School District policy prohibits students from carrying medications to and from school. A responsible adult must transport all medications. Students are NOT allowed to self-administer medication. When a physician and parent/guardian determine that older students are capable and

responsible to self-administer medications (such as asthma inhalers) a special self-medication order must be completed by the child's physician and parent/guardian. This order is in addition to the original medication order and parent/guardian permission. The school nurse will also interview the child and make the final decision about the student's ability to self-medicate at school.

### **Immunizations**

NYS law requires physician verification of specific immunizations for legal entry into any NYS school. Current immunization guidelines are available from your local health care provider and our school nurses.

Exceptions to this requirement are:

- A certificate signed by a physician licensed in NYS stating the specific reason or condition why immunizations(s) are detrimental to the child's health.
- Physician's certification that the child has had the disease or serological proof of immunity.
- A written statement signed by the child's parent/guardian that they hold religious beliefs contrary to the practice of immunization. The statement must describe the beliefs in sufficient detail to permit the school to determine that (a) the beliefs are religious in nature (not health or philosophical), and (b) the beliefs are sincerely and genuinely held.

Students who are exempt from immunizations will be excluded from school in the event of an outbreak of disease for which the student is not immunized.

### **Overnight Field Trips**

For students with special dietary needs, parents may be required to provide supplemental food to complement meals.

### **Technology**

EACMSI is committed to educating children to be fully functioning citizens of the 21st century. We believe that just as the current technological revolution is transforming society as we know it, so too must the process of educating children be transformed. Doing so while holding true to Montessori principles requires great care and forethought.

For the 2013-2014 school year, the use of personal reading devices by EAC students from Primary through Upper Level is restricted to those children for whom their use is sanctioned by either an IEP or an Individual Learning Plan. Middle School students are permitted the use of personal reading devices such as the Nook or the Kindle. We will revisit our technology policy on a yearly basis.

### **Toys/Games/Cell Phones**

We request that children come to school without toys, electronic games and cell phones. We encourage the bringing of objects of interest related to ongoing

projects in the classroom, and recognize the importance of the link between home and school. Weapons, play or real, are not permitted. Families who choose to allow their children cell phones must instruct them that these are to remain in the child's backpack and may not be used while the child is at school.

### **Footwear & Labeling**

Each child needs to have a pair of indoor shoes to wear in the classroom. These can be indoor sneakers also used for indoor physical education. In addition children need outdoor shoes or boots for recess play and outdoor physical education sessions. Crocs, clogs and flip-flops or any open toe shoes are not permitted for recess or gym.

Please label lunch boxes, hats, mittens, sweaters, jackets, shoes, etc. with your child's name. This enables them to recognize their own things and assures that they get returned if misplaced.

### **Birthdays**

The birthday tradition at EACMSI is that rather than celebrating with cupcakes or sugary treats, each child chooses a small gift for the school as a way of sharing his/her special day with his/her classmates. The gift can be a book, a plant, or anything the class can use. Check with your child's teacher for ideas. Our hope is that this will make your child's birthday a more meaningful event. We ask that birthday party invitations not be distributed at school.

### **Classroom Observation**

The school is organized into three Primary classes, which includes both a half-day and full-day program, three Junior Level Classes, an Upper Level Program, and a Middle School program. Classroom observations are scheduled on Thursday mornings, beginning in October through the beginning of May. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment to observe their children in action.

### **Conferences/Report Forms**

Formal reporting for the Junior Level, Upper Level, and Middle School consists of two written progress reports, in January and June. In addition, Junior Level and Middle School parents will have two conferences, Fall and Spring. Upper Level parents will have one scheduled conference in the Fall, and Spring term conferences as needed. Primary/Extended Day parents will have two scheduled conferences and one written report in June. **Please reserve the dates as printed on our school calendar. Conferences will not be rescheduled.** Standardized testing is administered to the third year students in Junior Level and Upper Level students the second and third weeks in May.

## Recess Wear

**All temperature determinations take wind chill into account**

### **Required Recess Clothing**

- Below 20 F: Indoor recess
- Over 20 F: Outdoor recess for everyone. Listed below are the proper clothes for outdoor recess
- **We recommend children wear face protection when sledding.**
- 20 – 30 F: Down or heavily lined coat, hat, waterproof gloves or mittens, snowpants, insulated boots
- 30 – 40 F: Down or heavily lined coat, hat, gloves or mittens, snowpants, if sledding or sitting in snow, boots if snowy or ground is wet
- 40 – 50 F: Coat, boots necessary if conditions are wet (water or snow), outdoor shoes otherwise, hat and gloves
- 50 – 60 F: For those who **are not** involved in an active sport
- Coat, polar fleece, sweatshirt, or sweater with one layer. For those who **are** involved in an active sport, long-sleeved shirt or a T-shirt with a windbreaker or light jacket  
Boots if playing in snow, mud, or water  
Outdoor shoes for playing on paved surfaces, grass or stone

## Tuition

If you have registered to pay tuition by the month, payments are due on the first of each month beginning in July and must be sent to the school no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. A late fee may be charged if we are required to bill you. If you are paying tuition twice yearly, payment dates are August 1 and January 1.

## Classroom Placement Policy

It is school policy that in those levels where there are multiple classes; siblings will be placed in different rooms.

It is school policy that in levels where there are multiple classes; children of faculty will not be placed in rooms with their relatives.

## **Behavior Shaping Policy**

*Part of the preparation of the environment for the child's learning involves the establishment of ground rules of human behavior. This provides the limits for the group and for the individual.*

Nancy Rambusch  
American Montessori Society Founder

The ground rules at EACMSI are simple and all encompassing:

1. Respect yourself
2. Respect others
3. Respect the environment

When a child has broken a rule at our school he/she is asked to come up with a reasonable solution with the support of his/her teachers so that the behavior will not occur again. If the child's solution does not work and subsequent incidents occur, the child is sent to the office where a new solution is proposed by the child, with the support this time of the office staff. The child fills out a form which is brought home for parents to sign, and a meeting is scheduled between parents, teachers and Laura or Anne. If the child is involved in a further incident, the child calls his/her parent and must leave school for the remainder of the day. Child and parent together process the issue, look at solutions that have not worked and come up with a new solution that holds promise. An 8:45 a.m. meeting between Laura or Anne, the child, the child's teacher and the parent is called for the following day. A new solution is presented by the child; if it is a reasonable solution and the child seems ready to be at school, the child is welcome to return to school that morning.

# **Please note: We are a peanut free school!**

Please read ingredient lists carefully. If a product has been processed where peanuts have been processed, we cannot have it at school.

**Primary, Extended Day and Junior Level classrooms are now also tree nut free!** Please read ingredient lists carefully.

## **Nutrition**

EACMSI dedicates itself to educating our children, staff and families in making healthy, sound nutritional food choices during the school day. We encourage using whole grain products, and making low sugar and low fat choices for lunches, snacks and treats to share.

Full Day Primary, Extended Day, Junior Level, Upper Level, and Middle School children must bring a lunch, including beverage, in a lunch container. Please include any necessary utensils. In order to promote re-cycling, children will be required to carry back home all their remains from lunch in their lunch boxes. We encourage parents to pack food in re-usable containers.

Please try to include a high quality protein and a fresh fruit and veggie in each lunch. Candy, gum and soft drinks are not permitted.

What we consume really does impact the quality of the energy we bring to our work and it affects our emotional state as well.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter.

## **Snack Suggestions**

Pumpnickel bread and a tangerine	Whole grain cereal
Bran muffin	Whole wheat bagel and orange slices
Oatmeal cookie and a plum	Corn muffin
Cinnamon rice cake and a peach	Tortilla and refried beans
Whole wheat bread and a sliced tomato	Nut-free trail mix
Waffle square and strawberries	Rye wafers and cream cheese
Graham crackers and a pear	Cucumber, carrot and cottage cheese
Whole wheat raisin toast	Rice cakes and cream cheese\
Whole wheat pita bread and seed-butter or hummus	Cut up vegetables w/ ranch dressing
Ginger snaps and applesauce	String cheese and celery
Whole wheat bread sticks and string cheese	Cottage cheese w/crushed pineapple
Whole wheat crackers and vegetable sticks	Yogurt and fruit
	Nut free granola and a baked apple