

NWCS Homeschool Extension Program Staff



NWCS
HOMESCHOOL
CELEBRATING 16 YEARS



Alisha Schulz – Preschool 3&4's

My passion for creating unique educational programs for young children began over 20 years ago during a collegiate study abroad in Florence, Italy where I was first introduced to the artwork of children educated in an environment that upheld the values of the Reggio Emilia philosophy. The amount of detail and imagination captured in the children's works of art inspired me. Upon my return from Italy, I earned a BA in psychology from Seattle Pacific University as well as extensive continuing education in child development and teaching. I have since had the privilege of working with children in a variety of settings including interning with a play therapist; coordinating children's ministries at several churches; overseeing the development of a creative arts program at Bel Air Presbyterian Preschool where I was also a mentor teacher in the two and three year old classrooms; leading innovative outdoor classes through the National Tinkergarten program; and teaching preschool art classes at the Corbin Art Center here in Spokane. I had the privilege of co-leading a homeschool co-op during my oldest son's preschool years. After a year of experimenting with private school for Kindergarten, my husband and I made the decision to return to homeschooling for both our boys: Jude who is 6, and Jack who is 3. We are thrilled to have found such a wonderful program here at Northwest Christian to support our efforts with them. We are delighted to be a part of the learning community here and I am honored to help pilot the new preschool program. In the rare spare moments of life, I enjoy experimenting with photography, pottery, painting and crochet.



Kindergarten – Jennifer Edwards

I grew up in the Spokane area, attended East Valley High School and graduated from Eastern Washington University in 2003 with my bachelor's Degree. I moved to Memphis, Tennessee in 2003. I have always loved working with children and have done so my whole life, from volunteering with the Muscular Dystrophy Association, St. Jude's children's research hospital and working in the children's ministry at my church. This love for children led me to work as a Teacher Counselor/Supervisory for emotionally disturbed youth in Memphis. This is where I met my husband. I then had the amazing opportunity to teach at a Christian Academy. I taught both Kindergarten and Pre-K 4. I had the privilege to teach for 6 years and I absolutely loved teaching there. There is such a joy in seeing a child learn and discover something new. I loved my time teaching and it was bitter sweet for me to make the decision to leave my job and stay home with my kids. God called me to stay home with my kids and homeschool. I love being able to teach my children and be a part of their everyday life. In June 2015 my amazing husband moved us back up to Spokane because he knew it was my desire to be around my family. God opened many doors and allowed us to move up here. I have been homeschooling my, soon to be 4th grader and Kindergartener as well as chasing a very busy 3-year-old around. In my free time I love to exercise, read and spend time with my family. This will be my second-year teaching in the program and my 4th year as a parent in the program. I am so excited for all that God has planned for this year. I am looking forward to an exciting year of learning and getting to know each of you!



Grades 1/2 - Jena Tinklenberg

I grew up in Nebraska and went to college in Iowa where I received my bachelor's degree in Social Work. There I also met my husband Michael while running cross country. Since moving to Spokane in 2011, I received my Masters in Elementary Education through Whitworth University and an endorsement in Special Education through Pacific Lutheran University. I have worked as an Autism paraeducator for the West Valley School District for three years and one year as a Behavior Intervention Teacher for Central Valley School District. My husband and I have been married for twelve years and have moved six different times to four different states. We have two children: Alayna age 4 and Nolan age 2. In my free time I enjoy spending time with my husband and daughter, watching and participating in almost every sport, being outside, boating, reading, and vegging out in front of the T.V. I look forward to getting to know each and every one of you this school year while further investigating what the Lord has created.



Grades 2/3 – Sara Jones

I was born in Montana, but I moved to Yakima, WA when I was eight years old. I spent the rest of my childhood there with my parents and as the oldest of four girls. I moved to Spokane in 1998 to attend Whitworth University. While at Whitworth I met my husband, Greg, and completed a bachelor's degree in nursing. After getting married and graduating we moved to Liberty Lake. I worked as a labor and delivery nurse and a school nurse but gave up my payed employment to be a stay at home mom after the birth of our daughter. We have four children, Aubrey (15), Nathan (13), Dane (11), and Johanna (9). Greg and I have been happily married for nineteen years.

We are beginning our ninth year as a homeschooling family. This is the third year that all four of our kids have attended NWC's Homeschool program. I have been teaching our children at home, teaching and leading children in our church's kids ministry for four years, and subbing for the homeschool program the last two years. I am hoping to begin my master's in teaching in the spring. My favorite way to spend my free time is with people! I enjoy going on dates with my husband, coffee and conversation with friends, hanging out with my sisters, and having adventures with my kids. I read all the time (we have a Little Free Library in front of our house!), crochet, and love a good nap. I'm so excited to be a part of this program and seeing all the fun things God has in store for us this year!



Grades 3/4 - Christy Noller

My growing-up years were spent in upstate New York. After attending Philadelphia College of Bible and earning a B.S. in Elementary Education as well as a B.S. in Bible, I moved to Ohio where I taught third grade at Dayton Christian School for three years. My husband and I met and were married there in 1997 while I was teaching, and we moved out here in 1999. We built our home in 2000 while I substitute-taught in public schools all around Spokane. We have four kids: Alex and Katie, 23, are twins and were adopted from Russia at the age of 7, in 2002. Tanner is 16 and a junior at NWC and Chloe is 14 and starting her freshman year at NWC as well. Our kids have been in public, private, and homeschool, and I have taught in all three as well. Our homeschooling years were my favorite. This is my third year with the Homeschool program and am absolutely delighted to be returning.



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Grades 5/6 – Abby Leman

Abby grew up as a missionary kid, with her parents translating the Bible and holding numerous roles in administration with Wycliffe Bible Translators. During her childhood, she lived in Canada and Colorado and had the opportunity to travel around the world for a year with her family. After high school in Texas, she attended Whitworth College in Spokane, where she pursued Elementary Education and a Vocal Performance Major, but with 3 credits short, changed it as she felt God was calling her to finish her degree in Religion. She married her husband James during her senior year of college (1999), and after graduation she pursued her master's degree in Counseling Psychology at Gonzaga University. She worked at Lutheran Social Services and The Hutton Settlement Children's Home as a counselor, house parent, and girls' Case Manager. She stopped working outside the home for a time to start a family. Her family currently makes their home in Spokane, Washington, where her husband serves as the Senior Pastor of First Free Methodist Church since 2006. She has loved doing music ministry, children's ministry, counseling, teaching voice lessons, homeschooling, raising her two boys Sam and JJ, teaching at Semper Fi, a Classical Christian Co-op, working for her church and denomination, and working at her boys' gymnastics center over the last 20 years. In her free time, she enjoys all things music, writing, reading, art, camping, sports, and movies. She began her journey with NWCS's homeschool program the fall of 2016, first in Kindergarten, and then to 5th and 6th in 2017. She enjoys all the students and families immensely!



Spanish - Jennifer Huseland

Although I was born in Philadelphia, I moved to Wisconsin soon afterwards, where I lived until I was 8. My parents then joined Wycliffe Bible Translators and we moved to Peru where I grew up in the jungle. It was there that I saw the gospel on full display and trusted Christ for salvation and life. When we returned to the States, I attended Dordt College in Iowa and received a B.A. in elementary education with a minor in Spanish. I also met and married my husband Brian there. We then taught for 3 years in a one-room Christian school on the prairies of South Dakota. When I became pregnant with our first daughter, we explored missionary work. Eventually my husband was hired to teach in Walnut Creek, California. After living there for 3 years, we joined a small team going to the U.K. to plant an International Presbyterian Church. By this time, we had 3 girls and I homeschooled them while we were there. Upon returning to America, Brian got a job at Northwest Christian School as a 4th grade teacher and we settled into Spokane in 2007. We now have 5 girls (19, 16, 14, 4 and almost 2). I am excited to join the homeschool program here as the Spanish teacher. I am looking forward to magnifying God's glory in the study of language and culture. Christian education has played a huge role in my life and I am excited to get back into teaching the next generation the wonders of God's world, expanding their horizons and deepening their Biblical worldview.



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Online Adjunct Math - Lisa Angle

Lisa Angle holds a B.S. from Wheaton College in Mathematics with a secondary education certificate, and a M.S. from the University of Illinois in Mathematics. She has taught math to students of all ages for more than 30 years at the University of Illinois, Seattle Pacific University, and Flathead Valley Community College in addition to her private online tutoring and home school cooperative classes. She has written five popular math texts: Basic Math, Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Calculus. Using computer technology, Lisa engages and mentors students and believes that every serious student can be successful with appropriate placement and excellent instruction. Lisa lives with her husband, Jim, and three of their nine home educated children in the Pacific Northwest. She enjoys music and has been a church pianist since she was a teenager. She and Jim will welcome two more grandchildren this fall.



Math - Laura Bula

I graduated from Pensacola Christian College in 2004 with a B.S. in Mathematics Education, and in 2009 I graduated from Western Governors University with a B.A. in Mathematics Education where I also received my Washington State Teaching Certificate. In January of 2014 I completed the requirements for my Professional Teaching Certificate for the State of Washington. I have thirteen years of math teaching experience. I began my teaching career at Rainier Christian Schools in Auburn, Washington in 2004. In 2008 I moved back to Spokane and took a job at Northwest Christian Schools teaching math full time. In December of 2013 I found out I was pregnant with twins and decided that after the school year was over that I was going to be a stay at home mom. I was away from teaching for the 2014-2015 school year when an opportunity arose with the NWCS Homeschool program. This will be my 4th year teaching math with the program. I love teaching math and am excited to see what this school year will hold! My husband James and I have three boys, twins, Austin and Caleb, who are 4 years old, and Isaac who is 16 months. We love hiking, kayaking, swimming, and being outdoors.



History, Technology/ASB – Sarah Hilsen

I have called Spokane my home most of my life. My family and I have grown to depend on our community of family, friends, and life that we have been blessed with. I graduated from John R. Rogers High school while having started the Running Start Program in one of the pilot sessions! I have graduated from Eastern Washington University a few times over the past few decades to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Secondary Education, English Literature and minoring in History. My husband Matt, the last Prince Charming of my generation, and I were married shortly after college (he Gonzaga) and we were experimenting with living in Seattle. Our hypothesis was correct in being Spokanites and we returned home two short years later. We found firm foundations in our marriage putting Christ the center with our work together in youth ministry. Our daytime jobs didn't resemble our passion for God and struggled to find purpose in our Monday-Friday, 9-5. We just celebrated fifteen years of marriage this July! He still opens the car door for me and kisses me goodnight every night!



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History, Technology/ASB – Sarah Hilsen cont.

I have been involved with Young Life here in our community for almost twenty-three years and still serving strong in the Spokane Valley. My family and I are deeply rooted in our home church Millwood Community Presbyterian church. My husband leads with our worship team, my daughters attend Sunday School when I can get them up and out the door (Lexi and Ava), and I teach Middle School and Up -our middle school and high school Sunday school. Before returning to earn an education degree, I was the business and operations manager for Spokane Youth for Christ and served on the national board as a safety officer. ME? I have a quirky sense of humor, nerdy disposition, and passionate about being a lifelong learner that values relationships above all else. I actually love the crazy stuff that I teach!



Literature and Study Skills - Melodie Workman

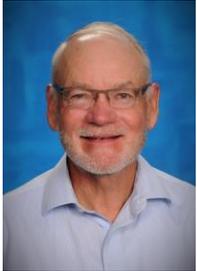
I grew up in Tampa, Florida in a Christian family. Education runs deeply in my blood and vibrantly through my heart. My parents were both educators and trained me with the understanding that education is not the end goal but a strong pathway to success. As I grew, I knew I was made for and called to this same ministry. I have always enjoyed taking the complex and making it simple, seeing concepts click in people's eyes, and making the mundane and undesired into exciting and desirable. When I realized that English education was a means to reach every learner, that is was pertinent to every field of study and every avenue of life, that I could strengthen and equip young people for life using literature and composition, I knew I had found my specified calling. I pursued this calling at Pensacola Christian College where I first received my B.S. in Music Education and later received my M.S. in English Education. I taught junior high and high school English in New Mexico for two years. Then I moved to California and taught at the collegiate level for eight years. After having my second child, my husband and I decided it was time for me to take some time away to raise our own children. My son, Jude, is now five years old and attending Midway Elementary, and my daughter, Paige, is three years old. God has opened many doors for me to begin teaching at NWCS Homeschool, and I'm thrilled to be stepping back into the classroom to interact with your children weekly!



Science-Courtney Manuel

Undergraduate degree at PLU in BSPE pre-physical therapy/MAE in Education.

I have taught high school biology and general science at Foss High School in Tacoma before I took maternity leave and never returned to the public school system. I helped start up and teach a church co-op for preschool through junior high kids. I also taught at Mead's homeschool program last year and started up their secondary science program. I have a passion for science; the discovery, the problem solving the aha moment when it all makes sense. I believe in hands on learning and if a student figures it out themselves it is information not easily lost. I hope to pass on my passion for science and a confidence that they can figure it out!



Jack and Carol Hancock – Senior Leadership

Jack and Carol Hancock bring a rich Christian heritage in their personal lives of faith and in their continuing and passionate commitment to biblical education to our program this year. God worked through Jack to establish the Homeschool Program 16 years ago! In their first year of retirement together from Jack's service as NWCS Headmaster, we are blessed and excited that they are giving their time and love to our senior students this year.



Physical Education – Tara Gelhausen

I am the oldest of eleven children in a Christian homeschool family. I grew up in Spokane and received my AA in Liberal Arts through Running Start. My husband and I have been married for 10 years and have two girls. While homeschooling our girls I taught classes at a homeschool co-op for four years. We love being active and have participated in a wide range of sports: soccer, softball, baseball, gymnastics, tennis, and swimming, along with yoga, hiking, ballet, and fitness classes. We enjoy going to Gonzaga basketball games each winter. I love getting out in nature to observe birds, flowers, and especially geology. I am passionate about pairing cognitive learning with hands-on activities.



Art and Yearbook - Rebecca Lamb

I grew up in Spokane and attended Northwest Christian from Kindergarten to the beginning of tenth grade when I transferred to Mead High School. While at Mead I took 2 art classes each semester, joined the Yearbook staff and was able to complete a semester at Spokane Skills Center for Graphic Design. After I graduated in 2007, I went on to receive a degree in both Graphic Design and Web Design from Spokane Community College. In 2010 I married my husband, Eric who I met at my home church, Crossover. We have 3 children, Micaiah (8), Selah (4) and Benaiah (3). The Lord has allowed me to stay home with our children for the past 7 years and homeschool the oldest. I have been working on freelance design jobs during that time to keep my skills up to date with the ever-evolving technical world. Art has always been a passion of mine and I am elated that God has allowed me to join this homeschool program as a teacher.



Music - Nathan Schmidt

I was born in Tennessee but moved to Peru before the age of five. Growing up as a missionary kid in the Amazon jungle, I had a pet kinkajou and several boa constrictors. And yes, I swam with piranhas. I studied music and theatre in college and graduate school and traveled on choir tours to exciting places like Europe and Texas. I have been fortunate to do a lot of fun things, like help write a musical to perform in New York City, play the lead in a short film, be a church pianist for seven years, and write the music for my own wedding. I have a wife and four kids, all of whom enjoy music. Playing the piano for over a quarter century, I love to teach and infect other people with a love for music that gives all the glory to God.



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Ruth Wagley – Program Director

BS University of Wisconsin-Madison Dietetics and Management

I have enjoyed the privilege of directing the NWCS Homeschool Program for 7 years. My husband Doug and I came to Spokane to serve New Vision Lutheran Church in 1994, a conservative, evangelical fellowship dedicated to serving God's most vulnerable people in the Hillyard and Chief Gary communities. We homeschooled our five daughters, while ministering as a family, preschool-8th grade and each engaged a unique high school education that included homeschooling, public education, and community college experiences. I love encouraging homeschool families and supporting their needs as parents and students navigate God's best plan for Christian education together. I enjoyed many years in the independent homeschool cooperative community in Spokane and taught the Homeschool Qualifying Course for several years. This year my life verse is: John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.



Deanna Stewart – Administrative Assistant and Registrar

BS-Business and Marketing, Eastern Washington University

Deanna Stewart, our registrar and administrative assistant, and her husband Don exemplify the multiple ways families use the Homeschool program. After working 7 years in fundraising in all the public and private schools in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho, God laid it on the Stewart's hearts to homeschool if ever given the opportunity. 9 years later after adopting 2 children, God granted them that desire. Deanna shares, "Homeschooling for 15 years has blessed and humbled our family. I find it a great honor to help families in their homeschooling endeavors with the support of NWCS." The Stewarts have 2 adult children and one 8th grader. One of her favorite verses this year is Psalm 116:1-2 I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy. Because he inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call on Him as long as I live.



Madison McRae – Admin PreK - 1/2

I was born in Spokane and spent most of my childhood here. When I was young, my parents served as missionaries in St. Petersburg, Russia, where our family lived for two years. My parents homeschooled me and my younger siblings, and gave me a solid, faith-based education that I will always be grateful for. I've had the opportunity to support children's education by tutoring preschoolers and taking an active role in supporting my siblings' home-education. I've also worked with elementary students leading reading groups as a Literacy Associate at the Boys and Girls Club, and more recently have been working as an Assistant Teacher at the YMCA Children's Center. In 2016 I married my amazing husband and moved to British Columbia where he is from. We have one daughter, Zoia, who will be two this fall. From B.C. I have been working towards my B.A. in Elementary Education from WGU and am excited to start student teaching next year! With siblings who attend Northwest Christian I have been so blessed to be a part of the broader community and am more than excited to be directly involved this year!