



NWCS
HOMESCHOOL
CELEBRATING 18 YEARS

NWCS Homeschool Extension Program Staff



Preschool - Madison McRae

I was born in Spokane and spent most of my childhood here. When I was young, my parents served as missionaries in Russia and church planters, while homeschooling me and my younger siblings. Seeing the power and impact of Christian education first-hand has given me both a passion for it, and a deep respect for the sacrifice and commitment it often takes. I've had the great joy of being involved in education through being an assistant teacher, tutoring, and taking an active role in my siblings' home-education. In 2016 I married my amazing husband and moved to his native British Columbia. We are so excited to be back in Spokane now with our daughter, Zoia (4). This spring I will graduate with my B.A. in Education from Western Governors University and am so excited to be returning to the Homeschool PreK program as the lead teacher! Through joining the Homeschool team last year and supporting my siblings who now attend Northwest Christian, I have been so blessed to be a part of this community.



Preschool Assistant – Abby DeVries

I have been a stay at home mom for the past 9 years. My husband Peter and I have three children Nora (10) Stella (8) and Caleb (6). As a family we love camping, hiking and hobby farming. My desire is to raise my children in a home that serves the Lord and to bring them up to have complete faith in Him and have a firm foundation to stand on when they leave home. I have been to India on mission twice. My last trip in 2019 I was honored to teach a non English speaking children's class at a pastor's conference. Here the Lord showed me the compassion and love I had for teaching young kids. Through an abundance of prayer in the last year God has led me to this job and homeschooling my three children full time these last two years. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve Him and come along side of Mrs. McRae in teaching your preschool children.



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. After graduation, I decided to move to Memphis, Tennessee with my best friend. At the time I didn't understand why God lead me to make this decision but it was the best decision I could have made and he blessed me in so many ways on my journey. I have always loved working with children and have done so my whole life, from volunteering with the Muscular Dystrophy Association for over 8 years, 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 for over 2 years. This is also 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 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 bittersweet for me to make the decision to leave my job and stay home with my kids. I felt God called me to stay home with my kids and homeschool (something I never thought I would do). 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 so many doors and allowed us to move up here. This year, I will be homeschooling my, soon to be 7th grader, 3rd grader and 1st grader. In my free time I love to exercise, read and spend time with my family. This will be my fifth year teaching in the program



and my 7th 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 – Juli White

I grew up in Spokane and graduated from Eastern Washington University with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. My husband and I met in the EWU college ministry at our church and got married in 2005. After graduating from college, I subbed in Mead and Spokane Schools, and went on to teach for a short time as a 1st grade teacher and then a Library specialist. I then taught Elementary music and directed the school choir until I decided to stay home after the birth of my daughter. We now have three girls, ages 6, 9 and 11. While staying home with my girls, I have kept busy serving at church. I have taught Sunday School, directed both the adult and children's choirs, led music for Vacation Bible in the summer, and sang in the Worship ministry.

My family loves the outdoors: we love to go camping and travel, and we also love to swim, go for walks, and run around in the backyard. Some of my hobbies include reading, baking, gardening, and having coffee with a friend. I am so excited to be back in the classroom in such an amazing program. I'm thankful for the opportunity God has provided for me to teach at the NWCS Homeschool program for my 2nd year!



Grades 2/3 – Sara Jones

I was born in Montana, but moved to Yakima, WA when I was eight years old. I spent the rest of my childhood there with my parents and three sisters. 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 (17), Nathan (15), Dane (13), and Johanna (11). Greg and I have been happily married for twenty-one years.

We are beginning our eleventh year as a homeschooling family and our fifth year in the NWC Homeschool Program. I have been teaching our children at home, teaching and leading children in our church's kids ministry for four years, and am excited to be back as the 2/3 teacher. 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 parents, 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 back and looking forward to what 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 dual degrees in Elementary Education and 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 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, 26, are twins adopted from Russia at the age of 7, in 2002. Tanner, 19, a graduate from NWC. Chloe is 17 and a senior year there. Our kids have been in public, private, and homeschool, and



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I have taught in all three as well. Our homeschooling years were my favorite. This is my sixth year with the Homeschool program and I am absolutely delighted to be returning.



Grades 4/5 - Stephanie Van Ornum

I grew up in Puyallup, WA and then moved to Spokane my freshman year of high school. I went to Whitworth College and received a bachelor's degree in religion and a certification for ministry. I went to Whitworth to get a BA in elementary education and took many education classes my first two years. However, God had a different plan as He prepared me for ministry with children in the church, instead of the classroom. Out of college I worked for 7 years as a children's ministry director. I loved teaching children the Word of God and equipping teachers to share their faith. I met my husband Adam at Whitworth and we have been married for 16 years. We have two sons, Aidan who is 13, and Nathan who is 10. Once my second son was born, I became a stay-at-home mom. My husband was homeschooled K-8th grade and asked me if I would consider it for our children. I immediately fell in love with homeschooling. Being with my boys and learning and exploring together has been one of the greatest joys of my life. We were a part of a co-op for many years where I taught Apologia science, writing, history, and other fun classes. I love teaching and nurturing children and see this as my life's work. I enjoy reading, long walks, camping, one-on-one time with loved ones, paddle boarding, and time with my family at our property near Sacheen Lake. I am thrilled to get to partner with parents to enrich their children's lives at NWC homeschool.



Grades 5/6 - Nicole Wagner

I grew up in Enumclaw, WA and realized my love of teaching at a young age. I taught swim lessons through my high school years and becoming an educator seemed like an obvious next step. I attended Whitworth University and received my Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and my Teaching Certificate in 2004. After earning my undergraduate degree, I was employed as a substitute teacher for the Spokane School District and enrolled in Whitworth's Master in Education program. In 2006, I graduated with my master's degree. Earlier that same year I married my high school sweetheart. He graduated from Gonzaga and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Army. We were stationed at Fort Hood, Texas shortly after we graduated. I taught 5th grade for two years and loved the experience. After two years in TX, we were transferred to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. While stationed there, we began having our own kids. At that stage in life, I decided that being a stay-at-home mom was what I desired. In 2013, my husband's military orders took him to the Corps of Engineers Seattle District Headquarters. We happily moved back near family in Western Washington. We had two more girls. I began working very part time coaching the Girls High School Swim Team at my alma mater. In 2016, we decided that leaving Active Duty and becoming a Reservist was in the best interest for our family. We knew we wanted to raise our four girls in Spokane. God opened door after door to get us here. During our last four years in Nine Mile Falls, I have mostly been a stay-at-home mom. For the last two years I have had a very small job teaching advanced math to 4th and 5th graders at Nine Mile Falls Elementary. We regularly attend and are actively involved in First Free Methodist Church. Our four girls ages 11, 9, 6 and 4 will be attending the NWC Homeschool program this year. This is our second year homeschooling. I am extremely excited to see all God has in store for this coming year.



Elementary and HS 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 we started having kids, my husband took a teaching job in 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 (23 and married, 20 and married, 18, 8, and 6). I have so enjoyed teaching in the homeschool program these last 4 years. I love showing your kiddos the glory of God in the study of language and culture. Christian education has played a huge role in my life and I am excited to continue to share with the next generation the wonders of God's world, expanding their horizons and deepening their Biblical worldview.



Secondary Math - Laura Bula

I grew up in Spokane, WA, and graduated from Mt. Spokane High School in 2001, where I also earned my AA degree through the Running Start program. I then attended Pensacola Christian College and graduated 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 15 years of math teaching experience. I began my teaching career at Rainier Christian Schools in Auburn, Washington in 2004, and taught high school level math for 4 years. In 2008 I moved back to Spokane and took a job at Northwest Christian Schools teaching high school math full time for the next 6 years. In July of 2014 I had twin boys and took the following school year off to stay home with them. Then in 2015 I joined the Northwest Christian Homeschool Program and am beginning my 7th year in the program this year. My husband James and I have 3 boys, twins, Austin and Caleb who are 7, and Isaac who is 4. My twins are starting 1st grade this year at Northwest Christian's full-time campus, and my 3-year-old will be in the homeschool pre-school. My husband James is a supervisor at Costco in the Valley and has worked there for over 11 years now. We love camping, hiking, kayaking, being outside, and exploring new places.



JH History, Top 20 Skills, Technology, ASB, and Academic Coach – Sarah Hilsen

BA Sociology and Literature, BAE Secondary English Education Minor: History, Eastern Washington University

Washington State Certified Teacher – English and History Endorsements

I am passionate about education to raise up lifelong followers of Jesus. I have been called to help students recognize their God-given potential in academics, lead with their godliness in lifestyle, devotion to the Word of God, and prayer. With Homeschool this year, I am excited to be part of the pilot program Academic Coaching for additional support for secondary students. I spent the summer in research mode, which was hard with all the libraries closed, with information on what qualities our staff can provide for students, families, and each other. I became a Washington State



OSPI Mentor on my road of discovery to best equip this endeavor! The classes I taught last year brought so much joy and I am blessed to teach again this year!

Summer brought the Hilsen family tighter than ever. My husband Matt and my two girls at home, Lexi 17 and Ava 13, stuck out 2020 with me and all are proud to announce that we made it! The dog however refuses to go for another walk. ME?!: My favorite character is Baby Yoda, my favorite book(s) The Lord of the Rings epic, Goalcast videos make me tear up, my favorite drink is Cinnamon Stick tea, and I sometimes snort when something is really funny.



Secondary Literature, Dual Credit English, and Newspaper - 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 eight years old and my daughter, Paige, is five years old. God has opened many doors for me to begin teaching at NWCS Homeschool three years ago and I'm thrilled to be stepping back into the classroom to interact with your children weekly!



High School Science, Dual Credit Science, Health, and Senior Leadership - Courtney Manuel

I grew up in here in Colbert on 30 acres to explore and run wild. I participated in every sports season available since 4th grade up until my senior year at Mead High School. I didn't grow up in the church, but God called me to Himself as a sophomore/junior in high school. I was very involved in Young Life and my youth group. It was in those relationships I learned of the value of Christian education. I attended Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma WA and received both a BSPE pre-physical therapy and 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 and teach at a church co-op for preschool through junior high kids. I also taught at Mead's homeschool program for a year and started up their secondary science program. I am currently homeschooling my 3 school age children and chasing my almost 3 year old. 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!



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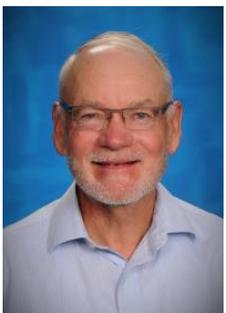
High School Biology - Charissa Phillips

I was born in Saskatchewan Canada, a pastor's kid. I grew up in the public school system, and being reserved and alone a lot in my faith in Christ, I did well academically, but was lonely. It wasn't until I left the public school system and entered full time into the Running Start program at age 16 that God gave me confidence in who He'd made me to be. I was able to win Grandview's Jr. Miss, and the next year received my high school diploma and 2-year Associate of Science Degree from Yakima Valley Community College in the same month. From there I finished a four-year degree at Seattle Pacific University, majoring in Communications with an emphasis on Pre-Med, and minored in Biology. I worked at Seattle Biomedical Research Institute in the lab, as well as for American Medical Response as an Emergency Medical Technician in Seattle. In my desire to be a wife and mom and not have the competition of a career, I forewent medical and nursing school and decided to work at Providence Alaska Children's Hospital for almost 5 years as a nurse tech. I loved it, and married my husband Bryan, an engineer, in Anchorage, Alaska. When we began having children, I became full time Mom and Home Educator. Married almost 17 years, we have 8 children, ages 6 to 15, whom I've homeschooled for 12 years. This is our fourth year in the program. I have also enjoyed leading Bible studies for the past 25 years, and love sharing Jesus with kids as a Sunday school teacher. I also love our three Havanese dogs, hiking and the outdoors, reading and conversations over coffee. I have always loved science, especially Biology. We love this homeschool program, the people and it's Christ-centeredness. It is an honor and wonderful adventure to share my passion for God and His incredible designs with your awesome kids.



Junior High Science, Top 20 Skills, and Academic Support - 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 fourteen years and have moved six different times to four different states. We have three children: Alayna age 6, Nolan age 4 and Zachariah age 1. In my free time I enjoy spending time with my husband and kids, 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.



High School History and Bible - Jack Hancock

God called me to be a teacher for His Glory over 36 years ago. My professional journey started in the public school system, however I quickly gained a teaching position at a small Christian school in Edwall, Washington. The freedom to use God's Word and to integrate the Bible with the history curriculum excited me to the extent that I never returned to the public school system. After six years of teaching in Edwall, I was employed to teach history and Bible at Northwest Christian Schools (NWCS) in 1993. During these initial years, God invested in me by challenging me to be an elder in a new church plant in Spokane while teaching middle school at NWCS. The combination of serving as an elder and in a Christian School empowered me to grow in my ability to effectively integrate the Word of God with any historical curriculum assigned to me. Additionally, I earned a



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Masters Degree in History to help stimulate me as a true historian. Next the Lord intervened through circumstances as I served in administration at NWCS for 22 years, while adding a Doctorate in Educational Leadership. And most importantly, God by His incredible Grace gave me a life partner Carol who encourages me every day in all that I do as I attempt to love the Lord with my heart, soul, mind and strength.



K-12th Physical Education – Tara Gelhausen

I am the oldest of eleven children in a homeschool family, and I had lots of practice teaching a variety of ages and personalities in my younger siblings. I grew up in Spokane, attended Chester elementary (public school) until fifth grade, was homeschooled from sixth grade through my sophomore year of high school, then completed AA in Liberal Arts through the Running Start program. I met my husband, Wade, at our church. We have been married for 12 years and have two girls, Nora and Elise. I was blessed to stay home with them when they were tiny and have been homeschooling since Nora was 5. We joined a homeschool cooperative where I taught classes for four years. We continue to be involved in our church and I facilitate the nursery and help run VBS each summer (except 2020). 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. I love getting out in nature to observe birds, flowers, and especially geology. I also enjoy cooking, coffee, reading aloud, audiobooks, and podcasts. Wade and I have Gonzaga men's basketball season tickets and love to attend games, but there are no games in 2020. This will be my third year on staff at the homeschool program as it is superbly rewarding. I love coaching the students through learning skills and playing games. I am blessed and grateful to be the Physical Education teacher at the homeschool program. God has blessed me beyond what I deserve. My goal to share God's love and grace with students each week.



Secondary Art – Katie Kohlstedt

I moved to the Spokane area as a young adult after growing up in Northern California. It was here that I met and gave my heart to Jesus Christ, my precious Savior and Lord - He utterly changed the course of my life. My heart's desire is to bring glory to God in every area of my life and to be found faithful in what He has called me to. My husband Ray & I have 5 children – 4 daughters and 1 son. We were led to homeschool them in the early years, were in public school in the middle years, and then felt led again to finish homeschooling my youngest 3 girls. I found a real love for teaching when my kids were at home, and I also taught Sunday School and kid's choir at our former church. Teaching is what truly brings me joy and is my happy place! Whether teaching art to little kiddos, working on a school newspaper with middle schoolers, or leading teens & women in beginning sewing classes, my life is full! I serve in my church in both women's & children's ministries and have led a small group ladies Bible study the past few years. My family is the center of my life – including the blessing of 3 grandchildren! My life verses are found in Psalm 30: "He has turned my mourning into dancing, taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness. I will sing praise to You now and forever!"



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Elementary Art – 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 (10), Selah (6) and Benaiah (5). The two older kids go to the full time school and Benaiah will be in our preK program again this year. Art has always been a passion of mine and I am so blessed that God has allowed me to teach in the homeschool program.



Elementary 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 five 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.



Ruth Wagley – Program Director

BS-University of Wisconsin-Madison Dietetics and Management

I have enjoyed the privilege of directing the NWCS Homeschool Program for 11 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, Chief Gary and Shadle 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: 1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen Jesus, you love Him, and even though you do not see Him now, you believed in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.



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Deanna Stewart – Registrar

BS-Business and Marketing, Eastern Washington University

Deanna Stewart, our registrar, 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 10th 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.



Kara LaVoie - Administrative Assistant

I'm Kara. I've been married for 26 years and have five incredible kids! I've been a homeschooling Mom for 20+ years. Throughout our homeschooling journey, we have witnessed God's faithfulness as we sought (and continue to seek) to provide the best educational opportunities for our children; each with their own unique needs and giftings. I have worked with homeschooling families in multiple capacities over the years, most recently at Deer Park Home Link. I enjoy researching, organizing, encouraging, reading, writing, and people watching. I look forward to working with the Homeschool Program at Northwest Christian School.