



**NWCS**  
HOMESCHOOL

## NWCS Homeschool Program Staff



### **Laura Bula - Secondary Math, and Dual Credit Math**

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 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. In May of 2022 I was approved to be an adjunct professor for Northwest Nazarene University to teach college level mathematics in the high school classroom. I have 17 years of secondary math teaching experience, the first 4 of which were full time at a private school in the Seattle area, the next 6 were full time at NWCS, and the past 7 years have been here at the NWCS Homeschool Program. My husband James and I have 3 boys. Twins, Austin and Caleb, who are 9, and Isaac who is 6. The twins will be in 3rd grade at Northwest Christian's full-time Colbert campus, and Isaac will be starting kindergarten there this year as well. My husband James is a supervisor at Costco, in Spokane Valley, and has worked there for over 15 years. We love camping, hiking, kayaking, being outside, being together, and exploring new places. Summer is our favorite time of year!



### **Molly Davis -Kindergarten**

I grew up in Eagle Creek, OR (outside Portland) and was homeschooled through Junior High. I attended Portland Christian High School, where my dad taught Bible, and graduated in 2001. After High School, I earned my AA from Clackamas Community College and my BS in Early Childhood/Elementary Education from Western Oregon University in 2006, with a minor in Spanish. Growing up, I spent many summers volunteering and on staff at Eagle Fern Camp, which is where I started working with kids and realized how much I loved it! It's also where I met my husband! We were married in 2007 and moved to Pullman, WA where I taught primarily as a preschool and kindergarten teacher. I also taught high school Spanish and Elementary PE (and discovered I really preferred teaching the younger crowd). When our oldest son was born, we decided I would stay home to be with him. Two years later, we moved to California (where we were for 7 years) and decided that homeschooling was the best option for our family. We haven't looked back since, and I have enjoyed being a part of their learning and growth academically and spiritually! We moved to Spokane in 2019 and love being back in the Northwest again. We have 4 children (3 boys and a girl) ages 13, 11, 9 and 7, all of whom attend the NWCS Homeschool program. I am excited to get back into teaching in a classroom setting this year and look forward to getting to know all of you and your children!



**Abby DeVries - Preschool**

I have been a stay at home mom for 11 years now. My husband Peter and I have three children Nora (12) Stella (10) and Caleb (8). As a family we love spending time out on our boat together fishing, camping, hiking, and gardening. Our hope is to raise our children in a home that serves the Lord and teaches our children the importance of their own faith in which we can nurture and strengthen while they're at home so that they have a firm foundation as they grow into adulthood. I have been to India twice on mission. My last trip was in 2019 where I taught a non-English speaking children's class at a pastor's conference. I was so blessed by that trip as God revealed to me my love for teaching children. I have enjoyed serving Northwest Christian for the last few years in the preschool program. Here I have been able to recognize my strength in teaching children about Jesus and the world around us that God has created and it brings me great joy!



**Brenda Dillon - Grades 1/2**

I grew up in Spokane bouncing back and forth between private schools, public schools, and homeschooling. This gave me the freedom to think outside the box regarding my own education and my children's education. In 2007, I graduated from Eastern Washington University with a bachelor of secondary education in English. My first job out of college was teaching high school and middle school English, Bible, and journalism at Northwest Christian Schools. I loved the four years I taught at NWCS. Then I had the opportunity to stay home with my first child. I now have four children and have been homeschooling for seven years. I have also had the opportunity to work with children of all ages as a teacher at my church's Sunday school program, a preschool leader at Bible Study Fellowship, and on the board of an American Heritage Girl's Troop. I love working with children of every age and am passionate about the positive experience homeschooling can be for so many families.



**Rachel Dornquast - Grades 2/3**

Hello! I'm Rachel! I grew up in Sammamish, Washington. I grew up having a strong foundation in Christ and it truly became my own the summer after my freshman year of high school. After graduating high school, I attended Washington State University (Go Cougs!). While at Washington State I met my amazing husband, Tyler! I graduated college in 2010 and moved to Spokane. My husband and I got married in 2011. We have 3 amazing children who are all homeschooled (Carter, Lucas and Jocelyn)! On top of homeschooling our 3 children I have a flourishing photography business. My family and I live on 20 acres in Colbert, WA. It's amazing how The Lord guides us to exactly where He wants us when we let Him lead our life! My hobbies include photography (both for my business and personally), remodels and house projects (which my husband and I do together), being outside, playing cards, spending time with family and friends, coffee dates, gymnastics, snow skiing, my 2 dogs, my flock of around 20 chickens, and the occasional road trip when time permits! I am blessed to teach in the NWC Homeschool Program and love being a part of an amazing community that loves Jesus!



**Jennifer Edwards - Kindergarten**

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. At the time I did not understand why God lead me to make this decision, but it was the best decision I could have made. He blessed me in so many ways on my journey and during my time in Memphis. 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 a residential treatment setting in Memphis for over 2 years. This is also where I met my husband, Jeff. After my time in residential treatment, I felt God calling me to something different. I had the amazing opportunity to teach at a Private Christian Academy in Memphis. I taught both Kindergarten and Pre-K 4. I had the privilege to teach for 6 years and absolutely loved every minute of it. 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 two young girls, but I felt that God had called me to stay home and homeschool my kids (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 along the way and we have really loved being in Spokane. This year, I will be homeschooling my 9th grader, 5th grader and 3rd grader. In my free time I love to serve in the Children's ministry at church, hike, read, and spend time with my family. This will be my seventh-year teaching in the program and my 9<sup>th</sup> 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!



**Tara Gelhausen - Elementary Physical Education**

As the oldest of eleven children in a homeschool family, I have had lots of practice teaching a variety of ages and personalities. I grew up in Spokane, attended public school through fifth grade, homeschooled from sixth grade through tenth grade, then completed AA in Liberal Arts through the Running Start program. I met my husband, Wade, at our church. We have been married for 14 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 five. We joined a homeschool cooperative where I taught classes for four years. Our family has participated in a wide range of sports: softball, baseball, basketball, gymnastics, tennis, and swimming, along with yoga, hiking, biking, ballet, strength training, and indoor rock climbing. An average week will find me listening to audiobooks, cheering my husband as plays softball, taking my daughter to gymnastics, working out, baking sourdough bread, and helping with youth at my church.

My daughter Elise is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader in the NWC homeschool program. Nora is a 8<sup>th</sup> grader in Odyssey. This is my fifth year teaching Physical Education at the homeschool program as it is superbly rewarding. I love coaching students through learning skills and playing games. God has blessed me beyond what I deserve. My goal to share God's love, grace, and truth with students each week.



**Sharalyn Goodman – Elementary Music**

I was a missionary kid in the jungles of Peru and was homeschooled with my two brothers out of pure necessity, until a small missionary kid school (similar to a co-op) opened up. When I was sixteen, we moved to the States for my dad to teach at Moody Aviation, I finished up high school and God provided an amazing piano teacher who set me up for success in college. I attended and graduated from Bryan College with a degree in Piano Pedagogy and a minor in Bible. While there and since then, I have had many opportunities to sing and travel with a choir, minister in church music and leadership, and grow my abilities to teach music in children's choir and private piano instruction, all to the glory of God. While at Bryan, I met and married my amazing husband, Drew. Fifteen years later, four kids (Aiden, Cora, Evie and Lainey) and a couple international moves, we find ourselves in Spokane, WA, and loving life as a homeschooling family. We love to garden, camp, hike, eat good Peruvian food, terrorize our cats and sing around the piano. When I was young, I said I wanted to be a mom and a music teacher, I guess you could say I'm living my dream, and I'm ecstatic to be a part of this community of amazing people doing it with me!



**Karolyn Graham – Elementary Music**

I am a missionary kid from Africa. I was born in Zambia and moved to Kenya where I graduated from high school at Rift Valley Academy. I then attended Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI and graduated with a BA in English. My parents moved to Pasadena when they returned to the U.S., so after college I moved there and taught 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade from 1997-2000. I met my husband, John in Pasadena (also a missionary kid- from Papua New Guinea) and once married, we moved to Boise, ID where my two kids Esther and Benjamin were born. I home-schooled them for their first five years of school; Esther graduated from NWC in 2021 and Benjamin graduated from NWC in 2023. I substitute taught in the Riverside School district for several years and I continue to substitute at NWC (K-12) in addition to teaching piano lessons. I love teaching and enjoy playing with the worship team at church. I also have served in AWANA as a SPARKS director and have been involved in VBS many years. My family and I love the outdoors...camping, backpacking, hiking and biking. We live on several beautiful acres with goats and chickens. I am excited to be continuing this year with this team and look forward to all that God has in store for our music program.



**Jack Hancock - High School History, PE, and Bible**

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 Master's 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.



**Irene Huseland – Kindergarten PE & Art**

I was born in the north of England while my parents were church planting. We moved to the U.S. when I was young and lived in Montana for a few months. We then moved here to Spokane in 2007 where my dad started teaching at NWCS. I attended Northwest from kindergarten through my sophomore year. At that time I started attending the homeschool and graduated from the program in 2021. My senior year I taught an elementary Spanish class with a classmate, due to class size. Last year I took over right after Christmas teaching two Spanish classes and assisting in music. I was active in Northwest Christian's theatre and

choir programs all throughout middle school and high school. I love all different kinds of arts! I'm excited for our journey this school year!



**Jennifer Huseland – Secondary & Dual Credit Spanish**

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 an emphasis in language arts and 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, 2 sons-in-law and a grandkid! I have so enjoyed teaching in the homeschool program these last 6 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.



**Diana Ithomitis – Financial Administrative Assistant**

Diana is married, from Spokane and has been a part of the NWCS community for 3 years. She and her husband have two daughters attending Colbert Campus. Diana says, "I love being a mom, and also am blessed to run a small wedding planning business."

Diana holds an undergraduate degree from Whitworth University and a Master's of Administration in Organizational Leadership from Gonzaga University. She is efficiency minded, driven to a high level of success, and detail oriented. After working in various capacities at the Colbert Lower Campus, Diana has joined the Homeschool Program to contribute to the amazing team of administrative professionals at NWCS Homeschool. Diana's goal is to add value to the Homeschool team and glorify God with grace! Her life verse is Romans 12:12 "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer."



**Sara Jones - Grades 2/3**

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 and later to Spokane Valley. I worked as a labor and delivery nurse and a school nurse but gave up my paid employment to be a stay-at-home mom after the birth of our daughter. We have four children, Aubrey, Nathan, Dane, and Johanna. Greg and I have been happily married for twenty-three years. We are beginning our 13th year as a homeschooling family and our 7<sup>th</sup> year in the NWC Homeschool Program. I have been teaching our children at home, teaching and leading children in our church's kids ministry, and am excited to be back for my 5th year as a 2/3 teacher. I recently received my master's degree in Elementary Education! 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!



**Rebecca Lamb - Elementary Art**

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 (11), Selah (7) and Benaiah (6) who all attend the traditional NWC. 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.



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

I grew up here in Colbert on 30 acres to explore and run wild. I participated in every sports season available from 4<sup>th</sup> grade up until my senior year at Mead High School. I did not 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 for over 15 years in many settings and many subjects. I am passionate about most everything and love to share that with my students. The goal is to see God and His character in everything I teach as a means of sharing the gospel to each student. I am currently homeschooling my 3 school age children and preschooler. I have a passion for science; the discovery, the problem solving, and love 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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**Madison McRae - Kindergarten**

I was born in Spokane and spent most of my childhood here. When I was young, my parents served as missionaries in Russia and were later church planters, all the while homeschooling me and my seven younger siblings. Experiencing first-hand the power and impact of a Christian education has given me both a passion for it, and a deep respect for the sacrifice and commitment it often takes! In 2016 I married my amazing husband and moved to his native British Columbia. We are blessed to be living in Spokane now with our daughter, Zoia (5, attending NWC Kindergarten this year) and son Darian (2). I graduated with my B.A. in Elementary Education from Western Governors University and am so excited to be returning for my 5th year at the Homeschool program! I have had the great privilege of teaching Preschool, Kindergarten, and most recently as a reading specialist with the Cedar Literacy Center. I am thrilled to be teaching First Grade this year! Both in my personal and professional life, I have been so blessed to be a part of this community.



**Christy Noller - Grades 3/4**

Growing up in Upstate New York I always knew I wanted to be a teacher. After graduating from Philadelphia College of Bible (now Cairn University) with a B.S. both in Elementary Education and Bible, I taught third grade at Dayton Christian School, Ohio for three years. My husband and I met and were married there in 1997 while I was teaching, and two classes of my 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students sang at our wedding! We moved to Spokane in 1999 and built our home in 2000 while I substitute-taught in public schools all around Spokane County. Kendal and I celebrated our 25th anniversary last year! We have four kids. Twins Alex and Katie (28) were adopted from Russia in 2002, at the age of 7. Tanner (21) travels the world for photography and videography, and Chloe (19) is a sophomore at Hillsdale College. Both Tanner & Chloe graduated from NWC. Our kids have done it all: public school, homeschool and Christian school! Our homeschooling years were my favorite. Besides teaching with the Homeschool Program, I also teach group fitness classes and private piano lessons, and manage our two Airbnb's, all things I love to do! This is my eighth year with the Homeschool program and I am thrilled to be returning.



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**Charissa Phillips - High School Biology, Junior High Science, Secondary PE**

I was born a pastor's kid in Canada, then moved to California, Oregon and Washington. During high school, 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 through Running Start. I also ran in Track and Field and played Volleyball 5 years. 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 won the dorm award for 'Most Athletic Female' 2 years in a row, participated in most intramural sports offered, and worked as both Senator and Vice President of my dorm. I worked as a lab assistant at Seattle Biomedical Research Institute, 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. We began having children, and I became a full-time Mom and Home Educator. Married almost 19 years, we have 8 children, ages 8 to 17, whom I have homeschooled for 13 years. This is our sixth year in the program. I have also enjoyed leading/teaching Bible studies for the past 27 years, and love sharing Jesus with kids as a Sunday school teacher. I love our three Havanese dogs, hiking, and the outdoors, reading and conversations over coffee. 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, His creation and being active with your awesome kids.



**Sarah Pounder - Preschool**

Originally from Philadelphia, I graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with dual certification in Elementary and Early Childhood Education. After years of working for local public-school districts, underprivileged and at-risk youth programs, and private Christian schools, I decided to join Wycliffe Bible Translators. Serving in Papua, Indonesia as a teacher of missionary kids at Hillcrest International School was a life-changing experience. Having lived a mostly sheltered life, I was able to experience a third world country and see the impact of the gospel on those hearing it in their heart-language for the first time. In Papua, during a short, three-week visit of mutual friends, is where I met my husband Luke. Since moving to Spokane, I have taught first grade for Spokane Public Schools, and have earned a Master's Degree from Walden University. I have been married for nine years and am blessed with two daughters and a son. This journey of becoming a parent has opened new opportunities for professional and spiritual growth and I am excited to see what God has planned as I continue growing with our Homeschool Team.



**Alisa Spine -Secondary Art**

Mrs. Spine received her Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Fine Arts from St. Petersburg Academy of Arts in Russia with a major in Visual Arts. She was a professor of Drawing and Painting, as well as a member of the Acceptance Committee for the entrance exams at St. Petersburg State University. She taught there for 11 years, then moved to America in 2016. She also ran her own art school which catered to students of different ages. She is a member of the Union of Artists in Russia and has taken part in city-wide, country-wide, and international art exhibitions.





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She loves her family, her profession, and is very grateful for the many blessings and opportunities that have been given to her in her life. She lives with her husband, Charles, and their son, Nikolai, in Spokane, Washington. She likes different sports activities, especially out in nature: cycling, camping, hiking, and kayaking. The gorgeous nature of Greater Spokane is such an inspiration



**Deanna (Deena) 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 been married for 25 years and have 2 adult children and one 12th 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.



**Jena Tinklenberg - Academic Support**

was born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska and went to college in Iowa where I received my Bachelor of Social Work. There I also met my husband Michael while running cross country. We moved around for the next three years while my husband continued his education. In that time, I had the opportunity to work as an educational assistant with middle school special education students. I absolutely loved that job and felt God was calling me to pursue teaching. Since moving to Spokane in 2011, I received my Teaching Certificate and a Masters in Elementary Education through Whitworth University with a focus in special education and an endorsement in special education through Pacific Lutheran University. I have worked as an Autism paraeducator for the West Valley School District and a Behavior Intervention Teacher for Central Valley School District. My husband and I have been married for 16 years. We have four children ages 8, 6, 3, and 10 months. Once we started having kids, I knew I wanted to be home with them. It has been an amazing adventure watching them grow in so many ways and am excited to be homeschooling my two school aged children and preschooler again this year. In my free time I enjoy spending time with my husband and kids, watching and participating in almost every sport, being outside, boating, and reading. This is my eighth year with the NWCS Homeschool Program and am excited for what this year will bring.



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**Stephanie Van Ornum - Grades 4/5**

I grew up in Puyallup, WA and then moved to Spokane during 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 18 years. We have two sons, Aidan and Nathan. Once my second son was born, I became a stay-at-home mom. My husband was homeschooled K-8<sup>th</sup> grade and asked me if I would consider it for our children. I immediately fell in love with homeschooling. Being with my boys, 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 education at NWC homeschool.



**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-8<sup>th</sup> 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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**Nicole Wagner - Grades 5/6**

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's 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 to have our own family. In 2013, my husband's military orders took us back "home" to Washington. 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. We have lived in Nine Mile Falls for 6 years and regularly attend and are actively involved at First Free Methodist Church. I am extremely excited to see all God has in store for this coming year.



**Melinda Webb – Lobby Manager**

I grew up in Spokane until my senior year of high school, we then moved to the west side of the state and I attended Bates Technical School. I was a Certified Dental Assistant for 20 years until homeschooling our children. My husband and I have been married for 26 years and have four children (one through adoption) and two grandchildren. All of our children have attended Northwest Christian Homeschool Program and two of them have graduated from it. I have homeschooled for 15+ years and taught children all of my adult life in one way or another. The part I enjoy the most in my teaching/mother role is making a difference in a child's life. I look forward to teaching kindergarten art this year and being a substitute teacher.



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**Tamaryn Weber – Math Teacher**

As a college student I majored in Mathematics because I found it fun and easy. As I questioned what I wanted to invest in as a profession I discovered quickly how much joy I found in helping students. Both a tutoring experience as a Freshman in College, and a summer teaching English to High School students in Vietnam opened my eyes to how much I love helping students learn. Upon graduating from Azusa Pacific University I began my first official job as a math teacher at Gladstone High School. While Gladstone was a low-performing and high-migrant population, our administrative and new teacher support was incredible. Getting to help students who struggled incredibly with English, confidence in math, and with school in general was such a gift. I continued teaching in California and then in Texas until my husband and I began our family. Upon having kids I taught mathematics part-time at Heartlight - an in-house counseling facility - and then went on to work in Kids Ministry at our church in Texas and then in Spokane where we moved for my husband's job. After about 4 years in Spokane I began teaching the math courses at Moody Aviation. 5 years later I am so excited to teach math at NWCS Homeschool Co-op! As my career has transitioned with the needs of our family, being a life-long learner has always been a priority for my life and how I encourage my students.

I absolutely love my family. My husband - Jon - is a pilot and flight instructor. He currently works at Parkwater Aviation and keeps our family laughing and eye-rolling with his punny jokes. My son Esmund (14) is heading into his first year of high school at Gonzaga Prep and loves learning and sports. Our daughter Lina (12) is in middle school and enjoys spending her free time in ballet. Anja (10) is in her last year of elementary school, and loves playing outside whenever she can. Being able to invest in my kids when they are home has made me a better teacher, and being a teacher has helped me to be a better mom. I am so thankful for the journey I have walked in my family and work.



**Jennifer Werkheiser – ASB, Jr. High History, Jr. High Art**

My journey to teaching began after I graduated from college and served as a missionary in China for two years. My job while in China was as an English Teacher at a University and I fell in love with the profession. I came back to Washington to earn my Masters degree so that I could continue my career in teaching. After graduating from Whitworth, I encountered a severe shortage of jobs in the elementary field and so I took a job teaching middle school with the intention of transferring to elementary after a year or two in a district. While I would not have chosen that age group initially, I discovered God's plan for me that year as I fell in love with teaching that age group. I continued in the public realm for 13 years teaching primarily Language Arts and Social Studies. I married my husband Jonathan in 2015 and we have two children Jack and June. I knew I wanted to homeschool Jack after spending many years in the public school system, but really missed teaching older students. The Lord directed us to NWC in 2022 and I found a home with the staff and teachers there for both my children and myself.



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**Melodie Workman - Secondary Literature, Dual Credit English & Newspaper**

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 it 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 ten years old and my daughter, Paige, is seven years old. This year marks my 18<sup>th</sup> year teaching students from ages 12 to 40, and I love it as much now as I did the first day I stepped into the classroom. I'm honored to have a small part in each student's week, to introduce them to great literature, and to reinforce the line of truth that God has imprinted on each of our hearts through written word.



**April Young – Administrative Assistant**

I am proud to have been raised here in Spokane and continue to shine God's love into this community. I have a Big, Beautiful Blended and Blessed family with my husband Tim, and our 6 children. Tim is a High School teacher in the Public Sector and I have been in the Education, Admin and Support world for 15 years. In raising our 6 Children, I have been called to teach them each individually in many ways over their childhoods and life situations. I have home school, co-op, Montessori, Public, Hybrid and Private school experience behind me, and have been blessed in that my previous careers have enabled me to serve and love on my personal family, along with the families and students I have served. I believe that God's plan for each of us is divinely unique and that we are equipped with just the right skills to meet these families and students where they are, helping fulfill God's promise and vision for them and their lives. I am excited to be a part of the NWCS family and trust that I will get to continue my own personal growth and build meaningful, Christ centered relationships with others.

Outside of spending a lot of time with my family and our dogs (2 Great Danes and a French Bulldog), I enjoy creating and crafting. I also spend a lot of time with my church family and small groups and am always on the hunt for a good read or study.

This season in my life I am staying on "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:12