

Hello Naturalists and Parents!

We are thrilled to have the opportunity to share this incredible year with you at School in the Woods! Not only will we experience numerous learning adventures together, we will also focus on taking care of each other and the land around us. As naturalists, we will continue to ask questions, explore ideas and discover new elements of our natural world. Please allow us to introduce ourselves to you in the following paragraphs!

Mr. Wuerth (jon.wuerth@asd20.org)--I am the administrator of School in the Woods and responsible for coordinating many aspects of our unique educational program. Along with my co-founder, Carol Stansfield, we founded SITW in 1999. I had started in 20 in 1988 at High Plains Elementary. I hold a master's degree in teaching Integrated Natural Sciences from Colorado College and a master's degree in administrative leadership. I have created and taught numerous environmental and natural science programs for children at UCCS, District 20's Summer Enrichment Program, and Colorado College. I love running, camping, visiting national parks and other beautiful wild lands, and enjoy many outdoor recreation activities. I have a loving wife, Tammy, who is a SPED teacher at Woodmen Roberts, a 23 year old daughter, Kendra, who is a kindergarten teacher at Woodmen Roberts, second daughter, Jordan, a senior at Muhlenberg College in PA, and two dogs: Max-yellow lab and Anny-golden retriever. I am passionate about the natural world and feel strongly that children learn best through meaningful real-world experiences in a community-focused environment. A leading goal of our school's natural science and outdoor instruction is to assist our naturalists in becoming life-long learners who are committed to making a difference on our planet through their examples and advocacy.

Mrs. Powers (karla.powers@asd20.org)--I have been our school secretary/bookkeeper/registrar for the last 10 years. I was familiar with the school because my son, James, attended way back in 2002-03 and it changed his life. I have three adult children and one granddaughter (Camille) who is 5 1/2 months old. I went to school at UNC and CSU, graduating in three years with a BA in Philosophy. I played viola professionally with the Colorado Springs Symphony/Philharmonic for over 30 years and still substitute as an Information Specialist throughout the Pikes Peak Library District. Prior to my time at School in the Woods, I was a buyer and corporate librarian for Hewlett Packard BC (before kids). In my spare time, I love spending as much time as possible with my granddaughter, visiting my mom in La Junta, walking with friends, and completing crossword puzzles.

Ms. Frei (emilie.frei@asd20.org)--(pronounced "fry") I am beginning my third year as a part-time (morning) classroom teacher at SITW. I am a Colorado native who has lived my whole life all along the Front Range. My husband, Rob, is a biologist, who also shares my passion for the environment and we are very blessed to have three healthy, wonderful children; William -12, Elleena-10, and Olivia -8. I hold a Bachelors of Science in Chemical Engineering and a minor in Environmental Engineering from CSU. I worked as an Environmental Consultant for four years, and then decided to become a teacher and got my Masters in Education at Regis University. My two greatest passions in life are working with children and the environment and now I get to teach children in the most ideal environmental setting! I taught 4th& 5th grade for 10 years and P.E. for 5 and am so excited to be back to teaching in the regular classroom, especially at School in the Woods. When I'm not working I love to raft, hike, mountain bike, backpack, ski, and snowboard. Basically I enjoy most any physical activity, especially if it takes place outdoors. I also love reading, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. I am absolutely thrilled to get to know our 2019-2020 naturalists and their families!

Ms. Seidenberg (melissa.seidenberg@asd20.org)--I joined the School in the Woods staff in February 2017. I support our school as an Instructional Paraprofessional, assisting classroom education, and as a Building Clerk, helping manage the organizational and clerical needs of our school. I have a BA in Communication and Biomathematics, and have lived in Colorado for 14 years with my husband, Todd, and two children, Abi, now age 15, and Braeden, now 11. Both of my children were Naturalists at School in the Woods, and are presently students at Discovery Canyon Campus. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, running, hiking, traveling, learning new things, and volunteering as an EMT/Firefighter. I'm looking forward to getting to know the naturalists in this year's class and sharing in some great times during the coming year!

Ms. Teger (crystal.teger@asd20.org)--I am our Academic Support Teacher as well as our Talented and Gifted teacher. I work closely with the students and staff to help differentiate for the variety of learning needs of the School in the Woods naturalists. As a Colorado native, I grew up just north of here in Castle Rock (back when it was a much smaller town). I have been teaching for 19 years and hold a BA in Psychology from The University of Colorado in Boulder, a Masters in Science Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Colorado Denver, and am National Board Certified. With a passion for making sure all students have an opportunity to grow, I allow them to travel the path that is right for them. Outside of school, I love spending time with my husband Mike, and two children; Miles-11 and Parke-almost 9. I enjoy hiking, camping, skiing, and travel. Some of my favorite places to travel give me the ability to scuba dive all over the world.

Mr. Perry (patrick.perry@asd20.org)--I grew up in Colorado Springs and later attended Colorado State University where I majored in sociology. Upon graduation I continued my education at Colorado College where I earned my Masters in the Arts of Teaching and graduated in 2007. I was a 4th grade teacher for seven years here in Colorado and at the Embassy School of Athens, Greece. After that I went into Environmental Education by becoming the director of High Trails Outdoor Education Center for three years. However, my job as director left me missing the direct, daily interactions with students so I went back into the classroom at School in the Woods starting in the 2017-18 year. Most of my school holidays and summers are spent exploring national parks in the west and you might find me rock climbing at the gym before or after school. I also spend ample time on the rivers of the west, enjoying extensive raft camping trips. This past summer, I married my wife Cat in a magical Cheyenne Canyon celebration, surrounded by numerous family and friends. I'm thrilled to integrate the natural world into the SITW 4th grade curriculum and couldn't be more excited to share my love of the outdoors with our naturalists, and guide them to foster their own sense of wonder for the natural world.

Mr. Ulizio (chris.ulizio@asd20.org)--Hi! My name is Chris Ulizio, and I'm excited to join the SITW team for my first year here. I love the outdoors - on free time, I'm almost constantly outside observing and reflecting or walking, running, biking, climbing, and adventuring. I have lived in the Colorado Springs

area since 2010 and love the access to the outdoors here. My wife Sarah is also a 4th grade teacher, and we enjoy adventuring outdoors together, cooking and eating great meals, and debating about whose students are more awesome. I started teaching as a rock climbing instructor and continued with five years as a full-time outdoor educator at High Trails Outdoor Education Center. I entered professional teaching by earning a Masters in the Arts of Teaching from Colorado College and have been teaching 6th grade math at Mountain Ridge Middle School for the last three years. At SITW, I am dedicated to creating a culture of growth in the learning environment. Growing through making mistakes and developing emotional intelligence are two of the foremost goals in my instruction. I look forward to developing a love of nature, a growth mindset, and a sensitivity towards emotional skills with your students this year!

Ms. Selke (megan.selke@asd20.org)-- This year is my fourth year of teaching at School in the Woods and my 9th year in District 20! I spent my first five years teaching science through Eagleview Middle School's Academic Arts Academy. It is my upmost passion to share my love of the outdoors with my students, and to guide them in fostering their own awareness of and deep appreciation for the natural world. After spending my childhood in Michigan, I came to Colorado College to study biology. There I had numerous powerful learning experiences in the outdoors, including traveling to the Grand Canyon and the Patagonian region of Argentina. I have also spent time as a field instructor in Grand Teton National Park and returned to CC to complete my masters degree in teaching in 2011. My family now lives in Idaho and Montana, so I travel north often to see them. They live the true definition of coexistence in the natural world, as they ranch cattle in areas heavily populated by wolves and grizzly bears. They focus on sustainable land practices, low-stress cattle management, predator-prey relationships and the health of the ecosystem as a whole. This has been a constant reminder of how great of an impact we can be as humans on the landscape and how important it is to pass these holistic ideas and practices to the next generation. My husband and I welcomed our son, Nodin William, in July 2018 and I seized the opportunity to spend last fall at home, soaking up all of the experiences of being a new mom. Here in Colorado Springs, I enjoy hiking, running and cooking with my husband, son and our two dogs, Shasta and Minion. We also have a cat named Javi. I have also spent the last 8 years coaching cross country and track and field at Colorado College, but am taking a little break from that to spend time with Nodin. I can't wait to see where the year takes us together at SITW!