

**Heather Glowacki  
Principal**

As we begin the 2009 - 2010 school year, I am excited to once again be joining Romona School. I started my career in District 39 as a special education teacher at Highcrest. I worked with many students and families throughout those six years, working in both fifth and sixth grade. In the fall of 2001, I left the classroom and began to work as a special education coordinator. As a coordinator, I have worked at Wilmette Junior High School, Highcrest, Romona, Harper and Central. I enjoyed the opportunity to learn about each school within our district. In this position, I worked with special education teams, including families, to plan individualized educational programs for students with disabilities. I have also worked at Romona and Central in a dual role as an assistant principal and special education coordinator. During the last two school years, I have worked at Highcrest as the assistant principal. I feel very fortunate to have had so many wonderful experiences in District 39.

When I leave Wilmette each day, I go home to my family. Michael, our son, is four, and he keeps us on our toes. Alexandra joined our family in January of 2009, and we are enjoying all that a baby girl brings to a family. We are fortunate to have family living close by to help us with the kids. In addition to my family, I am in the process of completing my doctorate from the University of Illinois in Educational Administration. Although exams and coursework are completed, the long writing process has begun. I try and devote time each weekend and during holidays to chip away at the dissertation. I plan to have this degree completed in a few years.

**KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS**

**Ellie Brenner  
Teacher – Kindergarten**

Ms. Brenner has been teaching for nine years. This will be Ms. Brenner's sixth year teaching at Romona School. Ms. Brenner attended Indiana University and received a degree in Elementary Education with a Reading Education minor.

Her favorite thing to do is be with her baby girl, Lilly, who is the light of her life. She also likes cooking, shopping, decorating, scrap booking and making flower arrangements. In fact, she loves to make Diaper Cakes which are the newest rage. Ms. Brenner also enjoys reality TV and eating sushi. Ms. Brenner's favorite book is Elmer by David McKee and her favorite movie is *The Notebook*.

**Fran Engstrom**  
**Teacher – Kindergarten**

Mrs. Engstrom has been teaching for eleven years. This is her eighth year at Romona School. She received her B.A. in Early Childhood and Spanish from Bradley University. This fall, she will start a masters program to receive her masters in School Leadership.

Mrs. Engstrom enjoys being a Creative Memories Consultant and teaching others how to preserve pictures. She also loves to sing and enjoys karaoke. Mrs. Engstrom's favorite book is *Twilight* and *Dirty Dancing* is her favorite movie. Mrs. Engstrom also enjoys being a mom to her 2 beautiful daughters, Talia, born in April 2006 and Giana, born in January 2009. Mrs. Engstrom was born on the south side of Chicago and loves the Chicago White Sox. She loves attending games.

**Peggy Roberts**  
**Teacher – Kindergarten**

This is Mrs. Robert's sixth year here at Romona. She received her B.A. from Georgetown College and her M.A.T. from University of Louisville, both of which are located in Kentucky. She received her Early Childhood Certification from Trinity College in Washington D.C. She began teaching first grade 38 years ago, and has 22 years full-time experience.

Mrs. Roberts grew up on a farm in northern Kentucky. Her husband is the Senior Minister of Glenview Community Church, and they have three children. All of her children are now married. She also has a 19 year old stepson and an 3 ½ year old grandbaby. She loves being a grandmother! Mrs. Roberts sang at all of her children's weddings and her husband performed the ceremonies. Mrs. Roberts enjoys singing solos, playing hand-bells, performing and watching theatre, swimming and reading. She and her husband love to travel and have travelled extensively. They enjoyed being in China right before the Olympics started and enjoyed watching the Olympics especially the swimming. Mrs. Roberts' favorite children's books are Down, Down the Mountain and The Teddy bear and the Empty Pot. Her favorite movies are *Rudy* and *Sea Biscuit*.

## **FIRST GRADE TEACHERS**

### **Heather Cartwright Teacher – Grade 1**

This is Mrs. Cartwright's first year at Romona and her sixth year of teaching. She received a B.A. in Spanish Literature and Communication Studies from the University of Kansas. She completed her Master of Science in Education at Pittsburg State University while participating in the Kansas City Teaching Fellows program. She has taught first grade for four years and was a reading intervention specialist for one year.

Mrs. Cartwright enjoys reading, traveling, cooking, running, spending time with her family and exploring her new home in Chicago. She has been married for four years and has a 15-month-old little boy named Harrison. She grew up in Kansas City, MO and recently relocated to the Chicago area where her husband grew up.

### **Katie Courtois Teacher – Grade 1**

Miss Courtois has been teaching for four years. She is looking forward to her first year of teaching at Romona. Miss Courtois received her undergraduate degree from Miami University in Ohio and her Masters degree in Reading and Literacy from Benedictine University.

Miss Courtois enjoys spending time with her family and friends and loves being outdoors! In her free time she likes to go hiking, camping, snowshoeing and running. Miss Courtois loves listening to music and is an avid Chicago sports fan. Her favorite books are [Into the Wild](#) by Jon Krakauer and [Tuesdays with Morrie](#) by Mitch Albom.

**Jennifer Hook**  
**Teacher – Grade 1**

Ms. Hook has been an elementary school teacher for seven years. This is her third year at Romona. Prior to accepting her new position, she taught third grade, first grade, and technology in St. Louis, Missouri. She also taught Title One Reading for two years in Skokie, Illinois. Ms. Hook has a B.S. in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and an M.A.T. in Reading from Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri. In addition, she achieved National Board Certification (Reading/Language Arts) in November of 2008.

Ms. Hook enjoys a wide variety of things and loves to try things outside of her comfort zone! Exploring the city, reading, spending time at the beach, learning to play the guitar and traveling are just a few things she enjoys. Family is very important to Ms. Hook. She enjoys spending time with her parents and frequently visits her sister Amy, brother-in-law Ryan, and their children Brady, Kate and Ellie. Her favorite children's book is Dear Children of the Earth.

**Susan Imburgia**  
**Teacher – Grade 1**

This is Mrs. Imburgia's first year at Romona, but she has been in Wilmette for 19 years. She has taught kindergarten, first grade, and fifth grade at Central. She is very excited to be moving to Romona. She also taught first grade in Arizona and Mokena, Illinois, but that was a LONG time ago.

Mrs. Imburgia loves to read, walk, and ride her bike. Her family enjoys traveling and listening to music together. She likes to read anything by Kevin Henkes or Mark Teague. Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse might be just about her favorite book.

**Jenny Seed**  
**Teacher – Grade 1**

Mrs. Seed has been teaching for ten years. This year will be her 5th year at Romona School. Mrs. Seed earned her B.S. in Elementary Education at Illinois State University and her M.Ed. in Language and Literacy at National-Louis University. She earned her National Board teacher certification in 2008.

Mrs. Seed has two daughters, Alexis and Madison. In addition to spending time with her girls, she enjoys reading, scrapbooking, softball, volleyball and going fishing with her husband.

## **SECOND GRADE TEACHERS**

### **Laura Drasler Teacher – Grade 2**

Mrs. Drasler has been teaching for six years. She is beginning her fourth school year at Romona. She earned a Master's degree in Learning and Instruction at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

In her free time, Mrs. Drasler enjoys dancing, snowboarding, listening to music and traveling. Her favorite books are the Harry Potter series. Her favorite movie is *Forrest Gump*. Over the summer, Mrs. Drasler traveled to San Francisco, Paris and Rome.

### **Debbie Greer Teacher – Grade 2**

This is Mrs. Greer's 10<sup>th</sup> year teaching and 10th year in Wilmette. Previously, she taught fourth grade and sixth grade Technology at Highcrest Middle School. Mrs. Greer has a B.A. from Indiana University in Elementary Education with endorsements in French and technology. She also completed her Masters in Language Arts at Northeastern University.

Mrs. Greer loves playing with her daughter Caitlin and being with her family. She also enjoys spending time with her friends, traveling, reading, and baking.

### **Sandra Karwowski Teacher – Grade 2**

Sandy Karwowski has been a teacher for 11 years. She has her B.S. in Elementary Education from Illinois State University and her Master's in Teaching and Leadership from St. Xavier University here in Chicago. She loves teaching at Romona School in second grade, which is one of her most favorite grades to be teaching.

Sandy and her husband, Tad, have two children. Their daughter, Cassidy, is in eighth grade this year and her son, Cameron, is in fourth grade. They also have 3 pets. They adopted a rabbit and a dog from an animal shelter and they have a guinea pig.

Sandy loves to read. It is her favorite way to spend free time. She is a huge Nora Roberts fan and has read all of her books. Her favorite children's book is The Giver. She loves to do activities with her kids like rollerblading, snow skiing, going to water parks, and playing games. She is a scrap booker and has created many albums of her children. It is just like creating bulletin boards for her classroom! Her favorite TV shows are General Hospital and Dancing with the Stars, both of which she Tivo's so she can watch them during her little bits of spare time. She is a Starbuck's coffee lover and loves to shop with her daughter.

**Emily Moore**  
**Teacher – Grade 2**

This is Ms. Moore's seventh year teaching at Romona School. She previously worked as a paraprofessional at Harper School. Ms. Moore received her B.S. from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio and her M.A. from DePaul University. Ms. Moore was born on 7-7-77 and she went to high school with "Jared" from the Subway commercials.

Ms. Moore enjoys tennis, reading and TIVO-ing her favorite TV shows. Her favorite children's books are by Robert Munsch and her favorite movies are *Overboard* and *The Devil wears Prada*.

**THIRD GRADE TEACHERS**

**Debbie Honigberg**  
**Teacher – Grade 3**

Mrs. Honigberg has been teaching for eighteen years. This is her eleventh year at Romona as a third grade teacher, although she also attended Romona as a student. Mrs. Honigberg has an undergraduate degree in the Philosophy of Interdisciplinary Studies from Miami University. She received her J.D. from University of Cincinnati College of Law and her Masters in Teaching from National-Louis University.

Mrs. Honigberg is an avid reader of funny poetry and mystery novels. She spent her summer tutoring and walking all over Evanston with her dog, Ziggy. She is very excited to be teaching another wonderful group of third graders.

**Jane Levine**  
**Teacher – Grade 3**

Mrs. Levine has been teaching for fifteen years. This is her seventh year at Romona. She received her B.S. in English from St. Louis University in Missouri. Her two masters degrees, one in teaching and one in written communication, are both from National Louis University. She is also a certified learning behavior specialist. Mrs. Levine enjoys being with family and friends, Reading, writing, and nature. She and her husband have four grown children.

**Karen Pampush**  
**Teacher – Grade 3**

Karen Pampush is very excited to begin the new school year and meet her new third grade students. She has taught in Mentor, Ohio and Chicago before coming to Wilmette. This is her third year teaching at Romona. She earned a Bachelor's degree from the University of Cincinnati in Sociology and a Master's degree from Cleveland State University in Education. She lives in the city, by the Shedd Aquarium and loves to walk and ride her bike on Lake Shore Drive's bike path.

Ms. Pampush enjoyed her summer by visiting with her family back in Ohio and spending time up in Wisconsin.

**Evie Tiotis**  
**Teacher – Grade 3**

Ms. Tiotis has been teaching for fourteen years. This is her eleventh year at Romona School. She received her B.A. in Education with an endorsement in History from the University of Illinois. Ms. Tiotis received her MA in Special Education (LD/BD) from Northeastern Illinois University.

Ms. Tiotis' hobbies are painting, sailing, baking and fishing. Her favorite book is Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt. Ms. Tiotis' favorite movies are *Cheaper by the Dozen* and *Million Dollar Baby*.

## **FOURTH GRADE TEACHERS**

### **Kelly Harney Teacher – Grade 4**

Ms. Harney has taught for five years. This is her fourth year at Romona. She earned a Bachelor's degree in elementary education with a minor in psychology at DePaul University. Ms. Harney did her student teaching in Dublin, Ireland.

Ms. Harney enjoys kayaking, camping, reading and painting. Her favorite book is The Alchemist and favorite movies are *The Jerk*, *The Garden State*, and *Pieces of April*.

### **Valerie Johnson Teacher – Grade 4**

This is Mrs. Johnson's sixth year at Romona. She taught in Mundelein for four years previously. Mrs. Johnson received her undergraduate degree from Elmhurst College and her graduate degree from National-Louis University.

Mrs. Johnson enjoys camping with her family and mountain biking. children. This summer she enjoyed spending time at the pool and vacationing in Ohio with her husband and two children.

### **Angie Pemble Teacher – Grade 4**

This will be Ms. Pemble's 11th year of teaching. This will be her 7th year teaching at Romona. Ms. Pemble received her undergraduate degree from Northern Illinois/Arizona State and her degree in Reading and Literacy from Lewis University.

Ms. Pemble enjoys boating, reading, running and spending time with family and friends. Her favorite children's book is *The Quiltmaker's Gift* and her favorite movie is *The Notebook*.

**Carrie Stefano**  
**Teacher – Grade 4**

This is Mrs. Stefano's sixth year at Romona and her eighth year of Teaching. She received her B.B.A. in Business Administration at the University of Michigan, where she also received a Master of Accounting. Mrs. Stefano completed her Master of Science in Education at Northwestern University.

She enjoys writing, camping, hiking, traveling, yoga, running, and swimming. Mrs. Stefano previously worked as an accountant and taught financial and managerial accounting classes at the University of Michigan. She has also worked with graduate students at Northwestern University as a coach for their masters' projects. She loves nonfiction books such as *Into Thin Air*. Finally, Mrs. Stefano loves teaching and finds it to be her passion in life.

**Jessica Thelander**  
**Teacher – Grade 4**

Ms. Thelander has been a teacher for seven years. This is her fifth year at Romona. Ms. Thelander received her undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her graduate degree from St. Xavier University.

Ms. Thelander's hobbies include reading, dancing, watching movies, running and planning fun activities for her students. She is training for her first half marathon in September. Her favorite book is *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and her favorite movie is *The Notebook*.

**SPECIALS**  
**Teacher – Art**

This is Ms. McAllister's first year at Romona. She is a Wilmette native and graduated from New Trier High School. She received her B.A. in Art and Education at Cornell College. She loves painting, drawing and photography among other media. She previously worked in an art gallery. She also worked with Open Studio Project in Evanston, facilitating art classes and therapeutic art sessions. Some of her favorite artists are Claude Monet, Andy Warhol and Robert Rauschenberg. She believes art facilitates self expression, communication, creative thinking and problem solving.

"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up". –Pablo Picasso

**Lori Gentry**  
**Library Media Center**

Ms. Gentry grew up in the Midwest states of Kansas, Missouri, Michigan and Illinois. She received her undergraduate degree in Advertising at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. After working several jobs in sales, she decided to go back to school to become a teacher, and attended National-Louis University, where she received her Masters of Arts in Teaching.

Ms. Gentry taught sixth grade her first year, and found that she really loved building her classroom library. In the next two years, she worked as a Library Information Specialist and completed classes to become fully endorsed. She worked for Chicago Public Schools for over 5 years as a volunteer, substitute, classroom teacher and librarian.

Just finishing her first year, Lori has enjoyed becoming part of District 39. "The students and staff are wonderful, the parents are supportive and the district provides the tools for success."

Lori loves children's storybooks; her favorites characters include Curious George, Clifford, Skippy Jon Jones and Arthur. She has many favorite chapter books, but recent favorites include "No Talking," and "Edward's Eyes." This year she will be working on NBPTS, integrating smart boards into instruction in the LMC and Internet safety.

Ms. Gentry has two sisters and a brother, and a cat named Tommy. Her extended relatives live in Kansas and Missouri. She spends her free time painting, riding her scooter, attending cultural events, and of course, reading!

**Tina Honoré**  
**Teacher – Music**

Mrs. Honoré has been teaching for 20 years. This is her 16th year at Romona School. Mrs. Honoré received her B.M.E. from Westminster Choir College. She has a M.M.E. from Roosevelt University-Chicago College of Music and has completed Orff levels 1-3 and Kodaly Levels 1-3 from the University of St. Thomas.

Mrs. Honoré grew up in Alaska. She enjoys gardening and going to the movies. She also plays in the hand bell choir at her church.

**Joe Ryback  
Adapted PE**

Mr. Ryback has been teaching for five years. This is his fifth year at Romona. He has a BS in Education from Northern Illinois University. Mr. Ryback completed his masters in Adapted Physical Education from Northern Illinois University this past December. Mr. Ryback enjoys reading anything history related. His favorite movie is *A Clear and Present Danger*. His hobbies are scuba diving and flying!

**Bill Schaaf  
Teacher – PE**

This is Mr. Schaaf's sixth year teaching Physical Education and fifth year in District 39. Mr. Schaaf just finished his 1st year at Romona after 3 successful years at McKenzie.

Mr. Schaaf started his college career at Parkland College in Champaign Illinois. He was a pitcher and third baseman for their baseball team. Mr. Schaaf finished his college career at Indiana University receiving a B.S. in Kinesiology with a K-12 P.E. endorsement and a Health and Safety Minor.

He has a variety of interests in his life. Mr. Schaaf loves spending time with his wife and their families when he gets a chance to travel back home to Schererville, Indiana. He loves taking vacations during the summer. Mr. Schaaf also enjoys teaching baseball for the Illinois Baseball Academy during the summer. The camps are offered to 4-9 year old boys and girls and he loves watching them learn the game. He likes to stay active by playing on three different softball teams from the spring to the fall. It's great exercise and an excellent opportunity to hang out with close friends.

**Christopher Toy  
Teacher -- PE**

Mr. Toy steps into his first year of teaching in District 39 as the new Harper and Romona Elementary School Physical Education teacher. He has graduated from North Central College in Naperville Illinois where he received his B.A. in Health and Physical Education. There he was involved in various on and off campus activities including the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (President), varsity baseball pitcher, pep band (trombone), orientation leader, chess club and many other activities.

Mr. Toy enjoys playing baseball/softball, exercising, ultimate frisbee, pool, bags, and ping pong. One interesting fact about Mr. Toy is that he has traveled to 8 different countries (4 different continents) in the last 4 years.

**Christina Rosario  
Technology**

Ms. Rosario has been teaching for ten years. This is her fourth year at Romona. She earned a BA in Linguistics and Phonetics and studied at the graduate level in education and technology.

Ms. Rosario enjoys tennis, running, reading the biographies of musicians and going to concerts. Her favorite book is Pride and Prejudice and favorite movies are *Love Actually* and *Bridget Jones' Diary*. Previously, Ms. Rosario was the webmaster at the District Office of the City Colleges of Chicago. She also has participated in The Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program. Ms. Rosario will be returning from maternity leave after having her first child Astrid.

**Tiffany Bennett  
Teacher – Spanish**

Ms. Bennett has been teaching for six years. This is her third year at Romona. She earned an undergraduate degree in Spanish at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master's in Education at DePaul University.

Ms. Bennett enjoys karaoke, running, hiking and dancing. Her favorite book is How the Carcia Girls Lost their Accents and favorite movie is *Die Hard*. She is an experienced traveler, having spent time in 12 countries. Specifically, her travels include Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Spain, Portugal, France, Greece, England, Ireland, Canada, Italy, Mexico, and Tortola.

**Spanish  
Teacher – Brian McCann**

Brian McCann is a first year teacher at Romona. He recently graduated from the University of Illinois with a B.A. in the Teaching of Spanish. Mr. McCann has traveled to Spain and Mexico and would love to visit South America in the near future. Outside of Spanish, his passions include cooking, reading, and music. Also, he enjoys watching documentaries, his favorites include: The King of Kong, My Kid Could Paint That, and Stone Reader.

During the summers, Mr. McCann is a golf fanatic. He plays every chance he can get, and enjoys teaching the game to younger players. One of his goals is to play golf in every Spanish speaking country.

Mr. McCann is looking forward to starting his teaching career a Romona School with a group of young and talented Spanish speakers.

**Spanish  
Teacher – Theresa Giardina**

**PARAPROFESSIONALS**

**Marissa Adams  
Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Adams second year at Romona School. She graduated from University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. She loves hanging out with family and friends. She also likes to spend time shopping, traveling and going to the movies. Her favorite books are Marley and Me and Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants. *The Breakfast Club* is her favorite movie.

**Mary Ann Backlund  
Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Backlund's fourth year at Romona. Ms. Backlund previously taught grades 1-4 in Wisconsin and in Illinois. She attended school at North Park, Chicago and Mount Mary College in Milwaukee. She enjoys working out, reading and golf. Her favorite books are East of Eden and To Kill a Mockingbird. She also enjoys spending time with her two grandchildren.

**Cheri Beederman  
Paraprofessional**

Mrs. Beederman has taught for eighteen years. This is her fifteenth year at Romona. She graduated from the University of Illinois-Chicago with a B.A. in Elementary Education. She enjoys outlet shopping, reading and watching television. The Beederman's have three daughters, two human and one canine.

**Tom Beveridge  
Paraprofessional**

This is Mr. Beveridge's third year at Romona School. He graduated from Northeastern University with a degree in Elementary Education. Mr. Beveridge has been married for four years and is expecting his son in October. They just bought their first house in Morton Grove. He has traveled all over the U.S. The Empire Strikes Back is his favorite movie, and his favorite book is *The Two Swords* by R.A. Salvatore. In his spare time, Mr. Beveridge enjoys reading and video gaming, especially war and strategy games.

**Gretchen Bois  
Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Boies third year at Romona School. She received her undergraduate degree from St. Olaf College and her Graduate degree from National Louis University. She loves to paint, play and watch baseball and take in a good movie. Her favorite book is *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison and *To Kill a Mockingbird* is her favorite movie.

**Genny Britt  
ELL Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Britt's seventeenth year teaching. She graduated from SUNY New Paltz and holds a master's from SUNY Stony Brook. She taught Kindergarten and 1st grade for 8 years in New York before retiring to raise a family, two boys and a daughter. She is happy to return to teaching as a parapro, especially in the ELL program. Ms. Britt has worked with students from K to 8th grade and they have all taught her so much about their countries, their cultures and how alike we all really are.

**Kate Brower  
Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Brower's fourth year at Romona. She attended Bowdoin College, and worked in the insurance industry for many years. She enjoys sports, reading and spending time with her four children. Her favorite book is *The Secret Life of Bees* and her favorite movie is *Miracle*.

**Christy Chase**  
**Early Childhood Paraprofessional**

Ms. Chase is starting her third year at Romona as she completed her internship last year. She graduated from Drake University and received her Masters at University of Illinois-Chicago. She loves to spend her free time with her family. She is currently reading The Twilight Series By Stephanie Meyer. She loves to go to all types of movies and has to many favorites to pick just one.

**Kerry Cook**  
**Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Cook's fourth year at Romona. As a child, she attended Central School, Romona, Wilmette Junior High, Regina and New Trier! Her hobbies are photography, listening to music, shopping, reading, watching TV, spending time with friends, watching movies and traveling. Her favorite books are the James Patterson Series and fher favorite movie is *Mr. And Mrs Smith*. Ms. Cook has traveled to the Bahamas, and she has a 4 year old neice, and a 2 year old nephew. Kerry was born in Korea.

**Evelyn Danner**  
**Paraprofessional**

Ms. Danner's is beginning her fourth school year at Romona. She is an early childhood parapro. She attended IU Bloomington. Ms. Danner enjoys singing and sewing. Her favorite movie is *Crash*. Ms. Danner is also very active in theatre. She acts, sings, designs costumes and stage manages.

**Nancee Davidson**  
**Technology Paraprofessional**

This is Mrs. Davidson's ninth year at District 39 and sixth year at Romona. She attended Iowa State University, where she earned her BS. Her favorite book is Where Eagles Soar and her favorite movie is *Mercury Rising*. Ms. Davidson has a daughter who lives in California with her Marine husband and 21/2 year old son, Jacob and a 11 month old son Seth.. Ms. Davidson also has a son living in Connecticut. He designs helicopters.

**Angela Dizikoski  
Paraprofessional**

**Elizabeth Egan  
Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Liz Egan's first year at Romona and her second year teaching for Wilmette's Public Schools. She received her B.A in Art and Art History at DePaul University, where she is also currently working on her Masters in Elementary Education.

She enjoys art, craft projects, reading, taking her dog on nice long walks, dance, swimming and running. Ms. Egan previously worked as a Nanny and tutored children in the city of Chicago. Her favorite artist is Faith Ringgold. Ms. Egan has a large extended family and loves spending time with her two sisters and one brother.

**Marsha Eagen  
Paraprofessional**

This is Mrs. Eagen's second year as a paraprofessional at Romona School. She attended college at the University of Wisconsin. She and her husband have two children. Their daughter is a sophomore at New Trier and their son is in eighth grade. They both play team sports and she is their biggest fan! She loves to spend her free time jogging, cooking new things and doing yoga. Her favorite book is To Kill a Mockingbird and her favorite movie is *The Father of the Bride*.

**Ninorta Gabriel  
Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Gabriel's first job in the United States since she moved here from Toronto, Canada. She previously filled the role of office clerk at Romona School and is now happy to be a paraprofessional here. She attended the University of Toronto and is currently attending National Louis University to get my masters in Education. She has seen the CN Tower, the tallest structure in the world, and Niagra Falls. Ms. Gabriel loves working with children and hopes to be a teacher in the near future. She plays the flute, and her favorite movie is *My Cousin Vinny*.

**Michelle Hammond**  
**Paraprofessional**

This will be the start of Mrs. Hammond's ninth year at Romona as a special needs paraprofessional. Before starting in Wilmette she was employed at Misericordia home in Chicago as recreational instructor, she left Misericordia after 15 years of service there.

Mrs. Hammond's and her husband, David of 21 years are raising 3 boys. Daniel is 19 years old whom is starting his sophomore year at Illinois State University. Kyle is 17 years old and starting his senior year at Niles North High School. Alex is their youngest; he is 14 and is beginning his first year at Niles North High School.

Some of her favorite things to do are gardening, playing with the family dog Zeus, board games, watching her kids play their sports, reading, and watching movies (current releases and older movies). This summer she saw G.I. Joe: Rise of Cobra, Harry Potter and The Half Blood Prince, The Proposal, The Taking Of Pelham 123, and Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen.

**Jen Jeffries**  
**Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Jeffries (or JJ as she likes to be called) second year at Romona School. She received her undergrad degree from Northern Illinois University and her Master of Art from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She loves to speak in French, sew, and cook ethnic food. Her favorite books are Persuasion by Jane Austen and Tender at the Bone by Ruth Reich. Her favorite movie is *The Buena Vista Social Club*.

**Tessa Johnson**  
**Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Johnson's fifth year at Romona. Ms. Johnson has a BA in Early Childhood Education from North Park University. She enjoys reading, tennis, biking and cooking. Her favorite movie is *Sixteen Candles*, and her favorite book is A Heartbreaking work of Staggering Genius by Dave Eggers.

**Alisa Mirkin  
Paraprofessional**

**Cathy Peach  
Paraprofessional**

Ms. Peach has been working with special needs students for twenty years. She has been at Romona for twelve years. Ms. Peach received her Bachelor's degree from Western Michigan University and has done graduate work at Northeastern Illinois.

Ms. Peach enjoys music, sports (Cubs baseball) and knitting. Her favorite book is The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck and her favorite movie is *Clockwork Orange*.

**Jill Pinkerton  
Paraprofessional**

This is Ms. Pinkerton's fourth year at Romona. She is the LMC parapro. She holds a BA degree from Drake University. Her favorite book is Vengeance By Brian Pinkerton and favorite movie is Finding Nemo. Ms. Pinkerton enjoys spending time with her children. She lives in Wilmette with her husband, Brian and two children, Anne, ten and a half and Joseph, nine.

**Emily Voit  
Paraprofessional**

This will be the third year as a paraprofessional at Romona for Ms. Voit. She attended Scripps College in Claremont, California. Her husband, Rick, has two children ages 18 and 21. She and her husband attended New Trier, and her children are attending the Wilmette schools as well. In her spare time, Ms. Voit loves to travel with her family, cook new dishes and work in the garden. Her favorite children's book was Heidi and Where the Red Fern Grows. Her favorite movie is *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

**Ellie Weisbard**  
**Building Paraprofessional**

Mrs. Weisbard has been subbing and working for District 39 for twelve years. She has a BS and an MFA from The University of Wisconsin, Madison. Mrs. Weisbard enjoys spending time with her husband and two children, both of whom are away at college. Some of Mrs. Weisbard's hobbies are hiking and Medium format photography. Her favorite book is *A Prayer for Owen Meany* and her favorite movie is *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*.

**Leslie Williams**  
**Paraprofessional**

This is Mrs. Williams fifth year at Romona. She is also a student at Northeastern Illinois University. Leslie enjoys working out and reading. Her favorite books are *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, by Hussein Khomeni. Her favorite movie is *Pride and Prejudice*, the BBC production. Ms. Williams also has two wonderful children, Tarah 22, and George 19.

**SUPPORT STAFF**

**NURSE**  
**Michelle Hynes RN, BSN**

Mrs. Hynes, or Nurse Michelle, was born and raised on the Northwest side of Chicago, and went to St. Ignatius College Prep high school. She received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Saint Louis University. She started her career at Resurrection Medical Center in the SICU (Surgical Intensive Care Unit). For the past 3 years, she has been working at Rush Pediatric Primary Care Center, near the medical district on the near west side of the city. She has worked at Highcrest Middle School part-time in the 2007-2008, and last year at Romona.

She is the youngest of six in a big Irish family. She enjoys barbeques and birthday dinners with her family & especially hanging out with her 10 nieces and nephews. She enjoys going to the movies and keeping up with seeing the latest box office hits. Romantic comedies are her favorite!! She went to Italy this summer for her honeymoon, which was amazing and beautiful!

**Jane Psocka  
Secretary**

Mrs. Psocka is starting her tenth year at Romona School. She graduated from Southern Illinois University with a B.A. in Early Childhood Education.

Mrs. Psocka has three children. Her oldest child graduated from the University of Indiana, her middle graduated from University of Kansas and her youngest is a Senior at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Mrs. Psocka enjoys walking, baking, sewing and spending time with her children and her two dogs. Mrs. Psocka's favorite movie is *White Christmas* and any Carey Grant movie.

**Ellen Smith  
Secretary**

Ellen Smith has been working with the public all her life. She has seven siblings, which prepared her for anything and everything. This is her second year at Romona. Prior to accepting her position, she was a dental assistant in MN, a retail store manager on State Street in Chicago, and managed a low Income Tax Preparation site at Truman College.

Ellen enjoys spending time with her husband, Tim, and Daughter, Molly. She also has two stepsons, Bryan, 33 and Tim, 27 They love to explore the city and try all sorts of different activities. She is also a huge stamping fan and uses it as an outlet for her creative side. Her favorite movie is *The Lion King*.

**Nancy Pecoraro  
Head Cook**

Mrs. Pecoraro is starting her tenth year Romona. She enjoys baking and sewing. Life is Beautiful is Mrs. Pecoraro's favorite movie. Ms. Pecoraro loves life and spending time with her 4 grandchildren.

**Anna Rojas  
Assistant Cook**

Ms. Rojas has been our assistant cook for 3 years. She went to school in Mexico. She loves to cook, bake and crochet in her spare time. Her favorite movie is *Titanic*. She is married to our custodian and bus driver, Nelio Patino. They have two children whom they love to spend time with. Ms. Rojas also likes to travel!

**Nelio Patino  
Head Custodian**

Mr. Patino has worked at Romona for six years. He attended Evanston High School. He enjoys playing music in a band. His favorite book is To Kill a Mockingbird. His wife Ana, is the assistant cook. Mr. Patino and his wife have 2 children, a girl 5 years old and a boy 2 years old.

**Efrain Diaz  
Custodian**

Mr. Diaz has worked in the district as a float for 1 year prior to landing a permanent position at Romona. He attended Roberto Clemente High School in Chicago. In his free time he likes to paint portraits and fiddle with his guitar. He also likes to work on cars in his spare time. Mr. Diaz enjoys driving the school bus and interacting with the children.

**Israel Herrera  
Custodian**

Mr. Herrera is the newest member to the custodian staff. He has been at Romona for one year. He attended school in Mexico. He loves to listen to music.

**Eric James  
Custodian**

Mr. James has been working part-time at in the district for twelve years. He has two daughters, Bianca age 16 and Erica age 22. Eric also enjoys spending time with his six month old grandson, Nasir. He received his master of Arts degree from North Eastern Illinois University. He loves to play cards in his spare time. His favorite book is To kill a Mockingbird and his favorite movie is *A soldiers Story*.

**Jose Marquez  
Custodian**

Mr. Marquez has worked for Romona for fourteen years. He attended school in Mexico. He loves to play soccer in his spare time. His favorite movie is *Power Ranger*.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION  
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Bev Taylor  
Differentiated Instruction Teacher**

Mrs. Taylor has been teaching for more than 30 years. She received her B.S. in Child Development from Brigham Young University, her B.S. in Education from Weber State University and her Masters in Language Arts from Northeastern.

Mrs. Taylor enjoys gardening, camping and singing. She is originally from Utah but has lived in Illinois for over twenty years. Mrs. Taylor completed at Welfare Service Mission on the Indian Reservations in South Dakota and also spent many summers as a camp director in the Rocky Mountains. She loves to teach and enjoys being able to work with many students and teachers at Romona.

**Sandy Capsuto  
ELL**

Ms. Capsuto has been teaching for thirty years. This is her sixth year at Romona School. Ms. Capsuto attended Northern Illinois University and received a B.S. in Education. She also received a M.Ed. in Education from National-Louis University.

Ms. Capsuto enjoys traveling, reading, taking walks and gardening. She has a family of four cats. Her favorite book is The Physician by Noah Gordan. Her favorite movie is *Somewhere in Time*.

**School Social Worker  
Kathy Brandeisky**

This is Mrs. Brandeisky's first year at Romona and tenth year in District 39. She received her B.S.S.W. in Social Work from Ohio State University and then her Master of Arts degree and School Social Work Certification from the University of Chicago. Mrs. Brandeisky is excited to be coming full circle in District 39 back to Romona where she completed her social work externship ten years ago as Mrs. Auslander's student teacher during the 1999-2000 school year.

She enjoys reading, gardening, baking, traveling, and supporting her children in their activities. Mrs. Brandeisky loves inspirational quotes, music, movies, and books. One of her favorite books is Oh The Places You'll Go by Dr. Seuss.

**Dr. Ashley O'Meara**  
**School Psychologist**

Dr. O'Meara (formerly known as Dr. Ehrhardt) has been a school psychologist six years. This is Dr. Ehrhardt's fifth

year at Romona School. She earned an undergraduate degree from Indiana University, her Masters at the University of Chicago and her Doctorate from National-Louis University.

Dr. Ehrhardt enjoys black and white photography. Her favorite book is A Prayer for Owen Meany and her favorite movie is *The Game*.

**Kate Hood**  
**Reading Specialist**

Mrs. Hood began teaching in 1975. This is Mrs. Hood's sixth year at Romona. She received a B.S. and M.S. in Reading at Western Illinois University and an Educational Administration Certificate from Loyola University in Chicago.

Mrs. Hood enjoys gardening, skiing and watching the White Sox games with her sons. She loves to read and her favorite childhood book is A Wrinkle in Time.

**Leslie Upson**  
**Math/Reading Support**

Ms. Upson is returning for a second year at Romona. She received her degree from the University of Virginia and this will be her 9th teaching. She enjoys traveling with her husband and her last trip was to Nicaragua, which was totally awesome. She played tennis at the University of Virginia and still tries to play as much as possible.

**Amanda Fisher**  
**Teacher – LBS**

This will be Miss Fisher's third year at Romona and her fourth year teaching. She has a B.S. in Special Education from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. During her spare time she enjoys reading, cooking and spending time with friends and family. She had a summer full of reading, lounging by the pool, and beach volleyball! Miss Fisher had a wonderful time vacationing in Seattle, WA this summer. She is very excited for a great school year!

**Sara Fisher**  
**Teacher –LBS**

This is Ms. Fisher's 7th year teaching in Wilmette. She spent her first six years at Highcrest Middle School and is excited to begin her 7th year at Romona! Ms. Fisher grew up in Northbrook and then received her Bachelors degree in special education from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. She received her master's degree in gifted education from Northeastern Illinois University and is currently pursuing a second master's degree in Reading, also from Northeastern Illinois.

When she is not teaching, Ms. Fisher enjoys working out, playing tennis, reading, shopping, traveling, and spending time with friends and family. Her favorite author is Jodi Picoult and she loves all types of movies.

**Robyn Tedford**  
**Teacher – LBS**

This is Ms. Tedford's fifth year teaching at Romona. Ms. Tedford earned her B.S. in Communication Disorders at Northwestern and her M.Ed. in Special Education at University of Illinois.

Ms. Tedford enjoys scrap booking. Her favorite books are Tuesday's with Morrie and The Giver. Her favorite movies are *Harry Potter* and *Cinderella*.

**Mary Wong**  
**Teacher – LBS**

Mrs. Mary Wong is happy to be beginning her third year at Romona. She holds a B.A. in psychology from the University of Illinois in Chicago and a M.A. in special education from Roosevelt University. Prior to coming to District 39, Mrs. Wong worked as a special education paraprofessional for NSSED for 9 years and was an extended resource teacher in Highland Park. Mrs. Wong and her husband have 3 children (2 in college and 1 out of college), and a cute pug named Jasmine. This past summer Mrs. Wong and her son went on a missions trip to southeast China for 2 weeks to work in English youth camps. Favorite pastimes include walking, reading, and spending time with family.

**Lindsey Barnes**  
**Occupational Therapist**

This is Ms. Barnes' sixth year at Romona. She has been an Occupational Therapist for twenty-two years. Ms. Barnes received her B.S. in Biology from the University of Illinois and her Occupational Therapy degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Ms. Barnes enjoys needlework, travel and reading. Her favorite book is Wanderlust and her favorite movie is *Parent Trap*.

**Brittany Barker**  
**Speech Language Pathologist**

This is Ms. Barker's first year at Romona as well as her first year as a licensed speech-language pathologist. She received her B.S in 2007 and her M.S. in 2009 in Communication Disorders and Sciences both from Eastern Illinois University. She is from Charleston, IL and in her spare time enjoys being outdoors, spending time with her friends and family, and exploring the Chicago land area.

**Amy Schumacher**  
**Occupational Therapist**

This is Mrs. Schumacher's fifth year at Romona. She has been an occupational therapist for eight years. Mrs. Schumacher earned her B.S. and M.S. in Occupational Therapy at Ithaca College. Mrs. Schumacher enjoys photography and yoga. Her favorite book is Tao of Pooh and her favorite movies are Old School and The Sound of Music.

**Leeann Smiser**  
**EC Speech-Language Pathologist**

Mrs. Smiser has been teaching for ten years and this is her fifth year at Romona School. Mrs. Smiser comes from Chicago Public Schools where she team-taught with Julie Larva, who now works as the EC Coordinator for the Connecting Kids Program. Mrs. Smiser graduated from the University of Kentucky and completed her Masters at Miami University of Ohio.

Mrs. Smiser enjoys reading, cooking, running and outdoor summertime activities. Her favorite book is The Kite Runner.

**Lynn Sweatt**  
**Speech Language Pathologist**

This is Lynn Sweatt's third year as a speech-language pathologist at Romona School. Lynn has 16 years experience as a Speech-Language Pathologist, 4 years as an educational diagnostician, 2 years as a teacher of a self-contained classroom, and 1 year as an assistive technology specialist. She has attended 14 schools and lived in 10 cities in 4 states. Lynn has a Masters of Science plus 50 credit hours.

Lynn has been married to her husband Mike for 35 years. Mike is an architect and holds the position of Whole Foods Market Midwest Region Senior Construction Coordinator. They have 3 children, Brian 25, Brad 23, and Laura 20. Brian is married, working, and going to school in Kansas City. Brad is working and *considering* going to school in Kansas City. Laura is currently living with mom and dad and going to school at Oakton. Lynn's favorite author is Eric Carle and her current favorite movie is *Star Trek (2009)*. Her hobbies include earring design and gardening.

**Kristin Spalo**  
**District Physical Therapist**

Mrs. Spalo has worked as a physical therapist for eight years. This is her fifth year at Romona School. Mrs. Spalo earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois – Champaign/Urbana and earned her Masters in Physical Therapy at Midwestern University.

Mrs. Spalo enjoys spending lots of time with her son, running, and reading.

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

**Julie Pease**  
**Coordinator, Early Childhood Education**

Mrs. Pease was Ms. Lavra last year--she got married over the summer! This is Mrs. Pease's twenty-fifth year as a teacher and her fifth year at Romona School. Mrs. Pease received her B.A. in Special Education from the University of South Florida and her M.Ed. in Early Childhood Special Education from Arizona State University.

Mrs. Pease enjoys gardening and cooking. Her favorite book is The TimeTraveler's Wife and her favorite movie is *Mi Familia*.

**Jennifer Erickson**  
**Teacher - Early Childhood**

This is Mrs. Erickson's third year in the Early Childhood Connecting Kids Program. She received a B.A. in Communication studies from the University of Iowa and M.A. in Early Childhood Education, with an approval in Special Education from DePaul University in Chicago. Ms. Erickson worked as a paraprofessional at McKenzie School and also completed her student teaching there! During her free time, she enjoys reading, watching movies, and spending time with her family and friends. She also enjoys shopping, especially for children's books!

**Stephanie Hahn**  
**Teacher – Early Childhood**

This is Ms. Hahn's sixth year teaching and third at Romona. She received her Bachelor's degree at Illinois State University and received her Masters degree from Roosevelt University.

Ms. Hahn enjoys hiking, biking and camping. Her favorite book is *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and her favorite movie is *The Wizard of Oz*.

**Melissa Jandris**  
**Teacher – Early Childhood**

This is Ms. Jandris's third year teaching. She earned a BA at Butler University and a Masters in Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois – Chicago.

**Kristin Johnson**  
**Teacher – Early Childhood**

My name is Mrs. Kristin Johnson and this will be my first year teaching at Romona in the Connecting Kids Early Childhood Program and my third year teaching in District 39. I previously taught in the Student Learning Center at Central Elementary. I received my B.S. in Special Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and am currently pursuing a master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education from Northeastern Illinois University. In my free time I enjoy reading, being outdoors, cooking, and playing/watching sports. I also coach a Special Olympics basketball team in Evanston