

BRIDGE CAMPUS - MT. PLEASANT, SC

NIDO & WEE CASA PROGRAM



AUDREY GRAHAM - WEE CASA LEAD & NIDO/WEE CASA PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Audrey is a native of Charleston and has over 15 years of experience in a teaching environment. She holds a Montessori certification for children ages birth through 3 years and is RIE 1 trained as well. Audrey previously taught at both Charlestowne Montessori and Oak Grove Montessori for children in infant through Casa programs. She loves the outdoors and her annual jaunt to the quiet beaches of Panama with her family.

JELENA ZEREGA - WEE CASA ASSISTANT & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM SUPPORT

Originally from Serbia, Jelena moved to the United States and spent 10 years working as an accountant. After the experience of raising her two children as little ones, she decided that working with children at this impressionable stage was something she was passionate about. Jelena joined Sundrops in the summer of 2011 and is currently pursuing her training in music therapy.



KIM EVANS - NIDO LEAD

Kim has over 10 years of experience and is Montessori and RIE certified. Kim held previous positions as a lead teacher at Montessori of Mt. Pleasant and as a first grade special education teacher in the Virgin Islands. Prior to this Kim worked as an in-home trainer implementing various therapy programs for children and adults with disabilities. Kim has an Early Childhood Education degree with a concentration in special education.

REBECCA BENTON - NIDO ASSISTANT

“While working closely with parents and using the Montessori philosophy, we are able to honor the individual child and help them reach their full potential.”

Becky was born and raised in Mt. Pleasant. She earned her degree in Chemistry from the College of Charleston in 2003. After having two children and being a stay-at-home Mom for 5 years she decided to rejoin the workforce. While taking care of her children she realized that this was her passion. She looks forward to every day being unique here at Sundrops.



ZOE CAPLAN - NIDO ASSISTANT & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Zoe is originally from Atlanta, GA and moved to the Charleston area in 2010. After graduating from Georgia State University with her degree in Psychology she moved to the coast to work as an ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) therapist. Zoe has been with Sundrops since the fall of 2011 as both a classroom assistant and support for our After School Program. Her hobbies include photography and traveling.

CASA PROGRAM

LINDY HOEL - CASA LEAD & CASA CURRICULUM COORDINATOR

“By being a Montessori teacher I am able to share my love of learning with children.”

Lindy has been sharing her love of learning as a teacher for over 16 years. As a lead Casa teacher at the Bridge Campus, Lindy brings previous experience from various private Montessori and public schools in the Charleston area. Lindy is Montessori certified and has a degree in Psychology from the College of Charleston.





MAREE HARVEY - CASA ASSISTANT

Maree was born and raised in Charleston. She headed to Columbia, SC to pursue her degree in Studio Art from the University of South Carolina. After completing her undergraduate degree she came back down to the Lowcountry. Maree is married with one child, Forrest, who currently attends Sundrops. Her interests include running, camping, painting and the gym.

STEPHANIE WARD - CASA LEAD

“There is nothing more amazing than looking around a Montessori classroom and observing busy, productive, self-directed, happy children who happen to be learning at the same time.”

Originally from Long Island, NY, Stephanie has been a teacher at Sundrops since 2007. Both Stephanie and her husband attended Arizona State University where she majored in Elementary Education with a concentration in Child Psychology and Family Studies. Stephanie spends her spare time designing jewelry, studying photography, camping, cooking and relaxing at Folly Beach.



MELISSA FLORES - CASA ASSISTANT

“Children are what life is all about. Nothing is more joyful than to see how they become outstanding beings and to help them excel through life’s experiences.”

Melissa was living in Germany when she decided that her calling was to work with children. She has now been doing so for over 20 years. While teaching in an Italian preschool with multi-aged classrooms she learned the importance of this fundamental Montessori principle. She received her Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education. Melissa enjoys reading, dancing, walking outdoors and traveling as much as possible.

COLLEEN GRIFFIN - CASA LEAD

"Some of my earliest memories as a child are in the Montessori classroom. Teaching is my passion. I consider it a gift to be able to watch children thrive in this environment on a daily basis."

A native of the area, Colleen returns to Charleston after teaching at Asheville Montessori School and joins us as a Casa Lead teacher at the Bridge Campus. Colleen has been teaching since 1996 and had previously worked with Shannon Smith and Chandler Payne when living in Charleston. She has a degree in Early Childhood Education from Trident. She also has her Montessori certification from North American Progressive Montessori School.



STEPHANIE HULL - CASA ASSISTANT

"I love working with children and watching them grow as individuals. Everyday I am amazed at what they can do."

Born in Charlotte, NC, Stephanie has been an assistant teacher at Sundrops as well as an assistant in the Upper Elementary and after school programs at East Cooper Montessori Charter School. Although she received her degree in Business Management from Belmont Abbey College, her heart lead her to teaching. Stephanie is currently working towards her Montessori 3 to 6 certification at CMTE in North Carolina. She will complete the program in the spring of 2012 and will eventually lead a Casa classroom of her own.

ELEMENTARY PROGRAM

BIANCA SWINBURNE - ELEMENTARY-I LEAD

As the lead elementary teacher, Bianca brings over a decade of experience from both public and private schools in the Charleston area. Bianca is completing her Montessori Elementary training for 6 to 9 year olds at CMTE in North Carolina. She earned her B.S. in Elementary Education in 1998 and her Master's in Early Childhood Education in 2008. As a Montessori parent, she has been a part of this community since 2005. With a passion for learning through the community and outdoors, Bianca specializes in gardening and horticulture.





SHANNON MARCHELL - ELEMENTARY-I ASSISTANT

“Since finding Montessori I have been amazed at how much young children can learn when treated with respect and given the freedom to explore.”

Shannon has been with Sundrops since 2006 as a mother, volunteer and assistant in the Casa program. She recently completed her Montessori Lower Elementary training at the Seacoast Center in Celebration, FL and is currently pursuing a M.Ed. in Montessori Curriculum Strategies at Plymouth University. A native of Virginia, she has her B.A. in Psychology and a J.D. from the University of Virginia. Shannon began her career in law as an attorney in the suburbs of New York City before relocating with her family to Mt. Pleasant and discovering Montessori. She loves books, movies and travel, and enjoys boating and playing Wii games with her husband and three children.

SUPPORT STAFF

EMILY KUPPENS, MSW - SUPPORT PROGRAM
COORDINATOR

A native of Charleston, Emily earned her degree in Sociology with a minor in Psychology from Charleston Southern University. She went on to receive her Masters in Social Work from the University of South Carolina, where she gained experience working with individuals, families and groups through MUSC’s Department of Developmental Pediatrics and the Department of Psychiatry. Emily received her certification in MACAR I (Montessori Applied to Children at Risk) from the Shelton School in Dallas, TX and has experience as a Lead ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) therapist.



KEJAL AMIN - CLASSROOM SUPPORT

“My favorite part of being in a Montessori classroom is seeing the joy on a child’s face when they have mastered a task all on their own.”

Born in India, Kejal has been both an assistant and a parent. She saw her two children graduate kindergarten from Sundrops and attend East Cooper Montessori Charter School. Kejal has a Bachelor’s degree from Kean University and has been living in Charleston since 2000. She enjoys reading, cooking (everyone loves the days she brings in her Indian dishes) and spending time with her family at the beach, biking and playing games.

SANDRA LEE - AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM SUPPORT

“I am grateful and delighted to be able to nurture and care for children on a daily basis...it is a rewarding experience.”

A native of New York City, Sandra worked for eight years at the administration level prior to moving to Charleston in 2004. Since then she has done social work in family reunification, adoption and tutoring. Sandra began her Montessori teaching experience in 2008 as a teacher’s assistant at Montessori of Mt. Pleasant. Sandra’s extracurricular activities include mentoring children, going to the movies, dancing and cooking.



KATIE PHILLIPS - AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM SUPPORT

“I think the Montessori philosophy is amazing as it enables the child to reach their true potential.”

Born in Florida and raised in Charleston, Katie realized that she wanted to work with children after her first job as a nanny. As a result she studied both education and communication studies at the College of Charleston. She did not feel that public school was a fit for her and recently learned about the Montessori method from a friend who works at Sundrops. From day one as a substitute for Sundrops she fell in love with Montessori. Katie looks forward to learning more about the Montessori method everyday and growing with Sundrops.