

CDSA
STAFF BIOS
2019-2020

20 April 2020

Dear Donnell Families,

Our continued social distancing and remote learning are settling into something of a routine, albeit a routine that is not the preferred approach to learning for any of us! The CDSA staff is making the best of our circumstances and actively looking for ways to stay connected. Learning packets, phone calls, emails, and Teams meetings are all being used as communication and learning tools. We felt like we wanted something more.

Thanks to a suggestion from one of our families, we are taking the time to share staff bios with you. Through this newsletter, 6 staff members will be featured in a “Who We Are” series. Upcoming issues will feature the next group of staff members, until we have all shared. As you read about our wonderful staff, you will learn about some unique talents, adventurous spirits, or creative “stay-at-home” coping strategies that might not have been communicated in “normal” circumstances. We hope that you enjoy this series. We invite feedback and continue to look forward to when we can be together again.

On another note, the May 19, 2020 election is through absentee ballot only. The WASD bond has been taken off the ballot at this time. The WASD supplemental levy, however, is still on the ballot. The supplemental levy provides “operating revenue that pays for staff, utilities, and materials. Supplemental levies must be reauthorized by voters every two years and requires a 50 percent majority to be approved” (deWeerd, <https://meridiacity.org/mayor/2018/02/27/school-bond-supplement-levy-election-overview> ,). Your vote matters!

Here is a copy of an email from Eric Exline, our WASD Communications specialist.

West Ada’s supplemental levy remains on the May 19 ballot. The question on the ballot will ask if voters want to reapprove the levy in its current amount (\$14 million per year) for each of the next two years. This is the amount of the supplemental levy that has been in place since 2012. It has been approved four times at that amount since then.

Like so many things these days, the election won’t be normal.

All voting will be done by mail. No polling places. Each voter can request what is called an absentee ballot. Ada County Elections will then mail the ballot to your home. You fill it out, put a stamp on the return envelope, and mail it back (easier and cheaper than going to a polling place).

Another change is that ballots aren’t actually due back to Ada County Elections until June 2 at 8 pm. You just have to request a ballot by 8 pm on May 19 (which would have been election day).

The county has made requesting a ballot much easier to do. Now, you can request a ballot by filling out an online form. You will need your driver’s license and the last four digits of your social security number. You can also request a ballot the old way, which is to print off a ballot request form, fill it out, and then mail in the request form. Then they will mail you a ballot.

Sincerely,
Joni Leipf



Hello Donnell Stars!

I am Karen Kirk. I am the Administrative Assistant/Secretary/Office Manager at CDSA. I have worked for West Ada for 23 years! I started as a noon duty at Chief Joseph Elementary, then became a paraprofessional in the Special Ed classroom at Chief Joe and River Valley Elementary. After that I was the receptionist at RVE. I became the secretary at Discovery Elementary the year it opened and had the opportunity to help open Christine Donnell when it was created and have loved every minute of it!

Something you may not know about me is that I love to fish! I don't love to touch them, so my amazing husband has always willingly taken them off the hook when I catch them....even if that means he must reel in his pole! Many times, I will out fish him, but I don't think he minds.....too much (haha)! Trust me, he still gets lots of chances to catch fish!

Now that you know a little something about me, I hope you can share something about you I don't know the next time I see you! Take care of yourself and others!

Mrs.Kirk



Hello everyone,

My name is Austin Switzer and this is my 8th year at CDSA. I am one of two music teachers here. I have lived in Idaho since I was 14. I was part of the first full 4-year attendance and graduating class at Mountain View High School. I went to Boise State University for my bachelor's degree and for my master's degree. My undergraduate work was music education and my graduate work was educational leadership. This year I have been trying to practice my main instrument more which is the trombone. Seems like there is never enough time to practice and keep up with our own instruments on top of teaching. I used to be better back in college, but I have let it slip. I once nearly got to play trombone with Michael Bubl . He and his band were traveling through Idaho doing a few shows and I guess his trombone players were sick. Unfortunately, I had a different commitment I had already agreed to play at, so I had to decline. In my free time I like to go camping, watch lots of Netflix, even play some video games from time to time! The kids think they can beat me...but there's no way! I also write some band music in my free time. Some of my other band friends got a website going so we all contribute to it to sell our music. Staying home has been driving me crazy as I'm sure it is for many of you as well.

I hope to be going back into school soon! I hope you have all been doing well and get to see you soon!

Take care!

Tammy Duthie

I grew up in Mesa, Arizona and am the youngest of 8 children. My siblings say that I was spoiled, and I've always told them that a person can't spoil themselves, so it is their fault!

I have always been musical. I started playing the French Horn in 4th grade and played it through high school. I've also sung in choirs, and currently sing in the Boise Philharmonic Master Chorale. I have been privileged to sing in many different groups and even soloed for various events. One of my first jobs was singing at a funeral home!

I have taken classes from 12 different institutions and universities, receiving my teaching certificate from Utah State University. I have taught for 26 wonderful years! My favorite campus was the University of Utah. I loved the big trees and beautiful old buildings.

My husband Jim and I have one son, a daughter-in-law, and a dog named Ellie. Between us we have 52 nieces and nephews! We like to camp, kayak, travel, and go on adventure rides.

Something that has made our school closure easier for me is getting to stay up later and getting to sleep in a little later. However, the hardest thing is not getting to see all the students at CDSA and the students in my class! I miss all of you! Take care and stay healthy!

Mrs. Duthie

Amy Hymas

I earned my Bachelor of Arts from Boise State University with an endorsement in Literacy. For two years, I taught 5th graders and loved the challenge of the both the curriculum and the students! I currently teach 4th graders. I also love this age group and the curriculum! I think I would be happy teaching any grade level because I just love to learn!

I was raised on a dairy farm in Meridian where I learned valuable lessons about work and responsibility. I play the piano and participated in three choirs my senior year. I played tennis and volleyball in high school as well as basketball and softball for fun. I did not think I could call myself an artist until I started teaching at Christine Donnell and realized that everyone is a potential artist if they will take a leap and just create. I am loving my time with our two cats, our bunny and my two teenagers at home while creating new delights in our kitchen and new growth in our garden. But am also missing all my sweet students and their amazing creations! Keep creating your own forms of art and our learning will never stop!

Nicole Chan

I was born and raised in Southern California. I had a great childhood with my parents and brother who is 3 years younger than me. When I was a kid, I was in a performance singing group called Kids R' Music. I absolutely loved being a part of the group. We sang at malls, senior living communities and one time we sang before an Angels' baseball game while former President George Bush Sr. watched from the crowd.

I married Mr. Chan in 2001, the year after I started teaching Kindergarten. I taught Kindergarten and first grade for four more years in California. During my fifth year of teaching, we had our first child, Tyler, who turns 16 this month. When Tyler was one and a half, we moved to Forest Grove, Oregon, and I stopped teaching and worked at home while Mr. Chan continued to work for Yahoo. About a year later, we had Jayda, who is now 13 and a half. When Jayda was in second grade, I went back to teaching-but this time it was fifth grade, and fifth graders are a lot bigger than Kindergarteners! I taught 5th grade for two years, then I decided to do substitute teaching instead. I also started a business called Some Enchanted Singing and sang at retirement communities, events and parties.

About 2 years ago we decided to move here to Idaho to be closer to my sister and her family. We started looking for jobs near Meridian and I fortunately ended up being hired at Christine Donnell! I truly love the students, staff and school here at Christine Donnell. This is my first-year teaching second grade, it's my favorite so far, which had been the hardest part of the school closure for me. I miss my students and teaching and staff friends dearly. However, working from home in my pajamas (only sometimes!) and not driving my kids to school has made my mornings a lot less hectic!

The Chan family is hoping to go visit Mr. Chan's family in New York sometime this summer. We plan on going to see my family in California. We also would like to explore more of Idaho by camping, hiking and riding in our 4 person ATV.

One more thing you probably don't know about me-I'm learning to ride a dirt bike! I'm not very good at it or fast, but I'm going to keep practicing learning this new skill.

Life is good and I am very blessed and grateful!

Hi CDSA Stars!

I have absolutely loved working with you this year and cannot wait to see your smiling faces again! The 2019-2020 school year has been my first time working as a school nurse. Prior to this I have always worked in a hospital taking care of critically ill patients. I loved doing that but decided I wanted to try a new adventure and investigated school nursing. Turns out...I love it! I am married and have one son, Blake who is 10. We love to mountain bike, dirt bike, and go out to eat! But our favorite thing to do as a family is play in the ocean on a warm beach! Since we have been out of school, our family got a puppy named Kya. I have been busy learning how to take care of her - and it is hard, but **we can do hard things!** I love Lego, as you probably already know, and I love finding treasures at antique and thrift shops. Students, I hope you are **being kind** to your families as we get this extra time to be at home. I miss you and hope to see you soon!

-Nurse Lisa