



2019-2020 New Faculty Bios

Aura Evans - ES/MS Art

Hello! My name is Aura Evans and I am the incoming Elementary and Middle School Visual Arts Teacher. I am beyond excited to be a part of your beautiful community in Grand Cayman! I am an artist, teacher, and designer from Chicago, IL and completed my BFA and MAT at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, MD. After graduating I pursued my love for teaching through the Department of Defense by teaching at Crossroads Elementary School in Quantico, VA. Both my artistic studies and growing up in military family introduced me the joy and excitement of international travel. Traveling has taught me to take risks and engage in the world around me by pursuing my curiosities. As an art educator, I engage students in a space where they can discover the tools that they need to become lifelong learners. It is important for students to learn how to pursue their own questions and find ways to express their discoveries. My students know that learning is not restricted to a classroom environment and that we are constantly learning wherever we are by collaborating with the people, places, and things around us. Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of CIS! I can't wait for us to learn and teach each other.

Catherine Molitor - ES Learning Support

As an incoming student support teacher, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Kate Molitor and I am very excited to be joining the CIS team. I completed my undergraduate degree in elementary education in Chicago and continued on to obtain a master's degree in special education as a learning behavior specialist. I am in my 9th year of teaching and have taught a range of primary grade levels in Chicago, Grand Cayman, and most recently at an international school in Denver. I am excited to get back to Grand Cayman and all it has to offer. I grew up traveling to Grand Cayman on summer holidays with family and it has a special place in my heart. When I am not in the classroom, I have a passion for staying active outdoors. I love running, hiking, kayaking, scuba diving, snowboarding, and my biggest passion is cycling. I have had the opportunity to ride over 4,000 miles across the US raising awareness for multiple sclerosis with a charity group called Bike the US for MS. I am so thankful and excited to this opportunity to join the CIS team and can't wait to meet the students, families, and community of staff.



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Natalie Grimmert - Nursery

My name is Natalie Grimmert and I am thrilled to start my next adventure at the Cayman International School! I have taught first grade in Oklahoma for the last two years. I'm so pleased to be joining Early Childhood at CIS. I earned my BA in Elementary Education from The University of Oklahoma. My husband and I both got our SCUBA certifications in Oklahoma, so outside of work, you can usually find us by the water, listening to music, or just enjoying the outdoors. I am looking forward to joining the CIS family!

Antonio Mañas Puertas - HS Spanish

My name is Antonio Mañas Puertas and I am an international teacher of languages. After completing my degree as a Philologist from the University of Almería (Spain) and Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy), I spent many years traveling and teaching around the world. I have taught in Italy, Romania, England, The Bahamas, Spain and I have spent the last 8 years here in Grand Cayman with my wife Gema. As a young boy growing up in the diverse community of Almeria Spain, I developed a keen interest in the many languages and cultures of the world. This passion led me to become an IB teacher of Spanish and English many years ago. My interest in global adventure is also fostered by a love for history and the environment. I enjoy hiking, diving, and any adventure activity that immerses me in nature. I am very excited to join CIS as my next adventure.

Jared Joiner - Athletics/Activities Director

My name is Jared Joiner, I grew up in the Chicago Suburb of Bartlett Illinois. After High School, I went on to attend Loras College in Dubuque IA where I was a member of the American Football team and met my wife Kinsey. I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Physical Education, Health and Coaching in 2012. I began my career in education at Korea International School (KIS) located in Seoul, South Korea teaching Pk-5 physical education, from there I moved back to Chicago where I taught middle school PE and Health at Pennoyer School in Norridge IL. Most recently, I have spent the past 4 years as Director of Athletics and Physical Education at Yangon International School (YIS) located in Yangon, Myanmar. I just recently finished my Master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in Education Administration. I enjoy being active and the outdoors, specifically swimming, scuba diving, cycling, ultimate frisbee, soccer and any type of exercise or fitness. My wife Kinsey and I are extremely excited to join the CIS learning community and begin our new adventure on Cayman!



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Kinsey Joiner - Grade 1 Teacher

My name is Kinsey Joiner, I grew up in Greendale, Wisconsin which is a south suburb of Milwaukee. After High School, I went on to attend Loras College in Dubuque IA where I was a member of the soccer team and met my husband Jared. I graduated with my bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with a Special Education and Coaching endorsement in 2014. After I graduated I moved to Chicago where I taught half a year at Enger Elementary School an outplacement special education school education where I was a teaching aide in a K & 1st-grade classroom. The other half of the year I taught Special Education to 5th graders at Newberry Math & Science Academy. I am currently finishing up my 4th year as a first-grade classroom teacher at Yangon International School (YIS) located in Yangon, Myanmar. At YIS, I had the opportunity to pilot both the iPad integration program and Readers Workshop curriculum for the lower elementary school. I am a dog lover, who enjoys being outdoors and participating in team sports like soccer, ultimate frisbee, or volleyball. My husband and I love traveling to new places and experiencing different cultures and trying new yummy foods. My husband Jared and I are looking forward to joining the CIS team!

Nadine Appleton - Kindergarten Teacher

My name is Nadine Appleton and I am thrilled to be joining the CIS community. I moved to Cayman in August of 2018 after a long love affair with the island! Prior to moving to the Cayman Islands, I worked in IB international schools in Hong Kong and Korea for 14 years where I gained valuable experience as a primary teacher and as a coordinator. My husband, James Appleton, is also joining the CIS teaching community and together we have two wonderful children who will be entering into Grade 1 and Grade 3. I am originally from Canada and grew up in Ottawa, Ontario but my family valued traveling and exploring the world together. I enjoy playing guitar and crocheting in my spare time, as well as camping with my two adventurous children. I have been a passionate educator ever since completing my Masters in Education in 2003 and I continue to search for professional learning opportunities and experiences that challenge and motivate me. I believe that the Appleton family has found a new "home base" at CIS and we are all looking forward to a successful academic year!



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Olivea Comer - Nursery

I grew up on a farm on the west coast of Ireland. The beautiful, rugged, landscape in which I grew up was instrumental in helping me develop a nurturing disposition toward animals and the environment. I carry the same outlook from my formative years, which has helped shape my career. I have worked as a Early Years Practitioner for over 16 years and believe that starting school is a delightfully special time for young children and their families. I do my utmost to ensure the transition into formative education is a wonderful and fun experience for all. I earned my BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education from Cork Institute of Technology, Ireland, and Master's in International Human Rights Law from the National University of Ireland, Galway. I actively advocate for, and promotes children's rights. I volunteer with organizations that promote autism awareness and support children from disadvantaged areas. This will be my second time working in an International school setting, having previously spent 10 fantastic years teaching in Thailand.

Mark Riggelman - Secondary Learning Support

Hello CIS! My name is Mark Riggelman and I will be the new Middle School Learning Support teacher next year. I have over 20 years of experience teaching learning support in a variety of locations, including the United States, Singapore, London, Nepal, Tunisia, and Bulgaria. My wife Lori is a retired science teacher and is currently a writer. My interests and hobbies include hiking, bike riding, tennis, gardening, reading, kayaking, snorkeling, scuba diving and spending time with my wife and grandson. We love living and working overseas and look forward to our next adventure at CIS and the Cayman Islands.



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Emily O’Keeffe - EC Music and Movement

Hi! My name is Emily O’Keeffe and I am so excited to be joining CIS in August as the Early Childhood Music and Movement teacher. I have been teaching music for over 10 years and my job has taken me from the UK (where I am originally from) to the USA and then, finally, to the Cayman Islands. I earned my BA (Hons) in Commercial Music from the University of Westminster in London U.K. and my music teacher degree from Canterbury Christchurch University in the U.K. I have lived here with my husband for nearly 5 years now and we have a three-year-old son, Rowan, who is also looking forward to starting at CIS in August! We love our life here in Cayman and I am excited about this new chapter in my work life. Outside of work and spending time with my family and friends I enjoy yoga, traveling, making and listening to music, theatre and reading. I can’t wait to get started at CIS - we’ll have the most musical Early Childhood in Cayman in no time!

Gabriel Cadenas - Secondary Spanish

As the incoming High School Spanish Teacher, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Gabriel Cadenas and I am very thrilled to become part of CIS for the coming school year. This is going to be my fifth country of teaching experience (Venezuela, USA, Costa Rica, and Ecuador). Spanish and its culture is my passion to share with students and colleagues. I have taught Spanish to middle school, high school, and college students. For the past 11 years, I have taught different IB Spanish courses, as well. On a personal note, I like everything that is linked to sports therefore, long-distance walking, running, and biking are some of my favorite pastimes. I also consider myself a very passionate photographer. I love reading, listening to music and eating exquisite food. My wife, Paola Ortiz, will also be an educator joining CIS. Our daughter Amaia loves making new friends, reading, playing basketball and volleyball. She also enjoys playing the violin, the piano and listening to music. My family and I are very FELICES *to connect, inspire and serve* with you all.



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Andrea Irish - Nursery

My name is Andy Irish and I will be teaching Nursery. I worked as a substitute teacher at CIS last year and I am absolutely elated to be returning to what I consider to be the best school on the island! I was born in Scotland, raised in England, studied my BA (Hons) in Primary Education in Wales and have Irish as my last name! I love art, surfing, yoga, traveling, reading, drinking tea and being with my two little girls, Poppy and Charlie, who will also be joining the CIS family in August. I have had a wonderful 19 years of teaching experience; teaching 1-12-year-olds within the UK, Thailand, USA, Bermuda, and Cayman. I arrived on the beautiful island of Grand Cayman 12 years ago and have taught at Red Bay Primary, Saint Ignatius and CIS. I am also a fully qualified yoga instructor; additionally certified in teaching children's yoga and mindfulness. I consider teaching to be an absolute privilege and am very excited to create a happy, nurturing, engaging and fun-filled classroom. I can't wait to meet and explore the world with our youngest students.

Paola Ortiz - Grade 5 Teacher

My name is Paola Ortiz and I am an elementary teacher. As a child growing up in different parts of the world, I was fortunate enough to attend great schools with a strong educational and ethical philosophy that is rooted in my daily life. I have taught 3rd, 5th and 6th grade in the elementary. I enjoy researching new reading and writing strategies, implementing math techniques and games, and designing project-based learning concepts. I also search best practices for differentiated instruction to ensure that all my student's needs are met. I am a certified Destination Imagination coach and a TRIBES Teacher. I use many of the community building strategies in my class to ensure positive communication, inclusion, and respect. Among my highest interests and passions is reading and therefore, I inculcate in my students that same excitement for the written word. My husband Gabriel (HS Spanish teacher) and I have taught in Ecuador, Costa Rica, and the USA. Our fifteen-year-old daughter Amaia, loves basketball, piano, and violin. She is also an avid reader, like her mother! I enjoy walking, biking, cooking. I love spending time with my family and dogs as well. Above all, I love being a teacher and believe so strongly in the power of education. I am very excited to be part of the CIS team, teach CIS students and meet you all.



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Rachael Simidian Nicoll - ES Learning Coach

Enthusiastically, I am eager to begin my next step at CIS as the Elementary Learning Coach. I bring 25 years of public school experience from Los Angeles, California, working with a culturally diverse population of students. Professionally, I have served as a classroom teacher, literacy coach, Kinder- 8th school-site principal, and a coordinator at the county office of education to support school districts in planning programs for at-risk students. In these varied roles, my focus has been to implement and support instructional programs that are differentiated to meet the needs of all students. I deeply believe children thrive in a student-centered classroom while giving them opportunities to learn through exploration and inquiry, goal-setting, and ongoing reflection to apply their new conceptual understandings. On a personal note, I love living in and learning about new cultures, as I have served in the Peace Corps in Guatemala and have taught in Colombia. My husband has lived in Gabon and loves music and writing and my ten-year-old son, Gabriel is a curious, adventurous kid who loves reading and hapkido. The excitement of moving to Grand Cayman is a wonderful new chapter for us as a family.

Aaron Huber - MS Social Studies

My name is Aaron Huber and I am very excited to be joining CIS as the new MS Social Studies teacher. I grew up in Chicago and graduated from the University of Arizona with a BA in psychology. I later went on to DePaul University to gain a Master of Education degree. I started teaching history and global studies in Chicago in 2013 and for the past three years, I have led the Geography department at a London prep school. Over the years I have had many side projects in education including teaching for an inner city gifted youth program, writing and teaching secondary exam prep courses and developing an outdoor adventure program. Living in London has allowed my wife and me to do what we enjoy most, travel. We have explored as much of Europe as we could and had some amazing times along the way, including rafting in Norway, zip-lining in Slovenia, hiking glaciers in Iceland and scuba diving in Greece. I am really looking forward to exploring Cayman and working with all the great staff and students at CIS!



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Laurie Mackaill - Elementary Counselor

My name is Laurie Mackaill and along with my husband, Paul, I am excited to be joining the faculty and community at CIS. I am the new elementary counselor K-2. I began my overseas education career in Greece and have since worked at schools in Kuwait, the U.S.A., England, Hungary, and the Netherlands. I am passionate about working as a school counselor. I love to walk, cook, eat and garden. Paul and I have two children both graduates of international schools and eager to visit their parents in their new location!

Paul Mackaill - MS/HS Social Studies

My name is Paul Mackaill and I am excited to be joining the CIS faculty, along with my wife (Laurie Mackaill), who will be an Elementary School Counselor at CIS. I shall be teaching Social Studies in the Secondary School. Prior to joining CIS, we worked at The American School of the Hague, The American International School of Budapest, ACS England (Cobham) and the American School of Kuwait. We look forward to joining the CIS community and continuing to expand our knowledge and practice of teaching and learning. We like to be outdoors, travel, cook, eat and read. We have two grown-up children, graduates of international school education and both are looking forward to visiting their parents in the sunny Caymans!

Maribel Moreno - EC Spanish

My name is Maribel and I am an educator with a passion for teaching the youngest of learners. Originally from Mexico, I have lived and taught Kindergarten in India for the past four years. I enjoy including art, music and movement into my lessons and I am always exploring new ways to help students find the joy in learning in Spanish. I like traveling, trying different types of food, learning traditional styles of dancing and value family time. Our two boys, Nacho and Carlos, will be in Middle School at CIS next year. We are all excited about the move to Cayman!



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Stephanie MacKay - Pre-K3

I am so excited to be joining the team at Cayman International School! I'm originally from New York City and relocated to Cayman in December 2016 with my husband, who grew up on the island. Prior to moving, I taught kindergarten and Pre-K 3 and then Pre-K4, first as an associate teacher and then as a head teacher for 8 years in several private schools in New York City. I received my Bachelor of Arts in History and my Masters of Teaching in Elementary Education from the University of Virginia in 2008. Since moving to Cayman, I took some time off to start a family. In addition to playing with my son Spencer, I enjoy spending time reading, trying new recipes and playing fetch with our dog, Bear. I am passionate about helping students feel confident in themselves and successful in their learning.

Alyssa Lunde - Pre-K4

Hi, I'm Alyssa! I am an Early Childhood Educator who has been working with children for nine years. I love to travel, discover new foods, draw, kayak, play the ukulele, and play basketball. I am excited to join the CIS teaching team this year as the Pre-K4 teacher. For the past two years, I have been teaching internationally in Yangon, Myanmar. Before that, I was a Literacy Specialist in AmeriCorps and taught Preschool in Madison, Wisconsin. I earned my B.A. in Macalester College in St. Paul MN and my Masters in The Art of Teaching from Grand Canyon University in Phoenix AZ. These experiences have broadened my perspectives as a person and as an educator. I approach this profession with the belief that children have an incredible capacity for creativity, wonder, intelligence, and resiliency. I am looking forward to learning and growing along with the children this year!

Luke Grimmatt - Grade 3 Teacher

Hello CIS family! My name is Luke Grimmatt, and I have been teaching 4th grade in Norman, Oklahoma for the last 6 years. When I'm not at school, you can usually find me playing mandolin or guitar, soaking up the sun with friends, or reading a good book in a hammock. I come from a family full of teachers and am eager to teach and learn in such a beautiful setting. It has been a dream of my wife and me to teach internationally for years, and we are beyond excited to join Cayman International School!



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James Appleton - Grade 2

My name is James Appleton and I am thrilled to be joining the Cayman International School community, as the new Grade 2 Teacher for the upcoming 2019-2010 academic year. Prior to teaching in the Caymans, I spent 14 years working in International IB schools in Hong Kong and South Korea, both as a teacher and administration leader. My wife, Nadine, is also joining the CIS community as a new teacher, and we are overjoyed to have our two children, Mathis and Celeste, beginning 3rd and 1st grade at this fantastic school. Being an educator is something that I feel very privileged to do as a professional, and it has allowed me to teach a variety of different students, meet and work with other teaching professionals, and travel to many interesting destinations around the world. I will admit, that leaving Hong Kong was a very difficult decision for my family to make, as it was our home for twelve wonderful years. However, upon visiting the Cayman Islands one Christmas holiday, my wife and I knew that we had indeed found someplace special to raise our family. When I am not teaching, I am most likely busy being a husband and father, cooking, reading, playing tennis, going to the gym, or doing photography.

Claudia Richardson - High School Learning Support

My name is Claudia Richardson. I was born in Dresden, Germany and after the fall of the Berlin Wall moved to West Germany to become a nurse. After graduating, I decided to start a new adventure by moving to the United States, where I raised my two children. I returned to school to get my B.A. in Corporate Communication and upon Graduation followed my passion to become a teacher by completing the Texas Teacher Certification Program. My Certifications are in Mathematics Grades 4-8 and Special Education K-12. I have worked in the capacity of Resource and Inclusion Teacher as well as Mathematics Specialist at the High School Level. I am looking forward to becoming a member of the CIS team as the High School Learning Support Teacher.



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Breanne Gill - Grade 3

As an incoming elementary school teacher, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Breanne Gill and I am thrilled to be joining the CIS family! I was raised here on island but left to study psychology and sociology in Florida. I then moved to Los Angeles, CA, and what started as volunteering at a local elementary school between jobs, turned into becoming a hired classroom aide, and consequently a student teacher. I have had the opportunity to be a full-time teacher for the past two years on island. I am Caymanian, so it has been wonderful to be back home and helping to impact students within my community. I love to travel and I'm always looking for new places to explore. My current bucket list is Japan and South Africa. I am elated to join the CIS team and I look forward to being able to learn and grow from each and every member of the staff.

Sederis Brooks - Secondary Spanish

It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself as one of the new secondary Spanish teachers at Cayman International School. My name is Sederis Brooks. As a native of Charleston, South Carolina, I am excited to live near the ocean again! I earned my degree in Spanish at Charleston Southern University and studied abroad in Santiago, Chile at La Universidad Diego Portales. After working in education for 3 years in South Carolina, I moved to Spain to work in a cultural ambassador program. As a participant in that program, I taught bilingual English and Spanish subjects at Los Montecillos secondary school in Málaga, Spain. My international teaching experiences have been some of the most rewarding. Prior to joining CIS, I lived and worked in Phoenix, Arizona as a high school Spanish teacher for almost 5 years. I also served as the National Honor Society Advisor for 3 years. Aside from teaching, I enjoy traveling, cooking, going to concerts, and hiking. I look forward to being a member of the teaching staff at CIS and sharing my passion for the Spanish language with CIS students!

Dara Cooper - Grade 1

Hello CIS! My name is Dara and my husband, Dan, and I are moving from the San Francisco Bay area where we have been living since we graduated from college in Ohio. I have been a primary elementary teacher for six years and an intervention specialist for one year. Though I've enjoyed working with striving students and have learned a lot, I'm looking forward to being back in the classroom! I am excited to meet everyone and get to know our new community.



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Sarah Parham - MS English

I could not be more excited to return to CIS next year! My husband Jason and I previously taught at CIS from 2013-2016. We left a year after having our son, Andy, to move to Atlanta. To be honest, we missed Target and Amazon, but we have since found those luxuries to be overrated, especially compared to what island living offers. Since leaving Cayman, I have been teaching Grade 7 Humanities and leading interdisciplinary work at The Lovett School, where I also served as a diversity coordinator, technology liaison, and Jr. Model United Nations advisor. Prior to 2013, I taught middle school English in New York City, and before that, I was an attorney in Austin, Texas. I love news, cooking, yoga, reading, and hanging out with my almost-4-year-old. Oh, and his dad is pretty cool too.

Jason Gianitti - Grade 5

I'm moving back to Cayman with my wife Sarah Parham and our soon-to-be four-year-old son Andrew for round two on the island. Guess we just missed the island life—especially being out on the water! We are coming from Atlanta where I have been teaching fifth grade for the last three years. I spent 10 years in New York City teaching Elementary and Middle School before moving to Cayman for three years. Obviously, I enjoy the sun and the beach. Outside of that, I like to play and watch sports, cook (or mainly eat), play with technology, and spend time with my family. I'm looking forward to seeing some familiar faces and meeting a bunch of new people!