

A portrait of Steve Salley, a middle-aged man with glasses, wearing a white lab coat over a blue shirt and a red tie. He is standing in front of a shelf filled with various colorful items, possibly in a classroom or a science lab.

**Steve Salley**

A portrait of Kristin Uptmor, a woman with dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark, patterned short-sleeved shirt. Behind her is a bookshelf filled with books.

**Kristin Uptmor**

# Inspiring Learning

## **Amanda McGee,** 2nd Grade Teacher

I love so many things about St. Mark's. Our entire community is incredibly supportive. The families, team of teachers, and administrators I work with lift me up each day and allow me to be my best. St. Mark's is truly a place where we support the uniqueness of each child. Teaching and working with kids brings me such joy. To watch a child discover and grow, and then to witness the "a ha" moment when they understand a new concept is inspiring. Last year was special for me because it was my first year as a lead teacher at St. Mark's. This coming year, the 2nd grade team is excited to expand upon and introduce some new thematic studies. We will study our community, habitats, where in the world we come from, space and solar systems, and of course, our traditional famous Americans unit. At St. Mark's, we collaborate to offer the best educational experience for our kids. This year we are focusing on vertically aligning with our new reading curriculum so our students have a consistent experience as they move from grade to grade.

## **Steve Salley,** 8th Grade Science Teacher

St. Mark's has a nurturing, loving atmosphere that encourages and supports learning and growth. This community welcomes diversity and has a special, inclusive spirit. I often say, as a teacher, after 39 years in public school, I finally found heaven! Being swarmed with hugs on the sidewalk by appreciative 3 year olds weeks after making density bottles with them; the smiles, hugs, and sharing memories with visiting alumni; receiving an email from a student I taught 30 years ago after he found me through a google search, thanking me for instilling a love of science that he shared with his children; receiving a visit from the most challenging, difficult, frustrating, young man I ever taught, introducing me to his wife and new baby girl, thanking me for caring and not giving up on him. The reward of knowing something I did made a positive impact; there is nothing more special.

## **Kristin Uptmor,** Librarian, Preschool 2s through 2nd Grade; Technology Teacher, Pre-K through 1st Grade

Last year was incredible. We combined our two libraries last summer, and I moved upstairs. I now am physically closer to Laurie Mitchell, 2nd through 8th Grade Librarian, and the entire technology department, which allows me to collaborate and really actively be part of those teams. My favorite thing about our school is the true sense of community. I just completed my sixteenth year in the St. Mark's family, and I love being a part of a place where every person—faculty, parents, and students—is known, supported, and encouraged. We mean it when we say we celebrate the uniqueness of each child. Students are given opportunities to explore and share their varied interests. Our teachers encourage students to be comfortable in their own skin and take pride in who they are, and our students learn to appreciate one another's differences.