

2024–25 Lower School New Faculty Bios

Ann Claire Hoch – Ann Claire will serve as a first grade assistant teacher. Ann Claire is a graduate of Furman University. She worked as a Middle School Latin Teacher at Country Day for 10 years, before staying home to be with her daughter, a current fourth grade student. Ann Claire has served as a long-term substitute teacher in both library and kindergarten. In addition, she has been tutoring children after school using the Orton Gillingham training that she received.

Paige Kearnan – Paige will serve as a first grade lead teacher. Paige comes to us from Far Hills Country Day School in Far Hills, New Jersey, where she served as a first grade teacher. Prior to her time in New Jersey, Paige taught first grade and kindergarten in public schools in both Arlington, Virginia and Cornelius, North Carolina. Paige is a graduate of UNCC, where she received a BA in Elementary Education.

Lisa Pierce – Lisa will serve as assistant theatre teacher. She served as a music teacher in Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools for 30 years, including 20 years at Myers Park Traditional School, before retiring in 2022. Lisa has a strong background in theatre, collaborating on many theatre productions, in addition to being involved in adult theatre. Lisa is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Jessica Stoner – Jessica will serve as a fourth grade assistant teacher. A graduate of Indiana University, Jessica began her career as a lead second and fourth grade teacher in Fulton County schools in Atlanta, before working for her family business for 15 years. She transitioned back to the world of education, working as an Orton-Gillingham tutor and a substitute teacher.

Cameron Tuomi – Cameron will serve as a fourth grade lead teacher. Cameron most recently worked at Parish Episcopal Day School in Dallas, Texas, where she served as the math department chair, teaching 5th–8th grade. Prior to her time in Dallas, Cameron taught fifth grade at The Lovett School, and 1st, 2nd, and 4th grade at The Dwight School in New York City. Cameron received her BA from The University of Georgia, and her MA from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Yvonne Turner – Yvonne will serve as a first grade assistant teacher. Yvonne most recently spent the past four years as Assistant Third Grade Teacher at Charlotte Latin School. Prior to her time at Charlotte Latin, she taught in CMS, as well as public schools in San Diego and Anaheim, California. Yvette is a graduate of Cal State Long Beach and received an MA in Reading from Walden University.

Ashley Westerberg – Ashley will serve as a kindergarten assistant teacher. She is a graduate of Auburn, and recently received her MA in Elementary Education from Old Dominion University. Ashley spent five years as an assistant and lead teacher in early childhood classrooms in both Charlotte and Norfolk, Virginia. After relocating from Norfolk this past December, Ashley spent time as a substitute teacher at Country Day.

Carter Williams – Carter will serve as a third grade assistant teacher. Carter is a graduate of Charlotte Country Day, Coastal Carolina University, and the University of North Carolina Charlotte, where she received an MA. After working at Ortho Carolina as an insurance representative and as a varsity lacrosse coach at Country Day, Carter more fully pursued her passion for working with young people by serving as a go-to substitute teacher last year at Country Day, where she positively contributed to our community in a variety of ways.

The following faculty members will serve in new roles:

Beth Ellis – Beth will serve as a junior kindergarten lead teacher this year, after spending the past four years as a junior kindergarten assistant teacher. During her time at Country Day, Beth has also taught first and fourth grade, both as an assistant and lead teacher.

Sydney Farrance – Sydney is moving from third grade assistant teacher to lead second grade teacher. Sydney received her BA from Florida State University and her MA from University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She has spent the past two years as a third grade assistant teacher, and served as a long-term substitute teacher in third grade prior to her time as assistant teacher.

Tom Fredenberg – Tom will teach Lower School science this year. Tom has spent the past 12 years teaching in the Middle School. Prior to his time at Middle School, he taught fourth grade at Country Day for five years, and third grade for seven years. Tom created the Oceanography Club in Lower School 20 years ago, and has served as a third, fourth, and fifth grade coordinator during his 24 years at Country Day. Prior to his time at Country Day, Tom taught at St. Gabriel's and in CMS. We're excited to welcome Tom back to the Lower School!

Caroline Hoff – Caroline will transition this school year from teaching second grade to serving as a physical education teacher. A college field hockey player at UNC Chapel Hill, Caroline spent the past six years as an assistant second grade teacher- the last two at Country Day.

Lori Townsend Mahaffey – Lori will serve as the new Lower School Director of Studies. Lori's accomplishments during her time at Country Day have been numerous, and she has served in a variety of leadership roles during her 22 years on the faculty, including serving as Special Area Coordinator, Lower School Science Department Chair, and Lower School New Faculty/Staff Mentor Coordinator. Lori's work ethic, care for others, and continuous focus on what is best for students will serve her incredibly well in this new position.

Stephanie Sooroojnauth-Khan – Stephanie will serve as kindergarten lead teacher this year, after having spent four years as a kindergarten assistant teacher and serving as an interim kindergarten teacher this past spring. Prior to her time at Country Day, Stephanie was a lead kindergarten teacher in Brooklyn.