

The GarDa School 2024/2025

Meet our exceptional team of dedicated educators and administrators who are committed to our mission: to provide a nurturing and intellectually stimulating environment that arms students with the knowledge, skills and resilience to achieve their goals, make thoughtful decisions, and act with integrity in all aspects of life.



Ms. Marilena Tesoro boasts a 35-year career in education marked by key leadership roles, including her recent long-serving tenure as Head of School at an independent university preparatory institution in Ontario.

Fueled by a passion for empowering others, Ms. Tesoro's educational journey began in 1984. Starting as a teacher, she swiftly ascended to the role of Guidance Counsellor, eventually becoming Department Head of Guidance.

Ms. Tesoro's impact extended even further when she pioneered the first alternative school in Dufferin-Peel and introduced high school classrooms within Sheridan College. Her influence also reached the Ontario Ministry of Education, where she played a pivotal role in developing and championing strategic policies as an Education Officer.

Known for her innovative and collaborative leadership style, Ms. Tesoro has earned deep respect from colleagues, while students appreciate her compassionate dedication to empowering their fullest potential. She champions a learning environment that fosters curiosity, intellectual risk-taking, confidence, and personal growth.



Mr. Frank Scarcelli is dedicated to creating impactful learning environments for students to thrive academically, socially, and personally. With over four decades of experience in education both domestically and internationally, he exemplifies leadership, innovation, and excellence. Holding a Master of Education in School Administration and specializations in Special Education and Career Counselling, Mr. Scarcelli is a member in good standing with the Ontario College of Teachers.

His leadership spans multiple curriculums including Ontario, IGCSE, International Baccalaureate, and American. As Head of School in the UAE, he led significant improvements in infrastructure and academics, overseeing four governmental inspections, two accreditations, and increased enrollment.

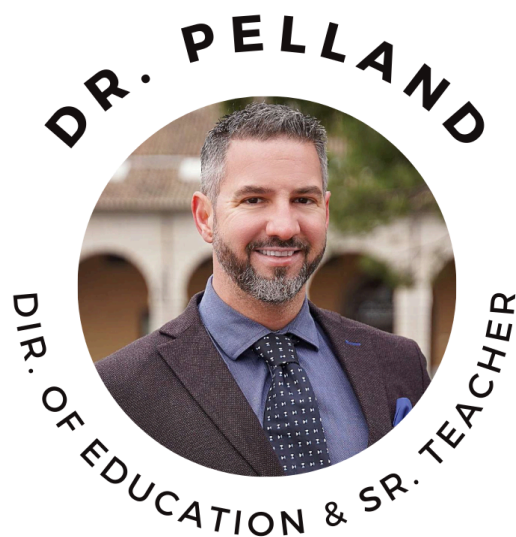
During his tenure as an Academic Advisor to the Abu Dhabi Educational Council, he played a pivotal role in shaping educational reform within a complex landscape of political and cultural sensitivities. By guiding National Principals through the integration of an international curriculum, he significantly advanced educational practices in Abu Dhabi, creating a more conducive environment for learning and development.

An outdoor enthusiast, Mr. Scarcelli and his wife have hiked Mount Kilimanjaro and Everest Base Camp, reflecting his commitment to physical fitness and well-being.



Ms. Carmela Bigioni is a passionate and experienced educator from Toronto, Canada with a teaching degree from York University. She has built a strong foundation in Ontario classrooms, teaching in both the English and French Immersion streams. Additionally, she has gained valuable international experience at Canadian schools in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai. Recently, she has discovered a deep passion for Special Education and finds great joy in supporting and empowering diverse learners.

Ms. Bigioni's teaching style is dynamic and inclusive, driven by her passion for culture and languages. She is dedicated to supporting all students by integrating diverse cultural perspectives into her curriculum, which helps create an engaging and globally-minded learning environment. Her ability to connect with students and adapt to their individual needs ensures that every student feels valued and supported. She enjoys exploring new destinations, being outdoors, and immersing herself in different cultures, all of which continually inspire her teaching practices.



Dr. Derek Pelland is an American education entrepreneur. He earned his doctorate in organizational leadership along with a master's in social entrepreneurship from Pepperdine University in Malibu, California. He completed his formal studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, obtaining his bachelor's and teaching credentials.

Derek joined Canadian College Italy after teaching at St. Louis School in Milan and the International School of Verona. He served as the youth fellowship coordinator at the United Nations in Geneva and designed the Leadership Academy and Entrepreneurship Lab at College Du Lemman in Switzerland.

He has spent more than ten years delivering and designing educational programmes across Europe and co-authored 21st Century Leadership for European Institutions in 2016 with The Greenleaf Centre for Servant Leadership in Brussels. He is the proud father of a child studying at The Garda School and enjoys spending his free time with his family at his home on Lago di Garda, Italy.

MS. GRAY



CORE TEACHER

Ms. Gabriella Gray is a senior teacher at The Garda School, celebrated for her exceptional ability to inspire breakthroughs in both mathematics and language among our senior students. After earning a degree in languages and a brief tenure with the Italian Trade Commission, she quickly discovered her true passion in education.

Ms. Gray began her teaching journey as an early years Montessori directress, mastering child-centered learning before transitioning to a Montessori directress role for Upper Elementary School. Her commitment to education led her to earn a Postgraduate Certificate in Education for the Senior Phase, graduating Cum Laude. She furthered her expertise by attending an intensive workshop on the Davis Method of dyslexia correction in Paris and is also TEFL certified to teach English as a foreign language.

Throughout her career, Ms. Gray has taken on influential roles, including Grade Head for the Intermediate Phase (Grade 6), where she nurtured academic excellence and holistic growth. Her diverse experience includes homeschooling a single child and teaching mathematics and language to an entire grade of 125 students.

Ms. Gabriella Malacrino is known for her warm and approachable teaching style that consistently leads to breakthroughs in our younger Garda School students. With a strong background in both computer science and graphic design, having studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti Santa Giulia in Brescia.

Raised bilingually in English and Italian, Ms. Malacrino specializes in languages, holding both Cambridge English C1 and TEFL certificates. Her international experience includes studying in Germany as part of the Erasmus program and completing her teacher training in London. These diverse experiences have enriched her teaching methods, making her a versatile and effective educator.

Ms. Malacrino is particularly passionate about early childhood education and teaching English as a second language to Italian children. Her dual role at The Garda School as a technology and ESL tutor allows her to merge her technical expertise with her linguistic skills, creating a well-rounded and impactful learning environment for her students.

MS. MALACRINO
CORE & TECHNOLOGY TEACHER



MS. KARCH



ART

Ms. Jennifer Karch has ignited a passion for art in hundreds of students as a middle and high school art teacher for more than 20 years. Ms. Karch studied art history at York University in Toronto, graduating Cum Laude and specializing in Indigenous art. She also served as the director of public relations at the prestigious Koffler Gallery in Toronto before relocating to Italy.

Ms. Karsh held several positions at the Galleria D'Arte Moderna in Verona over a twenty year career. An active member of the Veneto art community, Ms. Karch represented prestigious cultural and educational institutions.

She also had the privilege of curating six collections for the Imago Mundi project of the Luciano Benetton Foundation – Namibia, Indigenous Art of North America, Western Canada, Inuit Art, Nepal and Hawai'i. She has also curated and organized two major national photography competitions and exhibitions entitled "Vite in Viaggio" about traveling and photography.

MR. COX



MUSIC

Mr. David Cox is a British engineer, musician and educator who has built an esteemed reputation teaching both in international schools and private consulting. His experience spans decades and crosses into the fields of engineering, business development, and music production in the UK and abroad.

Mr. Cox is a firm believer in the education of children and young people through a combination of theoretical knowledge complimented and enhanced with practical interactive activities and reinforced with real 'hands-on' skills.

His teaching methods reflect the creative and dynamic energy of his students, leading students to discover their own passion and love of music. Through production technology platforms, Mr. Cox provides opportunities for students to create and master essential skills, preparing them for the digital world of the 21st century.



Mr. “Drew” Stefanelli is a dedicated and passionate physical education teacher at The Garda School, where he is known for his empathetic and enthusiastic approach to student development. With a certification as a personal trainer from the prestigious ISSA, Mr. Drew possesses a profound understanding of the human body and its capabilities, making him a master at guiding students towards their optimal physical potential.

At The Garda School, Mr. Drew has had the unique opportunity to work with a diverse group of students, including professional kart athletes, whom he has helped to enhance their performance through tailored fitness programs. His reputation as a supportive and motivating educator has made him a trusted figure among students, fostering not only their physical well-being but also a lasting passion for health and personal growth.

Mr. Drew's mission is to sculpt individuals into the best version of themselves, instilling a deep-rooted commitment to wellness and self-improvement in every student he teaches.

Mr. Davide D’Alessandro is the corporate director and leader of the Garda School and Canadian College Italy, where he applies his diverse business background and passion for educational excellence.

Born in Canada, Mr. D’Alessandro was a student of a number of international private schools in Canada and Europe, before his mother, a teacher in Toronto, launched CCI, a Canadian boarding school in Lanciano, Italy in 1995.

After graduating CCI, Mr. D’Alessandro earned his Bachelors at the University of Toronto and went on to a career in film production & finance. He also developed his keen entrepreneurial spirit helping to manage a variety of family businesses along the way.

After earning his M.B.A. at the International University of Monaco, Mr. D’Alessandro spent years honing a deep understanding of business development in the world of start-up ventures, real estate development and mortgages.





Passionate about food, Mr. D'Alessandro also trained at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris. It is his great pleasure to be a personal chef to his loving wife and two children, who also attend The Garda School.

Ms. Cheryl D'Alessandro strongly believes that poor communication is at the root of many human foibles.

A journalist for more than two-decades, Ms. D'Alessandro has a keen curiosity, tenacious organizational skills and an enthusiasm for research and travel.

After earning her Bachelor of Communications at Ryerson University in Toronto, Ms. D'Alessandro became an accomplished writer, reporter, social media editor and news producer.

During her 13 years at the CBC, Canada's national public broadcaster, she covered major national and international events, including traveling to South Korea for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang.

A mother of two Garda School students, Ms. D'Alessandro is fiercely devoted to her family and seeks to serve Garda School families as she would wish to be served.

