

CORNELIUS LAKE SID E LIVING



INSIDE:
More Amazing Teachers
NC Teacher Pay
Mayor's Update

POWERED BY
BVM
BEST VERSION MEDIA

Celebrating Our Teachers

COVER PHOTO BY WORDS & PICTURES BY JEANNIE DESENA

CELEBRATING OUR *Teachers*

BY CAROLINE CAMPBELL
PHOTOS BY WORDS & PICTURES BY JEANNIE DESENA

May is Teacher Appreciation Month, and we are celebrating these amazing local teachers and educators who work in one of our local schools or reside in our *Lakeside Living* community. They work tirelessly to prepare our students for bright futures, and we are incredibly grateful.

BRAD BAKER



**AP US History
William Amos Hough High School**
Number of Years Teaching: 24
Awards/Recognition: 2008, 2013 & 2020 Teacher of the Year
Greatest Inspiration: His wife, Wendy, and his twins, Abby and Bennett
Favorite Quote: *"I change by not changing at all."* —Pearl Jam

Mr. Baker has lived in the Cornelius area since 2002, when he and his wife married and bought a condo on W. Catawba Ave. He began teaching in Gaston County and was there for seven years. Mr. Baker has spent the last 16 years at CMS schools—teaching at Providence High for three years before coming to Hough in 2013, which has become a second home. He has spent the last 16 years teaching AP US History. "I love history and love making connections to show students how our history impacts current events today."

ERIN BAUER



**Multilingual Learner Teacher (English as a Second Language)
Cornelius Elementary School**
Number of Years Teaching: 12
Greatest Inspiration: My students. Their resilience and determination inspire me to be more patient, show greater compassion and set high expectations every day.
Favorite Quote: *"A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new."* —Albert Einstein

For Ms. Bauer, teaching at Cornelius Elementary is deeply personal as it's the same school she went to when she moved to Cornelius as a child. Now, 12 years into her career, she's proud to serve the same community as a Multilingual Learner teacher. Over the years, she's taught kindergarten, 3rd and 5th grade. Ms. Bauer's current role allows her to support students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, while building strong relationships with families. "I believe language is a strength, and I work every day to help my students be able to share their thoughts. Being able to work at the school that I grew up attending is a full-circle moment that I feel very lucky to have!"

KRISTINA BOWERY

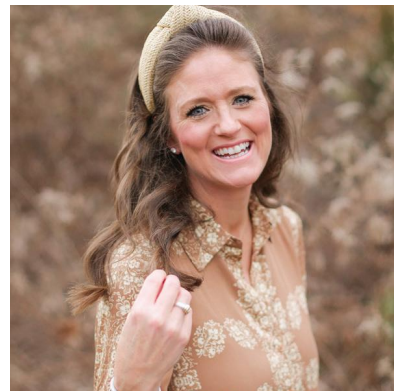
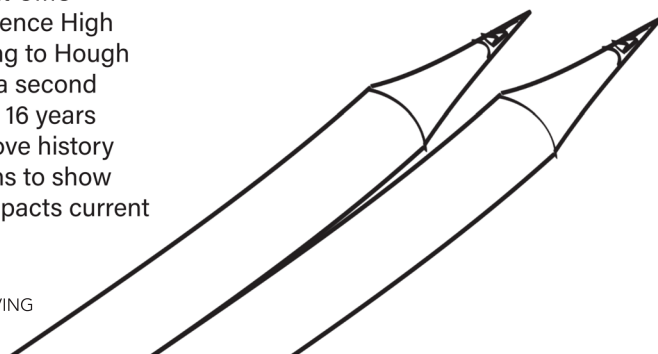


Photo by Deeana Beckley of Deeana Kourtney Photography

**5th Grade Math and Science Teacher
Cornelius Elementary School**
Number of Years Teaching: 18
Awards/Recognition: Lansdowne Elementary Teacher of the Year 2014-2015, Cornelius Elementary Teacher of the Year 2020-2021
Greatest Inspiration: The amazing teachers that I have worked with throughout my journey in education. They have taught me so much and helped shaped me into the teacher I am today.
Favorite Quote: *"When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind."* It is a famous precept by Dr. Wayne Dyer featured in R.J. Palacio's book *Wonder*.

Mrs. Bowery is an elementary educator in her 18th year of teaching and truly loves what she does. She has taught in both Wake County and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and currently teaches 5th grade math and science at Cornelius Elementary. Mrs. Bowery is inspired every day by the incredible educators she has worked alongside, who have shaped her into the teacher she is today. She strives to lead with kindness, guided by her favorite quote: "When given the choice between being right or being kind, choose kind." Outside of school, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two energetic toddlers. The family resides in the Antiquity neighborhood in Cornelius.



TARA COSTENOBLE



5th Grade Science

Lake Norman Charter Middle School

Number of Years Teaching: 28

Awards/Recognition: Teacher of the Year 2017, NCCTM 2018 Innovator Award

Greatest Inspiration: Making a lasting impact. Watching students grow and achieve things they did not know were possible is so rewarding. Supporting their growth, building meaningful relationships and experiencing the joy of seeing/hearing students living 'aha' moments.

Favorite Quote: "You are not wrong, you just proved that way did not work." — Thomas Edison

After 28 years in the classroom, Mrs. Costenoble can honestly say teaching has been one of the most meaningful parts of her life. She's had the chance to work with so many students over the years, and watching them grow—not just in school, but as people—has meant everything to her. There's nothing quite like seeing former students out in the world, doing well and becoming good, responsible humans. Those small moments in the classroom, when something finally clicks or a student starts to believe in themselves, are

what has kept her going all these years. Whenever she runs into former students, they usually say one of the things they remember most about her is when she would read to them, which she does every day. "I'm proud of the years I've spent teaching and the students I've worked with. I also hope to see real changes in how the state of North Carolina supports teachers. Teacher pay is one of the lowest in the nation. It matters for our students and for the future of education."

JULIE CUTLIFF



Photo by Stacey Lanier Photography

Preschool (Toddlers) The Children's House Montessori Preschool

Number of Years Teaching: 32

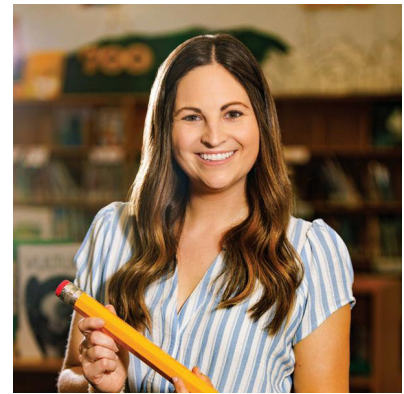
Greatest Inspiration: Maria Montessori

Favorite Quote: "The greatest gifts we can give our children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence." —Maria Montessori

Mrs. Cutliff began her 32-year teaching career in middle school orchestra after graduating from the University of Georgia, leading ensembles that consistently earned superior and excellent ratings. While her own children

were young, she transitioned to private instruction at North Atlanta Talent Education, a Suzuki Method school. During that time, Mrs. Cutliff joined Cross of Life Christian Montessori, where she discovered her love for Montessori education and completed training to become a Toddler Guide. After moving to Jetton Cove in Cornelius in 2015, she taught in CMS magnet Montessori schools before finding her home at The Children's House in Davidson. "Working with young children and their families has been a true joy over the years, and I often say I've never 'worked' a day in my life. I especially cherish the toddler years and deeply believe in the Montessori Method as a beautiful foundation for lifelong learning."

MELISSA DOLLIVER



1st Grade

Cornelius Elementary School

Number of Years Teaching: 12

Awards/Recognition: Teacher of the Year 2019

Favorite Quote: "The influence of a good teacher can never be erased." — Henry Adams

For Mrs. Dolliver, teaching isn't just a career—it's a lifelong passion. She has



TYLER niblack, cpa
Fresh Approach · Experienced Foundation

If you need assistance with income tax planning, business consulting, or college financial aid coaching, please call us today to schedule an appointment.

Tax and Financial Consulting serving businesses and individuals

919.356.6843 | niblackcpa.com



taught 1st grade at Cornelius Elementary for the past 12 years and was honored to be named Cornelius Teacher of the Year in 2019. She believes in building strong, lasting relationships with students and their families to create a joyful classroom community where a lifelong love of learning begins. One of her greatest joys in teaching is witnessing those magical "lightbulb moments" when a challenging concept finally clicks for a student. Outside of the classroom, Mrs. Dolliver enjoys traveling with her family, visiting local parks and reading by the pool in the summer. "Ultimately, I'm driven by the belief that 'the influence of a good teacher can never be erased.'"

**LAURISSA
ECKER-BERKMAN**



Photo by Madison Newman, Madison Newman Photography

**Elementary School Grades K-6,
Reading Specialist K-12, Owner of The
Davidson Center**

Number of Years Teaching: 24
Greatest Inspiration: My family inspires me to want to be better every day.
Favorite Quote: "You can do hard things."

Mrs. Ecker-Berkman began her teaching career as a teaching assistant at an all-boys private school, where

an exceptional mentor taught her the importance of preparation, classroom management and creating a space that both supports and challenges students. She then spent 17 years in a New York public school teaching grades 1, 3 and 4 before becoming a K-6 reading specialist, deepening her expertise in literacy and inclusive instruction. Later, as an administrator at Davidson Day School, Mrs. Ecker-Berkman expanded her work in school leadership and family partnerships. In July, she became the owner and director of The Davidson Center, an accredited tutoring center and non-public school in Davidson. "While I still tutor when needed, my most meaningful work involves mentoring tutors and developing educational plans that help every student feel safe, supported and inspired to love learning."

ALYSSA HARRINGTON



**3rd Grade
Cornelius Elementary School**

Number of Years Teaching: 15
Awards/Recognition: National Board Certified Teacher, Teacher of the Year recipient
Greatest Inspiration: My students. Their growth, confidence and successes

motivate me every day.
Favorite Quote: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." —Maya Angelou

Mrs. Harrington is a 3rd grade teacher with 15 years of experience in Union County Public Schools and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. Throughout her career, she has taught both 2nd and 3rd grades. Her passion for teaching centers on building strong relationships with her students and creating a classroom environment where they feel confident and supported. Mrs. Harrington uses data-driven instruction and engaging, standards-aligned lessons to meet the diverse needs of her learners. "My goal is to ensure students not only achieve academically but also develop confidence, independence and a love of learning."

TRISHA HEFNER



**2nd Grade
Cornelius Elementary School**

Number of Years Teaching: 26
Awards/Recognition: National Board Teaching Certification
Greatest Inspiration: Her own 2nd grade student-teacher, Ms. Priest.
Favorite Quotes: "We all make mistakes,

Restoring
MOVEMENT.

Reclaiming
CONFIDENCE.

**Orthopedic and Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy for All
Pregnancy and Postpartum Care and Fitness
Birth Prep ~ Dry Needling**

UPLIFT
PELVIC HEALTH & PERFORMANCE

📞 **704-251-5141** ✉️ **admin@upliftpelvicnc.com**

📍 **10210 Hickorywood Hill Avenue, Suite 120, Huntersville, NC 28078**

that's why pencils have erasers!" and "Don't look back, you're not going that way!"

Mrs. Hefner has been a teacher at Cornelius Elementary for the past 26 years and has taught 5th, 3rd and 2nd grades. She knew she wanted to be a teacher since she was in the 2nd grade. Mrs. Hefner was inspired by many amazing teachers growing up, but especially one particular student-teacher she had that year, Ms. Priest, who brought a new level of energy and enthusiasm to teaching and learning, which made her want to run to school every day! Ms. Hefner wanted to provide that experience for her future students one day. In 2010, she received her National Board Teaching Certification and renewed her certification again in 2020. When she's not teaching, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two sons, watching them play basketball and baseball, cheering on the Tarheels in Chapel Hill or spending time with friends. The family feels blessed to live in Cornelius. They have lived in Rockridge Shores, Antiquity and now off Washam Potts Road.

"I always try to help my students understand that many lessons can be learned from the mistakes we make. It's what we choose to do with this new knowledge the next time we are faced with the same problem that will be the true test."

DAN MCDERMOTT



**8th Grade English Language Arts
Bailey Middle School**

Number of Years Teaching: 22
Awards/Recognition: Master's in Middle Childhood Education
Greatest Inspiration: My students

Mr. McDermott has been teaching in North Carolina since 2004, with 22 years as an 8th grade teacher. He feels fortunate to teach at a great school in the Lake Norman area and is inspired by students who push themselves and strive to improve as they approach high school. Mr. McDermott's wife, Nicole, is a dental hygienist and they live in Davidson. The couple's son, Connor, is a freshman at Hough, and their daughter, Brooke, is a 5th grader at Davidson Elementary. They enjoy their kids' soccer and dance, adventures with their terrier, Oreo, and all that North Carolina offers.

TANYA PAXTON



**3rd Grade
Cornelius Elementary School**

Number of Years Teaching: 13
Awards/Recognition: Teacher of the Year 2021-2022, Rookie Teacher of the Year 2012-2013
Greatest Inspiration: Hope and love
Favorite Quote: The Serenity Prayer, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

Ms. Paxton's teaching career began when she became a mother to a wonderful son, JP. Her job was to create a safe, nurturing learning environment that required love, patience and discipline. This prepared her for a professional career in teaching. Ms. Paxton started this journey by volunteering at her son's preschool at the Lake Norman YMCA. In working with the children, she enjoyed seeing their progress as they learned different skills. When the children learned and made progress, it made her happy. She then chose to go back to school to earn a master's degree in elementary education so that she could provide a positive experience for children while earning a living.

BOZA BOARDS
CHARCUTERIE & SMALL BITES
704-699-4687
bozaboards.com

Artfully curated for any occasion!

One time, move-in, out, or regular **CLEANING SERVICES**

Check Out Our Reviews

Maid Brigade
Serving the Lake Norman Area for 27 Years!

**New Client Special:
SAVE \$60**
(call for details)
Expiration Date: 5/31/26

4.9 ★★★★★

704-568-0028
charlotte.maidbrigade.com

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS

BRIAN ROSEBROOK



Talent Development Teacher Cornelius Elementary School

Number of Years Teaching: 14

Awards/Recognition: Inspiring Principal's Program Acceptance (CMS & UNCC); coached robotics team to third place performance award, first place judges award and state tournament qualification.

Greatest Inspiration: My mom.

Favorite Quote: *"Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard."*

—Tim Notke

Mr. Rosebrook has been at Cornelius Elementary for 14 years, spending three years in 2nd grade, one year in 4th grade and 10 years in AIG (Academically and Intellectually Gifted). He was inspired by his mom, who taught him that working hard and being kind to others truly pays off in life. In addition to teaching, Mr. Rosebrook inspires students as the Cornelius Elementary robotics team coach. Some recent team awards include a first place judges award and a qualification to go to the state

tournament for the 2022-2023 team and a third place robot performance award for this year's team. His hobbies include watching and playing sports with his two sons and spending time with his family.

DONNA SHECK



6th Grade Math

Lake Norman Charter Middle School

Number of Years Teaching: 27

Greatest Inspiration: My students.

Favorite Quote: *"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."* —Albert Einstein.

Mrs. Sheck has been teaching for 27 years in North Carolina, with the past 25 years dedicated to teaching 6th grade math at Lake Norman Charter School. She is inspired by witnessing her students' growth throughout the school year, and especially when they experience those "aha" moments in learning. Outside the classroom, she enjoys spending time with her family, taking walks by the lake and cooking. She has lived in Cornelius for the past 12 years.

ZACHARY WALKER



AP World CMS Lead, Social Studies Teacher

William Amos Hough High School

Number of Years Teaching: 13

Awards/Recognition: Senior Class Teacher of the Year (2021), Crystal Apple Award (2023)

Greatest Inspiration: Mr. Willie Howard and Mrs. Audrey Howard

Favorite Quote: *"A people without the knowledge of their past is like a tree without roots."* —Marcus Garvey

Mr. Walker has "had the good fortune of teaching for 13 years." All 13 of those years have been at William A. Hough High School, and the last decade has been focused on teaching AP World History. When he first joined Hough, Mr. Walker was living just down the road from Harp & Crown, which quickly became a favorite spot for his coworkers and him to unwind after a long week. He became a teacher because of Mr. Willie Howard and Mrs. Audrey Howard. Their decision to open a school to support underrepresented students showed him the truly transformative power of

Transforming Moments into Treasured Heirlooms



ABOUT ME: I am a Huntersville headshot, family, and portrait photographer offering a stress-free session filled with laughter and your favorite music while capturing authentic moments. We create beautiful custom heirlooms to help preserve your legacy.

G.fuller
PHOTOGRAPHY

980-292-2898
www.gfullerphotography.com

education. Their guidance shaped his approach to teaching and helped lead to him being named Senior Class Teacher of the Year (2021) and receiving the Crystal Apple Award (2023).

KRISTOPHER WAZANEY



**Journalism, Yearbook & Production Teacher
Bailey Middle School**

Number of Years Teaching: 23+
Awards/Recognition: MeckEd® Teacher of the Year, CMS Master Teacher, BMS Coach of the Year, BMS Teacher of the Year (2x Runner-Up)
Greatest Inspiration: My parents
Favorite Quote: *"Live the journey... for every destination is but a doorway to another great adventure."* —Masters of the Universe

Mr. Wazaney has been teaching for over 23 years, starting at The Villages Charter School in Florida where he taught American History. Following, he taught 6th and 7th grade Cultural Geography, 8th American History and is currently teaching Journalism, Yearbook and Production at Bailey Middle School. He's earned recognition as MeckEd® Teacher of the Year, CMS Master Teacher, Bailey

Middle School Coach of the Year and Bailey Middle School Teacher of the Year (two-time Runner-Up). Inspired by his parents, he also loves to be with his own family, wife Jasmine and daughter Kennedy.

TROY WHITEHURST

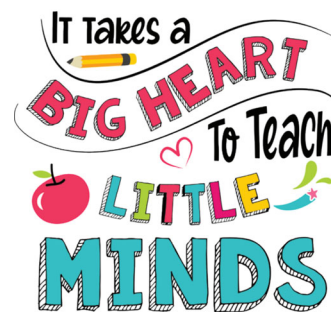


**Marketing Teacher
William Amos Hough High School**

Number of Years Teaching: 11
Awards/Recognition: Coach of the Year for volleyball, selected as an AVID national trainer, coached/taught at AVID National Demonstration School
Greatest Inspiration: God for giving him a new life
Favorite Quote: *"When life gives you lemons, you make orange juice."* — from Mr. Whitehurst's book, *Choose To Be Happy*

Mr. Whitehurst has been teaching for 11 years in CMS and currently teaches marketing at Hough High School. He's passionate about helping students grow academically, personally and professionally by developing critical thinking and transferable skills that will serve them beyond their high school years. He's most inspired by God

because He has given him new life. Throughout Mr. Whitehurst's career, he has been honored with being named Coach of the Year for volleyball. He was also selected to be an AVID national trainer and had the opportunity to teach and coach basketball at an AVID National Demonstration School. Mr. Whitehurst enjoys bringing creativity and inspiration into the classroom. Outside of teaching, he enjoys officiating basketball games, exercising and traveling.



FLOWER POWER!

Call now to plan outdoor portraits in fields of pinks, poppies, tulips, lavender, & more!



Words & Pictures
By Jeannie Desena

704-806-2192 • WWW.JEANNIEDESENA.COM



puddle
pool services

GNOME MORE WORRIES
Call 704.741.2185 today!

FULL SERVICE PROVIDER:
Pools & Hot Tubs
Routine Maintenance
Openings & Closings
Equipment Repair

Unmatched Care.
Unmatched Clarity.

LAURIE WRAGG



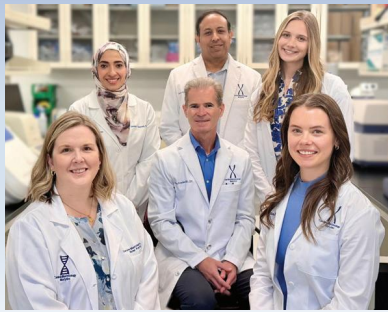
PE Teacher Cornelius Elementary School

Number of Years Teaching: 26
Greatest Inspiration: Helping students build confidence and a positive relationship with physical activity.
Favorite Quote: *"Success is giving your best effort, not being perfect."*

Mrs. Wragg is in her 26th year of teaching and is currently the PE teacher at Cornelius Elementary. Prior to Cornelius, she was a middle school health teacher for 19 years. The town of Cornelius has been home since 2011,

and she feels so fortunate to teach in the community and at the school both of her boys attended. Mrs. Wragg has always loved Cornelius Elementary, first as a parent and now as a teacher. Her greatest inspiration is helping students build confidence and have a positive relationship with physical activity. She wants kids to be excited to move and develop habits that will support their health for life. When she's not teaching, she enjoys spending time by the pool with family and friends, reading, working out and going out to eat.

Stage 4 cancer? Have you considered a clinical trial?



Top row:
Sherene Banawan, PA-C;
Neel Gandhi, MD,
Carson Kirby, PA-C;
Bottom row:
Caroline Mastrosante, NP,
John Powderly, MD,
Sydney Noldin, PA-C

Carolina BioOncology Institute Providers

We provide rapid access to the newest treatments for cancer before they are widely available.



Carolina BioOncology Institute
CANCER RESEARCH CLINIC

Treating every person as a Trial of One since 2005.
Call us today at **704-947-6599** to see if you are eligible.

www.carolinabiooncology.org

9801 Kinsey Ave. Ste. 145 Huntersville, NC 28078



Love Your Home Inside and Out

With Custom Window
and Door Upgrades by
Renewal by Andersen

THIS MAY ONLY

**Save \$300 off windows
and \$825 off doors**

PLUS

**An EXTRA 5% OFF
your entire order!**



704-800-4036

Call or Scan Now to
Schedule Your Free
In-Home Consultation

*Offer not available in all areas. Discount applied by retailer representative at time of contract execution and applies to purchase of 4 or more windows and/or Andersen patio doors. It cannot be combined with other offers. Additional 5% discount valid during first appointment only. Excludes ProVia entry doors. Initial contact for a free Window and Door Diagnosis must be made and documented on or before 5/31/26 with the purchase then occurring on or before 6/10/26. S&L Windows and Doors, LLC d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of the Carolinas. NC Residential Builders License #80213. South Carolina Residential Builders Commission #571. "Renewal by Andersen" and all other marks where denoted are marks of Andersen Corporation. ©2026 Andersen Corporation. All rights reserved. Products are marketed, sold and installed (but not manufactured) by Renewal by Andersen of the Carolinas, an independently owned and operated affiliate operating in NC and SC.