



Teacher Profiles



The Panama Teacher Match Program aims to increase English language capacity in the Panamanian public school system by matching American English volunteer teachers with Panamanian public school English teachers to assist in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and teacher training. American teachers will spend 6 weeks working alongside Panamanian teachers in all 10 provinces of Panama. The Panama Teacher Match Program also promotes mutual understanding between the American and Panamanian cultures. American teachers will live with host families throughout the country and share their culture with Panamanian citizens.



Amy Burge (Seattle, WA)

Ms. Burge is currently a high school Spanish teacher in Seattle, WA and has taught ESL both in the U.S. and in Chile. She is a National Board Certified teacher in English as a New Language; she holds a Masters degree in TESOL and a Bachelors degree in Spanish. Meeting people from around the world is something that she loves. She has lived abroad in Chile, Argentina, & Spain. She and her husband enjoy hosting exchange participants from around the world in their home; it has been a great way to deepen their understanding of different cultures. Ms. Burge is excited to have the opportunity to work with English teachers and live in Panama. When not traveling around the world, Ms. Burge enjoys hiking and working in her garden.



Kathryn Davey (Washington, DC)

In 2011, Kathryn Davey transitioned to education from a career in video production. Although her background is in art, Ms. Davey seeks out ways to explore language and culture as a means to learn about the world. While working toward her Master's in Education, Ms. Davey continued to teach art and began teaching English to adults as a volunteer at various non-profits around Philadelphia. It was during this time she discovered that teaching language challenged her creatively. She spent the next two years teaching English as a foreign language in Spain and has recently settled in D.C. to continue her work with language learners at a dual immersion elementary school. When she's not teaching, Ms. Davey still engages in artistic endeavors: ceramics, dance, illustration, music; and enjoys both domestic and international outdoor adventures.



Sonja Dill (Columbus, OH)

Ms. Dill considers life an adventure, and teaching an honor. She has been an educator at the elementary and secondary levels for 19 years. She has worked for 13 years as a Teacher of ESOL in Whitehall, a four square mile urban suburb in the Columbus, Ohio area. She has the privilege of working with students in various capacities as they strive to acquire proficiency of the English language. Ms. Dill is also a life-long learner born into a family of educators and world travelers. Her students' cultures continually enrich her. She has acquired Spanish fluency and is pursuing Portuguese. She has traveled to eleven countries including Israel, Paraguay, Mexico, and Dominican Republic, visited Venezuela on several occasions for missions, and explored Japan as part of a U.S. teacher delegation through the Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund. In her spare time, she enjoys family and friends, pursuing good health and fitness, and supporting her church community.



Susan Groff (Santa Ana, CA)

Ms. Groff has taught high school biology for 28 years in diverse educational communities in Southern California. She has also taught ESL, GED and Adult Education classes through Rancho Santiago College District. Last summer she visited the Philippines as a Teacher for Global Classrooms Fellow and in 2002 visited Japan as a Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Scholar. Due to her interest in astrobiology and space science; she applied to the 2013 SOFIA program and was selected as a NASA SOFIA (Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy) Airborne Astronomy Ambassador. She was honored to receive the Santa Ana Unified School District High School Teacher of the Year in 2009 and The Carlston Family Foundation Outstanding Teacher Award in 2013. She enjoys meeting new people, sharing experiences, and demonstrating the importance of global education and STEM across disciplines.



Jennifer Hahn (Washington, DC)

Ms. Hahn has taught secondary level English/Language Arts for four years in Prince George's County, Maryland. She is committed to empowering her students with essential language skills and sharing her love of literature to inspire life-long learners. As an Instructional Lead Teacher at Hyattsville Middle School, she collaborates with teachers to reach instructional goals and to differentiate curriculum for a rapidly growing ESOL student population. Additionally, Jennifer created and manages an independent reading program (rLab) that targets struggling readers through authentic reading experiences. Prior to moving to Washington, DC, Jennifer spent a year teaching English in southern Thailand and traveling through Asia. Outside of the classroom, Jennifer enjoys bookstores, swimming, cooking, exploring cities, and laughing with friends.



Jill Hendrix (Gastonia, NC)

This year Ms. Hendrix will mark twenty-five years of teaching in North Carolina. She began her career teaching Foreign Language in elementary schools after spending a semester in Spain and a summer in Mexico. After going back to school and receiving a Masters in Teaching English as a Second Language, she taught in an English School in Mexico and lived with a family there. When she went back into full time work, she took a classroom position co-teaching third grade. Over the next 13 years, she taught third grade, first grade, second grade, and kindergarten. She had two opportunities to travel, once to Mexico and then to Haiti. Most recently, she took a jump from kindergarten to Middle School Spanish.



Trinidad Hernandez (Galveston, TX)

Mr. Hernandez has been a teacher education professional since 1999, when he began teaching English at a public high school in Budapest, Hungary. Along with teaching English, Theatre Arts, and Speech Communication in Texas, Mr. Hernandez has taught English in schools around the globe - in Russia, the United Arab Emirates, and Taiwan as well as at the University of Houston College of Education and Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education (Kazakhstan). Additionally, he has served as the Education Director for Society for the Performing Arts in Houston, Texas, where he was able to bring together his love of the arts, culture and education to community-based contexts. Besides being an instructor for the Houston Community College Southwest campuses and an English Language Fellow for the U.S. Department of State, Mr. Hernandez is also a Texas state-certified Community Health Worker.



Jennifer Hesla (Arlington, VA)

Ms. Hesla has had the privilege of working with students for the last thirteen years in a variety of roles. She began her career working with elementary students and now is enjoying working with middle school students in Arlington County with English Language Learners. Jennifer earned her Master's in Education at George Mason University, and has a Bachelor's degree in Art from California State University Chico. In her career in education, she has enjoyed many professional development opportunities such as a Fulbright grant that allowed her to teach in London, England for a year on a teacher exchange. Ms. Hesla has had the opportunity to travel throughout Europe, North Africa, and parts of the Middle East. When she is not teaching she enjoys cooking, reading and spending time with her family.



Faith Ibarra (Martinsburg, WV)

Ms. Ibarra has been teaching English to English Language Learners for almost 16 years. Watching the light bulbs go on in the classroom is what motivates her students and her to do their very best, because she learns from them as much as they learn from her. She also works on creating authentic and engaging professional development opportunities for new and seasoned teachers. Her educational background includes English, Education, and Curriculum; she considers herself a life-long learner. She has been married for 25 years; she has three terrific children, two loving dogs, and five exotic parrots, whom her husband and she have rescued from various conditions and situations.



Zachary Karasek (Kansas City, MO)

Mr. Karasek is a Spanish teacher at Park Hill High School in Kansas City, Missouri. He completed his degree in both Spanish and Economics at the University of Missouri Columbia, and received his MEd from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Last year he taught English to students and professors at the University of Manabí in Portoviejo, Ecuador. That experience convinced him of the immense professional and personal benefits for the individuals from the host country as well as and perhaps more so for the visiting educators. Mr. Karasek intends to dedicate his summers almost exclusively to working with those programs that recognize the importance of not only initiating international professional ties, but also maintaining them well after the introduction. In addition to traveling, language learning and teaching, his interests include yoga, weight lifting and playing strategy board games such as Settlers of Catan.



Katherine Lodge (Alexandria, VA)

Ms. Lodge grew up in a suburban town just outside of Washington, D.C. Living in D.C. and working for Fairfax County Public Schools as a high school ESL teacher, she has had an amazing opportunity to see all walks of life come through her classroom. She is a second-year teacher and teaches mostly new arrivals from Central and South America. Most of her students hail from El Salvador and Honduras, as well as countries like Bangladesh and Democratic Republic of Congo. She received her Bachelors from Virginia Tech in Political Science and African Studies. During and after college, she has traveled extensively as a volunteer through East Africa. She also worked as an international school teacher in Ghana, West Africa. She served as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer with a refugee resettlement program in Richmond, setting her on path to the field of ESL.



Lisa Martinez (Thornton, CO)

Ms. Martinez is a school leader in the Denver Public Schools. She has taught for 10 years as ESL coach, ESL teacher and elementary classroom teacher. Eight of those years have been at a Title 1 school, so she is familiar with the needs of a high-poverty, high-needs school. In her current role, Martinez is responsible for coaching and evaluating teacher effectiveness in the classroom and supporting teachers to increase student achievement. Being grounded in the data-driven process, she and her team examine data, which in turn guides their instruction. Ms. Martinez has a passion for educating English language learners, and has traveled throughout Latin America learning Spanish and working in local schools. Martinez aspires to be the leader who engages teachers, families and communities in a partnership to build programs to help children learn, grow and meet rigorous standards.



Tiffany Palaniuk (Eugene, OR)

Ms. Palaniuk holds five years of experience teaching English Language Arts and ESOL at the secondary and university level. She has also participated in several teacher-training opportunities both stateside and abroad. She currently specializes in literacy, focusing on writing, reading proficiency, and rhetoric studies with native language speakers and non-native English speakers. Fluent in Spanish, Ms. Palaniuk lived in the Andes for several years where she not only developed linguistic fluency but also cultural competency. A firm believer in equity, Ms. Palaniuk passionately seeks to empower, inform, and ultimately grow with her students. Personally, she is a devout yoga practitioner, eager reader, and a content hiker. She will obtain her MA in Language Arts in 2016 and will continue her commitment to the field of education in curriculum development, teacher training, and rhetoric studies.



Laura Quisenberry (Houston, TX)

Ms. Quisenberry has taught children and adults for 25 years. Her favorite subjects to teach are math, world history, and English as a Second Language. She holds a bachelor's degree from Baylor University in Elementary Education and a master's degree from the University of Houston—Clear Lake, in Multicultural Education. Ms. Quisenberry loves teaching all ages and especially likes to use technology with her students. Her biggest passion is seeing the world and meeting the interesting people during her travels. She has been to 46 countries and is hoping to visit many more.



Alison Shank (St. Paul, MN)

Ms. Shank has worked as an adult ESL instructor for 18 years, teaching intermediate and advanced English classes to adult learners from Asia, Africa, and Latin America at the Hubbs Center for Lifelong Learning in St. Paul. After graduating from Amherst College with a B.A. in English and Spanish, Ms. Shank taught Spanish in northern California for two years. She then worked as a resource teacher and program specialist for the Monterey County Migration Education Program in Salinas, CA. She received her M.A. in International Relations at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies. Ms. Shank obtained her TESOL certificate and Adult Basic Education license and began teaching adult ESL classes in Silicon Valley. She speaks Spanish, French, Italian, and Portuguese. She has lived in Spain, France, Italy, and Brazil and has volunteered in Guatemala, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, and Bolivia.



Ayesha Swinton (McLeansville, NC)

Ms. Swinton grew up in Willingboro, New Jersey. She attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for her BA in Romance Languages. After teaching in NC for one year, she decided to devote a year volunteering with AmeriCorps in Austin, TX. Upon completion of the program, she returned to North Carolina to teach. Since that time she has taught elementary and high school Spanish, earned her Masters of Education and is currently working on her PhD. in teacher education at UNC-Greensboro. She loves to travel and explore new cultures, read, sing on her church choir, and spend time with her loving family and friends. She is grateful for the opportunities she's had to visit places like Mexico, Canada, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Puerto Rico, Spain, France, Germany, Italy and states throughout the U.S. She currently resides in McLeansville, NC with her husband.



Kelly Turner (Rogue River, OR)

Ms. Turner has worked as an educator in Oregon for over 20 years. Ms. Turner's teaching is supported by a secondary teaching license with endorsements in Spanish, Social Studies and English as a Second Language, an Initial Administrative License, a Masters Degree of Educational Leadership (MEd Southern Oregon University) and a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology and Spanish from the University of Oregon. Ms. Turner had the opportunity to provide professional development to rural *Telesecundaria* teachers through PROBEM (Programa Binacional de Educación Migrante) in Morelos, Mexico in 2009 and 2010. In 2007, Ms. Turner participated in the Juniata College Teacher's Abroad program and served as a volunteer English teacher at the Colegio Miguel Angel Asturias in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. Her travels include an adolescence spent living in Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru.



Judith Villedrouin (Sterling, VA)

Ms. Villedrouin grew up in a family of curious and caring people and was introduced at a very early age to people and conversations from many backgrounds. With her parents' support she was able to travel to Holland on a high school exchange program and thus begin her quest to experience international cultures first hand. She has since travelled and worked in many countries including Mexico, Japan, Israel, and China. Ms. Villedrouin became fascinated with languages and returned to the university to research language acquisition. She loves teaching because of her love of learning and sharing the insights she has gained. Ms. Villedrouin believes that the health of our planet depends on education and personal connections.



David Weinreb (New Haven, CT)

Mr. Weinreb currently teaches 5th/6th grade bilingual newcomers at the Fair Haven School as a Teach for America Corps Member. Mr. Weinreb participates on the School Planning and Management Team, leads the Google Chromebook Committee, and organizes an after-school gardening program. Previously, he served as the founding high school placement director, staff recruitment lead, enrichment coordinator, and technology enthusiast for The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School. Mr. Weinreb earned his B.A. in History and Urban Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, has participated in fellowships with Coro, AVODAH, and American Jewish World Service, and is currently pursuing his Masters in Elementary Education at Johns Hopkins University. Mr. Weinreb has a collection of 1300 PEZ dispensers, is fluent in Spanish, and enjoys sharing his HIV-prevention project for injecting drug users in India.



Julie Wright (Charlestown, MA)

Ms. Wright has taught English language arts and Humanities for the past 26 years at schools in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Oregon. In her current position, she teaches Humanities 4, World Literature history and Educators Rising for students interested in becoming teachers at the Urban Science Academy in Boston. She has served as an Instructional Leader and Humanities Lead Teacher, as well as participated in district-wide initiatives to enhance the experiences of educators and students. For five years, she has been an active member of the Dreamfar High School Marathon team. Ms. Wright received a bachelor's degree in English from Rivier College in 1990 and a Master of Science in Education in 2005 from the University of New England. She is married with two adult sons and loves to spend time running, taking pictures, and exploring.