



2021

Meet the Institute for Guided Studies' Staff

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Leadership and Administration

Mary Helen Cline, CEO

Following graduation from Kenyon College in 1982, Mary Helen Cline discovered the Montessori Method of education. She earned her Montessori early childhood certificate from Montessori Institute of America (MIA) in 1985. Since 1985 she has served as the Head of School for Montessori at Sandy Ford in Newton, NC. Montessori at Sandy Ford serves children ages 3 to 14, with focus on conservation efforts and the environment, a person's role in his or her local and world community, and each individual's responsibility to others. Mary Helen also leads by example by being an active participant in her community. Her volunteer services have included Rape Crisis Center, Acoustic Stage, Bas Bleu, ALFA, Newton Main Street Committee, the Catawba County Department of Social Services Board of Directors, Lenoir Rhyne University Visiting Writers Series, and United Arts Council of Catawba County. In 1995, Mary Helen became a founding member of Montessori Educational Programs International (MEPI). She serves on the Board of Directors and holds the position of Education Director. Prior to the founding of MEPI, Mary Helen was associated with Montessori Institute of America, and served on the Board as Education Director. In 2008, she was appointed CEO of the Institute for Guided Studies by Dr. Sheryl Sweet Miller. She was chosen to carry on the "IGS" way of leading individuals through their Montessori journey.

Teresa Noble, Education Director

Teresa Noble holds a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education and a Master of Education in Special Education from the University of South Carolina. Her Montessori Early Childhood credential was granted by Montessori Education Programs, International. She is retired from the public schools of South Carolina, with 28 years of service. She serves as Education Director, Early Childhood Program Director, Instructor, and Supervisor for The Institute for Guided Studies, headquartered in Camden, SC and is currently serving on the Board of Directors of The Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education. She provides private consulting for Early Childhood and Primary Montessori institutions.

Beth Langley, Executive Coordinator

Beth Langley has a BA from Columbia College, a MEPI credential at the Early Childhood Level, is a Veriditas certified labyrinth facilitator, and has a love of art—all things creative. Interest in the Montessori way began shortly after college when she served as an assistant in a primary classroom for a year. More than a decade later she returned and spent a dozen years at the Montessori Learning Center/Montessori School of Camden, first in the toddler environment, then in school administration. She began working for the Institute for Guided Studies in 2007. Beth enjoys sharing her love of labyrinths and has presented at various conferences in the US, Mexico, Canada, and Croatia for Montessori teachers, gardeners, art educators, and labyrinth enthusiasts. She has designed and installed over a dozen permanent labyrinths. Installations include a Pelican shaped labyrinth in Bay Harbor Islands, Florida; a Chartres-style medieval labyrinth at Christ Church Episcopal School in Greenville, SC; “Wisdom of the Heart” at Little Heart Montessori School in Zagreb, Croatia; and the Turtle Dreams Labyrinth at Gray Court – Owings Elementary School in Gray Court, SC. She lives in Boykin, SC and finds peace and contentment in country living.

Kristie Norwood, Director of Student Affairs

Kristie Norwood began her Montessori journey back in 2003 while serving as a primary assistant at the Montessori School of Camden. Later, as a Toddler classroom director at Palmetto Montessori of Ridgeway she fell in love with this stage of childhood. After several years of homeschooling she began working at the Institute for Guided Studies as an administrative assistant. She now is Director of Student Affairs and joyfully assists in everything from filing to scheduling workshops. She is a certified Laughter Yoga instructor and is currently working towards her certification as a Labor and Postpartum Doula.

Infant and Toddler

Maria Varela, Program Director

Maria Varela is a native San Juan, Puerto Rico, now living in California. In 1994 she received a Bachelors Degree in Arts with a minor in Italian Language from the University of Puerto Rico. She completed a Master’s degree in Early Childhood in 2009, and is currently pursuing a Doctorate degree in Early Childhood. Maria holds three Montessori credentials, at three different levels. The first Montessori certification was completed in 1996, an American Montessori Society-AMS in Early Childhood / Primary level, 3 to 6 years old. The second certification was received in 2003 from Montessori Educational Programs International-MEPI in Infants and Toddlers Program ages birth to 3 years old, a third one, in 2004 from MEPI as a Teacher Trainer to prepare future Montessori teachers in the Infant and Toddler Programs ages birth to 3 years old.

She has many years of experience as a teacher in the Montessori Education, eleven years in the Nueva Escuela Montessori in San Juan, Puerto Rico and

eight and a half years as a lead teacher of the Toddler and Primary programs at the Palmetto Montessori School (SC), Head Teacher, two years at the Infant Toddler level at Khalsa Montessori School and another two years at Casa Ninos School of Montessori, both in Arizona, from 2010 until 2014. She has helped prepare adult learners as program director and instructor for the Infant and Toddler Teacher Preparation Program since 2004.

Sarah Forseth, Instructor

Sarah Forseth has guided both Infant and Toddler Montessori Environments for over 12 years, partnering with families. Currently, in addition to working with a family implementing Montessori in the home, Sarah serves as the Infant Toddler Program Director for IGS and directs Children's Ministry at her church in Columbia, SC. She holds a BA from USC and received her MEPI credential at the Infant Toddler level in 2004. Sarah Forseth comes from a large family and is very involved in her community and in her local church. Through her local church she finds joy in working in Children's Outreach Programs including Sunday School, After School Programs and special projects. She is a very creative person who enjoys writing, exercising, and scrap booking. Her talent lies in knowing how to create a beautiful environment using grace, respect, and a true understanding of the needs of the infants and toddlers. She has a passion to help families realize the beauty in authentic relationships. Through implementing parent-connection groups, consistent communication and allowing time for understanding "to happen," Sarah has witnessed as families appreciate the "moment" and continue to follow this amazing path of enhancing relationships.

Krista Schauss, Instructor

Krista has lived in Hilton Head Island, SC since 2001. She enrolled her son in Sea Pines Montessori Academy that was right down the street from her home. Of course she fell in love with the school and started her Montessori journey by volunteering in the school. Volunteering lead to being a substitute teacher then to an assistant teacher and finally leading a Toddler classroom. She received her Infant/Toddler certification in 2006 with IGS and continued to be a lead teacher in the Toddler Classroom. At the end of the school year in 2015 she decided to step away from teaching full time at the school as is currently active with Institute for Guided Studies as a Infant/Toddler instructor and program director in training. She stays connected to Sea Pines Montessori Academy by substituting in the school.

Laura LeClair, Instructor

Laura is a Montessori instructor, educational consultant, and postpartum doula. She also spent over two decades in classrooms, guiding children from Birth through Kindergarten; she knew she wanted to work with young children by the age of eight. She has a passion for tending to classrooms and the adults

that bring them to life, with a special interest in creating successful, inclusive environments for children of all abilities.

Aja Debruyn, Program Director

Aja Debruyn-Staniszewski is a lifelong Montessorian. She attended AI Montessori in Naples, Italy as a child and grew up in a Montessori community steeped in history. She holds certifications in Infant and Toddler, Primary and Lower Elementary. She is a certified pediatric cognitive behavioral therapist and has experience working with special needs students and families. She is the owner of Mountain Heights Montessori in Las Vegas Nevada and is active in MPPI efforts for the state. She has taught adult learners as a trainer for Montessori Teacher Education of Nevada as well as the Nevada Registry. She has been a presenter for MEPI, SNAEYC and the IMC. She is the conference chair for MEPI. She has acted as field consultant for CGMS and can be seen in some of their infant and toddler training videos. She has a passion for Montessori and shares it with her daughter, nephews and nieces whom all attended Montessori schools. In her spare time, she is the Nevada Chapter Leader for Free Mom Hugs and has acted as a chair and steering committee member of the Human Rights Campaign.

Nanette Cenaruzabeitia, Instructor

Nanette has been involved in Montessori education for more than 30 years. She earned a Montessori Education Certificate from Little Way Montessori in 1986, an Infant Toddlers and Twos teaching diploma from NAMC in 2007, and an Infant and Toddler credential from MEPI in 2012. Nanette has worked in various Montessori programs in Utah and has a love of mentoring the next generation of Montessori guides. She was honored in 2011 by the Utah Montessori Council and inducted into their Council of Elders. Nanette has been with IGS since 2015.

Early Childhood

Teresa Noble, Program Director

Please see bio as Education Director

Karen Mangham, Program Director

Karen Mangham is a summa cum laude graduate of Mercer University, Macon, Georgia, with a Bachelor's degree in elementary education and holds a Masters degree in early childhood education from Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, TN. She taught in the public schools of Jackson and Macon, GA for 7 1/2 years. In the Butts County School System, Karen was named Teacher of the Year in Early Childhood for 1978.

Mrs. Mangham's first experience in Montessori education was in Nashville, TN in 1977. Her first observation was a life changing experience that led her

into Montessori teaching and leadership. She completed her 3-6 year Montessori Directress' training in 1986 and has her certificate from Montessori Educational Programs International (MEPI). She was directress of the Montessori program at Jonesco Academy in Jones County, GA, for two years and became co-founder of St. Andrews Montessori School at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in 1986. Karen has been an adjunct educational instructor at Wesleyan College in Macon, GA, and teacher-trainer, field supervisor, seminar presenter and consultant for Montessori Educational Programs International.

Ms. Mangham has been a Montessori teacher for over 30 years and brings a wealth of experience and insight into the developmental needs of children. St. Andrews Montessori School serves as an intern training site for the Institute for Guided Studies (IGS), a Montessori teacher training institute where Mrs. Mangham serves as program director for the state of Georgia. Karen has served on the board of directors for Montessori Educational Programs International (MEPI) She has been a teacher at St. Andrews since its founding in 1986 and became the Directress in 1991.

Luanne Hendricks, Instructor

Luanne Hendricks has been teaching in the Laurens 55 School District for more than 30 years. She earned her MEPI Early Childhood certificate in 1999. She is a Primary Montessori Directress at Gray Court Owings Elementary and has been a member of the IGS teacher training staff since 2010. Luanne has a passion for building community and enjoys facilitating workshops on that topic as well as many others.

Christine Lowry, Instructor

Christine Lowry, M.Ed. has founded and been the Head of School for two Montessori schools; a lead teacher in early childhood classrooms; and a consultant with a focus on policy and advocacy that impacts the Montessori community. With a background in special education, her commitment to classrooms of inclusion has given her a great deal of experience working with students with a variety of needs in Montessori classrooms. She now shares her knowledge at local, state, and national conferences. Christine is an instructor for IGS, and works for AMS teacher preparation programs as well.

Christine earned her masters degree in special education at UNC-CH; an EC Montessori credential from CMTE-NC; and has completed post graduate work in special education and public policy at UNC-CH.

Renee Crane, Instructor

Renee Crane has been involved in the education field since 1988, having completed her Montessori Early Childhood credential through Fort Valley State College and her Montessori Administrative credential through Houston Montessori. She received an Associate's degree from Brewton Parker College

and a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Georgia Southern University.

Renee has twenty-three years of experience in public and private sectors and has taught children from 2 ½ to 12 years of age in traditional and Montessori environments. Her administrative experience includes curriculum director and two head of school positions (Montessori) Schools for eleven years, and was instrumental in both of these schools receiving prestigious accreditations. One school received the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation and the other received the Florida Council of Independent Schools (FCIS) accreditation. In addition to her position with IGS, she also has served as an adjunct faculty member of the Institute for Montessori Innovation at Westminster College and as Head of School at Elizabeth Academy. Renee has a passion for non-profit organizations and has served on a number of non-profit boards and accreditation teams.

Elementary

Mary Helen Cline, Program Director

Please see Bio as CEO

Beti Wyn Holcombe, Program Director Emeritus

Beti Wyn Holcombe grew up in Snowdonia, North Wales. She taught in traditional Welsh and Canadian elementary and high schools for five years before discovering the Montessori Method of education. She settled in the United States of America and, in 1973, entered a Montessori classroom with her young child, and proceeded to teach Montessori students from 18 months to 15 years of age for the next 4 decades. Beti Wyn's Bachelor's degree was in Geography and her postgraduate Diploma in Educational Philosophy and its Practical Applications was for elementary teaching with an emphasis on science. She received her Primary Montessori certificate from the St. Nicholas Training Program of London, England; her Elementary I and II certificates were granted by MIA and MEPI. Beti Wyn has continued to attend undergraduate level classes in Philosophy and Mathematics for many years because of her love for learning. She has also pursued graduate courses in the Humanities. Beti Wyn has conducted a Montessori Teacher Preparation Program for the elementary levels I and II since 1989, in Kansas City, Utah, Missouri, Indiana and South Carolina. The training programs, administered by the Institute for Guided Studies, have been MACTE accredited since 1998. Beti Wyn's life goal is to continue to find joy in learning and teaching while interacting with people of all ages in the hope that she will be able to leave a legacy that will inspire others to continue developing the authentic Montessori philosophy of education. In semi-retirement, Beti Wyn and Randall continue to share their love of learning in the fields of philosophy, science, literature and the arts.

Karen Kissell, Instructor

Karen Kissell is a consultant, teacher trainer, and speaker who has worked in Montessori for 26 years as an educator and administrator. She holds a BFA from the University of Dayton and a Master of Education from Xavier University. After learning about Montessori while studying in England, Karen went on to earn an AMS Early childhood teaching credential, and an MEPI 6-9 and 9-12 teaching credential. As the director of education and training for various schools, Karen developed curriculum and training manuals. Twenty six years in the education field have provided her with first-hand experience in leading and managing rapidly growing schools both for profit and not for profit. Karen currently is head of school of a developing Judaic Montessori school. She is an active member in many professional Montessori organizations such as MEPI, AMS, and IMC. She is also a board member for many Cincinnati based Montessori schools.

Lena Hardaway, Instructor

Lena graduated from Davidson College in 1981, earning a liberal arts degree majoring in Biology, with a focus in Botany. She has had a variety of work and volunteer experiences over the years, but her passion is teaching. She came to Montessori when seeking the best educational options for her children. Her two younger sons, Jordan and Madison, have both experienced the valuable lessons this method of learning has to offer.

She began working at Montessori at Sandy Ford (formerly Montessori Children's House of Newton, NC) as a parent volunteer and was inspired to seek training and certification in teaching in the elementary classroom. She took initial assistant's training during the summer of 2002 and began the official classroom training the following summer. She received her Elementary I certification in 2005 and more recently completed Elementary II in 2016. Lena epitomizes the Montessori values of being a lifelong learner and continues to grow and learn as a teacher at MSF with gratitude for the opportunity to work with the children there, and to have Mary Helen Cline and Kenyon Kelly for mentors and role models.

Maggie Hunter, Instructor

Maggie Hunter has a ABJ in advertising and a BSEd from the University of Georgia. She became enthralled by the Montessori philosophy and method while working as an assistant for Warren McPherson during a summer semester break. She received her AMS Elementary I credential in 1994. Maggie has been a directress in the elementary program at Athens Montessori for 25 years, where she also directs the school choir. Multi-talented, Maggie is a folk musician who produces "Just Folks", a folk format radio show, for NPR affiliate WUGA in Athens, Georgia.

Adolescent

Melody Mosby, Program Director

Melody Mosby is Program Director and Instructor for the Adolescent course. She holds the AMI elementary Advanced Diploma from the Washington Montessori Institute in Washington, D.C., and the Secondary Montessori Diploma (12-15) from Montessori Educational Programs International (MEPI). She has served on the MEPI board for six years and was Chair of TEC. Melody has 35 years invested in education, 25 of them in Montessori education. She has written 3 books on Montessori Adolescent Education and along with her husband, Chuck Mosby, has produced a video on the Adolescent in Montessori learning environments. Melody is a teacher trainer, Montessori consultant, and director of the Adolescent Program at Athens Montessori School.

Heather Mosby, Instructor

Heather Mosby holds the MEPI Secondary Montessori Teaching Certificate from the Montessori Teacher Institute in Athens, Georgia and a B.A. degree in Sociology. Heather is a seasoned Adolescent Montessori Practitioner and co-Directs the Montessori Middle School Program in Athens.

Warren McPherson, Instructor

Warren McPherson is the Director of Athens Montessori School. He holds the AMI Diploma from the Washington Institute in Washington, D.C. and a Masters of Montessori Education from Kennesaw College. Warren has 40 years of Montessori teaching experience, 26 of them as the teaching director of the School. He has served on the MEPI Board and IAME, and has been involved in Montessori teacher training nationally and internationally. Warren will serve as on-site coordinator and instructor for the Teacher Preparation Course.

Steve Scurry, Instructor

Steve Scurry holds a B.A. in Anthropology. Through a love of the natural world and the history of particular places, Steve has led and presented enrichment programs to schools and summer camps. After a cross-country tour of Native American cultures and exploring the Oconee River Valley, Steve became involved with a project to archive 18th century history. He joins our Montessori Teacher Institute as adjunct faculty for the Montessori Adolescent Teacher Preparation Course.

Emily Reinersten, Instructor

Emily Reinersten, a Florida native, completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Florida. Following graduation, she moved to Georgia where she worked as a curriculum coordinator in environmental education. In 2006, she began her career at Athens Montessori School in Athens, GA, where she

assisted in the Adolescent program. In 2013, she received her AMI Elementary credentials through the Montessori Institute of Atlanta, followed by graduate studies at Loyola University Maryland. She currently teaches in the Upper Elementary program and serves on the school's Board of Directors. In her free time, she enjoys attending NASA and STEM workshops, keeping an eye out for the next Star Wars premiere, traveling with her husband, or enjoying a good sci-fi book while snuggled up with her cats.

Administrator

John Moncure, Program Director

John Moncure serves as Headmaster of the Montessori School of Camden, a position he held previously from 1998 to 2004. He was born in Victoria, Texas, attended The Citadel, and graduated from West Point in 1972. During his military career he served in cavalry regiments in Germany and Texas, and held teaching positions at West Point, Davidson College, the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, and the French Cavalry School in Saumur, France. After his retirement from the Army in 1997 with the rank of lieutenant colonel, John joined the Montessori school in Camden and was an adjunct professor of history at Coker College, South Carolina. He was also president of the Board of Directors of Montessori Educational Programs International (MEPI) from 2000 to 2005, and served as a member of the boards of directors of First Steps of Kershaw County, the Kershaw County Historical Society, and was a founding member of the South Carolina Montessori Alliance (SCMA). In 2004 moved abroad where he was Dean of the Apollo Institute of Health Sciences in Hyderabad, India, Principal of Eton Academy, a bilingual Montessori school in Beijing China, and Director of Operations of the Montessori Foundation and the International Montessori Council. Upon his return to the United States and the school, he was re-elected to the Board of MEPI and served as president until 2015. He is also an On-Site Visitor for the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). John has authored three books and numerous articles, graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and holds a Ph.D. in European history from Cornell University. He resides in Camden, South Carolina.

Consulting, workshops, and other services

IGS offers consulting services for all-school evaluations, classroom set-up, individualized mentoring, professional development, refresher courses, community building programs, and other workshop topics relevant to the Montessori communities we serve.