

# 2020-2021 RSA Instructors

## Cheryl Arden

### **Yoga For Teens; Gentle Adult Yoga**

Cheryl is a former art teacher; she received her BFA in Art Education from Virginia Commonwealth University and taught public elementary art for 8 years. She no longer teaches art, but teaches Yoga instead! She has been practicing yoga for over 20 years. In January 2017 she decided to deepen her personal practice by taking her first Yoga Teacher training course. Her intent was to increase her knowledge of Yoga philosophies and add physical precision to her own practice. Along the way she fell in love with showing others how yoga can enrich their lives, physically, mentally, and spiritually. She is registered with Yoga Alliance as a 200-hour Registered Yoga teacher and is currently training for the 500-hour RYT certification. She teaches private classes, special events, and several classes at the Smithfield YMCA. She and her husband, Kevin are happy empty-nesters (5 grown children) and live in Smithfield with their 2 old beagles, Titan and Lola.

## Angela Armstrong

### **Science, Math, and Design I and II; Sewing and Fabric Arts I and II**



Angela Armstrong studied art and technical illustration at the University of Kentucky, and worked as a technical designer for 14 years. Angela is currently self-employed as a professional designer artist. She produces a line of fashion and home accessories sold throughout the East Coast and at her web site. Her one-of-a-kind art pieces are displayed and sold in various art galleries in the region, and she has won several awards. She homeschooled her two sons, both of whom graduated from RSA.

[www.angeliarmstrongdesign.com](http://www.angeliarmstrongdesign.com)

## Lauren Babb

### **Dance Adventures, Creative Movement**



Lauren grew up in Smithfield, Virginia and received her Bachelors of Fine Arts with a concentration in dance and choreography from Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Fine Arts. Upon graduation, Lauren traveled to San Jose, Costa Rica to study advanced modern dance, choreography, and lighting design. There, she had the opportunity to perform choreography by Scott Puttman as well as present her own choreography at the National Auditorium in San Jose.

After returning to the U.S., Lauren performed and premiered with the modern dance company Amaranth under the direction of Scott Puttman. Lauren has been teaching the art of dance for over 10 years and has judged regional dance competitions. Her choreography has won several awards, such as most entertaining, judges' choice, and overall best choreography in regional and national dance competitions. Lauren finds vitality and fulfillment in life through the artistry of dance and choreography.

## Heidi Bloch

### **Suzuki Piano, Organ**



Heidi Bloch has been teaching piano using the Suzuki method and philosophy for more than 30 years. She is Organist/Music Director at Christ Episcopal Church (Smithfield), using her skills to plan music for worship, to direct the adult choir, and to play the organ. She also shares her professional time as organist at the Williamsburg Community Chapel. She earned her Master's degree in Sacred Music from the University of Michigan and her undergraduate degree in Organ Performance from Old Dominion University. Heidi is the Artistic Advisor for "Sundays at Four," Smithfield's performance art series. She is a talented musician and teacher who provides a thorough musical experience for her students. In her spare time, Heidi swims and volunteers for several community-service and arts organizations.

## Molly Brown

### **Life After High School**



Molly Brown is a graduate of ODU and is passionate about teaching youth about how to better themselves with finding a job, post-secondary options, financial literacy, and career exploration. She has worked with the Youth Career Center of Hampton Roads for 3 years as a Career Coach.

## Stephanie Cady

### **Spanish**

Stephanie Cady enjoys speaking and teaching Spanish. She has 3 children between 10 and 15, and they all speak Spanish. She has spent an extensive time traveling to Guatemala where she has an NGO in a community where there is an after-school program to assist in educational and community needs. Reaching out to others is something Stephanie is passionate about as her master's degree is in counseling. She currently works as a qualified mental health professional doing crisis and trauma intervention in people's homes for young people and adults.

Stephanie studied in Venezuela as well and traveled and worked in Mexico years ago. She continues to interpret as she travels. Incorporating conversational Spanish and services projects into her teaching is something she likes to do.

## Michael Creech

### **Group and Private Guitar, Ukulele, Garage Band, Elementary & Middle School Drama, Acting**



Michael Creech is a seasoned professional singer/songwriter and musician who currently performs at Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, VA. You can catch him in Celtic Fyre, which was voted #1 Amusement Park Entertainment for 2015 and 2018 by USA Today and 10Best readers! He has been performing at colleges (e.g., VCU, College of the Albemarle), festivals (e.g., Old Towne Portsmouth Holiday Festival, Suffolk Peanut Festival), and well-known venues (e.g., Virginia Beach Amphitheater, The Norva) for several years on the East Coast. He has also shared the stage with several national recording artists including Hal Ketchum and Rascal Flatts. Michael writes jingles and performs voice-over work as well. His music is available on most streaming services, including Apple Music and Spotify. "With faith, creativity, and knowledge, you hold the key to success."

## Nate Edmonds

### **Chess**

Nate is a Class A (around 1800 USCF) player who has been playing competitive chess for over 40 years. He is a retired Civil Service Worker from Norfolk Naval Station. Nate is a former Virginia State Expert champion in the 1990s. Nate has competed in USCF-rated events off and on for the last 40 years, playing in the World Open and the New York Open. Nate played in Zofchak Memorial Tournament Open Section in 2019, tying for second place. Nate is a Chess coach of the Hampton Roads Chess Club and lives in Norfolk. He focuses on using proven pattern recognition training techniques, ChessBase computer-aided study tools, computer forensic game analysis, and mastering endgame techniques.

## Maryanne Donigan

### **Odyssey of the Mind**

Maryanne Donigan is currently homeschooling her two boys in Portsmouth, VA. She studied civil engineering at the University of Notre Dame. After graduating, she worked as a Water and Sanitation Engineer with the Peace Corps in Honduras. She worked for approximately 7 years as a senior project engineer modeling bridge hydraulics and the effect of large storms on infrastructure in Raleigh, North Carolina.

## Bonnie Franklin



### High School Literature

Bonnie and her family have been involved with Renaissance School since its very first year, and her two oldest children are RSA alumnae. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from James Madison University and a master's degree in English from the University of South Dakota. She has been teaching high school literature at RSA since 2010, and also works as an associate editor for GDIT, editing peer-reviewed grant applications in the areas of science and education. Bonnie is an RSA board member with a focus on the RSA website and registration system. When not at RSA, Bonnie stays busy with her two youngest children's home schooling, sports, music, and Scout activities; lifting weights; swimming; and reading.

## Fuhrmann Driving Academy

### Driver's Education

Fuhrmann Driving Academy was founded in 2007 to provide new drivers safe and professional driving instruction. They serve hundreds of students each year in the Tidewater region of Virginia. They are a fully licensed driving school providing a patient, courteous, and informed driving experience.

## Debbie Hallahan

### Leather Craft



We have all heard the phrase "Jack of all trades, master of none." It has been used for centuries to describe a person who has many interests and is sometimes used in a derogatory manner. The quotation was first documented in a book by Geoffrey Minshull in the 17th century. It is thought by some that Geoffrey was using only part of a saying to describe the colorful people he met while in a debtors' prison.

Debbie prefers the longer version of this saying when describing herself: "Jack of all trades, master of none, though oftentimes better than master of one."

She was born and raised in Littleton, Colorado, to parents who are also well described by the quotation above. She has worked with many materials, such as wood, leather, bone, plaster, food, snow, yarn, metal, and ink, to name a few. Her true passion lies in the process of creating. Her life-long inspiration has been the work of Jim Henson, creator of The Muppets. She and her family have settled in picturesque Smithfield, Virginia after her husband's retirement from the US Navy.

## Alyssa Harney

### **Bella Voce (High School choral group), Drama/Play**



Alyssa Harney is a graduate of Old Dominion University with a degree in Vocal Performance & Arts. As an alumna, she is happy to be back and teaching with RSA. In addition to teaching with RSA, Alyssa has a private vocal and piano studio in Suffolk. Alyssa is also an avid professional musical theater and opera performer and has performed regionally around the state of Virginia. She is a multi-award winning singer and wants to share her love of music and theater with her students.

## Elizabeth Haughton

### **Yoga and Mindfulness (Preschool, Elementary)**



Having practiced yoga for over twenty years, Elizabeth has become skilled in both the asanas (poses) and heart and mind work that encompasses the practice of yoga. She has taken courses and is certified as a KAY children's yoga teacher, focusing on poses, meditation, mindfulness, and breathing techniques. She has taken courses in Raja yoga and continues her own practice daily.

## Chloe Hinchy

### **Playful Learning**

Chloe Hinchy is originally from Wales, where she attended art school and studied photography and graphic design. She has lived in Virginia since 2013 with her husband. They have two daughters who have been attending RSA for the past two years, and love the classes and the friendships that have developed for their family. Chloe has always enjoyed being with younger children and loves to watch children learn, experiment, and figure things out and is a firm believer that younger kids learn best through play and fun.

## Ellen Howard

### **Art Adventures and Art is Fun**



Originally from Smithfield, Ellen currently resides in Chesapeake with her daughter and son. She has a BA in English from Christopher Newport University. She enjoys helping others be creative and develop their creative side. Ellen loves art, history, literature, writing for the Renaissance Review, being outside, music, and going new places. This is her sixth year homeschooling and the fourth year for her family at RSA.

## Shannon Johnson

### **Anime, Martial Arts, Latin I, Latin II**



Shannon Johnson has a bachelor's degree in Design and Environmental Analysis from Cornell University, where she was also actively involved in the Cornell Japanese Animation Society. She has attended many anime conventions across the country from 1994 to the present, studied conversational Japanese, and hosted exchange students from Japan. Shannon studied Latin for five years, and has experience teaching Latin I to III to her older children and other homeschoolers.

"Sensei" (teacher) Shannon is a Second Degree Black Belt in Chutoku Ryu Karate, and a First Degree Black Belt in Goshin Jutsu Karate. She also holds the rank of Okuden ("Entrance to Secrets," equivalent to Black Belt) in Kobudo (traditional Japanese weapons). The Johnsons have been members of RSA since 2010.

## Sean Kissell

### **High-Intensity Interval Training (H.I.I.T.)/ Strength Training, Active Games**



Sean Kissell runs Total Fitness in Newport News, just across the James River Bridge. Total Fitness specializes in strength training and conditioning for sports performance. Total Fitness also has power lifting and Olympic lifters (including some RSA alums) competing in both local and national events with USPA and USAW. Sean has a long tradition of helping his clients meet their fitness goals, whether it be getting into top shape for life or preparing for championship meets. Total Fitness has been in business since 1989, and Sean has been teaching with RSA since 2014.

## Debbie Lawrence

### **Photojournalism/Yearbook**



Debbie Lawrence has been a part of RSA since 2007, and homeschools her children, one of whom graduated from RSA. She earned a degree in photojournalism from the University of South Carolina and has experience as a newspaper reporter and photographer and as a newsletter editor. Debbie is the leader of RSA's Photography Team, which includes taking yearbook portraits and formal dance photos. She has a portrait photography business, D.R. Lawrence Photography ([www.drlawrencephotography.shootproof.com](http://www.drlawrencephotography.shootproof.com)), and is co-owner of Focus Art Studio ([www.focusartstudio.com](http://www.focusartstudio.com)) with Eryn Siegel, also of RSA.

Lisa Lewandowski

### **Animals Around the World**

Lisa Lewandowski completed her associate's degree in early childhood development in 1991 through Macomb Community College in Macomb County, MI. She has been homeschooling her children since 2012, with one having graduated from RSA. Lisa has experience teaching the early elementary ages through various church programs, and is excited to work with the youth at RSA.

Katrina Loheide

### **Elemental Body Alignment System**

Katrina Loheide is a graduate from the dance and choreography program at Virginia Commonwealth University. She began her dance training at Broadway Dance Academy under the instruction of Janet LaCava. Soon after, she joined the pre-professional company New Horizons Dance Alliance under the artistic direction of George Thompson and Tara Keating. She graduated as a dance major in 2010 from Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Performing Arts. Katrina studied with a company in California called Anaheim Ballet as an apprentice company member. She has been in original works by the VCU dance faculty and has performed in many of her colleagues' dance productions. She has been awarded the Carpenter Artistic Scholarship while at VCU. Katrina has traveled to Sicily, Italy to study dance and learn Italian. Since graduation Katrina has been teaching at various studios both in Virginia and Pennsylvania, but has truly found a home at Footnotes School of Dance. She is looking forward to embarking on new adventures while at Footnotes; she will be introducing the practice of Elemental Body Alignment System level 1.

Tanya Newbern

### **High School Essay Writing, Exploring American Government, Adulting 101, Middle School Literature, Tools & Technology**

Tanya Newbern taught the younger elementary grades in her early 20s and has loved teaching ever since. She found it so rewarding to see her students beam with pride and self-confidence when they mastered a skill, and that more than made up for the many after-hours of prep and grading papers and low teacher's pay.

She began homeschooling her own children in 2010. Her daughter graduated in 2015 and is currently employed in her field of study while earning her master's degree in forensic psychology. Her son just graduated from homeschooling this past year. In the last few years, she has had the opportunity to homeschool other children as well.



## Desirée Newman



Desirée Newman graduated from Old Dominion University, majoring in Psychology and minoring in Human Services. She studied American Sign Language through Tidewater Community College's ASL program. With a love of people and teaching, she began working in early childhood development, helping children learn through play. She has taught parents with young children, along with her own children, ASL as an alternative means of communication and has taught additional co-op classes. Desirée currently homeschools her two children and is an active volunteer in her community.

As a teacher, she believes in facilitating students' growth so that they may reach their highest potential. She feels most rewarded when her students are excited about learning. Rather than relying solely on verbal instruction, she combines lecture with a variety of forms of teaching including presentations, demonstrations, and class activities. She takes pride in holding classes filled with stories and diverse lessons. She strongly believes that her students should challenge themselves and take risks. Her classroom goals are for students to feel accepted, validated, comfortable, and successful.

## Charles (Ed) Parks

**Algebra I, Geometry, Engineering & Technology, Engineering/Physics, Dungeons & Dragons, Creative World Building, Calligraphy, Tutoring (various subjects)**



Charles Parks has a bachelor's degree in aerospace engineering from Georgia Tech, and served as a U.S. Naval Flight officer in F-14 Tomcats. After his military career, he earned a dual teaching certificate in both math and social science from ODU. He then worked in public schools for 10 years, developing interesting and creative ways to motivate inner city students to learn higher math. He also worked for Sylvan Learning Centers for many years, moving from part-time teaching to the Center Director. Since 2009, he has been focusing on private tutoring. He tutors students in math, science, social studies, economics, civics and history. He says that "math is just as creative as poetry. Both have form and restrictions that need to be followed, but within that framework you can be creative." This may be why he is a published poet as well as an engineer! He enjoys teaching students to have fun with math, and enjoys sharing his contagious enthusiasm with RSA students.



## Elizabeth Pasieczny

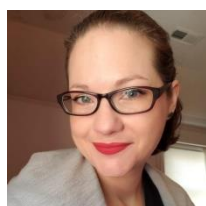
### **Animation Nation/Lego Animation, Film Crew, Pop-Up Film Studio, Digital Drawing, Cartooning/Visual Storytelling (Anima/Manga)**



Elizabeth Pasieczny is president of Pickleman Productions, an internationally award-winning film company specializing in family entertainment. She is a Cal Arts graduate, and recently returned to the area after living and working in New York. She is a consultant with ChipAway Productions and a freelance screenwriter. Elizabeth has taught with RSA for 11 years, and is committed to sharing her passion and skills with students. She believes that it is imperative for students to develop their communication skills and develop them with ever-advancing technology. Her award-winning film "Dillzilla: Titan of Terror!" was created with RSA students in Smithfield and Suffolk. Review her portfolio at [empasieczny.com](http://empasieczny.com) and her company at [picklemanproductions.com](http://picklemanproductions.com).

## Erin Pease

### **World Religions, World Explorers**



Erin Pease has a BA in Spanish, a BA in Religious Studies, and experience teaching high school students. She is mom to four girls, and they have been on this homeschooling journey for 8 years. She is a volunteer breastfeeding counselor with La Leche League and loves working with families.

## Sarah Rhodes

### **Irish Dance**



Sara Rhodes is a local Hampton Roads native and began her dancing career at the age of ten. Sara progressed through the ranks of a 13-year competitive career and was a 5 time World Qualifier, 2013 World Medal Holder; 9 Time National Qualifier, 2 time medal holder placing 6th in the North American National Championship in 2011 and placed 6th place in the Southern Region Championship for 5 consecutive years.

You may have seen Sara perform as the lead and troupe dancer for the last 8 seasons with Busch Gardens, Celtic Fyre, Ranked #1 Best Theme Park Show by USA Today in 2018 and 2015. Sara's biggest dancing achievement was performing with the renowned Michael Flatley's International and Broadway tour, Lord of the Dance: Dangerous Games in 2015. She was also the Feature Dancer in the Irish ensemble in the 2014 and 2017 Virginia International Military Tattoo in Norfolk, VA, and Co-choreographer in 2017. Sara is a 2013 Graduate from CNU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Technical Theater and earned her coveted TCRG (Teagascóir Choimisiúin Rinci Gaelacha) Irish dance teaching certification in 2014 through the Irish dancing commission in Dublin, Ireland.

Melissa Rich

### **Creative Photography**

Melissa Rich is a Hampton Roads native from Virginia Beach who now resides in Portsmouth with her husband, four children, and two Great Danes. She is in her 12th year of homeschooling, and her second year at RSA. She has been a life-long student of the arts in various forms, starting with her first love, ballet. In early adulthood, she enjoyed a career in advertising, working on creative development teams as a print production manager for many years. She then switched gears to homeschool her children and study photography. She has run a full time photography business since 2011, serving the mid-Atlantic region with a focus on lifestyle and wedding photography. Her work has been featured on several industry sites and in print publications, such as Coastal VA Bride Magazine, Snapknot Weddings, and Beyond the Wanderlust, as well as in advertisements for local businesses. She is also a member of the Professional Photographers of America (PPA.) She loves coffee, dogs, and cookies (not necessarily in that order), and is always up for exploring new places, or a road trip adventure. Examples of her client work may be found at [www.melissablissphotography.com](http://www.melissablissphotography.com) and examples of her personal work, encompassing a broader voice, may be found at <https://melissablissphotography.shootproof.com/gallery/11517923>

Patrice Sawyer

### **Elementary Music, Middle School Music, Voice, Piano, Forensics/Speech**



Patrice Sawyer lives in Carrollton with her husband of 28 years, Matthew, and their daughter Rachel. After obtaining her BA degree in Music Media, she worked for several years at radio and television stations in the Hampton Roads area. She has taught private voice and piano lessons as well as etiquette and public speaking. In her spare time, she enjoys composing music, cooking, and being an avid volunteer with over 40 years of experience. She is currently a board member for Bay Youth Orchestras of Virginia and a member of the Governor's School for the Arts PTA. She is the owner of the Sawyer School of Music in Carrollton.

Philosophy: Let your smile change the world, but don't let the world change your smile.

## Walter & Judy Schultz

### Ballroom Dance



[www.twostepTidewater.com](http://www.twostepTidewater.com)

Walter and Judy Schultz are residents of Portsmouth's Churchland area. They are Ballroom, Country-Western, and Swing social dancers and part time teachers. Most weeks will find them out three to four times at local social dance events. In addition to dancing at the local night clubs and studios, they travel a few times a year to their favorite Country-Western & Swing events. Some of their favorite events are the US National Dance Championships, the Easterns Dance Challenge in the Washington DC area, and the Halloween in Harrisburg event. They are known and liked by just about every Country and Western dancer, swing dancer, and ballroom dancer in this half of the country.

Walter & Judy offer dance instruction in Ballroom, Latin, Swing & Country Western. Their instructional goals are very simple:

1. To teach students to look like natural dancers, not school-taught dancers;
2. To maximize students' learning time during lessons, and not waste their time or money;
3. To concentrate on Social Dance instruction and refer those who wish to compete to other instructors;
4. To keep up to date in their style, technique, and syllabus.

## Phyllis Wells

### Mixed Media, Painting 101



Phyllis Wells' art career began in 1981 when she took a Parks and Recreation class in stained glass. For 21 years she worked in flat glass and hot glass, creating a lasting body of work in residences, churches, and restaurants in Tidewater. She began painting in 1997, segueing into an art form that was a little more body friendly! Glass is hard work. But, the moment she started painting, she knew it was the natural course for her into the future.

After a few years of producing canvas after canvas, Phyllis began to play with mixed media, painting on unusual surfaces, mixing paint with many materials, including fabric, wood, felt, and various handmade papers. While she still loves to paint in watercolor or acrylic, she loves the challenge of taking something old and turning it into something new.

This will be her sixth year of teaching at RSA. Because of her varied art endeavors and almost 40 years of experience, she has a lot of what she calls art wisdom to impart to her students who are interested in painting and mixed media, following their own art paths. Phyllis loves sharing what she's learned with others!