

Children of the World Learning Center Board Members

Laura Handler, Ph.D. -- Chair

Laura is an adjunct professor and educational researcher at UNC Charlotte. She received both her Master's in Teaching English as a Second Language and her doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction (focusing on urban elementary education) from UNCC. Laura taught in CMS for nine years, focusing on family outreach and community partnerships. These experiences drive current research interests in educational equity, school choice and the Latinx community. Her five-year-old son attended Children of the World Learning Center and now goes to Charlotte East Language Academy.

Lindsey Moss, MSW, LCSW -- Vice-Chair

Lindsey has a background in early childhood development and clinical social work. She has worked within early intervention and child welfare for 15 years. Her career has been focused on supporting healthy development for young children and their families.

Dick Woods -- Treasurer

Dick Woods earned a BS degree in Electrical Engineering from Duke University in 1965 and worked in engineering and construction management before retiring in 2014. Dick is a member of Central United Methodist Church where he has served in many different capacities, including Trustee, Treasurer, Finance Chairman. He also serves on the Board of Directors of Wesley Community Development Corp., an organization of the United Methodist Church's Western NC Conference, which builds affordable housing for seniors and works with the Western NC Conference to remission and manage church buildings.

Kim Becnel, Ph.D. -- Secretary

Kim is a professor of Library Science at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina and a former youth services librarian. She earned her Ph.D. in literature and language from the University of South Carolina and currently teaches and researches in the areas of youth literature and literacy and the intersection of technology and pedagogy.

Maria Antonietta Cardarelli -- Program Administrator

Maria has been the Program Administrator of COTWLC since August 2018. She was born in Venezuela to an immigrant family from Italy. She received a degree in Psychology with a specialization in family and children's therapy. Since she has been in the USA, Maria has worked in programs that support the Latino community. She feels blessed with the opportunity to open her arms and be one of the leaders of the first multicultural, dual language preschool which embraces diversity, inclusion and equity through education.

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Julie Babb

Julie spent 35 years working in the Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools, as a teacher, principal and director for the Pre-K program both in CMS and NC Pre-K. She has served on the state advisory board for NC Pre-K and the Mecklenburg County Early Childhood Education Executive Committee. Julie volunteers with multiple organizations to support marginalized families, encourage racial reconciliation, and promote opportunities for all preschool children to participate in high quality, authentic, child centered schools where classmates have diverse backgrounds, learning evolves from play, and interactions are rich and plentiful.

Rev. Pamela Blackstock

Rev. Pamela Blackstock was appointed to Central United Methodist Church in July 2018, and came to us from Union Memorial United Methodist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. She is an elder in the Western North Carolina Conference. Pamela received her Master's of Divinity from Duke University and a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education from Winston Salem State University. She is committed to helping the lost and hurting accept the love of Christ while leading them to a deeper relationship with Jesus.

Karen Carpenter

Attorney Karen Carpenter is a longtime member of Central United Methodist Church, where she has served in many capacities from church administration to children's ministries. Mother of two, she also has been heavily involved in scouting, sports and band programs. Before practicing law, Karen worked as a newspaper and catalog editor, and in public relations and marketing.

Verónica Corral

Veronica is originally from Chicago, Illinois, where she grew up in a Mexican-American neighborhood before calling Charlotte home in 1998. She has a B.A in Child and Family Development with a B-K License and has served as a preschool assistant and teacher both for CMS as well as for a private bilingual preschool. She was an early interventionist in Mecklenburg county before beginning her career in 2007 at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library as a Bilingual Outreach Specialist.

Veronica Garcia

Veronica was born in Mexico, raised in California and has been living in Charlotte for the past 19 years. She has four lovely children. Veronica has had various jobs besides being a mom. She's worked as a customer service representative, waitress, receptionist, and interpreter. Helping anyone in need or volunteering is something she enjoys. It's given her a sense of community. Veronica is currently working on obtaining a certification as an RBT to work with children with autism.

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Don Irons

Don has been in advertising for 34 years. He is currently the chairman of the administrative council at Central United Methodist church, where he has had various duties and roles.

Jennifer Johnson

Jennifer has been married for 49 years and has two adult children. She is a proud Nana of three grandsons. Jennifer holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Biology from Johnson C. Smith University. She worked in the daycare industry from 1985 to 1991 as a four-year-old teacher for four years and an assistant director for two years. After resigning from daycare, Jennifer worked in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System for twenty-three years as a Teacher Assistant and a computer instructor. She has now been retired for the past six years. Jennifer enjoys traveling, collecting children's books and having fun with her family.

Marjorie Kanipes

Marjorie was born and reared in Charlotte, NC. She is a proud aunt of 6 nieces and nephews who affectionately call her Aunt Bee. Marjorie loves to spoil and nurture them! She has been a member of Central UMC for 9 years. Before entering the medical field, Marjorie was a Pre-K teacher for many years preparing children for kindergarten. She currently works at Novant Health as a certified CMA and she provides remarkable care to patients daily. Marjorie's passion is for children as she has been a Girl Scout leader for over 15 years.

Cristian Pazmino

I am from Quito Ecuador, I am an international professional with accounting and financial background for commercial and service companies. Living here 4 year ago, the last 2 years I was working as a sales representative in a car dealership. I am always focused on my responsibility and punctuality when turning in projects and personal challenges. Bilingual with high proficiency in English and Spanish as native language. Good handling of accounting and tax reporting software. Effective communication skills for individual and group performance. Proactive when making suggestions in order to improve processes aiming for effectiveness and efficiency. Leadership skills in the work field.

Barbara Robinson, Ed.S.

Barbara Robinson has been in the field of education for over 15 years with experience in state-operated, district and charter schools. She has served as an elementary Teacher of the Deaf, Special Education Teacher, Director of Student Support Services, Director of Special Education Services, and Principal. Most recently, she was the Founding Principal of Movement School Eastland, which opened in 2020. She is driven by her passion for advocacy, equality, and genuine love of learning. Barbara loves being a "boy-mom" to Langston, Ellington, and Winston. She and her "partner-for-life" Christian have been married for over 12 years.

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Louise Woods, MSW

Louise earned her BA in Religion at Duke University and her MSW at UNC. A passion for east Charlotte and for equitable, diverse public schools led to her work on the CharlotteEAST Board and Education Committee, leadership on the League of Women Voters' Education Committee, her service on the Committee of 25 (CMS's first Equity Committee), her election to the CMS Board of Education and service on the NC School Board Association. Louise is passionate about the thriving multicultural community at Central United Methodist Church and its outreach ministries, particularly Children of the World Learning Center.