

About Our Crystal Lake Guides



Miss Austen Root-Walsh | The Nido Room (Infant)

I have been in a Montessori classroom since 2011 with ages 2 months to 6 years old and have been with The Montessori School Rochester & Crystal Lake since 2021. I have truly found my calling with the infants and that's what led me to earn my AMI (Association Montessori International) Assistants to Infancy Diploma at Montessori Northwest in Portland, Oregon.

I am passionate about Montessori philosophy and believe that through this method, children can reach their fullest potential leading to positive change worldwide. I share the same sentiment with Maria Montessori that "education begins at birth."

I grew up in Sterling Heights, Michigan, where I currently reside with my husband and son. Camping, kayaking, hiking, yoga, reading, crafting, and spending time outdoors with my friends and family is what I enjoy most.



Miss Audrey Spencer | Daisy Room (Toddler)

I have over a decade of experience in early childhood education in home and school settings. I stumbled upon Montessori and fell instantly in love with the philosophy. Now I am an AMS certified infant and toddler guide, and I have 6 years of experience in Montessori toddler classrooms. I have worked at the MSRCL since 2017, being a Lead Guide since September 2018.

I enjoy showing toddlers wildlife and the beauty of nature. Often this is through reading nature-based books, making art and class materials from items discovered outdoors, feeding and watching birds, or simply jumping in puddles.



Miss Joanne Shango | Chestnut Classroom (Primary)

In addition to founding The Montessori School Rochester & Crystal Lake in 2010, I am Montessori certified in Early Childhood and Adolescence through 12th grade, I hold diplomas from both the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). I bring creativity to the classroom that inspires genius and lead with kindness and compassion to create learning environments rich in creativity.

I am dedicated to meeting the needs of all students. To this end, I challenge and develop myself professionally outside the classroom.



Miss Sarah Craine | Grasslands Classroom (Lower Elementary)

I have been a Montessorian Lead Guide for 21 years and with The Montessori School Rochester & Crystal Lake since 2016. I studied human growth and development at Michigan State University and obtained my certificate at the Montessori Centre of Minnesota AMI training under Molly O'Shaughnessy.

I really enjoy helping/coaching families with Montessori in the home, like bedtime routines, toilet training, eating habits... helping them understand their child's development better, making life easier. I am devoted to the community and enjoy embracing new families and helping them feel better with their first school experience.



Miss Carey Wendell | Delta and Nebula Classrooms (Upper Elementary | Middle School)

I have been the Lead Guide for the Upper Elementary and Middle School communities since 2021. I graduated from the University of California-Davis with a B.S. in Genetics and completed my M.S. degree in Horticulture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I also hold a Master of Arts in Teaching – Elementary Education and an Education Specialist in Leadership degree from Oakland University.

In Montessori education, I am certified for Lower and Upper Elementary from the American Montessori Society and the Michigan Montessori Teacher Education Center (MMTEC). I have also completed my training for Middle School at the Houston Montessori Center. I have experience working with public, charter, and private Montessori schools throughout the state. In addition, I am a Montessori teacher trainer at MMTEC.

I enjoy gardening, baking, as well as listening to and performing music. My husband, Doug, and I have two children. Liz lives and works in New Haven, CT with their fiancé, Mer, while Jae lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. We, however, live with our two cats in Romeo, MI, home of the Michigan Peach Festival.



Miss Amy Turner | Delta Classroom (Upper Elementary)

I have been with the MSRCL community since 2024. I have a wealth of experience teaching elementary and middle school students at The Roeper School.

I look forward to starting my Montessori certification this fall. I will be graduating from Bank Street College of Education later this year with an MEd in general and special childhood education.

My passions include math, sports, cooking and knitting. I am truly excited to build relationships with the students and to share my passion for learning with them.