

CHRISTOPHER M. ADAMS, PHD

LAS MONTAÑAS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL, SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER
LAS CRUCES, NM



Dr. Adams is a twenty year veteran New Mexico educator. After sixteen years in Higher Education, at New Mexico State University, he has recently returned to his first love of teaching high school and is now working as a Social Studies teacher at Las Montañas Charter High School in Las Cruces, NM. His specializations include Critical Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, Social Justice Education, and Teacher/Youth Action Research. This year Dr. Adams is launching a music and art after school program ala School of Rock and is currently seeking donations and funding to purchase instruments, art supplies, etc... Other aspects that Dr. Adams brings to the OST project is that he has spent all of his teaching career in the New Mexico borderlands, except for one year in the northeast. He was born and completed primary school in Kentucky but spent his formative years and secondary schooling in Venezuela and is bi-lingual. Besides teaching his passions include writing, recording, and playing music, community service, supporting recovering addicts, watching pro football (Go Steelers!) and basketball (Go Celtics!) but mostly enjoys hanging out with his life partner watching Netflix and eating ice cream.

VALARIE BELLSON

PUEBLO OF ZUNI, CHILDREN'S PROGRAM COORDINATOR
ZUNI, NM



Valarie Bellson is a citizen and a member of the A:shiw/Zuni Pueblo. Her clans are Sandhill Crane (Kolotda:kwe) and child of the Eagle (K'yak'yali:kwe) clan. She obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from Southern Utah University in Sociology. In 2019, she started working as the Children's Program Coordinator for the Zuni Public Library. Valarie has attended training with ZETAC - Zuni Engaging Teachers and Community, EPICS - Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs, and with Strong Families New Mexico. Valarie is passionate about and continues to be a voice and advocate for children and families and has made volunteering and community involvement work a priority since working as the PTO President. She believes, "The day you become a parent, is the day you become a leader." Valarie and her partner Rodney Booqua have been active parents within the Zuni school communities where their children Jacob and Claire attend.

ANGELA DURHAM

HAYES MIDDLE SCHOOL, MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER
ALBUQUERQUE, NM



Angela enjoys working with children and has experience working with babies through the ninth grade in school, sports activities, and at church. She has two children and takes her job as a mother, teacher, tutor, mentor, catechist, counselor, friend, and listener very seriously. Angela believes that children are "the future of our world, and that they all need love, direction, boundaries, and opportunities to grow." She is excited about becoming a better mentor for her students, colleagues, peers, parents and her community. Angela's goal is to engage parents and the community at large to be a bigger part of schools and to provide real-life experiences for youth outside of the classroom. Angela also hopes to become a better communicator and listener and believes working with NMOST will assist her in this process.

MELINDA FRANCO

THE LOVINGTON YOUTH CENTER, DIRECTOR
LOVINGTON, NM



Melinda Franco strives to provide a safe haven for youth to go to during out-of-school time. She does this in her role as director of the Lovington Youth Center in Lovington, NM. In her four years of directing the Youth center, she has obtained a grant for a new STEAM lab, increased attendance in after school programs and consistently offers successful summer youth programs. She is the board president of the Lovington MainStreet and also serves on the boards of InforMe teen pregnancy program, the Early childhood development of Lea County, and the NMOST Leadership Council. She also recently completed a 9-month Leadership Institute with the Maddox Foundation. Melinda's personal hobbies include crafting, boating, sewing, reading and spending time with kids! She is the mother of two beautiful adults, nurtures a youth center full of kids and is honored to have been chosen as a candidate for the first Leadership institute.

JORDAN GRANT

FARMINGTON RECREATION CENTER, RECREATION PROGRAM SUPERVISOR
FARMINGTON, NM



Jordan feels privileged to be a part of the NMOST Leadership Institute! His love for after-school and summertime programming began when he was hired as a Program Assistant for The Boys & Girls Club of Bloomfield, NM. He was quickly promoted to serve as Unit Director for the Club and given the responsibility of planning all club-related daily activities, family events and fundraisers. In this role, Jordan witnessed how positive events and programming impacted youth and their families. This is what ignited his passion for working in the OST field.

Jordan loves his current position as the Recreation Program Supervisor for the Farmington Recreation Center. Here, he is able to experiment and create new youth and family programs and is thankful to be working under excellent leadership and mentors. Jordan lives with his wife Kristin Grant and is thankful for her encouragement and support.

DALE HAGIN ED. S

ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TITLE I, RESOURCE TEACHER
ALBUQUERQUE, NM



At a young age, a caring adult made a difference in Dale's life. This experience gave him the awareness that each adult involved in OST programs can play an important role as a mentor in the lives of young people pursuing their higher education and career pathways forward.

Dale has taught in Title I schools his whole academic career. He provided after school experiences for many years and saw the need to go beyond the classroom and offer alternative opportunities for students. Dale creates a welcoming environment promoting parental and family engagement in school and at out-of-school time events. After moving to the APS Title I Department, Dale spent 10 years in program development with the goal of increasing family engagement in Title I schools. He worked on the "Story Time in the Park" program, and in the "Statewide Title I Family Engagement Institute", which just finished its 11th successful year. "Partnerships" and "Collaboration" are his focus and favorite words. He has been involved with the APS Title I Out of School programs and NMOST for three years and is always excited to partner with an out-of-school time program with high engagement, and expectations.

ROSY MACARAH

SANOSTEE DAY SCHOOL, PROGRAM COORDINATOR
SANOSTEE, NM



Rosy Macarah is a successful community activist and educational consultant. She designs, develops and implements enhanced educational programs for both school and communities including community relations and community outreach.

Rosy has worked with the Los Angeles Unified School District, several ARMY Education Centers, The Youth Policy Institute, and First 5 LA, to name a few of her positions.

Rosy helps programs and communities discover their resources and potential and brings communities together for the common good of its residents. She loves challenges and will offer 100% transparency and commitment in the programs that she touches. Rosy has served on and headed numerous boards through her career bringing positive change to impoverished communities throughout the country. She is a nature lover and a long distance runner living in Sanostee NM and originally from Los Angeles, California.

BILLIE MATHEWS

PROMOTES LEARNING LLC, EDUCATION COLLABORATOR
LAS VEGAS, NM



Billie G. Mathews, Ph.D. is known for her love of learning. As a young student, her desire to be a lifelong learner was inspired by her second-grade teacher and paternal grandmother, both career educators. These mentors influenced her decision to become an educator. She has been a teacher and educational leader in kindergarten through high school and in community college/university levels.

Dr. Mathews earned a Ph.D. from New Mexico State University and a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from New Mexico Highlands University. She has worked with diverse populations in the areas of leadership, music education, gifted education, bilingual/dual language education, English as a second language, and project-based learning. Her interest in serving as a leader for diverse groups has inspired her to partner with the New Mexico Out-of-School Time (NMOST) Network to further serve students outside the school setting. When Billie is not teaching, writing, researching, training or presenting, she is performing music. She plays several musical instruments, performs a variety of styles of music and loves spending time with her grandchildren and family.

KELSEY MOORE

NMSU STEM OUTREACH CENTER, PROGRAM SPECIALIST
LAS CRUCES, NM



Kelsey loves her position as a program specialist at the NMSU STEM Outreach Center. She writes curriculum and facilitates OST programs for Las Cruces, Gadsden, Hatch, and Farmington school districts. She works with an amazing team that touches the lives of so many students and families in the local community. Kelsey received her Bachelor of Science in Education with an emphasis in mathematics, as well as a Master of Arts in Education with an emphasis in educational learning technologies, both from NMSU. She takes pride in providing services to students who otherwise would not have access to this type of learning. Kelsey is dedicated to being a lifelong learner. Her desire to learn and serve the community influenced her to participate in the OST Leadership Institute. She is excited about working along side of a group of statewide change-makers while continuing to advocate for the students and families of New Mexico.

SARA MORALES

NMSU STEM OUTREACH CENTER, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR
LAS CRUCES, NM



Sara Morales is the Associate Director for the STEM Outreach Center at NMSU, which hosts all out-of-school programming for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Sara held similar leadership roles for several National Science Foundation grants and has extensive experience in teaching, professional learning, research, assessment, evaluation, and outreach.

Sara's focus is equitable access for educational programs. This is important to her as she grew up in a low income-family. Her passion for developing high quality afterschool and summer programs stems from knowing first hand how these programs make a difference in a child's life. Growing up, Sara did not have opportunities to build her skills due to her family's inability to provide transportation, support her financially, or encourage her potential growth. This is still true today for many families in rural and/or isolated settings.

Sara is excited about participating in the OST Leadership Institute as it offers the opportunity to create long-lasting partnerships with others who are invested in the well being of children and their families.

ALINA POTRZEBOWSKI

UNM MEDICAL GROUP/WASHINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL,
COMMUNITY SCHOOL COORDINATOR
ALBUQUERQUE, NM



Alina Potrzebowski is currently the Community School Coordinator for Washington Middle School in Albuquerque. She is originally from Pennsylvania and has lived in New Mexico for over 17 years. As a child, Alina attended OST programming and now as a single mom, understands the importance of quality OST programming. She believes every child and family should have access to quality afterschool programming and believes addressing issues of inequality and justice cannot be ignored.

Alina has a background in fitness/sport and public health and has worked in and created out-of-school time programs since age 17. These programs include creating healthy and active programs at both Sandia and Santa Ana Pueblos. Alina's experience playing soccer and coaching at Oberlin College informed her understanding of the importance of physical activity and play. She creates programming where children engage in physical activity and have fun. She continues to coach and stays physically active by running and weight training.

SARAH PRATT

EXPLORA SCIENCE CENTER AND CHILDREN'S MUSEUM, PROJECT MANAGER
ALBUQUERQUE, NM



Sarah Pratt is a project manager at Explora Science Center and Children's Museum in Albuquerque, and in her three years there has been an educator, science writer, and program coordinator. She is passionate about sharing and teaching science to people of all ages, but especially teens, through hands-on experiments and relatable experiences. Her background is in chemistry, and she developed her passion for out-of-school time learning helping with chemistry outreach programs when she worked at Sandia National Laboratories. Through the OST Leadership Institute, Sarah hopes to gain knowledge and skills in OST program development, alignment with in-school learning, and advocacy.

LUCY RODRIGUEZ

HIGH MOUNTAIN YOUTH PROJECT, PROGRAM MANAGER
RUIDOSO, NM



Lucy has a BA in Psychology and an MA and MS in Professional and Clinical Counseling. She joined High Mountain Youth Project in November of 2018 as the Program Manager. Prior to this, she served as the Sexual Assault Prevention Program Manager for the Department of Defense and retired in January 2018 after 32+ years. Throughout her career, she served in the United States and abroad. She received the Sexual Assault Prevention/Response Program Manager of the Year Award for the Air Force and Army. Lucy loved her time with the Department of Defense but finds her current employment at High Mountain Youth Project to be even more fulfilling. Her greatest passion is helping underserved and at-risk teens achieve every level of success possible. She believes every child deserves an opportunity to become what they are meant to be and sees High Mountain Youth Project as instrumental in helping youth achieve their potential by providing a safe and secure place for them to study and relax.

Lucy believes participating in the OST Leadership Institute is a wonderful opportunity that will provide her tools to enhance what High Mountain Youth project already has to offer their target population.

LAURA SILVA

NGAGE NEW MEXICO, 21ST CENTURY PROGRAM DIRECTOR
LAS CRUCES, NM



Laura Silva is the 21st Century Parent Engagement Coordinator at Ngage New Mexico in partnership with the STEM Outreach Center at New Mexico State University (NMSU). She coordinates activities for parents and families that support students' learning through out-of-school time programming. Laura is passionate about empowering families as equal partners in education by building on strengths, promoting parent voice and leadership, developing opportunities for skill building, and connecting families to resources for students to thrive in the classroom and beyond. Laura is a recent graduate of NMSU completing her Master's in Social Work and a Master's in Public Health in May of 2019. Prior, Laura served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Botswana engaging youth through HIV/AIDS prevention and as an AmeriCorps VISTA coordinating Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tucson's school-based mentoring program. Laura believes that out-of-school time programming has great potential to bridge the gap between the school and home environments by providing stronger connections to families. She is excited about the potential to share knowledge with other OST ambassadors and to build her skills in developing sustainable family engagement strategies, programming, and partnerships in Doña Ana County.

MEGHAN SOWELL

MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE, MUSEUM ASSISTANT CURATOR
LAS CRUCES, NM



Meghan Sowell is the Museum Assistant at the Museum of Nature and Science. She is the coordinator of the museum spring and summer camps, and helps plan and organize all museum events. Meghan has worked with youth for about seven years and is very passionate about teaching. Meghan is also an artist and greatly enjoys utilizing these skills in her current position. She is able to apply both her art and science skills as teaching tools in the classroom. Meghan strives to inspire her students to be creative while learning and loves implementing classes that are fun and enjoyable. Meghan has a degree in studio art from New Mexico State University and currently lives in Las Cruces.

JENNY LLYOD-STROVAS

NATURE MATTERS WITH DR. JENNY, FOUNDER/DIRECTOR,
CEDAR CREST, NM



Dr. Jenny is a biologist, researcher and educator. Her passion is connecting people with nature so that they become stewards of our natural resources. This passion led her to develop Nature Matters Academy, a program that gets kids outside and learning about nature in their own backyards. She is honored to be part of NMOST's first Leadership Institute cohort. Through this program she plans to strengthen her fundraising and partnership development skills so she can increase equitable access to Nature Matters Academy across the state. ALL kids need time in nature, regardless of their income or zip code. Out-of-school time programs provide a unique opportunity to give all New Mexico children the opportunity to get outside and connected with nature.

BARBARA WHIPPLE

ASSISTANT PROGRAM MANAGER, HIGH MOUNTAIN YOUTH PROJECT-DROP-IN AND
STUDY CENTER
RUIDOSO, NM



For over thirty years, Barbara has been working in the areas of intervention, prevention and treatment. She earned an undergraduate degree of Science in Sociology and later a Master of Science degree in Mental Health Counseling, while holding certification as a Neuro-Linguistic Practitioner and prior certifications as a substance abuse counselor. Barbara has volunteered and served on non-profit boards, written and implemented grants and been involved in a wide variety of community wellness projects. Throughout her career, observation supported by research has allowed her to link risk factor increases with limited resources related to out of school support services. Participation in the OST Leadership Institute provides an opportunity to obtain increased research based information which will support the development and implementation of out of school time programming. This programming is seen as a valuable resource providing effective and sustainable support to overall community wellness. Barbara approaches life experiences with a nonjudgmental wellness approach and a continued desire to create an atmosphere of support which contributes to the resiliency of community systems.

HELEN WILDMAN-MEEHAN

GOLDEN ACRES SUMMER CAMP, DIRECTOR
SANTA FE, NM



Helen Wildman Meehan created and developed the Golden Acorns Summer Camp of Living Arts and Culture, Inc. in 2009. For eight years she has organized and orchestrated comprehensive summer programs including Yoga, T'ai Chi, Qi Gong, herbalism, healing arts, organic farming, and exposure to different cultures, with a core emphasis on Compassionate Communication.

Helen loves exploring ways in which to inspire children to find their own power, express it effectively, and to take more responsibility at home, at school, and in the community. Currently Helen is in the process of developing the Golden Acorns Institute, which will establish year-round after-school and out-of-school activities as well as programs integrated with public and private schools. She plans to create a family oriented community center for all ages. Helen feels that the OST Leadership Institute will provide the opportunity to work in collaboration with other inspired educators who share similar ideals and goals and who are creating a new paradigm for our society.

IRA M. VANDEVER-DINE' (NAVAJO)

FALLING CLOUDS,PROJECT MANAGER
PREWITT, NM



Ira is originally from Haystack, New Mexico. Born from a diesel mechanic and a special education teacher, Ira was brought up in a humble situation. His grandfather is one of the remaining Navajo Code Talkers who fought in World War II, and is also a medicine man. Through his grandfather's teachings, Ira's foundation was laid in the traditional Navajo way of life. That way of life is one with nature, activity, entrepreneurial in spirit and innovation. This way of life is very community oriented. Ira have spent the last 15 years helping shape health care on the Navajo Nation. Before then, he spent 10 years overseas in a completely different health care system, in Germany where he also played professional football.

In his spare time, Ira has developed programs (Falling Clouds) for elders and youth in their out-of-school time. He organizes outdoor activities, such as gardening caring for animals as well as beekeeping. The programs mostly center around cultural and traditional activities that help the community reconnect with who they have always been and hopefully will be again.