



ECOLOGY PROJECT
INTERNATIONAL

EPI TEACHER FELLOWSHIP

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



EPI TEACHER FELLOWSHIPS

2024 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



PROGRAM HISTORY & OVERVIEW

Since 2000, Ecology Project International (EPI) has involved more than 117,000 students in conservation education field programs in five countries. In 2013, EPI began hosting an educator-exclusive course, now known as the EPI Teacher Fellowship, which immerses teachers in EPI's experiential education curriculum.

The Teacher Fellowship is an 8-day field workshop designed to engage participants in hands-on investigations, community science research projects, and inquiry-based learning activities that strengthen understanding of key ecosystems. This powerful field experience also incorporates cultural exchange service learning in order to provide participants with cross-curricular learning experiences that inspire classroom instruction and deepen their students' understanding of the complexities of global environmental issues.

PROGRAM CONTACT HOURS

- 40 hours of active participation in daily activities

PROGRAM DATES & CONTACT INFORMATION

- **4.6.2024 - Costa Rica** Costa Rica Contacts: Jules Stuber - jules@ecologyproject.org
Sarah Wood - sarah@ecologyproject.org
- **3.2.2024 - Mexico** Mexico Contact: Grace Davidson - grace@ecologyproject.org
- **3.16.2024 - Yellowstone** Yellowstone Contact: Keri Geiser - keri@ecologyproject.org

Office information: 315 S 4th St E • Missoula, MT • 59801 • 406.721.8784

EPI PARTNERS

- Pacuare Reserve (CR)
- Tirimbina Biological Reserve (CR)
- Centro Interdisciplinario de Ciencias Marinas (MX)
- National Park Service (YEL)

EPI TEACHER FELLOWSHIPS

2024 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



EDUCATING, INSPIRING, & EMPOWERING NEW LEADERS

At EPI, our mission is to inspire youth with nature and empower them with science, fostering tomorrow's leaders. We envision a diverse movement building communities that cherish and restore the ecosystems that sustain them.

EPI was founded around three principal values: scientific literacy, environmental protection, and cultural exchange.

We acknowledge the challenges facing our planet today and aspire, together with our students and teachers, to help create a motivated, informed, critical, and creative citizenry who, based on a better understanding of nature and their role in it, practice positive behaviors.

The Question: How do we nurture the next generation to appreciate the role of science in addressing local and global problems related to climate change, sustainable development, and resource conservation?

Educators need to develop a robust understanding of science in order to incorporate science-related competencies in their classrooms. They need to use inquiry-based techniques to guide students in the tools and skills of research. They need to experience critical ecosystems first-hand in order to teach about their importance to global health.

Our Approach: EPI Teacher Fellowships address these needs by engaging participants in hands-on investigations, community science research projects, and inquiry-based learning activities. These authentic learning experiences are set in ecologically sensitive and biodiverse locations in Yellowstone, Costa Rica, and Mexico, where the integrity of natural systems and the complex human interactions within them are observable as part of one, interrelated system. These locations help model the importance of using authentic life experiences to teach science. Our professional staff of instructors implements a robust curriculum that focuses on promoting environmental literacy through the incorporation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

In the pre-field phase of the Fellowship, beginning with your invitation to our online learning platform, EPI works to familiarize Fellows with the field work ahead. Short writing prompts and an open forum for discussion are intended to provide building blocks for group formation and assess baseline knowledge and expectations.

During the Teacher Fellowship, participants get a close-up view of complex ecosystems and their interconnected relationships between soil, water, plants, wildlife, climate, and people. We explore how organisms have adapted and survived the test of immense competition to become unusual, diverse, and fascinating. Experiencing these unique ecosystems encourages a "new set of glasses" for one's local environment and provides a wider context for exploring significant questions, such as: What is biodiversity and why does it matter to me? What factors determine the biodiversity of these ecosystems, my hometown, and our planet? How will climate change affect them? How will it affect us locally? As a global citizen, what is my responsibility? How can I use this experience to improve my teaching?

In the post-field phase, we provide a framework to cement your findings from the field and implement them into your teaching, and we gather your experiences to share widely.

EPI TEACHER FELLOWSHIPS

2024 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

FELLOWSHIP LOCATIONS

Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem - As soon as you touch down in Bozeman, Montana, you'll understand why this ecosystem inspired our national parks. The landscape's singular beauty, abundance of wildlife, and fascinating thermal features combine to make this high-altitude plateau unique. Fellows will pursue a suite of research projects with teams from the National Park Service, spending time on foot or snowshoe (depending on weather conditions) and collecting data on species migration and land use in and around the park.

Baja, Mexico - While camping on this UNESCO-protected biosphere reserve, Fellows conduct a snorkel-based census of marine invertebrates and learn about the island's unique desert ecosystem. Based out of EPI's student campus in the city of La Paz, Fellows meet with local teachers and students and explore the culture of the city. The program includes a range of water and land-based activities, including boat access and educational excursions. Fellows are expected to snorkel and participate in ongoing monitoring projects.

Costa Rica - Based primarily on the Caribbean coast, Fellows monitor a protected tropical beach alongside instructors and researchers, in search of nesting leatherback sea turtles. These censuses are conducted at night, on foot. Fellows should expect long days in tropical conditions during this unique opportunity to participate in the conservation of Earth's largest turtle species. Fellows will also explore biological rainforest reserves and learn about tropical forest ecology.

MENTAL PACKING LIST

Of all the things you bring into the field, **the most important will be your open and inquiring mind.** During the Teacher Fellowship, you'll be guided by your curiosity, inquiry, and drive for discovery. Unlike a typical classroom course of study, this experience offers the opportunity to overcome fears, build confidence, recharge enthusiasm, explore different teaching techniques, reflect, and develop connections with fellow educators while spending time in critical ecosystems. Your outcomes, however, are rooted in your personal investment, preparation, and willingness to engage.

FELLOWSHIP GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Develop your familiarity with EPI's approach to education through field science & cultural exchange.

- Build a global perspective of the rich and interconnected nature of societies, cultures, and environments, as well as an awareness of the personal actions needed to sustain them.
- Observe the impact of globalization on local communities and ecosystems.
- Reflect on how personal experiences, choices, perspectives, and assumptions fit within the larger global context.

Celebrate & reconnect with the fundamentals of how students learn.

- Identify specific ecosystem-related topics that can be used to create engaging standards-based STEM learning experiences for students and communities.
- Identify research activities, protocols, and teaching strategies that can be used at a local level to engage students in inquiry-based learning and address national curriculum standards in a variety of subjects (e.g. science, social studies, language arts, & Spanish language).
- Deepen understandings of how to effectively use inquiry-based explorations as a means of constructing knowledge about the world.



EPI TEACHER FELLOWSHIPS

2024 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Provide unique experiences & activities to take back to your classroom.

- Engage in hands-on guided explorations of your site's ecosystem.
- Explore and describe the basic structure, components, and function of an ecosystem, and explain its role in maintaining a healthy global ecosystem.
- Understand different types of field investigations and how to use them to develop inquiry-based explorations with students.

Build a supportive network of science educators working toward similar goals.

- Engage in group conversations on challenges and opportunities in 21st century education.
- Share lessons, examples, and successes from your home institutions with a supportive group of engaged educators.
- Identify challenges to overcome in applying these concepts in the classroom — where help is required, how Fellows can encourage each other, and how to develop an action plan.

Introduce you to EPI's work & promote future student courses to program sites.

- Participate in field research projects developed by EPI and its research partners to gain an appreciation for the opportunities and rewards of field research.
- Gain competency in using traditional field research tools as well as digital technology to monitor and evaluate different ecosystem components.
- Explore how basic tools and protocols of scientific exploration, as well as innovative science education resources, can be used to deepen knowledge and understanding about ecosystems, your local environment, and the world

PROGRAM FORMAT

Pre-Departure

The Teacher Fellowship takes place primarily in remote field locations. Before departure, EPI provides Fellows with background information, readings, a pre-course assignment, and curriculum documents through an online platform. Thorough participation in the pre-departure program greatly enhances the experience for all participants.

In the Field

The field component of the Teacher Fellowship takes full advantage of learning resources in each course's home ecosystem. Each day offers new learning opportunities and is broken into morning and afternoon sessions. Sessions last 2-3 hours and include an initial challenge or question as well as a guided reflection activity. Field sessions are designed to actively engage participants via guided natural history explorations, inquiry-based learning activities, community science research projects, cultural explorations, and more. Incorporated into each session are activities designed to help participants deepen their understanding of best practices in inquiry-based learning and sustainability science.

Daily sessions are facilitated by course instructors, guest faculty, researchers, and local naturalist guides (in some cases). The following page contains an example of sessions and associated topics planned for the Teacher Fellowship.

Upon Return

The future of our planet depends on our youth. As teachers, we have the responsibility to help our students develop the dispositions, knowledge, competencies, and behaviors they will need to actively participate in a sustainable future. As an EPI Teacher Fellow, your task is to share and apply what you learn with your students, your district, and your community. Drawing upon all that you experience with us, what commitment will you make? What impact will you have? What legacy will you leave? We provide the tools, resources, and facilitation to stay connected to one another and share stories and successes.

COMMON SCIENTIFIC COMPETENCIES CONNECTIONS

Session Title	Ecological Knowledge / Competencies Connection
Types of Questions for Field Research Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask well-defined questions to conduct an investigation.
Descriptive Field Investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a field research procedure, identifying relevant independent and dependent variables. • Plan for control of your design and level of accuracy required. • Decide how much data is needed to produce reliable measurements, and consider any limitations on the precision of the data.
Comparative Field Investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use spreadsheets, databases, tables, charts, graphs, statistics, and mathematics to collate, summarize, and display data and to explore relationships between variables, especially those representing input and output.
Correlative Field Investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize patterns in data that suggest relationships worth investigating further. • Distinguish between causal and correlational relationships.
Research Project Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify gaps or weaknesses in explanatory accounts. • Identify flaws in arguments; modify and improve them in response to constructive feedback. • Use text, tables, diagrams, and graphs to communicate understanding or to ask questions about a system under study. • Make oral presentations of results and conclusions and engage in appropriate discourse with other Fellows by asking questions and discussing issues raised in presentations.

PROGRAM ASSIGNMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Fellows are expected to:

- Review and respond to pre-departure readings and activities.
- Share and apply what they learn during the field experience.
- Be a positive, active, engaged team member before, during, and after the field experience.
- Maintain a daily journal while in the field.
- Submit a post-course reflection paper about their field experiences.

PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT

Objective: Using the template available on your Fellowship’s Google Classroom platform, review and respond to pre-departure readings and activities.

- Contemplate the ways that you would like to see EPI’s Teacher Fellowship influence your teaching practice and help you grow personally and professionally.
- Share your expectations and hopes to inform course instructors of your personal and professional goals.
- Explore background information on the field location you’ll be visiting.

Due Date: This activity is due **one month before your course departure date**, and should be submitted through the Google Classroom platform once complete.

ON-COURSE & POST-FELLOWSHIP ASSIGNMENTS

Description: While you’re in the field with EPI on your Teacher Fellowship, we’ll ask you to keep a daily journal—in your own journal or in the space provided in your EPI course journal. Plan to use this space to reflect on your daily experiences. Beyond describing what happened, challenge yourself to analyze those events and reach the *why* that underlies them.

The field portion of your Fellowship is an intensive period of learning, study, and reflection. How do we hold on to the knowledge and experiences obtained on course? You will be asked to write a reflection paper using your daily journal and the prompts provided on your Google Classroom platform.

Due Date: The reflection is due **one month after your course return date** and should be submitted through the Google Classroom platform once complete.

Our Goals: Every EPI Teacher Fellow serves a community of learners back home; our goal is to help you extend what you learned through your field experience to create the largest possible impact upon your return. By keeping a daily journal and synthesizing those thoughts into a reflection paper, we’re aiming to lock in the knowledge and experiences you gained in the field, making them accessible and meaningful.

OPTIONAL COLLEGE CREDIT

After the completion of your Fellowship, EPI can provide a letter verifying the completion of 40 PD hours. Additionally, you can receive graduate credit through one of our partner universities. Separate registration and fees apply, as well as additional assignments. Check in with your Fellowship Contact about specific requirements.



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Excellent guides and great interactive curriculum. There was such a variety of meaningful things to do...so many great resources were shared...I learned so much new information and skills at each activity. I already use experiential learning but I will definitely use more because this brings home the value. I want to work on adding the community engagement piece [to my teaching practice].

-HEATHER LABELLE, 2021 TEACHER FELLOW

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Meet the 2024
MEXICO
Teacher Fellows

MARCH 2-9, 2024



JENNIFER BOLLICH

Jennifer is a high school science teacher in rural south Louisiana. While she has taught many sciences, high school-level biology is her passion. This is Jennifer's sixth year back in the classroom after a 20-year hiatus to raise her large family of seven children. Since returning to teaching, she has worked to

rapidly catch up to the new standards, and technology like computers and internet in the classroom. Jennifer graduated in 2022 with a master's degree from Project Dragonfly (Miami University). She is obsessed with nature studies and birds, and published an article on nature journaling for NABT.



EVA BURGESS

Eva is a classroom educator who is passionate about engaging students in relevant and rigorous science curriculum. She earned a master's degree in environmental education and has classroom experience that ranges from the Pre-K to the undergraduate level. She currently teaches Chemistry and

Earth & Space Sciences. In her free time, she loves to explore outside. Some of her favorite adventures include trail running, scuba diving and skiing.



BENJAMIN COOPER

Ben's passion for place-based and experiential learning grew while attaining his master's in Biological Science at Michigan State University (2013). He has participated teacher internships including studying walleye allelic frequencies and developing phenomena based curriculum using hydroponic systems that

he built. He teaches Biology, AP Biology, and Sustainability at Valley Lutheran HS in Saginaw, MI. In 2015 Ben was named Outstanding Secondary Educator by the Lutheran Education Association and as a STEM Star by the MiSTEM Network in 2021. Ben lives with his wife and son, and enjoys gardening, clay target shooting, and hunting.



KAYLINDA ELLENWOOD

Kaylinda received her BA in Environmental Policy from UC Berkeley and her MA in Education from University of the Pacific. She is the lead teacher for the freshman science class at Bishop O'Dowd High School and has also taught AP Environmental Science. Currently she is designing a

new course, Applied Ecology, which will focus on climate change's local ecological impacts. She loves to share her passion for protecting nature with students and hopes to inspire them to become climate literate global citizens! Kaylinda also loves spending time with her husband and daughter, traveling and doing crafty projects.



DARYL FORD-MACKALL

Daryl has taught secondary science for 10 years. She received her BS in Environmental Science from Allegheny College and MS Ed from Fordham University. Throughout her career, Daryl has served as a curriculum developer, teacher mentor, collegiate academic coach for STEM majors,

basketball coach, and aided students in science competitions and initiatives. Currently, she is the co-advisor of her school's Climate Action Team. Daryl believes in the importance of lifelong learning and loves leveraging science to foster wonder in her students. She lives in Pittsburgh with her husband and bernedoodle, and enjoys music, reading, the outdoors, and trying new foods.



NICOLE GREWELL

Nicole grew up in the countryside of northern Virginia. Following her interest in science and passion for the environment, she studied biology at Messiah University and then a master's degree in environmental engineering at Tufts University. She worked for many years as an

environmental protection specialist for both the Federal and State governments, where she performed environmental assessments and got to spend time in our nation's national parks. Eventually, she turned her career toward teaching — to prepare the next generation, to share her passion, and to balance her work and home life. She presently teaches AP environmental science.



NICOLE LINDSAY

Nicole currently teaches IB Biology at the Josiah Quincy Upper School in Boston, MA. Previously, she dedicated four years to teaching SEI Science in a multilingual classroom, where her passion for expanding access to STEM emerged. She holds a BS in Biology from Boston College and was

selected for the Donovan Urban Teaching Scholars Program, earning a master's degree in Science Education. Beyond the classroom, Nicole serves as a professional learning facilitator, empowering science teachers nationwide in implementing new investigation-based curricula. This spring, Nicole is excited to lead her first international trip to Costa Rica with her students through EPI!



ZOE MENDAL

Zoe is a biology and Earth/space science teacher in Bristol, CT where she helps teenagers navigate, investigate, and make sense of the universe from enzymes to supernovae. She participated in study-abroad fieldwork in the Galapagos and Amazon basin, and conducted microbiology research while

earning her Bachelors in biology, then concentrated in Multiple Intelligences Theory and arts integration while earning her MA in Education. Since COVID she's felt a bit cooped up, though, and is thrilled to be venturing back out into nature's classroom! She loves embarking on new adventures, live theater, audiobooks, crossword puzzles, and playing ultimate frisbee.



RENEE MILLER

Renee is a middle school science teacher with an infinity for all things space-related. Having started her career in science centers and museums, including the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum and NASA Langley, she's been a classroom teacher for the past decade. Renee has taught a

wide range of students, but she ultimately found her place in middle school. In her free time, she teaches aerial yoga, emphasizing both physical and mental well-being. Renee appreciates her downtime, hanging out with her family and her dog.



TRACI PHILLIPS

Traci is an enthusiastic educator with over 23 years of teaching experience. She holds an education degree from DePauw University and is a National Geographic certified educator. Traci is the fifth grade science teacher at Pine Crest School in Boca Raton, FL. Her passion for adventure has led her to spend

her free time pursuing a variety of activities, including ultra-distance marathon running, motorcycle riding, traveling, photography, surfing, scuba diving, camping, playing tennis, and more. Traci's commitment to education and her environmental stewardship have made her a role model for her students and an inspiration to those around her.



RON PROVOST

Ron's 25 years at Stevenson School in California teaching Marine Science, Astronomy, and Integrated Science creates experiences for his students that make science and scientific history real. He created a program through NOAA where students in the US and Belize worked together on ocean

pollution, has a 20+ year intertidal monitoring site, and is currently both an NSTA and NASA fellow communicating about the 2023 and 2024 solar eclipses. He is a history docent at Ed Ricketts' Pacific Biological Labs and volunteers on the Western Flyer, the boat Steinbeck and Ricketts took to the Sea of Cortez in 1940.



DANIEL SULLIVAN

Dan has been teaching in New England for 30 years, the majority of which had been at a small charter high school in northwest Connecticut, teaching courses in biology, environmental science, robotics, forensics, and integrated science. He is a two-time Fund for Teachers fellow,

participating in professional development in Costa Rica and in Peru. Dan spends his free time in the outdoors, fishing, skiing, hiking, mountain biking, and golfing, often with his teenaged son in tow.



Meet the 2024
YELLOWSTONE
Teacher Fellows

MARCH 16-23, 2024



KELLY GRONEMEYER

Kelly has taught Anatomy and Physiology for eleven years at John Carroll Catholic High School in Birmingham, AL. She also teaches AP Environmental Science and serves as the colorguard director for the JCCHS Marching Band. Her field work background includes a focus on amphibians and

tropical ecology, which she developed an interest for while she was working on her BS and MS degrees in Biology. Outside of the classroom, Kelly loves to spend her time cooking and eating food, going on walks and hikes in the Birmingham area, and snuggling with her two pets: Sebastian (cat) and Biscuit (dog).



HELEN HASKELL

Helen is a high school geoscience and outdoor leadership teacher based in Albuquerque, NM. Helen's passion is place based education and she is grateful to live in a state rich with geological and ecological diversity. She's often outside kayaking, cross country skiing

and backpacking with her students during the school year and in the summer she teaches a desert field ecology class for the University of New Mexico. As a Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms Fellow and NOAA Teacher At Sea Alumna, Helen is committed to transferring her love of learning to her students and school community.



LAUREN HUBERT

Lauren Marce Hubert has been teaching various high school science courses and French in Arizona for 25 years, and is a National Board Certified Teacher. She sponsors the Science Club's "fun, science-related field trips", and co-founded Travel Adventure Club "exploring the world—music, food, crafts and

festivals." Selected in 2022-23 for Fulbright's Distinguished Awards in Teaching Research, she recently spent three months in Singapore researching K-12 teaching of climate change and sustainability. In fall 2023, she completed graduate coursework towards creating a Sustainability dual enrollment course. In her free time, she enjoys arts and crafts, travel, movies, and family.



ANITA KURISKO

Anita teaches AP Calculus and Algebra 2 & Trigonometry at Gill St. Bernard's School in Gladstone, NJ. She holds a B.S.E.E. degree and a Master of Engineering degree and worked as an engineer in a research center and for a small technical software company prior to becoming a teacher

of mathematics. Anita strives to integrate "real life" math applications into the curriculum. She wants to bring her experiences with EPI to her classroom to help students discover connections between the world and "textbook" math skills. Anita enjoys spending her free time hiking, bicycling, baking, reading, and playing board games.



WARREN LAKE

Warren Lake has lived his entire life in Calgary, Alberta on Treaty 7 land. He started his career in 1995 with the Canadian Rockies School Division teaching at Canmore Collegiate High School and continues today with the Calgary Board of Education at Robert Thirsk High School. He looks for topics and

opportunities to reignite awe, wonder and excitement by taking students to pursue oceanography at Bamfield Marine Research Station or Arctic science at Kluane Lake Research Station. When not in the classroom or on the land, he can be found with a cup of black coffee and a good book.



AMY LANCASTER

Amy has been teaching for 10 years at Franklin Jr/Sr High School in Franklin, IL. Her degrees include AA in Fine Arts, BA in Environmental Science and BS in Elementary Education. Currently, she teaches sixth through eighth grade science, freshman biology and a high school ecology class. In

addition to teaching, she oversees the high school student council and the domestic/internal travel trips. When she is not at school or traveling she is having adventures with her husband and four children. Or in rare, spare moment enjoying a good book.



CHARLES MILLER

Charles is a science teacher from Maryland. He teaches Structures and Functions and Astronomy with Physics at a high school in Gaithersburg, MD. Charles is originally from Saint Petersburg, FL, where he found a love for science and field biology as a junior ranger at Boyd Hill Nature Preserve. This

interest has led him to many amazing outdoor adventures, working and assisting on herpetology field studies focused on snakes, turtles, and alligators. Charles never saw snow until 2017 when he moved to Maryland.



KARLA PHILLIPS

Karla has been in public education for 18 years as a science educator. Her current position at Academic Magnet High School has her facilitating AP Biology and Chemistry courses in Charleston, SC. Karla earned her BS in Biology from the University of North Carolina and a MS in Biological Sciences

from Clemson University. Although she lives at the beach, Karla is a mountain girl at heart, regularly making trips to Wyoming to spend weeks hiking and wildlife watching. When in South Carolina, she enjoys kayaking, horseback riding, reading, and living the farm life with her husband.



STEVE SHERK

Steve teaches middle school science in northern Indiana where he serves as department chair and a coach for both football and golf. During his 20-year career in education, Steve guides students to experience science through hands-on experiments that allow them to "get their hands messy."

Steve is a recent recipient of the Lilly Teacher Creativity Fellowship where he traveled throughout the USA in an RV recording video footage to spark the sense of adventure and excitement in students about science. Outside the classroom, Steve spends time with family, leads the ski/snowboard club, and is learning the art of photography/videography.



JENNIFER STOVER

Jennifer is a National Geographic Certified Educator who has been teaching for over 14 years. She has a bachelor's in Anthropology and a master's in Biological Science from Miami University as a part of Project Dragonfly/Global Field Program. She is serving as a Society for Science Advocate, is the STEM

Coordinator for Lufkin ISD and is on the Board of Directors for the Ellen Trout Zoo. She has worked as an archaeologist, as a National Park Ranger in her years prior to teaching. Jennifer is married to her high school sweetheart and they have one son.



MIKE SUSTIN

Mike enjoyed a rewarding 30-year career in public high schools teaching AP environmental science, chemistry, and earth & space science. Having transitioned to Hiram College in Hiram, OH, Mike now teaches "Methods of Teaching Science" to undergraduate MC and AYA

teacher candidates, and introductory science courses for EC and MC teacher candidates and non-science majors. He is also actively involved with Hiram's two field stations, one just off campus, and the other 600 miles to the north in the UP of Michigan. Mike and his partner Carol, an artist, love kayaking, hiking, and birding as often as possible.



CHASITY TEDESCHI

Chasity has been teaching science for 19 years. She started her educational career with an alternative certification in middle school science. For the past nine years she has been teaching high school biology, science research, and introduction to biotechnology. She was a National Board Certified Teacher

from 2013-2023. Outside of the classroom, Chasity enjoys spending time with her husband and sons. They are avid music lovers and love to attend concerts.



Meet the 2024
COSTA RICA
Teacher Fellows

APRIL 6-13, 2024



AMBER COBB

Amber has a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and a master's degree in Gifted Education. As a science specialist in a rural area of Arkansas, she provides professional learning experiences for teachers in 22 school districts. In this role, Amber strives to bring STEM

opportunities to students who may not otherwise have access. During her free time, she enjoys all things outdoors and hopes to visit all the national parks in the US.



SUE DAVIS

Sue has been married for over 30 years and has a love affair with nature and all living creatures. She has four children; one daughter at Purdue University, one daughter at Indiana University, and two sons at home. She serves as an Instructional Leader and currently teaches 8th-grade

science and biology. Sue has a BS from Heidelberg University in Biology and Business Administration. She loves to travel and has a lifelong love of learning. Sue loves to inspire her students to be curious, ask questions, and think creatively. Most importantly, she wants them to know they matter.



MERIDETH EKWALL

Merideth has been in the field of education since 1991 holding Master's Degrees in Curriculum and Instructional Technology, and Educational Leadership and Administration. As the PreK-8 Science Curriculum Coordinator for Westborough Public Schools in Massachusetts, her work focuses on inquiry through

hands-on investigations, place-based learning, citizen science, and school gardens. A travel study experience in Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands inspired her to embrace experiential learning and become a certified National Geographic Educator. Merideth serves on the National Science Teachers Association Outstanding Science Trade Book committee, volunteers in Lab rescue, and loves global travel with a local focus.



KAREN GUERRERO

Karen is a National Geographic explorer and educator with 20+ years of K-12 classroom experience, teaching future educators, and conducting teacher professional development. She's worked with a variety of students from inner-city children to urban adults in both informal and formal

education settings. Dr. Guerrero has an EdD in Leadership and Innovation and a PhD in Education with an emphasis on eLearning. Her passion for utilizing innovative technologies, collaborative strategies, leadership development, and reflective practices to support educators as they inspire the next generation of explorers emphasizes the innovation and commitment she brings to the education field.



KIM KLINKO

Kim teaches 7th and 8th grade science and environmental Studies in Lakeside, CA. Originally from Chicago, she now calls San Diego home where she enjoys walks with her dog, snorkeling, and the beach. Kim's passion is incorporating environmental literacy into science. She volunteers on the

California Association of Science Educators Environmental Literacy Committee. Kim is the 2023 recipient of the Leading Tomorrow Award from I Love a Clean San Diego and the Sustainable Earth Educator Award Winner in 2022 for her work in creating a student run recycling program at her school. This experience is a dream come true.



ALEXANDRIA KNOWS HIS GUN

Alex, a seasoned educator with five years of experience, teaches a multi-grade elementary class in rural Montana, focusing on instilling a lifelong love of learning. Holding a Bachelor of Science in K-8 Elementary Education from Montana State University-Bozeman, she is

committed to creating dynamic and engaging educational experiences. Alex actively participates in professional development, including a 6-week Research Experience for Teachers in Engineering program and the NEH Buffalo Nations Landmarks program. Beyond teaching, Alex and her husband love outdoor adventures, camping, skiing, boating, and hiking with their dog, Cairo.



STEPHEN KOS

Stephen is a dual-certified, K-12 licensed educator who teaches middle school STEM classes at NEST+m in New York City. A Math for America Master Teacher, Academy for Teachers mentor, and Urban Advantage Fellow, Stephen loves to work with other educators as much as with his students! Last summer,

Stephen traveled to the Middle East as a recipient of NYU's Astor International Travel Fellowship to learn how ed-tech startups are modernizing classrooms by automating teacher responsibilities and personalizing student activities. An avid scuba diver, he also earned his Advanced Open Water certification diving in the Red Sea, an incredible experience!



JAIME MOSQUERA

Jaime is a Gifted Resource Teacher at Floyd E. Kellam High School in Virginia Beach, VA. She has been teaching for 19 years and is passionate about empowering our future innovators and change makers through the creation and implementation of future-ready learning experiences. She thrives

on incorporating differentiation and personalized learning, tailoring educational journeys to individual student strengths and needs. She advocates for interdisciplinary learning experiences that prepare students not only for academic success but for a dynamic future. During her free time, she immerses herself in family adventures, exploring with her two sons, and enjoying the beach!



MELISSA RETTIG-PALMER

Melissa is currently a high school honors oceanography and biology teacher at LaFayette High School in LaFayette, GA. She is in her 11th year as department chair. She is the president-elect for the Georgia Association of Marine Educators and was their 2020 Marine Educator of the Year. She leads

her Marine Biology Club in the Georgia Adopt-A-Stream program, which monitors a local creek and the city lake for chemical and bacterial changes. In her spare time, she loves to travel, snorkel, hike, spend time with her family (and cat Skillet) plus work on real estate projects with her husband.



JONI SANFORD

Joni is a high school biology teacher at Halifax Grammar School in Halifax, NS, Canada. She has a BSc, BEd, and MEd in teaching and learning. She has 18 years of teaching experience, the most recent years teaching the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. She enjoys playing soccer, spending time at the

beach, and actively exploring new places with her family. She has travelled around the world with students for various reasons and looks forward to participating in this program to incorporate field experience to the internal assessment requirement of the IB science course.



MEREDITH SCHOENHOFER

Meredith is a graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in Plant Pathology and teaches APES, biology and chemistry. She has lived in Saudi Arabia, England, and Australia. She has traveled around the world to such places as Peru,

Chile, Singapore, all of Europe, New Zealand, and Fiji. She currently lives in Kennesaw, GA with her Husband and 14 year-old daughter. She recently sent her older daughter off to Auburn University where she is studying Mechanical Engineering. She enjoys horse back riding, swimming, and tennis.



SARAH SULLOFF

Sarah is an eighth-year educator living in Phoenix, AZ. She has bachelor's degrees in Biological Sciences and Biology Education, as well as a master's degree in Learning Sciences. She has taught both middle and high school sciences in the classroom, and has recently begun her journey teaching

in non-traditional learning environments. Sarah enjoys leveraging experiential education to facilitate meaningful learning, and she is looking forward to growing as an educator alongside her cohort at EPI!

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MARK SWAILS

Throughout his twenty-year education career, Mark has taught research skills, information literacy, intellectual property, and media studies to students at all levels. He is currently a librarian and professor at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, KS. Mark holds bachelor's

and master's degrees from Emory University in Atlanta, GA, a master's from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a PhD from the School of Library and Information Management at Emporia State University in Kansas.



MAURY WRIGHTSON

Maury is an assistant professor of biology and geology at Germanna Community College in Fredericksburg, VA. She has earned a BS in Biology from Roanoke College, an MA in Biology from the College of William & Mary, and an MS in Geoscience from Mississippi State University. She and her

husband have two teenage sons whom they homeschool. In addition to teaching in the classroom, Maury loves to help lead her homeschooling group on travel courses. This past year they traveled to the Bahamas to learn about the geology and marine ecosystems there.



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