

Meet the Teachers at...

APEX Home School Program

Rebekah Andriano

Longmont - Elementary Science, Electronics/Robotics, Intro to Robotics

Rebekah Andriano received her degree in Elementary Education from Lipscomb University in Nashville, TN. She lived in Tennessee most of her life and worked with children grades 3rd to 6th while there. She moved to Colorado 5 years ago and taught 1st and 2nd grade in Fort Collins. She is currently a stay at home mom to her two children, and is very excited to be a part of Longmont APEX. She is extremely passionate and dedicated to her work as a teacher. Rebekah also enjoys sewing, being outdoors, and spending time with her family.

Sharon Atkinson

Longmont - Secondary Spanish, French, Latin

Sharon Atkinson retired from the St. Vrain School District in June of 2006. She has taught English, French, and Spanish, and led six student groups to France and Spain while teaching at Lyons Middle/Senior. Originally from Galesburg, Illinois, she has lived in Colorado for 40 years and in Loveland since 1985. She was a flight attendant for Continental Airlines for 13 years prior to returning to teaching in Johnstown, CO, in 1989. Her hobbies include travel, reading, movies, visiting museums, and Scrabble.

Diana Austin

Longmont - K12 Music

Diana Austin earned her Bachelor's in Music Education from Colorado Christian University and her Master's in Linguistically Diverse Education from the University of Colorado at Denver. She has taught in Jefferson County Public Schools as well as with Montessori and Migrant Head Start programs. This is her third year with this program teaching music for kindergarteners through high schoolers. She has also sung professionally with various jazz bands and combos. Diana loves teaching and is passionate about making her classroom an enthusiastic place where students can succeed in music and public performance. She enjoys hiking, skiing, rock climbing, scrapbooking, and especially spending time with her husband and two sons (ages 4 and 18 months). Diana is excited about continuing to teach and work with the students in the Apex program.

Debbie Baldwin

Boulder & Longmont - Drama, Musical Theatre

Deborah Baldwin is an award winning drama teacher, professional actress and youth theatre administrator. She graduated from Stephens College with a BFA in theatre performance and a MED from Lesley College certified to teach drama, speech and English/language arts in Colorado and Missouri. Deborah has created seven youth theatre programs and serves as a consultant to several theatre companies in the mid-west. Twenty-two years ago, she co-developed a national playwriting contest for youth theatre plays which is still in existence today. Deborah has directed over 140 full length productions, plays and musicals alike and has inspired many of her students to become professional actors, dancers, directors, playwrights and teachers. She and her husband, an instrumental music teacher, reside in their dream home in Estes Park.

Karin Buckner

Boulder & Longmont - 1st Grade

Karin Buckner grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She earned her degree in elementary education and sociology from Moravian College. Since then, she has taught second grade for five years and has also taught kindergarten and first grade. Karin wanted to be a teacher since she was young and is passionate about creating an interactive and energized classroom focused on differentiated instruction, cooperation, and an element of fun. She enjoys painting, pottery, playing games, reading, trying new recipes, and exploring Longmont with her husband and two young children.

Joanna Buhlig

Boulder - Kindergarten

Joanna Buhlig was born and raised in northern Illinois. She earned a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology and a Master's of Science in Teaching from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. After moving to Colorado in 2004 to begin her teaching career, she taught in the elementary classroom for four years in Greeley. After marrying her sweetie and moving to Boulder, she became part of Boulder Options, and is entering her 4th year of teaching kindergarten with the program. Joanna is passionate about creating a safe, yet stimulating environment where kids are encouraged to love learning. Joanna, her husband, and little boy enjoy spending time with family and friends, trying new recipes, bike riding and exploring new places both near and abroad.

Angela Carter

Longmont - Elementary Math & Computer Skills

Angela Carter earned her B.S. Education from Indiana University with a minor in Learning Disabilities. She has taught full time in both 2nd and 4th grades and has taught Homeschool Enrichment classes for elementary math, writing, and literature. Angela is a registered teacher with the Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW), currently pursuing certified teacher status. Having trained with the Math Their Way curriculum, math is her favorite subject to teach, especially making math meaningful with concrete examples involving manipulatives and using Rapid Math tricks. Homeschooling three of her four children takes up most of her "free" time, but whenever possible, Angela enjoys reading children's literature, scrapbooking, and baking. After subbing for Options much of last year, Angela is very happy to join the APEX staff in a full-time position!

Meridith Criswell

Longmont – Elementary and Secondary Language Arts

Meridith Criswell is originally from the northeast, but has lived in California and now in Colorado for almost seven years. She received her BA in Communication from Boston College, her Elementary Education License from Cal State Los Angeles, and is currently working toward her Masters Degree in Teaching and Learning through Colorado State University. Meridith has taught in the public schools in both CA and CO, but left five years ago to teach home school students and provide private tutoring for kids in elementary and middle school. She enjoys skiing, camping, and spending time outdoors with her husband and two dogs. Meridith is excited to share her passion for literacy and learning with her students in the Longmont APEX programs this year!

Danielle DeFiore

Longmont - K12 Art, Photography/Yearbook

Danielle DeFiore is originally from the southwest and a recent northern Colorado transplant. Since she arrived in 2007, Danielle has embraced and fallen in love with the community here in Northern Colorado! She earned her bachelor's degree from Prescott College, located in Northern Arizona, majoring in Elementary Education with minor in Photography. She spent three years creating and implementing summer camps at Telluride Academy in Telluride, Colorado before moving to the Front Range. Danielle enjoys fostering a classroom that is fun, imaginative and chalked full of hands on learning! Outside teaching, Danielle enjoys working with her photography and hiking in the mountains with her husband and their dog Charlie. She's looking forward to a great year at Options.

Teri Foster

Longmont - Kindergarten

After growing up in the mountains of Georgetown, CO, Teri Foster married, graduated from UNC and then settled in the Greeley area. She taught third and fourth grades for three years in Hudson, CO before starting her family. As the children grew to be school age, she and her husband began to see all the benefits of homeschooling and so all three children have been homeschooled for a large portion of their education. Teri has always desired to teach at the Kindergarten level and feels very privileged to be able to do that through the Greeley and Fort Collins Options Program for the past four years. She enjoys walking, gardening and spending time in the mountains with her family.

Emily Gazlay

Longmont - Secondary Social Studies

Emily is a recent graduate of the secondary social studies program at CU-Boulder. She still lives in boulder with her husband and daughter, Annalise. Her family loves to travel and be outdoors: hiking, biking, camping, etc... Emily is passionate about the importance of social studies education and applying valuable real-world experience and examples to make history come alive. Much of her previous youth experience comes from volunteering at church, being a mentor/tutor, and interning with Boulder County's justice center. She is enthusiastic about the 2012-2013 school year.

Carrie Jacobucci

Boulder & Longmont - Secondary Science, Cooking

Carrie Jacobucci grew up in Chile. She is a licensed secondary science, elementary and early childhood teacher. She earned her degree from Colorado State University. She has taught math, science, preschool, Spanish, and wherever else she was needed to fill in. She feels that the true joy in teaching comes from watching a child discover new ideas. When not teaching, Carrie spends numerous hours working with the 4H program of Adams County.

Sara Jenkins

Longmont - Elementary Social Studies

Sara Jenkins is excited to be returning to the Longmont APEX team! Although Sara is a native of Colorado, her adventurous spirit took her far from home to Evansville, Indiana, where she earned her Bachelors of Science degree in Elementary Education. While in college, she also studied abroad in France for a semester. Because there's no place like home, she returned to Colorado where she married her husband and started her teaching career in the St. Vrain Valley School District. She also earned her Masters of Arts degree in Administration and Supervision at the University of Phoenix. This will be Sara's twelfth year of teaching, and she enjoys the opportunity to work closely with students in a fun and authentic learning environment through the APEX program.

Shannon Johnson

Boulder - Elementary Science, Electronics/Robotics, Intro to Robotics

Shannon Johnson was born and raised near Seattle. After graduating from Washington State University with a B.A. in Elementary Education she taught for a year before heading overseas to travel for several months. Her background of teaching 4th – 8th grade students, working as a substitute teacher, adult tutor and working outside of education has given her a breadth of experiences from which to draw. The familiar landmark of the mountains and recreation to the west made the transition easy, with her family, from Washington to Colorado about a year ago. Beyond spending time with her young family, Shannon enjoys fishing, swimming, walking, hiking, and reading.

Marie Kaufman

Longmont - Secondary Language Arts

Marie Kaufman is a certified Language Arts/English instructor with ten years of classroom experience. She holds her Masters in English from the University of Northern Colorado. During her time at UNC, Marie taught Freshman Composition and The College Research Paper and wrote the curriculum for and piloted a course in Writing for Social Change. Marie also teaches in the Youth Program at Lighthouse Writers Workshop. She is originally from Florida, where she taught middle and high school Language Arts and Literature and served as the Language Arts Department Chair and Curriculum Coordinator at New Renaissance Middle School. She lives with her son, Deacon, in Longmont, Colorado.

Cindy LaVanchy

Boulder & Longmont - Elementary Math & Computer Skills

Cindy LaVanchy graduated from Liberty University with a degree in Elementary Education concentrating in Physical Education and Psychology. Her teaching experience includes teaching middle school math, 4 & 5th Grade Gifted/Talented Math, and grades 5th and 6th in both Virginia and Colorado Schools. Cindy is currently a stay at home mom to her three boys and is very excited to bring her passion for teaching to the Boulder and Longmont APEX site. Her interests include spending time with her family, scrapbooking, running and enjoying the great outdoors.

Lisa Mann

Boulder - K12 Music

Lisa Mann earned her Bachelor's in Music Education from Anderson University in Indiana. Prior to becoming a mother, Lisa taught middle school general music, choir and show choir at Carmel Junior High School. More recently, Lisa led classes and directed The Music Playhouse program in Indianapolis, IN and Boulder county from 2003-2009. Lisa has led worship and directed children's and adult choirs in various churches and is presently working as the Children's Coordinator at Origins Church in Boulder. She currently teaches general music, piano and choir two days at Broomfield Options and is excited to join the Boulder Apex team as well. Lisa loves snow skiing, enjoys a good hike and is always working on a creative project. She loves to spend time with friends and family.

Jen Moyers

Boulder & Longmont - Elementary Spanish, Physical Education

Jen Moyers earned her Master of Arts in Elementary Education from Oregon State University. She taught 4th grade in the Hazelwood School District (St. Louis , MO) for four years where she was named the district's Rookie Teacher of the Year, was accepted into the Talented Teacher Institute, and participated in district curriculum development. After moving to Colorado for her husband's job, Jen taught one year in a private school and then began working for the Options program in 2005. She played all sports growing up, but specialized in basketball throughout college. She and her husband have been blessed with four children, the eldest two being homeschooled as well. When she has free time she enjoys sports, reading, scrapbooking, cooking, and coffee with friends. Jen has a passion for making learning fun and loves working with these incredible students!

Cassie Mulcahy

Boulder - Elementary Social Studies

Cassie Mulcahy is a Colorado native and currently resides in Broomfield. She has taught elementary age students for eleven years. Three of those years were at the Broomfield Options site and one year with the Boulder Options site. She received her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and her Master's degree in Curriculum & Instruction. She has been married to her wonderful husband for six years and has a four year old son that keeps her very busy! Cassie enjoys playing sports, reading, traveling, and spending time with her family.

Beth Olson

Boulder & Longmont - Elementary and Secondary Language Arts

Beth Olson is a licensed teacher with a Master's Degree in teaching and a BA in Cultural Anthropology. She has twelve years of teaching experience, ranging from kindergarten to high school. Her past experiences include directing a K-6 after-school program, teaching middle school English and Social Studies classes, and running SAT prep classes. Beth currently runs her own private tutoring business and was a part of the Boulder OPTIONS staff since its inception. Beth's educational philosophy incorporates the belief that all

students have special strengths and gifts. Sometimes they need help in discovering their abilities are and in gaining confidence to use them. When she isn't teaching, Beth enjoys spending time with her husband and sons (8 and 4 years old), playing outside, camping, and going on adventures, big and small.

Julie Simmons

Boulder & Longmont - K12 Physical Education

Julie Simmons was born and raised in Southern California where she spent her time playing basketball, volleyball and competitive softball. Julie attended the University of Hawai'i on a softball scholarship and earned her B.A. in American Studies and M.Ed in Educational Administration. After moving to Colorado, she attended Metropolitan State College of Denver and earned her Teacher Certification. Julie taught Social Studies and Physical Education for Jefferson County Public Schools and is an accomplished high school softball coach. She enjoys spending time with her family, watching the Rockies and Broncos play, and working out. Julie enjoys sharing her passion for physical education with this wonderful group of students!

Susan Steven

Boulder & Longmont - K12 Art

Susan Steven recently retired from teaching art and photography after fifteen years at Skyline High School in Longmont. She received her art education degree from San Diego State and University of San Diego. Susan moved to Boulder in 1995 to live closer to her home-schooled grandchildren. She has been a professional, award-winning artist and art instructor for over 30 years in California, Alaska, Hawaii and now Colorado. She is a member of the Boulder Art Assoc., Louisville Art Assoc., and board member/newsletter editor of the Longmont Artist Guild. Her interests include painting, drawing, photography, skiing, hiking, sailing, scuba diving and spending time with her four beautiful grandchildren. Susan is very excited to continue teaching and inspiring children to create their own works of art as well as to teach them to appreciate visual art in the world around them.

Cindy Stutzman

Boulder & Longmont - K12 Music

While working as a hair stylist for 24 years, Cindy raised her family of 4 children and pursued a degree in Music Therapy from CSU and Music Education from UNC. She has owned and operated a music studio and theater production company and prior to working at Options, focused on teaching general music (k-5th grade), and choir and theater (6th-12th grade) in both public and private education settings. Cindy also enjoys her four grandchildren, golf, tending flowers and sewing/knitting for her Etsy store SewNitSoftly.

Karen Williams

Longmont - Secondary Science

Karen Williams is a licensed K-12 science teacher with numerous years of Colorado science teaching experience at the middle and secondary level. She holds a BS from Eastern Michigan and A Master's degree from the University of Texas. A former Math, Engineering and Science Achievement sponsor and "Rookie of the Year" for NASA's Robotics program, Karen is also a professional scientist, spending time working on environmental issues around the country. She enjoys gardening, loves all animals, and is excited to see her daughter continue her education at UNC this year.

Usha Narayanswamy

Boulder & Longmont - Secondary Math, Finance, Destination ImagiNation

Usha Narayanswamy, was born and grew up in India. She came to Boulder for higher education and got her masters in computer science from University of Colorado, Boulder. She worked as a software engineer for a few years before choosing to be a stay-at-home mom for her three children. After her children started elementary school, she decided to change her career to her true passion, that of an educator. Usha has worked with students of different ages and abilities in various capacities for over a decade. She got her teacher's license in elementary education through an alternative teacher licensure program. Later, she added an endorsement in secondary Math. She loves to teach Mathematics and Science and incorporate creative and hands-on activities in her lessons. She has taught Math, Math Olympiad, Singapore Math, and AMC 8 (American Mathematics Contest) to K-8 students. She has also tutored K-12 students in Mathematics and been a substitute teacher in local districts for three years. In her free time, Usha likes to cook, work in her garden, draw and paint, and go for hikes and camping with her friends and family.

TBD Science

Longmont - Secondary Science
