



Kinder High School for the
Performing and Visual Arts

Introducing Our 2019-20 New Staff Members



Amanda Alexander (Biology) grew up in the deep East Texas Pineywoods north of Houston. She graduated with a General Studies Degree from Texas Tech University with an emphasis in Zoological Sciences. After working at the Field Research Station at Texas Tech in Junction, she co-founded The Outdoor School, an outdoor education program for K-12 public schools in the Hill Country. Amanda then continued her studies at SFASU researching invasive apple snails with the environmental science department. She fell in love with teaching at SFASU's Mast Arboretum and started her teaching career at her alma mater, Lufkin High School.

This next year will be Amanda's thirteenth year teaching science. She's taught Biology, AP Biology, Biology IB, IPC, Chemistry, AP Capstone Seminar and Research. Amanda comes from five years at Energy Institute. She helped create a PBL 101 Instructor course for all new teachers to EIHS and was voted Teacher of the Year. She is excited about bringing STEAM to life! She lives in Willowbend with her husband of five years and their newly adopted puppy, Olive. Her hobbies include gardening, needlepoint, and cooking.



Christy Farris (Counselor – Dance, Theatre, Visual Arts) grew up in Chicago, IL and moved to Texas 19 years ago. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from Illinois State University and after working as an elementary teacher for a few years, she then received her Master's in Counseling from Sam Houston State University. Ms. Farris worked as a counselor at The Woodlands High School in Conroe ISD for the past eight years.

She strongly believes every person has value and a purpose and wants to share this with the students as she guides them through their experiences at Kinder HSPVA. When not working with students, she is driving her 7 year old son to theatre rehearsals and piano practice or going on adventures with her family. These adventures include enjoying music and the arts, visiting museums, and learning about science together.



Heather Hill (Social Studies) was born and raised a proud Cajun in Lafayette, Louisiana and moved to Houston 16 years ago. After graduating from the University of Houston-Downtown with a Bachelor's in Interdisciplinary Studies, she began teaching social studies in Cy-Fair ISD, earning 10 years of experience with students from 8th to 12th grade.

As a high school student herself, Heather found her love of history with the guidance of a beloved teacher, and ultimately decided to pursue her passion through teaching. In the duration of her career, Heather hopes to inspire and support her students to find their passions as well as become successful in life.



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Rebecca Johnson (Counselor – Creative Writing, Instrumental, Vocal) – joins the HSPVA team from Humble High School in Humble ISD, where she has served as a counselor for the last thirteen years. She graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration, with a minor in Management, from Stephen F. Austin State University and continued her education at Sam Houston State University and earned a Master of Education in Counseling. Before becoming a counselor, Mrs. Johnson was a business education and technology application teacher as well as a cheerleading coach. In 2017, she was honored with the Career Guidance Award from the Career & Technical Association of Texas for Area 6.

Mrs. Johnson entered counseling because of her desire to be an advocate for students - supporting, guiding and assisting students throughout high school. She has worked with students individually and in a variety of group counseling sessions. When Mrs. Johnson is not with her family, you can usually find her at the theatre as a TUTS & Broadway Across America season ticket holder. Her other hobbies include photography, reading, and traveling.



Kimberlyn C. Jordan, BSN, RN (School Nurse) is coming to Kinder HSPVA from HISD's James Madison High School. Nurse Jordan came to HISD immediately after Hurricane Harvey and Madison was her first school. Prior to HISD, she worked in the Intermediate Care Unit (IMCU) at East Houston Hospital (which was destroyed by Hurricane Harvey). She has over 20 years of service in the United States Navy as a Hospital Corpsman and has served in two combat zones. During Operation Desert Storm she was stationed aboard one of the Navy's hospital ships, the USNS Comfort. She also served as "boots on ground" in Iraq attached to the Second Marine Expeditionary Force as medical support for Operation Iraqi Freedom. She is a native Houstonian, born and raised in Houston's Third Ward/Museum District. She has one

child, a daughter, Kyla Jordan, a 2011 graduate of HSPVA. Nurse Jordan loves to spend her "me time" reading a variety of subjects, watching self-development videos, and pampering herself with self-care (massages, pedicures, manicures, weekend getaways, etc.).



Belinda King (Psychology) graduated from college with a BS in Social Studies Education. She later completed a Masters degree in counseling and received her Administrative Certification from Sam Houston State University. She has 41 years of experience in public education as a teacher, counselor, and administrator with 34 of those years in the Humble Independent School District. She taught Psychology for 12 years at Kingwood High School and is excited about teaching that again! An important part of her time is serving on the Board of Directors and volunteering for FamilyTime, a crisis and counseling center in Humble that also operates a women's shelter. She enjoys

traveling, the theater, live music at small venues, reading, sports and most of all, spending time with her four adorable grandkids!



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Jacob Lozano (English Faculty) was born and raised in Houston, Texas. He graduated from St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas with his bachelor's in English Writing & Rhetoric with a concentration on Creative Writing. He also studied non-fiction writing and Arthurian Romance at L'Universite Catholique de L'Ouest in Angers, France before moving to Boston to earn his Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting & Film Production from Boston University while teaching classes in English and Screenwriting. In addition to his education, he has also worked in film and is a produced playwright.

After leaving Boston for the lack of tacos, Mr. Lozano decided to continue his passion for teaching at La Porte ISD before joining Kinder HSPVA this year. He enjoys creating a classroom of students who are critical thinkers that take their curiosity beyond the classroom to make their community a better place. Outside of the classroom, when he's not reading, writing, or playing with his dog, Sawyer, you can find Mr. Lozano eating tacos, dancing, or eating tacos while dancing.



Marilyn Lunnon (English Faculty), a native Houstonian, has a bachelor's degree in English and master's degrees in Guidance/Counseling and Public Administration. Her teaching experience spans several years having taught all secondary grade levels 6-12 and college level. She believes that teaching is her "calling" and youth development is her passion. Her entrepreneurship spirit has led her to start several youth programs during her educational career including a non-profit organization, Path of Life, Inc. – an organization for the total development of youth; Tutoring ETC.; and WISE – Westbury Intelligent Student Entrepreneurs.

Of all other professions, she believes that teaching is the greatest and can be the most rewarding and she is still proud to be called "A teacher!" Other than teaching, she enjoys theater, tennis, and traveling (alliteration not intended).



Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton (Creative Writing Faculty) is an internationally-known Poet, Singer, Actress, Photographer, Wife, Mother, and the first Black, Poet Laureate for the City of Houston. A California native, she was formerly ranked the #2 Best female Poet in the World and established herself as a notable force in the Performance and Literary World. A graduate of the University of Michigan, she moved to Houston in 2007 and became actively involved in the Poetry Slam community. She released her first full-length album in 2009 titled "The Unfinished Work of a Genius." She has been featured on BBC, NPR, Upworthy, Blavity, Tedx, Button Poetry, Write About Now, and the opening video of the 2017-2018 Houston Rockets Season. Her collaboration with the Houston Ballet celebrated Houston's resilience and

provided hope for the City after Hurricane Harvey.



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Deborah D.E.E.P. Mouton continued:

As Poet Laureate of Houston, she worked to shift the cultural and literary landscape of the City of Houston. She developed workshop series, readings, and directed an visual and audio tour of the city of Houston through the work of 38 writers, including her own. She pushed literacy and the inclusion of performance poetry as a valid art form through local and international channels. In 2018, she took the reigns as Executive Director of VIP Arts Houston: an organization dedicated to developing, empowering, and amplifying marginalized voices. As a Teaching Artist, she has traveled and taught at multiple schools, community centers, homeless shelters, prisons, churches, and more recently the TedX platform through multiple talks and performances. She is always looking for new and better ways to make poetry and the art of expressing oneself accessible.



Ellen Phillips (Visual Arts Faculty) was born and raised in Houston, Texas. Ms. Phillips is an alum of Kinder HSPVA. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Painting at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) where she primarily studied painting and printmaking. Prior to this year, Ms. Phillips worked in the Visual Arts Department as a consultant for one year. As a consultant, she educated students in Applied Drawing, Art Awareness, and Senior Independent Studio. Her background also includes working at Rothko Chapel, archiving mid-century modern furniture, graphic design and publishing. In her free time, Ms. Phillips enjoys spending time with family, creative writing, maintaining a personal studio practice, and collaborating with makers in the Houston community and beyond.



Antonio Roca (Mariachi Director) was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. He holds a Bachelor's degree in International Marketing from Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara and a Master's in Voice Performance from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. Mr. Roca started teaching at Elsie HS in Alief ISD, TX where he directed the Mariachi program. He has also taught voice privately for many years. In addition voice, Mr. Roca has also taught Classical Guitar Ensemble and Choir.

Mr. Roca has sung in Mexico, Italy, Israel, and USA with many fine Mariachis, Choirs and Opera Companies. He enjoys nature, cooking, sports, such as outdoors running, playing soccer and traveling around the world with his wife, Dalma. Mr. Roca enjoys making music with young talent and strongly believes that it is a spiritual gift that makes a positive impact in the world and heals the soul. Mr. Roca is thrilled to begin his first year as a member of the HSPVA team.



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Lucy Seward (English Faculty) joins the HSPVA team for her nineteenth year of teaching in HISD, having previously taught at Wheatley, Bellaire, and Heights High Schools. She earned her Bachelors of Science (Biology), her Juris Doctorate, and her teaching certifications in English and History from the University of Houston. Ms. Seward loves learning and honing, along with her students, literacy skills that foster civic engagement and a love for life-long learning. In her spare time, she loves reading, eating, jogging, practicing yoga, and picking out tunes on the piano.



Dr. Yanira Soria (Vocal Faculty) hails from Spain and has performed extensively as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the world. Dr. Soria is a HSPVA graduate, with degrees from Sam Houston State University and University of Houston, where she completed her Doctorate of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees in Collaborative Piano and Chamber Music. Dr. Soria has appeared as guest soloist with the Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra, and the Sam Houston State University's Symphony Orchestra and has received numerous awards for her performance.

Prior to joining HSPVA, Dr. Soria was the Co-Director of Piano Studies at Meyerland PVA MS from 2017-2019. Her additional teaching experience includes time as an accompanist/vocal coach at Sterling High School in Baytown, TX and at Klein United Methodist Church from 2011-2015. Dr. Soria is also on staff with the American Festival for the Arts, a music summer program for students' ages 9-18. Dr. Soria is a proud founding member of the Houston-based Terra Nostra Ensemble, an innovative ensemble dedicated to the performance, promotion, and preservation of music by Latin-American and Iberian composers. Her professional affiliations include the Music Teachers National Association, the Texas Music Teachers Association, and the Texas Music Educators Association.

THEATRE UNDER THE STARS

We are excited to announce a new partnership between our Theatre department and Theatre Under The Stars (TUTS). Beginning this school year, TUTS Teaching Artists will collaborate with our Theatre faculty to provide a four-year musical theatre curriculum developed specifically for our students. In addition to a well-rounded training program, there will be opportunities for masterclasses and workshops with renowned industry professionals. Theatre Under The Stars has a long history with Kinder HSPVA, providing many students and alumni with the opportunity to work as professional artists in Houston. We look forward to seeing how this innovative partnership continues to evolve in the coming years.