

GETTING TO KNOW THE NEW STAFF AT BELLS MILL



Mr. Amador

Lunch and Recess Assistant

What is your vision for education?

Schools should employ staff members who enjoy working with kids and have their best interests at heart.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I was, and still am, a school bus driver.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

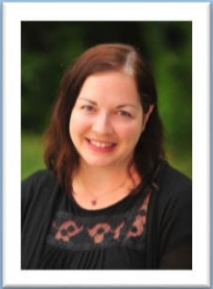
I wanted to continue helping kids.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

I wanted to be a mechanical engineer.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I also work with kids while at church.



Ms. Collins

Special Education

What is your vision for education?

I believe that education should help each individual become their best self, and this will mean something different for each student.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

Last school year I taught at an elementary school in Centreville, Virginia. I also taught preschool and kindergarten at a private school in Great Falls, Virginia.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I have been very fortunate to have had wonderful teachers throughout my lifetime, from elementary school through graduate school. The teachers who believed in me and built connections encouraged me onto the career path I have taken.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

I've always loved animals, so as a child I thought I would grow up to become a veterinarian or a wildlife biologist.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I am so excited to be at Bells Mill and I can't wait for a wonderful school year!



Mr. Eifler

Fifth Grade

What is your vision for education?

School is a place for young minds to learn about the world around them. Intellectual curiosity is one of the most important things a person can garner. However, school is just as important for learning life skills that will be vital for the rest of one's life. So whether kids are learning how to make friends or the causes of the American Revolution, all of it helps turn kids into the adult they are going to be.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I graduated from American University in December of 2015. At that time, I was a student teacher in the 1st grade at Bethesda Elementary. After graduation, I spent five months as a long-term substitute at Lucy Barnsley Elementary, splitting time between 2nd and 5th grade.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I sort of had a last minute decision to pursue education. I switched my major from Film Journalism my sophomore year. Though, if I think about it, working in schools and with young students was always in the back

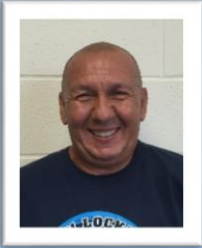
of my mind. I always worked at the same camp in New Hampshire every summer, and I had a number of great teachers when I was young. I think those things coupled together were, in the end, what pushed me in the direction of becoming a teacher.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

When I was a kid, other than playing for the Mets, I wanted to be a surgeon. I don't entirely remember why.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I like to spend as much time as I can outdoors. Whether it is at the ballpark or in the mountains, I feel my best when I get outside.



Mr. Garcia

Building Services

What is your vision for education?

I believe education is our future. Education should improve our students' likelihood of a better future and a better life.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

Before coming to Bells Mill, I was an Assistant Building Services Manager at Seven Locks Elementary School in Bethesda, Maryland.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I want to help create a safe environment for students to learn. I try to do my best at my job. I am committed and responsible in my tasks.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

When I was five years old, I wanted to be a firefighter like my father. He was my hero.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I am very knowledgeable about soccer. Even though I am from Colombia, my favorite soccer team is Bocca Juniors from Argentina.



Ms. Goodhand

Kindergarten

What is your vision for education?

Education should encompass a safe and positive learning environment for all students with teachers who smile, laugh, and love!

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I have been involved with Bells Mill Elementary School for quite a few years. I was on the PTA Board, and I was Ms. Abramson's long-term substitute!

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

Once I had kids of my own, I knew I wanted to work with children forever!

What was your dream job when you were a child?

I wanted to be a veterinarian when I was in elementary school!

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I love being a mom. I love being a teacher.



Ms. Hoffman

First Grade

What is your vision for education?

I believe that all students should have an equal chance to learn, and should have fun while doing it. Learning should be interactive and engaging and without that students would not reach their full potential.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

Before I came to Bells Mill, I was a student at Goucher College where I studied Elementary Education.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

In middle and high school I had amazing teachers. You could tell how much they cared for their students by how hard they worked and the strong relationships that they formed in the classroom. That showed me how important teachers were and made me want to go to college to become a teacher.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

A teacher! I decided that I would be a teacher very early on. I would play school over the weekends and I always asked for school and teacher supplies for my birthday so that my play school would be more like real school.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I am so excited to be at Bells Mill! Everyone is so wonderful and helpful, I cannot imagine working anywhere else!



Mr. Karpf

Art

What is your vision for education?

I feel that all students can be creative and should be given plenty of opportunities to flex that creative muscle. It's important to challenge yourself to try new things so you can grow as a person.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I am currently the full-time art teacher at Beverly Farms ES. I used to teach Art at College Gardens ES and Montgomery Knolls ES.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I was encouraged by my own experiences with Art in and out of the classroom when I was young. I also had a great art teacher in high school who influenced my career choice.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

When I was a child I wanted to be a soccer player.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

My wife and I have two kids and a dog. My daughter is four and my son is two.



Ms. O'Reilly

Physical Education

What is your vision for education?

I believe students should learn in a creative and active school environment.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

Before I came to Bells Mill I was a substitute teacher and a swim coach.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I always loved playing different sports even though I was never really the star. I want students to learn how fun and helpful movement activities and sports can be even if they do not believe they are that "good" at them.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

Being a manicurist or painting fingernails!

What is something you would like us to know about you?

Physical Education runs in my family. Both my mother and brother are physical educators as well!



Ms. Jennifer Obendorfer

Third Grade

What is your vision for education?

I think school/education most importantly should be fun! When students don't enjoy what they're doing, they will not be engaged.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I graduated from Towson University in December 2015. After that, I was a long-term substitute at Gaithersburg Elementary for five months.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I enjoy being around kids and making a difference in their lives.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

I wanted to be a cowgirl.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I am loving working at Bells Mill thus far. Everyone is so supportive, welcoming, and kind to one another.



Ms. Emily Obendorfer

Fifth Grade

What is your vision for education?

I think learning should be FUN, collaborative, hands-on, and student-centered.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I went to Towson all four years of college. While at school, I worked as a nanny and at a clothing store called Anthropologie.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

My own experiences in school- remembering teachers I've had who have made a tremendous impact on me.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

In my Dr. Seuss fill-in-the-blank book, I wrote that I wanted to be a teacher when I grew up- I was five years old!

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I HATE seafood (never had it...but I'll never try it). I have three cats- Olive, Otis, and Eleanor. I'm addicted to Mexican food. ☺ My favorite place to be is my family's lake house at Smith Mountain Lake...on a boat, of course!



Ms. Vassila

Music

What is your vision for education?

Students should enjoy their time with music from elementary school through high school.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I taught music at Beverly Farms Elementary School.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I come from a family of teachers.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

I wanted to be an opera singer.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I love children, music, and teaching.



Ms. Ventura

Special Education

What is your vision for education?

I think education should be engaging and fun. I like to incorporate lots of hands on activities and encourage my kids to use the computers to promote learning.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I worked for seven years in the functional and Autism programs in Baltimore County.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I love working with kids and making a difference. I wanted to come back to Montgomery County to be closer to my family.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

marine biologist- I wanted to train and swim with dolphins.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I am a huge fan of Disney and have almost every Disney movie. I also am a huge Pinterest fan and everything I do

or any idea I ever come up with I always go to Pinterest to help me implement my idea. I am also super super shy (I consider that a weakness though). I have 2 active boys and 2 active dogs so I am very, very busy!



Mrs. Watson
Principal Intern

What is your vision for education?

I truly believe that “all means all.” I believe that all students can learn and that it is our job to remove any barriers preventing students from reaching their full potential. I believe that social and emotional competency is the foundation to all that we do. To this end, our first task in education is to provide effective social emotional learning opportunities for all of our students. Once the barriers are removed and social emotional learning is in place, I believe one of the best ways to ensure that all students reach their fullest academic potential is to use the Universal Design for Learning framework to provide multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression in our daily instruction.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I was an Assistant Principal in Calvert County for the last three years. Prior to that, I worked as an Instructional Lead Teacher (ILT) and English teacher in Prince George’s County.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I had never even considered “leaving the classroom” until my principal pulled me aside one day and said she thought I should consider going into school administration. At first, I thought “no way, I love being in the classroom with my kids!” After some consideration, I realized that I could increase my scope of influence by going into administration. Although my job is no longer classroom based, I try to ensure I still work with students daily. After all, they are why I come to work every day!

What was your dream job when you were a child?

When I was a young child, I loved teaching. I had a chalk board in my playroom and would teach math and reading to my baby dolls. I must say, they were very good listeners!

What is something you would like us to know about you?

I am deaf in one ear. You may see me move seats or change where I am standing in order to ensure I can hear. I prefer quieter settings as I am better able to hear people when they are talking.



Ms. Weisenthal
Third Grade

What is your vision for education?

My vision for education - As we continue to live in a society where information is at our fingertips due to the internet, I feel it is the job of educators to help our students learn how to ask the right questions, determine if information makes sense, and be effective communicators. We no longer need to emphasize the memorization of facts, but rather know how to effectively gain access to the information we need.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

Before I came to BMES I taught at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School.

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I have always wanted to be a teacher. I come from a family of teachers: my grandma, mom, aunt, cousin, and sisters are all teachers. I have always loved children!

What was your dream job when you were a child?

My dream job was to be a teacher.

What is something you would like us to know about you?

Something interesting to know about me - I would love to be a photographer and travel the world taking pictures.



Ms. White

Fourth Grade

What is your vision for education?

I believe that all children are capable of learning! That learning in the classroom occurs in many different ways. As an educator, I strive to make sure that my students are academically challenged and emotionally/socially secure.

What did you do before you came to Bells Mill?

I just started my 21st year of teaching for Montgomery County Public Schools. I have primarily been a Math Support teacher; teaching students math and World Studies (3rd-7th grade).

What encouraged you to do what you are doing now?

I wanted to become a teacher when I became a camp counselor in high school, followed by a director of summer camps, followed by a youth director for my church group.

What was your dream job when you were a child?

My dream job as a child would have been to become a detective, like the ones on Charlie's Angels. My friends and I used to dress up like them and run through our neighbors' yards catching the bad guys.

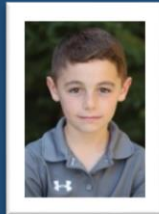
What is something you would like us to know about you?

I would like parents to know that I will treat your child with respect and always encourage them to keep striving to meet their goals. I also truly believe that there should be multiple opportunities given for measurement of growth in learning. If you don't get it the first time; try and try again and you will get there!

Interviewed by:



Eva Ashrafi



James Byrne