

Pythagoras Children's Academy

Staff Bios 2017-2018



Dina Jason, Director

djason@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Bachelor of Science in Education, Eastern Illinois University

Certification: Illinois State Teaching Certification (03) Elementary Education K-9

Endorsements: Language Arts, Social Science

How long teaching: 20 years

How long at PCA: 19 years (very first teacher at PCA in a multi-age classroom)

Past teaching and other positions: PCA Kindergarten teacher 1998-2015; PCA Assistant Director: 2010-2014; PCA Director: 2000-2010. Past nominee for the prestigious Golden Apple teaching award.

Other activities/organizations: Volunteer teacher for Vacation Church School (VCS), Girl Scout cookie mom (two troops)

Family: Married, with three daughters—all alumni of PCA



Christina Brales, Greek Director; 3rd-5th grade Greek

cbrales@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Greek Philosophy, Studies in Ancient Greek Language and Literature, Aristotelion University, Thessaloniki, Greece

Certification: Junior High and High School

Endorsements: Studies in Ancient Greek and Latin Language and Literature

How long teaching: 18 years

How long at PCA: 14 years

Past teaching and other positions: current director of Pythagoras Greek School and Pythagoras Saturday Greek School, and Greek teacher for Teen Track (12 years); 7th & 8th grade teacher at Athena Greek School (1 year); teacher of Ancient and Modern Greek language and literature in junior high and high school in Greece (5 years) **Other**

Activities/Organizations:

Family: Married, with 1 son, a PCA student



Alexandra Letsos, 2nd/3rd grades

aletsos@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education (K-6) AND Special Education (K-12) from Carthage College

Certification: Illinois State Teaching Certification (03) Elementary Education (K-6), Special Education (K-12)

Endorsements: Learning Behavior Specialist 1

How long teaching: 9 years

How long at PCA: 4 years

Past teaching/other positions: Hilda Walker Intermediate School in Tinley Park, IL (5 years), PSGS Pre-school teacher (1 year), tutored for 10 years

Other activities/organizations: Coordinator for Destination Imagination and Sports Club (3rd year) at PCA; past co-president of PPO; co-director of PCA Summer Camp 2015 and 2017; PCA Summer Camp Teacher (3 years),; volunteer teacher for Vacation Church School (9 years), Member of Compassionate Friends Ministry (at The Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios), co-coordinator for Inclusion Awareness Sunday program, Co-Coordinator of Meals on Wheels, Volunteer for church's summer festival and Taste of Greece Fall Glendi

Family: Married, with two sons, both current PCA students

Mary Sipka, Kindergarten

msipka@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Bachelor of Science in Education, DePaul University

Certification: Illinois State Teaching Certification (03) Elementary Education K-9

Endorsements: Language Arts, Social Science

How long teaching: 10 years

How long at PCA: 4 years

Past teaching and other positions: PCA pre-kindergarten and kindergarten from 2007-2011. Pre-Kindergarten teacher at Peter Pan Learning Center for 1 year. Kindergarten and 3rd grade at Ridgeland District 122 for 2 years. Pre-Kindergarten teacher at St. Helen School for 2 years.

Family: Married with 1 child.



Nikoletta Stavrou 1st grade

nstavrou@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Masters in Education, St. Benedictine University; Bachelor of Business Administration, St. Norbert College

Certification: Illinois State Teaching Certification(09)Secondary Education

Endorsements: Reading, Economics, Social Studies, Marketing

How long teaching: 6 years

How long at PCA: 3rd year

Past teaching and other positions: Oak Park and River Forest High School – Business and Computer Applications teacher; Gregory Middle School, Computer Applications teacher; Special education aide; reading tutor

Other activities: soccer coach; volunteer teacher for Vacation Church School (VCS)

Family: Married with 3 children



Nicole Kalantzis, Pre-Kindergarten

nkalantzis@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education from National-Louis University

Certification: Illinois State Teaching Certification(03)Elementary Education K-9

Endorsements: Language Arts, Social Studies

How long teaching: 4 years

How long at PCA: 4 years

Past teaching and other positions: Substitute teacher in Barrington Unit School District and Chicago Public Schools. Last school year, she worked with kindergarten students with autism; former aide in a 4th grade classroom at Washington Elementary School in District 62; volunteer teacher at Vacation Church School (VCS)

Family: Married



Pamela Kostopoulos, Kindergarten

pkostopoulos@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Bachelor of Science in Education from DePaul University, with a minor in Psychology.

Certification: Illinois State Teaching Certificate (03) Elementary Education K-9.

How long teaching: 6 years

How long at PCA: 6th year

Past teaching and other positions: Kindergarten Teacher at St. Alphonsus Catholic School; Special Education Teacher Assistant at Prospect Heights School District 23; volunteer teacher at Vacation Church School (VCS); teacher at PCA Summer Camp; chairperson for Apparel and Holiday Shop at my daughters school.

Family: Married with two daughters.



Staci Tagaris, 4th/5th grades

atagaris@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: MA in Teaching from National Louis University; BS in Biology from University of Illinois at Chicago

Certification: Illinois State Teaching Certification (09) Secondary Education grades 6-12

Endorsements: General Science, Biology, Social Science, and Health

How long teaching: 13 years

How long at PCA: 4 years

Past teaching and other positions: Middle school science and health teacher (3 years); special education classroom assistant for grades 2-8 (7 years)

Other activities/organizations: member of The Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios

Family: Married, 2 children



Helen Sarantopoulos, Pre-Kindergarten

hsarantopoulos@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education from DePaul University

Certification: Illinois State Teaching Certification (03) Elementary Education K-9 **Endorsements:** Biology

How Long Teaching: 11 years

How Long at PCA: 3rd year

Past teaching and other positions: Preschool teacher at Hellenic American Academy (5 years); Preschool teacher at Bright Horizons (4 years)



Peggy Zervas, Monday/Wednesday/Friday Preschool

pzervas@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Bachelor of Arts, University of Illinois at Chicago

Certification: Illinois State Teaching Certification (03) Elementary Education K-9

Endorsements: General Science, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Science

How long teaching: 15 years (took time off to raise family)

How long at PCA: 4 years

Past teaching and other positions: Fourth Grade Teacher in District 204, Naperville

Other activities/organizations: Volunteer teacher at Vacation Church School (VCS); preschool Sunday School aide

Family: Married; 4 children – all PCA alumni



Joanna Papadakis, Preschool, PreK, & K Greek

jpapadakis@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; currently pursuing an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Development.

Certification: Certificate for teaching the Greek language

How long teaching: 18 years

How long at PCA: 5 years

Past teaching and other positions: She also teaches Greek language classes at Holy Apostles in Westchester, IL; and St. George in Chicago.

Family: Married with 3 sons



Kathy Vranas, 2nd/3rd grades Teaching Assistant

kvranas@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: BA Education, Northeastern University

Certification: Illinois State Certification (03) Elementary Education K-9

Endorsements: Language Arts, Linguistics

How long teaching: 28 years

How long at PCA: 5 years

Past teaching and other positions: Current teacher at Pythagoras Greek School and Pythagoras Saturday Greek School; Socrates Greek American School (25 years), Holy Apostles Greek Schools (11 years), St. John the Baptist Pythagoras Greek School (2 years)

Family: Married, 2 children



Antonia P. Anton, Substitute Teacher

aanton@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: BA English Literature, The American College of Greece/Deree College.

Certification: ESL Tutoring Certification, Illinois State Substitute Teaching License (K-12)

How long teaching: 20+ years

How long at PCA: 4th year as a substitute teacher

Past teaching and other positions: Greek Teacher at PSGS; Licensed ESL Instructor for private schools: Tripolis, Arcadia, Greece (6 years); Greek language instructor: 1 year at Peiraikon Hellenic School (junior high and high school); 13 years at St. John the Baptist "Pythagoras" Greek School (Grades 2, 3, 5)

Other activities/organizations: PTO Vice President, Hersey High School; PTO volunteer coordinator at Hersey High School ; Greek language interpreter (Global Language, Inc.)

Family: Married with 3 children



Korina Broca, Preschool Aide

kbroca@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Certificate, Early Childhood Education & Special Education, Economic University of Tirana; BS Business Administration, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

How long teaching: 8 years

How long at PCA: 4 years

Past teaching and other positions: Greek language instructor at Aristotle Greek School ; and at Pythagoras Saturday Greek School.

Family: Married with two children



Sharon Mortakis, Specials: Art, Music & P.E.

smortakis@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Full Scholarship in Music Performance, Eastern Illinois University

Certification: Degree in Accident Reconstruction from Northwestern University

How long teaching: 2 years

How long at PCA: Hot Lunch volunteer for 3 years

Past teaching and other positions: Police officer for 9 years

Other activities/organizations:

Family: Married, current daughter at PCA

Religious Education



Father Andrew Georganas, Proistamenos

Father Andrew came to the community of The Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios in 2001, to assist Father Panagiotis Malamis, and became Proistamenos in 2006. He is a guiding force for our school, and directs the Religious Education program. From leading morning prayers, to Chapel Time, and other religious services and observances, Father Andrew imparts his love of Orthodoxy and Hellenism. He is a constant source of inspiration and enthusiasm for our youth.



Father Panagiotis Malamis, Protopresbyter

Father Panagiotis has humbly served the Community of The Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios since 1974. Under his leadership, the church and school buildings were constructed, two chapels (one in the school building at the other at Arlington Cemetery), PCA, and many dynamic ministries were established. A sage and loving individual, Father Panagiotis shares his knowledge and passion for Orthodoxy and Hellenism. In 1999, Archbishop IAKOVOS of North and South America granted him the title, "OfikiontouPresbyteriou," the highest rank and distinction attainable by a married priest.

Anthony Ruggerio, Youth Director

Anthony has served our parish and school since August 2016. Dedicated to our youth, Anthony jumps in where needed, and teaches our students about the Orthodox Faith on a weekly basis. His enthusiasm and dedication to the Faith is a fine example for our students.

Apospasmenous

Committed to Greek language education outside of Greece, many years ago, The Greek Ministry of Education established a program to send qualified Greek teachers abroad to assist in this mission. We are blessed to have one at our school.



Vasilios Tsagkalos, Greek Teacher

Education: B.Ed. Elementary Education and Special Education, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; working towards M.A. Basic and Applied Cognitive Science, from National and Kapodistrian University of Athens; Diploma in Translation English/Greek, Institute of Linguists, London UK.

Certification: Greek State Elementary Education Teaching Certification (K6); Greek State Primary Special Education Teaching; ESL Tutoring Certification.

Endorsements: Elementary School Greek Language, Math, Greek History, Religion

How long teaching: 30 years

How long at PCA: Since January 2015

Past teaching and other positions: Principal at PikpaVoulas Special School, Athens (6 years); Coordinator of the Local School Network for Education and Support and Head of the Center for Special Supportive Education for 5 local schools in South East Athens (1 year); Special Education Teacher (3 years); Greek State Elementary School Teacher (K1-K6) (14 years); ESL Tutor in private schools for English Learning (4 years); and Freelance Translator (25 years).

Other activities/organizations: Instructor in International Summer Camps for Greek Language and Culture; Religion teacher at Sunday Schools in Voula, Athens; Full localization into Greek for the software and documentation of the educational software, 'The Geometer's Sketchpad'.

Family: Married with 6 children



Odysseia Rasimoglou, Greek Teacher

orasimoglou@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org

Education: Bachelor in Science in Preschool Education and Educational Planning from the University of Aegean, Greece

Certification: ASEP, Proficiency in the English Language, University of Central Lincolnshire

Endorsements: Preschool Education

How long teaching: 11 years

How long at PCA: 3 years

Past teaching and other positions: Teacher and matron in Greek full-time public kindergarten.

Other activities/organizations:

Family: Married with one son