



NEWSLETTER

September 2023

Welcome to a new year at Aldrich!

It brings me so much joy to welcome you to the new school year. We are thrilled to see so many familiar faces and excited to meet those of you experiencing Aldrich for the first time. Aldrich has served the larger Rochester community since 1944, leaving it near and dear to the hearts of thousands of families--a group which now includes you!

Our talented staff is passionate about quality early childhood education. The bulk of your child's learning will happen while they explore their environment in both the indoor and outdoor classrooms, where you will see teachers interacting with students in small groups and one-on-one, engaging their minds by asking open-ended questions, prompting metacognition, and challenging them to take appropriate risks.

For these teaching techniques to work optimally with the development of a preschooler, our teachers must be masters of facilitating these interactions through the medium of **PLAY**. If you ever wonder why children are doing a particular activity in the classroom, I encourage you to ask their teachers. The wealth and depth of our faculty's knowledge on child development is impressive, and you will be thrilled to hear about the intentional learning opportunities they are creating for your child in their classrooms.

I look forward to seeing each of you more as the school year progresses; please let me know if there is ever any way I can assist your family. We are so happy you are here!

Your partner in education,
Annie Getchell, Director



PLAY is the highest form of research.
-Albert Einstein

Welcome Flags

Have you noticed all of the flags lining our hallways? We are very proud that these represent families at Aldrich from a variety of different countries! No matter the language, children's play is universal, and children can play alongside or with each other, even if they speak different native languages.

****If you don't see a flag representing your home country, please stop by the office and let us know.** We want your family to be part of this great Aldrich tradition! We'll be happy to order another flag, and we'll invite you to write "Welcome" in your native language.



Security at Aldrich

The doors at Aldrich are only open during drop off and pick up times. In the morning, doors will open at 8:45am. If you arrive at the school outside of normal drop-off and pick-up times, you will need to use the main entrance (Door M by the flagpole). This door has a buzzer system with an intercom to the office.

Safety First!

Children's safety is a primary concern of all Aldrich staff. We'd like to offer the following reminders:

In the parking lot:

- Drive slowly – 5 miles per hour. Children can dart out from cars so quickly.
- Follow the directions of the one-way signs and arrows.
- Hold your child's hand from the Aldrich door to your car door.
- Do not use cell phones while driving in the parking lot.
- Be considerate of other families and other cars.

When dropping off your child:

- Please turn off your car. Aldrich has an anti-idling policy: all vehicles must turn off their engines within the Aldrich parking lot as soon as possible to protect children from inhaling harmful car exhaust.
- Please bring all children into Aldrich with you. If you regularly have a sleeping child in the car or too many kids to bring in with you, coordinate times with another Aldrich parent to watch your children in the parking lot while you come in.
- Upon entering and exiting the building, keep an eye out for any children who may be alone and near the doors. We don't want to accidentally let children outside unaccompanied by their parent or guardian. If you see a child leaving without an adult, please stop him or her. The child's parent will thank you!



Help Keep Aldrich Healthy

While COVID has moved out of the spotlight in the news these days, it still remains a communicable illness in the world. As with all communicable diseases, parents play a vital role in keeping our program open and healthy. The following guidelines are in place to keep the students and staff at Aldrich healthy and able to operate:

- All staff and students are strongly encouraged to be up to date on their COVID vaccination. Per the CDC: "Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations is the leading public health strategy to prevent severe disease."
- All parents will be responsible to complete a daily health check of their child(ren) prior to arrival to ensure they are healthy. Children should only attend Aldrich if they are healthy and able to participate in all portions of the regularly scheduled day, including outdoor play. It is important to report **any** symptoms your child is experiencing to the Aldrich office within 24 hours. If children exhibit any of the symptoms below, they should stay home.
 - Fever or feeling feverish/having chills
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Vomiting/nausea
 - Diarrhea

Please be on guard and consider keeping your child home if they child exhibit any of the following symptoms, as they may be early signs of respiratory infections or communicable disease:

- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Runny or stuffy nose
 - Body aches
 - Headache
- If your child is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (any symptoms listed above), COVID-19 testing is strongly encouraged. Free COVID Test Kits are available in the Aldrich office.
 - If your child is exposed to someone that tested positive for COVID-19, we strongly encourage your child to wear a well-fitting face mask while at Aldrich, test if they become symptomatic or on Day 6 after exposure if no symptoms.
 - If you receive a positive COVID test for your child, please notify the Aldrich office immediately by email at aldrich@aldrichschool.com or calling 507-289-3097. This is vital so we can keep families notified of exposure. Children that test positive for COVID will need to complete a required isolation before returning to Aldrich.
 - Aldrich will promote and practice frequent handwashing.
 - Classroom windows will be opened when weather allows to promote better ventilation while indoors.
 - Classroom surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected daily, with higher touch surfaces cleaned and sanitized more frequently based on use patterns.

We will continue to follow guidance from the CDC in regards to masking, isolation, testing and responding to outbreaks.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Guidance for Operating Early Care and Education Programs <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/child-care-guidance.html>



Tuition Payments Made Easier

Looking for the easiest way to pay your tuition? Here are our tuition payment options:

- **Electronic Funds Transfer from checking or savings account** To take advantage of this option, print off the form found at this link (or request a form from the front office): <https://aldrichschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Tuition-Express-NO-Credit-Card-2023.pdf> and turn it in to the main office. Your tuition will then be automatically from your bank account on the first of every month.
- **Bank Bill Pay System** If you haven't used bill pay before, contact your bank for details to get started. If you already use bill pay, add Aldrich as a new payee, put your child's name in the memo section, and make your payment. It's even easier if you set up a recurring payment. Tuition is due on the 1st of the month, and it takes about one week for your check to arrive, so please plan accordingly. Please remember that no tuition payment is due on May 1st, which means that if you are using automatic bill pay, your last payment is due on April 1st.
- **Personal Check** Avoid the line at the front office by dropping your check in the secured Payment Slot on the left side of the Information Center (near the front office). Alternatively, you can drop the check in the mail slot outside the main entrance, to the left of the front doors, after business hours.
- **Cash Payments** For security reasons, always bring cash payments to the front desk.
- **Credit Cards:** Families may pay tuition with a credit card, but a 3% transaction fee will be charged. Please stop by the office if you would like to make payments this way.

Payments are always due on the 1st of the month. A \$20 late fee will be assessed if payment is not received by the 8th of the month.

Enrichment Class Update

Thank you to all who let us know that you would like to see **Enrichment Classes** offered again at Aldrich! We are in the process of recruiting teachers and hope to be able to offer some enrichment opportunities for the 23-24 school year. We will send further communication if/when we are able to offer Enrichments!

For those of you newer to Aldrich, you may be wondering what Enrichment Classes are. In previous school years, we offered month long, topic-based classes 1 afternoon each week. They were extremely popular and allowed children to supplement their time at Aldrich on a short-term basis.

United Way Campaign

This fall, many businesses will be promoting their United Way campaigns, encouraging their employees to give back to support community needs. *Because Aldrich is a non-profit organization, did you know that you can designate your donations to go to Aldrich?* Simply write in Aldrich Memorial Nursery School as the recipient when you make your donation to United Way. We sincerely appreciate the financial support from the Rochester community!



* MARK YOUR CALENDARS*

- September 16 Welcome Back Hangout at Aldrich 9:30-11:30am
- September 19 Aldrich Full Board Meeting, 6:30pm in Playroom 2
- October 4 & 5 School Pictures (order forms coming soon!)
- October 19 & 20 Fall Break- NO SCHOOL

For the complete calendar for the school year, visit our website:
<http://aldrichschool.com/calendarnewsletters/>

From the Board of Directors

The Aldrich School Board had a great kick-off to the school year at our Annual Board Orientation and Retreat. We're enthusiastic about our upcoming school year and are so grateful to the staff and teachers for all that they have done to welcome back children to Aldrich School. **We're also thankful to all those who helped spruce up our outdoor classrooms on Saturday, August 26th!** The playgrounds are looking fresh and ready for kids to do the important work of play (and getting messy)!

I would like to invite you to participate in all of the great events and opportunities the Aldrich Board of Directors is planning this year. From book fairs, help with the library, loving on our staff and teachers, to The Big Playdate in the spring (psst! Save the Date for Saturday, May 4th), we'd love help from the Aldrich School community. If you are interested in learning about ways to volunteer around the school and with the board, please send an email to aldrichschoolvolunteers@gmail.com.

If you have any questions during the school year, or simply want to say hi, you can reach the President and President Elect of the Aldrich Board (Allison Gross and Monica Booe Chowdhury) at aldrichboardrochester@gmail.com.

We hope you can join us!



Welcome Back Hangout!
The Family Engagement
committee invites you to a
morning hangout at Aldrich!

Join us in our outdoor
classroom spaces for a morning
of play with new friends and a
scavenger hunt!

Saturday, September 16!
9:30am-11:30am

Don't forget your water bottles!

Meet our TEACHERS

Teacher Biographies

KYLEIGH ANDERSON~ I am excited to be back at Aldrich! This will be my second official year at Aldrich year teaching. I graduated from the RCTC Early Childhood Program and have been at Aldrich since then. I am excited to be in the new full day program in Room 6 and looking forward to a great year!

EMILIE DAILEY~ This is my eighth-year teaching at Aldrich! I have a Bachelor's Degree in Communications and have worked in early childhood for over 20 years. Both of my children attended Aldrich and are now in 12th and 9th grade. When I'm not working I love to play board games, read, and spend time up north at our cabin.

ANGELA DEMARCO~ This is my eighth year at Aldrich, and I am thrilled to be back in the classroom with the children. I am originally from Omaha, NE but have lived in Rochester for 19 years. I grew up on a hobby farm where my dad still lives, and it is my happy place :) My favorite people are my husband, Shawn, and my 3 children: Ellie (17), Matthew (13) and James (almost 10). When I'm not driving them around to their activities, I can usually be found with a good book in my hand. I also love photography and cooking. I feel very blessed to be a part of Aldrich, and I can't wait to meet the students and families!

TERRI FARLOW~ This is my 23rd year teaching at Aldrich. I have taught all ages in both lead and assistant positions. I have been married for 44 years to my husband, Dennis. We have 3 children. Courtney is 42 and is a Special Education teacher and resides in St. Paul. Paige is 37 and lives in Denver with her husband and is also a Special Education teacher. Our son, Devin is a Social Worker in St. Paul, where he resides with his wife, Ashley and our beautiful grandchildren, Harrison (3 ½ years) and Mila (20 months). We love family get togethers and enjoy boating and traveling.

JILL FINNAN~ I have worked at several other child care centers and early childhood programs before coming to Aldrich in 2017. I have volunteered in many different programs for children and have worked with a wide range of ages. For several years, I homeschooled my two daughters. I enjoy reading, camping, hiking and spending time with my family.

NICOLE FORLITI~ I am so excited to be back in school this year with you all. This will be my 13th year working at Aldrich School. My husband Andrew and I are proud parents to our two boys Connor and Easton. We have a dog name Macee, who loves being up north with us all summer. My joy in life is being outside with my family and teaching children to explore the world. It's going to be a great year!

CINDY GAGNON~ Hi! My name is Cindy Gagnon. I have been married for 42 years. Dallas and I have 4 grown children and 8 grandkids, ranging in age from 21 down to 2 years old. I had an in-home daycare for many years. After I retired from my in-home daycare, I knew I needed to be around children. I found my way to Aldrich and I absolutely love it!

It takes a big
heart
to help shape
little
minds.

MIRIAM HAACKE~ This is my 9th year at Aldrich. I am a Rochester native and attended Aldrich as a child. I have a passion for music, enjoying sharing it in the classroom and you can also find me playing my original music around town. My husband and I have 3 kids- maybe you have seen me carting all three around Rochester on my giant yellow bicycle! I love being outside, being goofy with family and bringing that energy into the classroom.

STEF HERBST~ I am looking forward to my fifth year at Aldrich as an Assistant Teacher in Room 3. I am a Registered Nurse with a background in pediatric nursing. When I'm not at work, I enjoy hanging out with my husband, Mike and our dog, Walter. I love cheering on the Wisconsin Badgers, reading books and trying out new restaurants!

MARY HERGES~ This is my 17th year at Aldrich. I have called Rochester home for the last 45 plus years. My husband Rick and I have four grown children, Jake, Joe, Kori, and Kristen. We are proud grandparents to 8 little ones, ages 11 and under. I am a graduate of the University of Minnesota, and 12 years ago I also completed my RN degree. I have enjoyed teaching for many years. My interests include reading, walking, fun adventures, and my family. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you and your wonderful children this year!

SUSIE JOHNSON~ I am so excited to be starting my 8th year here at Aldrich! This year I will be the Lead Teacher in Room 9. This is my 30th year of teaching. Prior to working at Aldrich, I taught four-year-olds in Rochester, and I taught kindergarten for 21 years in Wisconsin. My husband Eric works in the Rochester Public School District as the Director of Leadership Development. We have two sons. Sam (23) is a mechanic at Audi in LaCrosse, WI and Ben (19) is a Sophomore at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT. We also have a yellow lab named Ranger. I enjoy spending time with my family, walking Ranger, exercising, and being outside.

ANN KAHN~ I began working at Aldrich in April 2018 as the Building Assistant. This year I will be in Room 7 working as a Lead Teacher and Building Aide. I have my preschool CDA and worked at a local childcare center for 16 years before I started at Aldrich. I am married and have 2 boys.

MELISSA LAFOREST~ I am excited to start my third year at Aldrich. I have a degree in Elementary Education. I have three kids- a 4th grader, a 2nd grader and a kindergartener. All three are Aldrich alumni. My family and I love being outdoors- hiking and biking especially! We are also Packer fans to the core.

BAILEY MARCOU~ I joined Aldrich in Spring of 2022 with previous childcare experience. I have a degree and background in art and design. I am excited to be working in the new full day program this school year!

JAZMIN MARQUIS~ I am very excited to start my fifth year at Aldrich. I will be the assistant teacher in room 4 Monday through Friday. I hold a Computer Science degree, and after working for IBM during six years in Mexico City (in my home country), I moved to Rochester to marry my husband Alex, who works for IBM in town. I decided to start a career in education and worked for the Rochester Public Schools District with first and second graders for two years as a paraprofessional, and completed a master's degree in Educational Leadership in 2009 from Concordia University, St. Paul. My husband and I have three children, Camila (14), Emily (12), and Alex (9), all of them Aldrich former students. We enjoy spending time together, going camping, swimming, sledding and traveling, watching a good show or a soccer game.



LYDIA MERKEL~ My name is Lydia Merkel and I am a new teacher here at Aldrich this year. I come from a wonderful family with a history of educators, and I am very excited about this teaching opportunity! I have a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, alongside a Masters in Human Resource Management. I'm a mother of two amazing children- a five-year-old daughter and a three-year-old son, who will be attending Aldrich this year as well! My family lives in Stewartville and we love it there. I love to be outdoors and also have a passion for baking. I can't wait for the school year to start and I hope your kids are super excited too!

KAREN MULVIHILL-PETRI~ I am excited to be starting my eighth year at Aldrich. I have a certificate in Early Childhood Care and Education and am currently pursuing my Bachelor's Degree in Educational Studies with Early Childhood Education emphasis through Southwest Minnesota State University. The majority of my career has been in the Early Childhood field. I live in NE Rochester with my husband, my four children and my 5 "bonus" children. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, playing board games, fishing and watching sports- especially Vikings football. I look forward to getting to know the children and families of Aldrich this year!

CAITLIN NEWBERG~ I am excited to be the morning Resident Substitute this year! I moved back to Rochester summer of 2021 and love that I have found Aldrich! I enjoy doing activities with my 2 huskies and husband, including going on walks and roads trips to the family cabin. In my spare time, I love doing arts and crafts, playing video games and spending time with my 5 siblings, who all live in town.

JOLENE OLSON~ I'm excited to start my 14th year at Aldrich! I am a lead teacher in Room 1 every morning. My husband, Brian and I have been married for 24 years and have 3 children. Brandon is 22 and is the GM at Culvers in Austin. Ashley is 20 and is studying architecture at NDSU. Zachary is 18 and is attending RCTC. I enjoy reading, going for walks, and spending time with my family and friends.

LOGAN PETZOLD~ I began teaching at Aldrich in 2021. I received my BA from Hamline University and an MS in School Age Counseling from UW-River Falls. I also enjoy coaching swimming for the Rochester Swim Club. I live in Rochester with my husband, my two daughters, two cats and a pug puppy.

NANCY PLUTE~ I am thrilled to be back at Aldrich as a substitute teacher and classroom materials donation coordinator after 16 years of teaching at Aldrich! My husband Michael is retired from IBM as a software engineer. We have 2 adult children. Allison lives in Colorado Springs and is married to her husband Rob. Kellie lives in Eagan with her husband Trent and they have 2 children. We are delighted to be grandparents to 12-year-old Nora and 6-year-old Maverick- we love spending time with them! We recently purchased a one level home in NE Rochester and can't wait to get in and make it a home this fall! My favorite pastime is consignment shopping, shopping at estate sales and heading to Savers on Tuesdays. I am looking forward to a great year at the #1 preschool in Rochester!

KATE RAUCH~ I'm beginning my eighth year at Aldrich School in the two-year-old room. My husband, Joshua works at the Mayo Clinic. And our daughter, Josie, an Aldrich alumni and now a fresh middle schooler, reminds me frequently that wishes she "could just go back to school at Aldrich." I am so looking forward to spending time with your little loves in the upcoming school year! It's sure to bring amazing changes, growth and fun.

MARCIA RIGGS~ I have a music education degree from Wartburg College and a special education endorsement from Buena Vista University. I taught instrumental music at a public school in Iowa before moving to Minnesota and have taught private music lessons for 16 years. My husband and I have two boys (4th grade and Kindergarten), both of whom went to Aldrich, and one very energetic dog. In my free time, I love exercising and spending time with my family. I look forward to watching your children grow and develop this year!



JULIANN ROGGOW~ My name is Juliann. I am a retired early childhood special education teacher who continues to enjoy being with children and learning through play! I love music, reading, walking, taking care of my grandchildren, spending time with family and traveling. I love being part of the Aldrich family!

MCKENZIE SHEFELBINE~ Hello everyone! My name is McKenzie Shefelbine and I have been working with children for about 6 years! I grew up in Calendonía, MN and moved to Rochester to begin my college education. I am currently working towards a degree in Early Childhood Education at RCTC. Some of my favorite things to do include walking my dog, hanging out with family and friends and staying in to watch movies.

RACHEL SKINNER~ This will be my 18th year at Aldrich. My family moved to Rochester in 1999 from Michigan. I have 2 grown daughters, my younger daughter is an Aldrich alumni. My older daughter and her husband live in Michigan and have 2 children. My husband works at Mayo Clinic. We enjoy traveling to see our grandkids and hiking.

BETHANY SMITH~ This is my first year with a teaching position at Aldrich. Last year, I was the resident sub and enjoyed the opportunity to spend time in all the classrooms. This year, I will be in Room 9 as the Assistant Teacher in the mornings. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and Master's Degree in Special Education from Washburn University (Topeka, KS). I taught for 5 years in Special Education (Kindergarten, 4th, and 5th grade) before my husband and I moved to Rochester for a position at Mayo Clinic. We have lived here for 6 years and during that time welcomed our little girl, Charlotte (5). She attended Aldrich and loved every minute of it! I love spending my time with my family, our dog (Lucy), and doing a little reading when the time allows. I was blessed to be able to stay home with Charlotte, but now she is headed off to Kindergarten. I'm looking forward to being back in the classroom and getting to watch your children grow this year!

KENDRA VERHAGE~ I'm very excited to be returning to Aldrich this year as an Assistant Teacher after working as a substitute teacher here last year. I received my BFA in Acting from Minnesota State University, Mankato and after 7 years in Chicago, moved back to Minnesota with my wife, daughter (4) and furbaby over a year ago. In my spare time I am an avid reader and love to keep my body active. I participate in crossfit and love to be out in nature, hiking with my family. I love to observe little humans as they discover the world around them and I'm excited to aide in that process!

NICCI WATSON~ I am thrilled to begin another exciting year at Aldrich. I have been blessed to be a part of the Aldrich community as either a parent or staff member for over 20 years. My husband, Jim, and I have five children. Together we enjoy attending the kids' sporting events, hiking, traveling, and photography. I look forward to learning & exploring with your children this year!

JENN WIENS~ I am the Lead Teacher in Room 3. I started at Aldrich in January of 2022 and am looking forward to another school year here! I have my AAS in Early Childhood Education. I live in Pine Island with my husband and 2 boys- ages 5 and 2- and our 2 dogs.



Administration & Support Staff Biographies



ANNIE GETCHELL, DIRECTOR ~ I am honored to serve as the Director of Aldrich School and am excited for a great year! I have been a teacher at Aldrich for 4 years, served on the Board of Directors for 4 years, and all 4 of my boys are Aldrich Alumni. I was also an Assistant Director for 5 years at another local childcare facility. My husband, Aaron, works for Mayo Clinic and we have 4 hockey-obsessed boys: Joe (12), Will (10), Charlie (10) and Finn (7). Aldrich is very near and dear to my heart, and I am thrilled to be able to continue to provide children and their families with the best experience possible!

CARRIE MANGUSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR~ I am looking forward to another great year as the Assistant Director at Aldrich! I was born and raised in Rochester. I have a degree in Elementary Education. After teaching one year, I worked as an Assistant Director for nearly 10 years at two local early childhood learning centers and then was fortunate to be a stay at home mom for 5 years. In fall 2014 I joined the Aldrich family and started working as an Office Assistant. My husband, Ryan works for the Rochester Police Department and we have three awesome children: Morgan (20), Paige (18) and Noah (13). We keep busy cheering on our kids in all their activities and we love to travel. I am looking forward to partnering with you in your child's early childhood education!

CHERYL PAYNE, OFFICE COORDINATOR ~ Hi! I am super excited to be the starting my 9th year as office coordinator at Aldrich School. I just love seeing preschoolers' happy faces every day! Both of my children are Aldrich alumni and I was a member of the Board of Directors. I have 2 children- one is a freshman in college and the other is an eighth grader. I am married to Mike who is a software engineer at IBM, and we have lived here since 1999. I give back to our community through Girl Scouting and love to talk about my pet chickens!

LARRY SCILLEY, HANDYMAN ~ Larry has been the handyman at Aldrich since 1998. His wife, Gwen, taught at Aldrich for over 35 years, retiring in 2011. Larry is very quick to get things checked off of his "to do" list here at Aldrich, and we are grateful for his willingness to help us in so many different ways!