



NEWSLETTER

September 2024

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.

This school year we are celebrating Aldrich's **80th Birthday!** We are so excited to celebrate with current and former families, friends, and teachers this fall! Keep an eye out for more information about this upcoming event 😊

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. (We currently have 57 flags in our hallway and would LOVE to add more!)



Security at Aldrich

The doors at Aldrich are only open during drop off and pick up times. In the morning, doors will open at 8:20am. 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

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 and flu vaccination. Per the CDC: "Data continue to show the importance of vaccination to protect against severe outcomes of COVID-19 and flu, including hospitalization and death."
- 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 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 respiratory viruses (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 or diagnosis of other communicable disease 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. The Aldrich office will share with parents/guardians when their child can return to Aldrich after illness based on guidelines we must follow as a licensed facility.
 - 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.

Thank you for partnering with us to keep our school healthy!

Source:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidance on Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses: <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/precautions-when-sick.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.

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 5** First Day of School for T/Th & M-F Sessions, Extension Programs begin
- **September 6** First Day of School for M/W/F Sessions
- **September 16** Aldrich Family Park Picnic
- **September 17** Aldrich Full Board Meeting, 6:30pm in Playroom 2 (open to all!)
- **October 2 & 3** School Pictures (order forms coming soon!)
- **October 8 & 9** Library Check Out Days
- **October 12** Aldrich 80th Birthday Party, 9:30-11:30am
- **October 17 & 18** Fall Break- **NO SCHOOL**

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

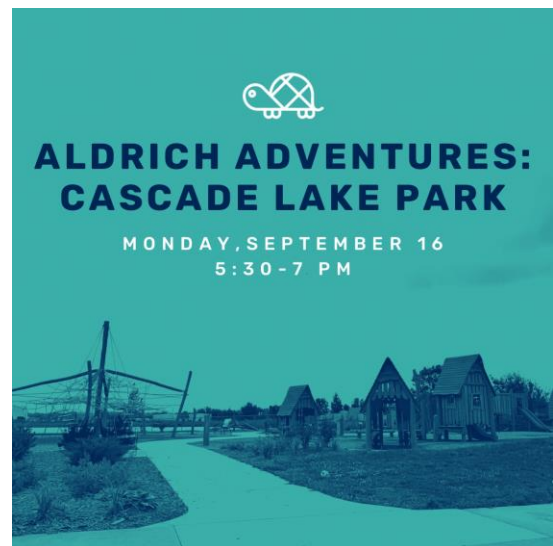
From the Board of Directors

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 24th!** 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, 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 of the Aldrich Board (Monica Booe Chowdhury) at aldrichboardrochester@gmail.com.

We hope you can join us!



Aldrich Adventure: Cascade Lake Park

Join us for our first Aldrich Adventure of the new school year—Cascade Lake Park! We'll meet on Monday, September 16, from 5:30–7:00 PM. Come meet other Aldrich families while you explore the playgrounds and park! Bring your own dinner/snacks/drinks and a blanket to join us for a casual picnic.

Meet our TEACHERS

Teacher Biographies

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

EMILIE DAILEY~ This is my eleventh year 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 a high school sophomore and college freshman. When I'm not working I love to play board games, read, and spend time up north at our cabin.

AMANDA DIGMANN~ I am excited to start my first year at Aldrich as a substitute teacher. I have an Associate's degree in Graphic Design, create deserts in my commercial bakery and have 10 years of early childhood experience. My husband Ben and I have lived in Rochester for the past 15 years with our children Christopher and Lilian and our cat, Petri. I enjoy painting, building and sewing with my children.

TERRI FARLOW~ This is my 24th year teaching at Aldrich. I have taught all ages in both lead and assistant positions. I have been married for 45 years to my husband, Dennis. We have 3 children. Courtney is 43 and is a Special Education teacher and resides in St. Paul. Paige is 38 and lives in Denver with her husband and is also a Special Education teacher and a choreographer. Our son, Devin is a Social Worker in St. Paul, where he resides with his wife, Ashley and our beautiful grandchildren, Harrison (Harry) is 4 ½ years and Mila is 2 ½ years. 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 14th 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 43 years. Dallas and I have 4 grown children and 8 grandkids, ranging in age from 22 down to 3 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!

MIRIAM HAACKE~ This is my 10th 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.

It takes a big
heart
to help shape
little
minds.

STEF HERBST~ I am looking forward to my sixth year at Aldrich as a Lead Teacher in Room 8. 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~ Hi! This is my 18th year at Aldrich and will be subbing in various classrooms. Rochester has been my 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 aged 12 and under. I'm a graduate of the University of Minnesota and 13 years ago I also completed my RN degree. My interests include reading, walking and fun adventures with my family. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you and your wonderful children this year!

SERENA HOKANSON~ Hi! My name is Serena. I enjoy tap dancing, reading (well, listening to audiobooks) and playing games with my family. I taught special education for several years before deciding to stay at home with my kids. My youngest is starting Kindergarten this year and I am excited to get back working with students here at Aldrich. I am looking forward to a great year!

SUSIE JOHNSON~ This is my 9th year at Aldrich (and my 31st year teaching!)! I will be teaching in Room 9 this year. I taught kindergarten for 21 years in Manitowoc, WI and have been teaching preschoolers ever since. I love 4 and 5 years olds! My husband Eric works for Rochester Public School District as the Director of Leadership development. We have 2 sons. Sam (24) is a mechanic at Eurotech in Medina, MN and Ben (20) is a junior at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT majoring in architecture. We also have a yellow lab named Ranger. I enjoy spending time with family, walking Ranger, exercising and being outdoors.

ERIN JOPPA~ I'm a full time RN. I have two sons, Theodore (6) and Sammy (4). Theo was at Aldrich for 2 years and this will be Sammy's last year at Aldrich. I really fell in love with Aldrich and how they are with the kids and wanted to give back, so I became a substitute at Aldrich!

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 fourth year at Aldrich. I have a degree in Elementary Education and have loved being one of the first teachers a child has. I have three kids- a 5th grader, a 3rd grader and a 1st grader. All three are Aldrich alumni. My family and I love being outdoors- hiking and biking especially! We are also Packer fans to the core.

JENNY LANDON~ My name is Jenny Landon and this is my first year teaching at Aldrich. I have been in early childhood education for 24 years and am excited to join the Aldrich team! I have been married for 26 years and we have 2 boys. Riley is 19 and is a sophomore at Mankato State and Logan is 16 and is a junior at JM. We also have 2 cats and a dog at home. In my freetime I enjoy reading and scrapbooking.

LIZ LUEHRS~ I earned a Bachelors of Sociology from Western Colorado University in 2009. Since then, I have worked with young children in a variety of settings.



JAZMIN MARQUIS~ I am very excited to start my sixth year at Aldrich. I will be the assistant teacher in room 4 Monday through Friday and in Room 8 in the afternoons on Tuesdays and Thursdays. 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 (15), Emily (13), and Alex (10), 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 this is my second year teaching at Aldrich. I am a mother, baker, dog-lover, and avid book reader. My family lives in Stewartville and we absolutely love it there. I enjoy traveling, especially to Lake Superior and anywhere full of nature. I can't wait for the new school year to begin and to meet all the amazing students this year!

JANA METZGER~ Hi! I'm Jana Metzger and I will be substituting this school year. I have 3 kids who have all attended Aldrich, with one that will still be at Aldrich in the 3 year old classroom. We have absolutely loved our time here and look forward to the year ahead.

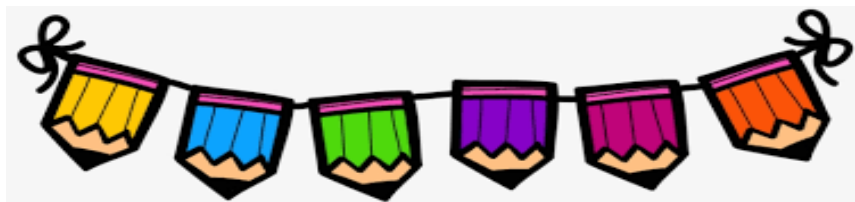
ANNA MITTELSTADT~ I am excited to join the Aldrich team this year! I have 25 years of experience working in the childcare field. My husband and I reside in Byron with our two daughters. Additionally, we have two grown sons, one residing in Iowa and the other in Rochester. In my free time I enjoy time spent with family at our cabin. I also enjoy watching my daughter play soccer and compete in dance competitions.

CAITLIN NEWBERG~ I was born and raised right here in Rochester and lived here until I married my husband in 2015. We then lived in Hawaii and New York while he was in the Army. We moved back to Rochester in 2021 and in January 2024 we welcomed our first child, Archer to our family. We also have 2 huskies who love having a baby in the house! In my spare time you can find me drinking Starbucks at Target, going to concerts with my husband, playing video games or hanging out with my 5 siblings. I'm so excited for a new year here at Aldrich and excited to have fun teaching the best tiny humans!

JOLENE OLSON~ I'm excited to start my 15th year at Aldrich! I am a lead teacher in Room 1 every morning. My husband, Brian and I have been married for 25 years and have 3 children. Brandon is 23 and is the GM at Culvers in Austin. Ashley is 21 and is studying architecture at NDSU. Zachary is 19 and is attending RCTC. I enjoy reading, going for walks, and spending time with my family and friends.

JINX PAYNE~ Hello! I am Jinx Payne and am one of the substitutes at Aldrich. I am currently attending college at the University of Wisconsin in LaCrosse studying K-9 Education. Since I am away at school, I will most likely only be at Aldrich during my winter and summer breaks. I really enjoy art and doing silly little crafts. My mom is Cheryl, the Office Coordinator here at Aldrich! It is such a joy to be at Aldrich again- thank you for letting me to continue to learn and grow in my education journey!

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 and the Century High School Girls Swim Team. I live in Rochester with my husband, my two daughters, two cats and a pug!



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 13-year-old Nora and 7-year-old Maverick- we love spending time with them! 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 ninth 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 7th grader, 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 17 years. My husband and I have two boys (5th & 1st grade), 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!

JAMIE ROCHOLL (3AM5 & 2AM5)~ I have a background in nursing, but after having kids of my own, I was inspired to go back to school for teaching. I earned an Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education and later earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education from University of Wisconsin Whitewater. My teaching experience includes doing in-home childcare, center based childcare, after school care, playgroups and teaching PreK. Most recently, I was a lead classroom teacher at another local nursery school for 7 years. My husband Josh and I are high school sweethearts and we have 3 children- Cole (19), Julia (17) and Kayla (10). In my free time I enjoy cheering for the Wisconsin Badgers and doing outdoor activities with my family, including fishing, hiking, golfing and walking our pug Mabel. I am looking forward to my first year at Aldrich! (And GO PACK GO!)

MCKENZIE SHEFELBINE (3AM5 & 3PM8) Hello everyone! My name is McKenzie Shefelbine and I have been working with children for about 7 years! I grew up in Caledonia, MN and moved to Rochester to begin my college education. I am currently working towards a degree in Early Childhood Education at Winona State University. 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 19th 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, hiking and running.



BETHANY SMITH~ Bethany has been at Aldrich since 2022. Once her daughter began attending Aldrich, she knew that this was a place she wanted to be a part of as well! She has her Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Special Education from Washburn University (Kansas). She taught Special Education for 5 years in Kansas before moving to Rochester, MN. She has been working with young children in some manner for over 20 years.

KENDRA VERHAGE~ I first came to Aldrich as a substitute teacher. This year I will be assisting in Rooms 1, 3 and 6. I hold a BFA in Theater from Minnesota State University, Mankato. I love coffee, donuts and helping little humans discover the world around them.

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 WESELY~ Hello! This will be my first-year teaching at Aldrich. I have had 2 daughters go through Aldrich and now my youngest will be attending as well! I am originally from Wisconsin and moved to Rochester in 2012. My husband, Chris has been at IBM for 11 years. Our family loves going on adventures and being active with our kids sporting events. I am looking forward to being part of the Aldrich family as a teacher and watching the kids grow throughout the 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 6 and 3- 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 was a teacher at Aldrich for 4 years, served on the Board of Directors for 4 years, and all 4 of my children are Aldrich Alumni. I was also an Assistant Director for 5 years at another local childcare facility. My husband, Aaron, works for the Mayo Clinic and we have 4 hockey-obsessed boys: Joe (13), Will (11), Charlie (11) and Finn (8). 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 preschool 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 (21), Paige (19) and Noah (14). 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 can't believe I am starting my 10th 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 sophomore in college and the other is a ninth 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!