Administration

Head of School / Tamara Mount

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Tamara Mount joins Hilltop excited to combine her management and Montessori experiences. She began in Montessori as a two year old and attended through Lower Elementary at a school where her mother was the Head of School. After transitioning to a traditional school she then went to the University of Virginia, majoring in English and Environmental Science. After graduating, Tamara worked for a leading consulting firm in the Washington D.C. area providing environmental management consulting for ten years.

Once she and her husband, Brad, had children of Montessori age, she delved back into the educational system that had always seemed right to her. She found a small "real" Montessori school not far from their home and she and their boys got settled in there. Tamara obtained her Montessori Lower Elementary credential in 2008 from the Princeton Center for Teacher Education. She was the lead teacher in a Lower Elementary class for six years.

Her family is excited to move north to a beautiful, established Montessori school at the top of a hill! Her sons, Darwin and Huxley, are attending Hilltop in the Upper Elementary. Tamara is honored and enthused to be able to lead this quality school with a close knit community as it continues to develop and grow in bringing the best of Montessori to the Brattleboro area.

Admissions Director / Lauren Campbell

Phone: 802.257.0500 ext 101 lcampbell@hilltopmontessori.org Lauren and her family moved to Brattleboro in 1991 from Washington, DC. They have two sons who are graduates of HMS, Ian, class of 2002 and Colin, class of 2008. Lauren is a graduate of American University and worked as a designer for many years before starting her own design firm in Washington. Vermont then became the answer to living in a place she would not want to leave during the summer! In 1996 Lauren returned to work and joined Hilltop's administrative team while her husband, Kevin Campbell, was developing Hilltop's Middle School program. A deep appreciation for the Montessori approach to education grew as a parent and member of the HMS staff and continues today as she shows the school to other families considering a Hilltop education for their children. Lauren still stays in Vermont for summers and feels it is an amazing place to raise children.

Development Director / Amelia Farnum

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Amelia's first connection with Hilltop was as a parent when her daughter entered the Children's House in 2008. In 2011, she accepted the role of Administrative Assistant at the school. Her broad skill base came in handy when the role shifted in response to the changing needs of the Admin Team. With the promotion to Director of Development, Amelia brings an arsenal of varied skills to the position and through her native Vermonter husband, many local connections. Her love of networking, brainstorming and executing FUN and innovative events, and commitment to Hilltop's mission and brilliant faculty make her a great match for this job. Amelia earned a Bachelor's of Arts degree in Psychology from Mount Holyoke College. Her checkered professional past includes time spent as an Arts Administrator, Video Editor, and Public Radio/Television staff. Amelia's husband Chad Farnum is the owner of Farnum Insulators, a local insulation and home energy auditing company. The three live in East Dummerston along with one dog, two cats and too many fish to count.

Business Office Office Colleen Frankiewicz

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Colleen joined Hilltop Montessori School as our Business Manager in January 2013. She oversees the operations of our business office, coordinating, tracking, budgeting and reporting all financial aspects of the school operations. Colleen loves numbers and looking out for the bottom line!

It was in 1988 that Colleen started her accounting career. Prior to joining Hilltop Montessori School, she worked for Pieciak & Co., where she was a Senior Staff Account and Tax Professional. Colleen serves as Board Treasurer for Green Mountain Camp for Girls.

Colleen lives in Brattleboro with her husband, Larry, their children and grandchildren. She enjoys cooking and spending time with her family. Her daughter, Amanda, is excited to join the Hilltop community as a middle school student in 2014.

Front Desk / Admin / Ann Brehm

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abrehm@hilltopmontessori.org or frontdesk@hilltopmontessori.org

Ann has had a love affair with Hilltop Montessori School for many years. Her son Dieter graduated in 2013 and she served as Parent Coordinator for the Middle School for two years. Her tireless energy and gentle, yet persistent manner proved invaluable to the Middle School staff and families. She officially joined Hilltop as our Administrative Coordinator in June of 2013 and brings many talents. She served as Board President at the Neighborhood Schoolhouse for 3 years and was an active member of their community for nearly 9 years. She will be at the front desk to answer your questions; she's the hub of our school. Ann lives across the river in Spofford, NH, with her son, Dieter. She loves cooking gardening, and cross-county skiing. Stop

Faculty and Staff			

by the front desk and say "hello"!

SummerFUN Camps Director / Melissa Mroz-Gaskill

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Faculty

Children's House (Ages 3 through Kindergarten)

Birch Room / Cheryl Matthews (Director)

Cheryl has been teaching in the Children's House program since 1987. She possesses a BS from Lyndon State College and has both of her Primary (age 3-6) and Lower Elementary (age 6-9) AMS (American Montessori Society) certifications as well as her elementary education state certification from Franklin Pierce College. She enjoys gardening, sugaring and is involved in her children's various Agricultural events.

Sarah Skuse (Assistant)

Sarah joined the Children's House program in 2000. She has a degree at Greenfield Community College and BA from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. She majored in psychology with a minor in education. Sarah completed her Montessori Assistant's training at Northeast Montessori Institute. Sarah enjoys volunteering at Turners Falls Pumpkin Fest and Greenfield Relay for Life.

Willow Room / Melissa Mroz-Gaskill (Director)

Melissa joined Hilltop in 1993 as Director of the After-Care program. Completing her Montessori training (3-6 years) in the summer of 2000, Melissa took over as a Children's House Director bringing with her fourteen years of teaching experience and a commitment to helping students with learning differences. She holds a BS in Early Childhood Education from the University of Rhode Island.

Ellie Pennell (Assistant)

Ellie joined Hilltop in 2010 as an aide in Willow Room and in 2011 she became the classroom assistant. Ellie earned her Assistants to Infancy certification (birth to 3 years) from The Montessori Institute (AMI - Association Montessori International) in Denver, CO, and her Children's House certification (3 to 6 years) from the Montessori Training Center of New England (AMI) in Hartford, CT. Ellie holds a BA in Psychology from Miami University and a Masters in Education from Loyola University Maryland. Ellie is pleased to return to teaching after taking time off to raise her young children.

Mariam Diallo (Assistant & After School Program Director)

Mariam attended training through the Montessori Elementary Teacher Training Collaborative

(METTC) at Lexington Montessori School this summer. Her training consisted of two parts - an introduction to Montessori and Early Childhood Overview. She studied the philosophy, pedagogy and methodology of Montessori education and how to guide children with the vast array of Montessori materials. Mariam also has an Associate's degree from the Community College of Vermont in Liberal Arts and a BA from Keene State College in Sociology.

Mariam has been a volunteer in orphanages in Mali, her homeland, and currently Mariam helps with an orphanage in Haiti, a project she began after the Earthquake. She enjoys cooking and sharing meals with friends and family, reading, travel, and learning about different cultures and new languages.

Elementary (Lower - grades 1 - 3 / Upper - grades 4 - 6)

Dan Filler (Elementary Director)

Dan is the Director of Elementary, overseeing and teaching in both the Lower and Upper Elementary programs. In this role he supports both teaching teams in their planning, implementation, observation, and evaluation of all areas of the curriculum. He also directly teaches the children of both programs in many subject areas. His particular focus of interest is to fully integrate art into the rich science and cultural curriculums of both Elementary programs. Dan has taught in other schools in Maine and Vermont, and finds Hilltop to provide an unusual combination of Montessori philosophy and educational curriculum that is a perfect match for his own educational beliefs. "Working at Hilltop has made me a much better teacher. The students push you to think differently."

Dan grew up in Simsbury, Connecticut with his parents and three brothers. He graduated from Yale University with a BA in Art, and went on to receive his Masters of Art in Teaching (MAT) at Brown. His teaching experiences include private and public school settings serving diverse student populations. Dan also implemented a community-based (internship) program at BUHS, which is still going strong today.

Dan has his 6-9 and 9-12 year old Montessori certification from the Center for Montessori Teacher Education. He team taught with Tom Griffith in Upper Elementary for 9 years before becoming the Director Elementary in 2013. This niche allows Dan to bring his unique

combination of skills, experience, and knowledge to both programs.

Lower Elementary

Kerstin Kjellberg

Kerstin joined Hilltop in the Lower Elementary in 2010. She holds a B.A. in English Literature from Clark University, has her certification in elementary Waldorf education and has taught first grade at the Waldorf School of Princeton in New Jersey. After one more year teaching the same children in second grade, she traded her suburban existence for the country life in Wardsboro, Vermont and taught a combined 3rd/4th grade, and a 5th/6th grade, as well as working as a one-on-one teacher for several children in the Windham County school district. For four years after the arrival of her daughter, Kerstin taught English Literature and Language Arts to skiers and riders at Mount Snow Academy in Dover. Kerstin completed her 6-9 Montessori teacher training the summer of 2013 at the Center for Montessori Teacher Education (CMTE).

Kerstin attended the Enfield Montessori School in Enfield, CT, from age 2 1/2 to nine. She has lots of fond memories of those early days, including tracing her finger on those scratchy sandpaper letters and polishing her shoes.

In her time away from school, Kerstin likes to spend time outside with her daughter, visit friends, bake, read, pick any fruit that's in season, and attend any fairs and festivals she can find.

Patrick Burke

Patrick, who will join Kerstin in the Lower El classroom this year, previously taught at Washington Montessori School in Connecticut. He has also worked with adolescents in a

community service program and as an after school program leader. Like so many Montessori teachers, Patrick had that "aha" moment through observing his oldest child, Jamie, when he started in Children's House. The more Patrick read and observed and the more he watched Jamie "become", the more he knew that he wanted to teach in an environment where respect was paramount.

Patrick and Kerstin trained in the same Montessori certificate program at the Center for Montessori Teacher Education and thus they have worked together on materials and practicing lessons. It's a team with some history!

Upper Elementary

Tom Griffith

Tom has been teaching at Hilltop in various capacities since 1994. Tom possesses a BA in Music Theory from Kenyon College and a MS in Environmental Studies from Antioch University New England. He participated in Montessori training courses at the Seacoast Montessori Training Center and c

urrently finishing his 9-12 year old Montessori certification at CMTE.

Jennifer Hed

Now that Jennifer is living the dream of a return to Montessori, her remaining life goals are

merely two-fold: getting some live honeybees into a "Warre" beehive she built, and playing her accordion in a klezmer band! (Stay tuned as she nudges Jay and the UE band groups in this direction.)

Jennifer is Montessori certified for both Upper and Lower Elementary and has years of teaching experience in Upper Elementary Montessori classrooms in Maryland before moving to Vermont. Jennifer is the parent of graduate Natasha (98'), as well as a younger daughter and son, Naomi and Noah. As a Hilltop parent and certified Montessori teacher she helped train Hilltop's Upper Elementary teachers in the use of the Montessori math materials in 2003-04 and served on the Board. So she certainly comes to Hilltop with a real understanding of the school.

Not only is Jennifer Montessori certified, she has an MEd and MA, is fluent in Spanish and has spent the past eight years teaching music in schools in New Hampshire and Vermont. In other words, this is one talented teacher joining an already talented Elementary team!

Connie Rugg-Damery

Connie came to HMS twenty-one years ago when her son enrolled in the Children's House, and immediately began filling in as a substitute that fall while Cheryl Matthews went on maternity leave. Since then she has worked in various capacities in Children's House, and the Lower and Upper Elementary programs. She holds her BS in Elementary Education from Lesley University, and AMS certifications at the Primary and Lower Elementary levels. She enjoys travel with her family, and has actually taught in Montessori classrooms in El Salvador, California, Pennsylvania and Maine as well as Hilltop! She currently provides educational support to elementary students.

Middle School (grades 7 - 8)

Paul Dedell (Director)

After years working in the professional theatre as a production manager, music director, and designer, in the world of music as a guitarist and composer and running a historical restoration company, Paul finally found a home for all his passions at the Hilltop Montessori Middle School. He began his association with the middle school as a parent, whose daughter Sydney was in the second graduating class. At first he collaborated with students in writing music for Performance month productions, then taught freedom songs during the first ever Civil Rights Movement study, helped construct a classroom community shelter in the woods, and eventually began team teaching humanities with Kevin Campbell, the founder of the middle school. Finally, he was around so much that the school offered him the position as director of the middle school in 2000.

Paul continues his composing career with a performance and recording of his choral work, "Songs of Divine Chemistry" in February 2014. He lives in Williamsville in an antiquarian house with his wife Susan, surrounded by gardens and forest.

Finn Campman (Lead Teacher: Language Arts & Fine Arts)

Finn grew up in the Brattleboro area. He went to the Putney School and is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College where he focused on 19th century Literature, Philosophy, and World Peace. After working in publishing and graphic design in New York City he moved back to Vermont where he worked at Sandglass Theater in Putney as technical director and associate artist while forming his own theater, Company of Strangers. Finn has performed and taught all over the world with his theater company. Mentored by Kevin Campbell, he began teaching in the Middle School in 2000. Finn says, "It is the raw passionate creativity of middle school students that makes me love my job. Every one of my students is about to discover the meaning of the universe, every one is walking the tightrope of self awareness, grappling with the potential of abstraction and metaphor. There is no place, I can imagine, where the potential for humanity is more evident."

Nora Gordon (Science and Math)

Nora graduated from Oberlin College with a BA in Environmental Studies and is currently pursuing an MS in Science Education at Antioch University New England. She completed the AMI Montessori Orientation Program to Adolescent Studies this summer (2013) and is excited to bring her heightened passion for Montessori education to bear on her second year of teaching in the middle school. A graduate of Hilltop herself, Nora has been working with students of all ages in Hilltop's classrooms and gardens since 2009. She is inspired by her love of the outdoors as well as her background in organic farming. When not in the classroom or on the land with her students, Nora can be found rowing, sailing, hiking, and skiing with her dog Rye.

Ilene Wax (Math)

Ilene has joined the Middle School Program to teach pre-algebra. After being in the public school system for 30 years, Ilene is excited to be a member of the Hilltop Montessori Middle School team. She has BA from SUNY Albany in Mathematics and Teaching and a MA from Teacher's College, Columbia University in Special Education. She is Vermont certified and has taught Kindergarten through 12th grade as well as math classes, reading and writing. Ilene has also been the developer of the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union's K-12 math curriculum and instrumental in the development of the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union's Gifted and Talented curriculum and policy. She is a dedicated believer in collaboration, co-teaching, and differentiation and is excited about working in a Montessori environment that supports these teaching styles.

llene enjoys gardening, canoeing, snowshoeing, reading, traveling and spending time with family and friends which includes her dog, Mya. She and her husband live in Wilmington and have two daughters. One is a family medicine physician and the other is a nonprofit financial consultant. Her two grandsons attend the Montessori program in Nyack, NY.

Music & Physical Education

Jay Cook (Music)

Jay is the school's musical pied piper. He has a BA in Music from Middlebury College and plays an array of instruments, specializing in African style percussion groups. Jay is involved in drumming residencies in schools throughout the state and in keeping the beat with his band, Jazzberry Jam.

Ben James (PE)

Ben is Hilltop's enthusiastic Physical Education teacher. Ben enjoys running, sailing, body surfing, telemark skiing, speed skating, and playing ultimate, basketball, and soccer, among other activities. He coached youth basketball for Brattleboro's Recreation Center and coordinated Green Street School's Mt Snow Winter Sports for several years. Ben became familiar with Hilltop Montessori School as a Lower Elementary intern for his elementary education training. His two sons currently attend Hilltop.