



Welcome,

The Office of World Languages is pleased to welcome another large group of new teachers. Although most are new to the district, some have been borrowed from other disciplines to assist growing programs. They bring with them a vast array of experiences and expertise to enhance our department.

Nagia Bogdoni-Xheka-French, Osceola HS; Nagia is a recent graduate of USF who completed a very successful internship last spring at Pinellas Park High School under the direction of Annette Coller.

Andrea Bonkowski-Spanish, John Hopkins MS; Andrea is a graduate of the University of Costa Rica who recently completed a teacher certification program at the University of Michigan, Flint.

Eleonora (Nora) Branson, Sanderlin Elementary Primary Years Program (IB); Nora has been an ESOL, Spanish and Russian teacher at the elementary, middle and high school levels. She is a graduate of South Dakota State University, SD (BA) and Lesley University in Cambridge, MA (M.Ed.). We are so pleased that Nora made the decision to relocate to a warmer climate this summer. She is working hard to use her extensive experience to build the program at Sanderlin.

Joan Bruce, a veteran teacher of ESOL at PPHS, joins the world languages team there as a Spanish teacher.

Jingsi Cheng - Chinese, Thurgood Marshall Fundamental MS; Jingsi taught English as a foreign language at the elementary, middle and high school levels Guizhou Province, China. She is thrilled to bring Chinese language and culture to her first American students enrolled in her Beginning Chinese, Intro to World Languages and Research classes at Marshall.

Angelie Duimovic, a social studies teacher at Dunedin MS and native speaker of Spanish, is now also teaching Beginning Spanish and the 6th grade Spanish Wheel. She was born in Puerto Rico and is a graduate of the University of Puerto Rico (Río Piedras campus). Angelie also took education courses at Florida Atlantic University in Ft. Lauderdale. She and her husband are expecting their first child in January.

Karen Franklin-Seminole MS, Spanish; Karen is a graduate of USF with experience teaching elementary, middle and high school Spanish. She recently joined the staff of Seminole MS.

Rebecca Gallegos, an ESE teacher at Lakewood HS, Rebecca also has a BA in Spanish from Portland State University. She has been working on her certification while also seeking training in TPRS. We are pleased that she is able to now also teach Spanish I at Lakewood.

Terry Garbis-Spanish, Bay Point MS; Terry received BA's in Spanish and Psychology from the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, and a MA in Spanish from Bowling Green State University in Ohio, where he also taught beginning Spanish.

Jennifer Gil-Spanish, Osceola HS; Jennifer, a USF graduate, returns to us after teaching for a year in Greensboro, North Carolina. Welcome home, Jennifer.

Debbie Gómez-Spanish, John Hopkins MS; Debbie earned her BA in Spanish from Florida Atlantic University. In addition to teaching pre-school and substitute teaching, Debbie has also hosted a radio program while living in Ft. Lauderdale.

Karen Hope, a native speaker of Spanish, is a veteran Math teacher who is now teaching Introduction to World Languages at Pinellas Park MS. She is excited about preparing students for success in the 7th/8th grade Spanish program there.

Brenda Lankford-French, John Hopkins MS; Brenda recently relocated to Pinellas with her two daughters from Belgium, where she taught English in an immersion program and served as a private tutor for adults in French and Spanish. She also has extensive experience teaching French and Spanish here in the states. She holds a BA in Modern Languages/Spanish and French Education from Wheaton College, and a M.Ed. in French and Spanish from the University of West Georgia.

Line Mercier-French, Palm Harbor UHS; Line earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the College de Limoulu, Qué Canada. She recently completed her teacher certification program and also worked at Curlew Creek Elementary as a VE teacher's assistant.

Ofelia Motta Cribbs-Spanish, Safety Harbor MS; Ofelia moved to the States recently from her native Perú, where she earned a BS in Spanish Education from San Luis Gonzaga de ICA University and taught at the elementary and secondary levels. Before becoming a teacher in Pinellas, Ofelia worked as a bilingual assistant at Woodlawn Elementary.

Emily Muñoz-Spanish, Madeira Beach MS; Emily earned her BS in education from Western Carolina University. She has taught MS and HS Spanish as well as Spanish GED and ESL at the community college level. Emily also provided Spanish instruction to the police department when she lived in North Carolina.

Kristen Parks-Spanish, Morgan Fitzgerald MS; Kristen, a graduate of PPHS, received a BA in Spanish language and literature in 2005 and recently completed coursework for her Master's in Teaching (Spanish). It is such a pleasure to welcome a product of PCS back as a teacher in our department!

Cynthia Ramos-González-Spanish, PHUHS;

Marlene Ricalde-Spanish and Math, Tyrone MS; Marlene, who served as a long term sub for Sarita Stevens at Tyrone MS last year, is now teaching full-time at Tyrone. Together with her partner, Nydia Irizarry, Marlene takes over the program built by Sarita, who transferred this year to Countryside HS. Marlene is from Lima, Perú. She met her Cuban husband in Kiev, Ukraine, where she learned Russian and Ukrainian and earned a degree in Electrical Engineering. Marlene is in the process of becoming a US citizen.

Nydia Irizarry-Spanish and Math, Tyrone MS; Nydia, a native of Puerto Rico, comes to us from a position as a curriculum specialist at Life Skills Center of Pinellas County, a charter school in St. Petersburg. Nydia earned degrees in science and math from the University of Puerto Rico and USF.

Elizabeth Rodriguez-Spanish, Campbell Park Elementary; Elizabeth and her family recently relocated to the area from Texas. She taught Spanish at the elementary level in Georgia for five years and also taught kindergarten in Puerto Rico, where she earned a BA degree in Elementary Education from Interamerican University of Puerto Rico. She has also attended Augusta State University in GA and the University of Phoenix, San Juan, PR.

Susan Schasse-Spanish, Pinellas Park HS; Susan recently graduated from the University of Virginia with a MA in Spanish. She earned her BA in Spanish and Foreign Affairs from the same institution. In addition to teaching as a graduate assistant at UVA, Susan taught Spanish at Hampton Roads Academy (grades 7-9) in Newport News, VA.

Benjamin Smet-Spanish/Speech and Debate, Oak Grove MS; Ben is a graduate of Dixie Hollins HS, Excelsior College in Albany, NY, and returns home to Pinellas with his family after serving for ten years in the US Navy, serving as 2nd Class Petty Officer (E-5), Aviation Electronics Computer Technician. Although Ben began his study of Spanish first at SPHS and then at Dixie Hollins, he acquired the language while stationed at Naval Station Rota, Spain, province of Cádiz for three years. It is there where he also met his wife, Eva María Cano Fernández, his real motivation to make Spanish his second language.

Yao Tsung Tsai-Chinese and Math, Clearwater HS; Yao, a native of Taiwan, is a graduate of the University of Tampa's Master of Arts in Teaching program. He also has a BA in computer animation from Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, IL. He has worked as a graphic artist and taught math last year in Lakeland. He is currently working to complete certification requirements in Chinese and is thrilled to have the opportunity to share his language and culture with the CHS students.

Colleen Wapole-Spanish Immersion, Ridgecrest Elementary; Colleen received her BA in Economics and Spanish from Washington University in St. Louis, MO. She also earned a Master's of Teaching from National-Louis University in Evanston, IL. In 2001, Colleen completed a doctoral degree in linguistics at Northwestern University in Evanston. She has an extensive background in teaching that includes serving as a bilingual teacher, ESL teacher, dual language teacher, adjunct college lecturer and dual language program coordinator.

Kelli Whitley-Spanish, Perkins Elementary; Kelli earned her bachelor's degree in Spanish Education from Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA. She has also studied in Costa Rica. She has taught middle and high school Spanish, but most recently taught Spanish at Westlake Christian School, a K-8 school in Palm Harbor.

News From the Schools

Safety Harbor Middle School

SHMS has started its first Spanish for Spanish Speaker program. Starting with one group of heritage speakers of Spanish from a variety of countries and with an array of levels and experience, teacher Maricela Duarte is working with them to both appreciate their own heritage and to be open to the rich variety that makes up Hispanic culture. Students participate daily in lively discussion that allows them to compare and contrast the various aspects of their language and culture. Students are reading literature and working on projects in order to improve their written and oral skills. They are using the *Nuevas Vistas* (Holt) series as their basic textbook.

Morgan Fitzgerald Middle School

Kristen Parks and Brian Farley are both new to Morgan Fitzgerald this year. Kristen is a beginning teacher and Brian transferred to Fitzgerald from John Hopkins MS. They have decided to work together in order to build a strong program at their new school. The first accomplishment towards that goal was the establishment of the French and Spanish Clubs. They plan to meet on the same day so that clubs are able to work jointly on activities.

Thurgood Marshall Middle School

Congratulations to Jingsi Cheng and her students, who were featured in an article published by the St. Petersburg Times September 24. The article, entitled "A Bridge to China", provided readers with a first-hand look at what it is like to learn a language as "foreign" as Mandarin Chinese. Visitors were impressed with the high level of interest and enthusiasm demonstrated by the students as well as Ms. Cheng's teaching methods, which keep students actively practicing oral and written language. Our inaugural program at Safety Harbor MS was also credited with starting the journey, which also includes the beginning of the first high school program, which started this year at Clearwater HS.

East Lake HS

East Lake HS has also added a new language to its curriculum this year. Along with Spanish, French and German, East Lake now offers Japanese. Joseph Corr, who also teaches French at the school, teaches three Japanese I classes this year. Corr was an English teacher in southern Japan for several years. He studied and learned Japanese while he was there. French students in French III and IV are reading FAMA VA EN CALIFORNIE (Blaine Ray reader) on Tuesdays when they do guided reading. The book starts in Mauritania, where the main character, Fama, lives. After lots of attempts they have finally received a connection with a Peace Corps volunteer currently working in Mauritania. The students are anxious to correspond with her. Their teacher, Jeannine Pursley, hopes that this real world connection will help motivate her students, providing them with "valued purpose" for their reading. Mrs. Pursley reports that, when the students

use their language skills to communicate with "real" French people, their attention to details, such as spelling and grammar, is in credible. We look forward to following the progress of this ongoing project.

WLTA Update

Greetings,

My name is Renee Belvis and I am proud to be your current WLTA President. I currently teach ESOL at Kennedy Middle School. My board members are Danny Boulieris, (Vice President), Geri Craven (Treasurer), Pam Benton (Secretary), Alexandra Robalino (Social Chair), and Mildred Pioli (ESOL Representative). We are honored to have our former president, Sylvia Amaya, still on board in an advisory capacity.

Membership Report

Currently we have 71 members in the WLTA. This number is falling short of our goal of 100 members. We are still accepting new members and need your support. We are working hard to provide Immersion Scholarships and to award a student with the Carmine Zinn Memorial Scholarship.

Our upcoming event is scheduled for October 10th. Please join us for a fun-filled Oktoberfest celebration. The fall social and fund raiser will be held at the PCTA Building from 6:00-9:00. The cost is \$10.00. We will be recognizing new teachers at this social.

More News from the Schools

Largo High School

The Spanish Club had their first meeting and is working on selecting officers. They decorated a bulletin board in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month and prepared announcements to present daily on the morning program. The Spanish National Honor Society (*Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica*) also met for the first time in September. They are planning a November trip to EPCOT. The Largo HS principal, Jeff Haynes, a long time supporter of world languages at Largo, is retiring after 30+ years of service to Pinellas County. Good luck, Mr. Haynes.

St. Petersburg High School

The *Sancho Panza* chapter of the SPHS Spanish Honor Society (*Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica*) has a new sponsor this year. After years of service, Gloria Muñoz has turned over sponsorship of the very active chapter to colleague, Gisela Torres. Under Ms. Torres' leadership, the group is already planning a trip to St. Augustine in October. Other Spanish teachers within the department will be joining the group to serve as chaperones.

Pre-IB French 3 classes presented a fashion show to students and faculty in the SPHS Little Theater September 19.

Northeast High School

Three of the Classical Greek students of NEHS joined 1700 others from over 150 schools in March in taking the National Greek Exam sponsored by the American Classical League and the National Junior Classical League. Matthew Kopec earned a Merit Award for Beginning Attic Greek. He was one of only 221 students nationwide to receive this ranking. Eric Mueller earned High Honors for Beginning Attic Greek, one of only 116 nationwide. Congratulations to Alan Blessing, Classical Greek teacher, and these fine students.

Ridgecrest Elementary and St. Petersburg HS

Congratulations to Amy Radwan, grade 2, Ridgecrest Elementary and Amy Smith, grade 10, SPHS, both state winners in the 2008 FFLA Santillana USA Student Essay Contest. Both winners will receive their award, a laptop computer provided by Santillana USA, during the FFLA meeting held in conjunction with the national ACTFL Convention and World Languages Expo at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort November 20-23. A committee made up of Florida Foreign Language Association board members had the very difficult task of selecting one entry from each category, elementary and secondary. Many high quality essays were written and submitted from throughout the state of Florida. How proud we are that both 2008 winners are from Pinellas County.

