

2013 Prospect Practitioner Fellows

Jerusha Beckerman

Jerusha Beckerman attended Bard College where she studied French and Creative Writing. Upon graduation, she moved to New York City and began her teaching career at Basic Trust Child Care Center on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, working with children from 3 months to five years of age. She left this position to earn her Masters Degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education at the Art of Teaching Program at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY. She now teaches a mixed-age class of 2nd and 3rd graders at the Ella Baker School, a pre-K-8th grade public school in New York City.

Alexis Gordon

Alexis Gordon was most recently the 3rd-5th grade teacher at Freebrook Academy in Brooklyn, New York. She was first introduced to the Prospect Descriptive Processes at Sarah Lawrence College, where she earned her masters degree in the Art of Teaching Graduate Program.

Rebecca Mack

Rebecca Mack is an artist and musician living and teaching preschool in the Old North End neighborhood of Burlington, Vermont. Rebecca is co-founder of Research Sharing Via Paper, a correspondence initiative which seeks to invigorate communities of thought outside of academic institutions. Her current studies center around themes of human development across the lifespan, arts integration in early education, the work of making, and extra-institutional scholarship.

Erika Norris

Erika Norris lives in Grand Isle with her husband Jed, son Dylan, and black lab Bella. Currently she works as a preschool teacher at the University of Vermont's Campus Children's School where she has taught for the past six years. Prior to working at the University of Vermont Erika worked at Mary Johnson Children's Center as a toddler teacher, and Newport Middle High School as an art teacher. When she is not spending time with her family Erika enjoys sewing, baking, and restoring or repurposing salvaged items.

Alida Salins

Alida Salins grew up in Melville, a suburban town in the middle of Long Island, NY. Her parents are both ethnically Latvian (the last name Salins means "little island" in Latvian), and as member of a small expatriate community, she attended Latvian-speaking Sunday schools, as well as a summer camp in the beautiful Catskill mountains, where she has been a counselor for the past seven years, and a program director for the last four. Her

love of that environment, and the relationships she formed with the children, strongly influenced her desire to be a teacher.

Salins attended Bennington College for undergraduate study and pursued her interests in variety of subjects including: comparative literature, creative writing, ecology, political science, painting and drawing, and Spanish, to name a few! She was also working part-time at the Early Childhood Center, and began to spend Bennington's winter term of experiential learning in schools ranging from a private day school in Manhattan to a struggling public school outside of Boston. When it came time to focus her interests, she decided to enter the college's master's program for a degree in Elementary Education. Salins spent a year student teaching at Shaftsbury Elementary School, as well as continuously reflecting on her teaching philosophy, methods and experiences in a Qualifying Portfolio. She is certified in both Vermont and New York State, and is working at the Hiland Hall School, a very small non-profit non-graded school dedicated to building a community of creative and curious learners.

Dawn St. Amour

Dawn St. Amour is a teacher at the Campus Children's School at the University of Vermont. She has been with the school for 8 years. Dawn attended the University of Vermont for both her undergraduate and graduate studies. She currently works with both young children and college students who are engaged in their early childhood teaching practicums. The social constructivist approach of the school has been a perfect fit for honoring the work of young children and advocating for their interests. She is looking forward to the opportunity to participate in the Practitioner Fellowship Program, the chance to study the wealth of resources collected over so many years documenting the important work of children.

2013 Prospect Practitioner Mentor

Ellen Schwartz

Ellen Schwartz has taught primary grades in Vermont and Massachusetts since 1983. Prior to that she taught in a bilingual cluster program in Boston, directed a school-based youth center in Brighton, England, taught English in the former Yugoslavia, and worked as a typesetter.

Ellen began her association with the Prospect School and Center in 1984, when she attended her first Summer Institute. She was amazed at how much was revealed about a child through description of her works, and felt that she had found a place where she would be able to explore the many questions that teaching was raising for her. Ellen has attended Summer Institutes ever since, along with the Fall and Spring Conferences formerly held by Prospect. She is a member of a study group that uses Prospect's descriptive methodology in support of teachers' inquiries into their students and various aspects of their practice and a Board member of the Institute for Descriptive Inquiry, which is carrying forward the institutes formerly run by Prospect.

Ellen has published articles about teaching and learning, and is currently co-editing a collection of stories and essays by teachers who have taken the philosophy of Prospect into other settings, mainly public schools.

2013 Prospect Research Fellow

Bethany Silva

Bethany Silva is a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA, in the Reading/Writing/Literacy program. At the University of Pennsylvania, Bethany is a graduate assistant at the Philadelphia Writing Project, where she collaborates on Professional Development opportunities for Philadelphia teachers, curriculum writing, and serves as a Philadelphia Writing Project Teacher Consultant. Her research interests include in-and-out-of-school digital literacy practices. Bethany spent six years as the technology and tutoring coordinator at King Street Center, a community center in Burlington, VT, where she specialized in digital composing with youth and connecting in-school with out-of-school literacies. Bethany has a Masters in Fine Arts in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. A former middle school teacher, Bethany holds a Vermont Middle Level Educator's certification in Language Arts and Science.