

## Heart To Hand School Faculty & Trustee Biographies

**NOTE:** This document is not yet complete, but we wanted to share with you what we have so far.

### Samantha Shaw Kindergarten Lead Teacher



Born in rural West Virginia, Samantha's interest in education came first from watching and then being mentored by her mom, a grade school teacher. Samantha was a half-time volunteer in two North Carolina preschools for two years before becoming an Americorp volunteer and taking on her own mixed classroom of Kindergarten through Third graders. She then moved west and completed a Bachelors degree in Fine Arts at Sierra Nevada College.

Samantha has been teaching with Heart To Hand School since May 2004. Beginning as a teaching assistant to our school's founder, Martha Fine, Samantha became our Kindergarten Lead Teacher in 2007. She completed her Waldorf Early Childhood Education certification in 2009.

"I have a great love for spending time in the mountains, traveling, knitting, producing wood fired ceramics, and creating a safe and beautiful place for young children to grow up in."

### Marybeth Legler Kindergarten Lead Teacher



Marybeth was born and raised on a small sustainable homestead in Northern Indiana. The youngest of four siblings, she spent most of her time playing in the creek, exploring in the forest, caring for animals, daydreaming, and reading books. Marybeth knew from a young age that she wanted to be a teacher, and began caring for other children at the age of 10.

Marybeth comes from a family of eccentric engineers and artists who built, fixed, knit, grew, sewed, and cooked everything they needed. Frugality was a household law – everything was used and reused and if you did not have it, you built it or improvised. Growing up was an adventure in self reliance and creativity.

Marybeth began her college career majoring in education, but was quickly disenchanted with the sterile, institutional approach her university took toward this subject. She changed her major to Social & Environmental Sustainability, and this course of study led her to Australia and New Zealand. It was there, through serendipity (or destiny) that Marybeth saw a Waldorf school for the first time and immediately knew that she wanted to be a Waldorf teacher. Upon returning to Indiana to complete her BA, Marybeth began an apprenticeship in a one room Waldorf school house in a forest in Southern Indiana. Doors in this field have not stopped opening for her since. She was a Kindergarten Assistant Teacher at the Sycamore Spring Waldorf Initiative in Bloomington, IN, and the After Care Director at the Waldorf School of Louisville, in Louisville, KY., before being led to Heart To Hand School in August 2009. Marybeth completed her Waldorf Early Childhood Education certification at Rudolf Steiner College in 2009

Besides teaching and studying human development, Marybeth loves to spend time with her family and friends camping, hiking, cooking, and sharing stories. She loves to read, knit, cook, study, think, dance, have adventures, and ride her bicycle. Marybeth is very passionate about self-sufficient living and sustainable community development, with the hopes of one day living on a small farm with a menagerie of animals, her family, and close friends.

## **Paula Leeder**

Kindergarten Assistant Teacher



Paula lives in old Southwest Reno with Alex, her husband of 26 years, and their two daughters, Cordelia and Olivia. They have owned and operated an intimate health and wellness retreat and skin care center, “You Microspa”, since 1997. Paula is a lifelong learner with varied interests. Among other educational accomplishments, she holds an Associate Arts degree from Diablo Valley College (Pleasant Hill, CA); a certificate in Children’s Literature from the Institute of Children’s Literature (West Redding, CT); and a certificate in Storytime Yoga. Paula has also published numerous articles in local publications.

Paula was a Teachers Aide and Tutor in the Washoe County School District from 2003-2006 before joining Heart To Hand School in August 2007 as a Kindergarten Assistant Teacher.

“I enjoy the study and practices of yoga and writing. I also enjoy crewel embroidery, singing Elizabethan music, reading, and visiting museums and cultural centers. I particularly appreciate the local labyrinth at Rancho San Rafael, bird watching at Virginia Lake, and just spending time with family. I also have fun peeking in at the dance studio to admire Cordelia’s talents, and playing second violin to Olivia’s first violin during impromptu family performances. I am very happy to be a part of Heart To Hand School and to be inspired daily by your creative children.”

## **Patricia Miller**

Kindergarten Assistant Teacher



Patricia Miller will be joining our faculty in Autumn 2010. Patricia comes with many gifts and life experiences, including being fluent in Spanish – she completed 2 years full time college at Ave Maria College of the Americas in San Marcos, Carazo, Nicaragua.

## **Clare Brock**

After Care, Summer, & Substitute Teacher



Clare has been a Wildflowers (After Care) Lead Teacher at Heart To Hand School since August 2003. She also assists in the Waldorf homeschooling of her 3 grandsons.

## Halla DeSart

After Care, Summer, & Substitute Teacher



Raised in Henderson, NV, Halla graduated with honors from high school and is now pursuing a degree in Secondary Education at UNR, with a minor in Anthropology. Halla joined Heart To Hand School in July 2007 as a Wildflowers (After Care) Teacher and now also serves as a substitute Assistant Teacher in our morning program as well as Summer Lead Teacher.

“I am fascinated with history and especially the objects that come from it. I love working with children and believe that their innocence and free spirited ways are contagious to anyone they encounter. If I could choose any other group, besides children, to work with it would be animals. In my free time I enjoy using my creative side in whatever way comes to me. I especially enjoy photography and writing. I also enjoy being outside and observing nature. As a young twenty-something I find it hard to make a list of my accomplishments because I feel that I am in the process of many soon-to-be accomplishments.”

## Catherine Gegen

After Care, Summer, & Substitute Teacher

Raised in Henderson, NV, Catie graduated with honors from high school then went to Los Angeles to attend the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising where she was a Merchandise Marketing major. Catie then came to Reno to pursue her Bachelors degree in Journalism at UNR. Catie began work at Heart To Hand School in April 2009 as a Wildflowers (After Care) Teacher and now also serves as a substitute Assistant Teacher in our morning program.

## Jennifer Bowen

After Care, Summer, & Substitute Assistant Teacher

Raised in Henderson, NV, Jenn graduated with honors from high school then came to Reno to pursue her Bachelors degree at UNR. Jenn began work at Heart To Hand School in December 2008 as a Wildflowers (After Care) Teacher and now also serves as a substitute Assistant Teacher in our morning and summer programs.

## Lelan Harris

Administrator, Heart To Hand School

Executive Director, Desert Sage Educational Initiative



In March 2007, Lelan came to Heart To Hand School as the school's first administrator and as the executive director of the nonprofit corporation under which we do business, Desert Sage Educational Initiative. During the 30 years previous to this (since 1977), his vocational responsibilities have always included a combination of roles, primarily educator, trainer, counselor, writer, speaker, and manager.

Lelan's academic training includes degrees and certificates in education, supervision, management, theology, spiritual and personal formation, psychological assessment, and vocational counseling. These include a B.S. from the University of Minnesota in Secondary Education (social sciences); an M.Div. from Bethel Seminary in Pastoral Ministry (emphases in spiritual & personal formation, conflict resolution, and change management); business supervision and business management certificates from the American Management Association through the Carlson School of Business (Minneapolis, MN); group spiritual formation certification from the Shalem Institute (Bethesda, MD); numerous certifications in psychological, personal formation, and

vocational development assessments; and OSHA Supervisor-level safety certification.

Lelan's vocational experience has included being a preschool substitute teacher and high school history teacher (Minneapolis, MN); project researcher & international conference coordinator for the Christianity Today Institute (Chicago, IL); pastor (St. Paul, MN); Director and Professor of Personal & Spiritual Formation at Bethel Seminary (St. Paul, MN); founder & managing partner of Soul Formation (consulting, training, speaking, and curriculum writing); and visiting scholar (Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA; and the University of Nevada-Reno).

In addition to the numerous curriculum, training, and retreat materials he has authored and co-authored, and the many presentations he has made at professional conferences, Lelan has written and produced one drama, and published five articles. He was also a reviewer (and minor contributor) to Janet Hagberg's revised edition of *The Critical Journey: Stages in the Life of Faith* (2004).

“Of greater delight than any of the foregoing, I have been joyously married to Julie since 1988. We are partners and spiritual companions in this life pilgrimage that we are on together. We have two children in heaven (miscarriages). In our relationships with other people, we share a passion for developing and living in various forms of intentional community – which is what not only brought us to Reno in 2004 for a temporary period of service, but which also contributed to our choosing to remain in Reno indefinitely ... in fact, all our belongings are still in storage back in Minnesota! For rejuvenation, we love wilderness adventures of many kinds (backpacking, mountaineering, rock climbing, canoeing, backcountry skiing, snowshoeing), as well as downhill skiing and bicycling (road and mountain). We also enjoy creating romantic interludes and retreats for one another, whenever possible.”

## **Keli Brown**

### **Program Director and School Trustee**



Keli's life journey has been truly multifaceted. She has lived with her husband and children off-grid in a yurt high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and as members of the Waldorf-inspired Tui Spiritual & Educational Trust Intentional Community in New Zealand. Keli holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education (University of Nevada-Reno), has invested five summers in Waldorf Grades education (Rudolf Steiner College, Sacramento, CA), and holds certifications in fields as diverse as German language and culture immersion (Munich, Germany) and yogic meditation (Satananda Ashram, Australia).

Keli's current educational endeavors include being a full time student at the University of Nevada where she is working on a Masters degree in Educational Leadership, while simultaneously pursuing certification as a Waldorf Administrator through Rudolf Steiner College.

Keli's primary vocational undertakings have included work as a Professional Ski Instructor at Lake Tahoe, Yosemite, and in Germany; as the Special Event and Race Coordinator at Sugar Bowl; as an Administrative Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator at Live Oak Waldorf School; as the Owner/Director of Granite Peak Camp; as a substitute teacher in the Washoe County School District; and as Management Coordinator and Board Member of Reno's Great Basin Food Cooperative.

Keli joined our Heart To Hand School community as Administrator and Program Director in May 2007.

“My greatest life accomplishment is being the mother of absolutely amazing, teenage, twin boys whom we are Waldorf homeschooling. I have been married for fourteen years and my husband and I have been actively participating in consensus based, intentional, permaculture communities for the last ten years. Our boys have been Waldorf educated and I am committed to bring noncompetitive, arts integrated, spiritual education to as

many children as possible. Along with alternative education, I have a strong value for supporting local, organic agriculture and healthy, sustainable living practices. I enjoy gardening, camping, yoga, and any noncompetitive sport that gets me into the great outdoors.”

**Bob Clarkson**

School Trustee

**Richard Schreinert**

School Trustee

**Patricia Fenkell**

School Trustee



**Becky McGrath**

School Trustee

**Judy Ishibashi**

School Trustee