

Child Development Team



Child Development Program Manager Emily Bugos

Emily is a long-time member of the Novato community and has dedicated her career to the Child Development industry. She obtained a Master of Arts in Education with a concentration in Early Childhood Education in December 2020 from San Francisco State University. Prior to this, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Health Education with a focus on community-based public health along with her Child Development Site Supervisor Permit. Emily worked as a Head Teacher for several years, serving children ages 0-5 and currently works as a lecturer within SFSU's Graduate College of Education. Emily is a Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) Certified Trainer, as well as a consultant and Board Member with Early Care Educators of San Francisco. Emily progressed through the NUSD public school system, from kindergarten through high school, and is an alumna of the Novato Youth Center afterschool program. Working with children and families has always been a passion for Emily, who believes that these relationships are at the heart of the work that we do.



Child Development Program Assistant Manager

Angelina Susmani

Angelina has worked for Marin Community Services (and previously Novato Youth Center) for nine years, and has held various positions including Student Intern, Elementary Teacher, Kindergarten Teacher, School Age Head Teacher and more recently Child Development Program Coordinator. She has earned a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from Sonoma State and continues her education through College of Marin, taking ECE and administrative courses. Angelina is a lifelong Novato resident, attended Waldorf and NUSD schools. She quotes, "I am excited to grow in my new position and to learn new things each and every day. Working with the children and their families brings me joy. Seeing the smiles on their faces and being able to make a difference in their lives is why I get up in the morning. When I am not at work, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. I wouldn't be who I am today without the support and guidance of those around me. You can always find me singing, dancing, and cracking a joke inside and outside of the office. I look forward to beginning my next chapter at NMCS!"



School Age Assistant Manager **Anne Varner**

Anne's career started at the center back in June of 1985 when she started as a Youth-In-Training employee through Marin County. Anne has worked at NMCS for over 36 years and is currently the Assistant School Age Program Manager, School Age teacher for 3rd-5th grade, and Art Teacher. Over the years she has met some amazing families, co-workers and many students, some of whom have their own children here at the center. Anne met her husband Tim while working at NMCS and has one son Mason, who was a NMCS student from Toddlers through 5th Grade. Anne's education has been ongoing and she has taken many trainings and workshops in Early Childhood Education, Anti-Bias, Teaching Pyramid, CPR and First Aide, and Trauma-Informed Care. On her off time, she loves to spend time with her family and friends, watch & read Sci-fi and horror books and films and take photos of landscapes and animals. Black & white photography is her favorite! Anne: "I get to Live, Laugh, and Love & Teach every day!"



ECE Assistant Manager **Michelle Keane**

Michelle Keane began her journey at North Marin Community Services (then the Novato Youth Center) in December of 1998. She began as the After School Kindergarten Aide, and since then has taken on a variety of classroom roles in all Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs - from the infant room to preschool. In 2017 she became the Preschool Head Teacher and focused on providing quality care, and an enriching, developmentally appropriate environment for the children in her care. In 2020, she was promoted to ECE Assistant Manager, where she splits her time between the classroom and providing more focused support to the ECE Program. She also runs the Developmental Playgroup Program, offering support to families that don't have access to affordable and high-quality preschool. Michelle holds an AA degree in Early Childhood Development from Santa Rosa Junior College.



Preschool Head Teacher



Mary Moroski Asher

Mary Moroski joined the Child Development team at North Marin Community Services in 2019. Her current position is Head Teacher in the preschool program.

After graduating from the University of California in Santa Cruz with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology, Mary accepted her first professional position as Educator in a progressive toddler program. Inspired by her work, she complemented her undergraduate degree with Early Childhood Education coursework at Cabrillo College in Aptos, California, studying with notable Child Development professionals Julie Olsen Edwards and Mary Warshaw. After promotions to Head Teacher and Assistant Director, Mary turned her focus to advocacy, enrolling in a film program at San Jose State University. Always impressed by her observations of young children in a center-based learning environment, the motivation to visually capture of the social dynamics between very young children was strong.

After producing a documentary profiling a high quality children's program, Mary pursued freelance videography. She was offered a grant-funded project to produce a video exploration of the rigorous process toward achieving the National Association for the Education of Young Children Accreditation for excellence in standards for early learning programs. The original project featured the perspectives from five distinct children's programs in Santa Cruz County. A companion video focused on NAEYC Accreditation from the program director's point of view. These videos were used as teaching tools at the Child Development Resource Center in Santa Cruz.

Stepping away from child development, Mary accepted a position at University of California Extension, Santa Cruz working as a Program Associate in the Behavioral Sciences Program, in addition to co-director for an undergraduate wilderness field studies program, Sierra Institute. Ultimately, Mary gravitated back to primary education when her son became school age. First, teaching art curriculum to grades 1-6, then obtaining a K-12 Substitute Teacher Permit. Upon returning to her hometown, Novato, Mary was hired by Marin Head Start as Head Teacher, then transitioned to MCOE, working with moderately to severely autistic students. After a very brief stint at the Marin Superior Court in Records Management and customer service, Mary returned to public service at NMCS and again found the love.

	<p>Mary enjoys cooking and baking for friends and family, photography and editing, and live music. She is looking forward to taking her son to the New Orleans Jazz Festival for his first time, her fifth.</p>
	<p>Preschool Teacher Tatiana Rojas</p> <p>Tatiana Rojas Hering studied Political Science and Anthropology in her home country Colombia. She also has a master's degree in Higher Education and Pedagogical Innovations. She has been dedicated to teaching for the last 18 years with extensive experience teaching World History to adolescents in high school and Social Research Methodology in university. Her passion for pedagogy has led her to explore Early Childhood Education and she is currently a preschool teacher. She is also part of the NMCS Promoteres volunteer group where she supports the Advocacy group that helps connect the Latino community residing in Novato. Besides Colombia, Tatiana has lived in Guatemala, Ecuador and currently in the US. This experience has taught her to appreciate the richness of cultural diversity. Tatiana is married, has a 24-year-old son who is an economist and lives in Ecuador. In her spare time, her favorite hobbies are reading and dancing salsa. She is a pet lover and her 4-legged love is named Freddy Mercury. Tatiana defines herself as an eternal apprentice.</p>
	<p>Preschool Teacher Ali Ratto</p> <p>Ali Ratto started working as a substitute at North Marin Community Services (then Novato Youth Center) in 2014. Since then, she has taken on various roles throughout the Child Development Program, from infant to kindergarten. She currently works in the preschool classroom. Ali's favorite part of working with children and their family is the relationships that build and how she gets to see first hand the positive impact that the center has in their lives. Ali studied Child Development at Santa Rosa Junior College. In her free time, she loves to spend time with her husband and their daughter.</p>



Preschool Teacher **Jasmine Romero**

Jasmine grew up in Novato and used to be a Novato Youth Center student. She's now worked at NMCS for 3 years. She started out as a floater working in the infant/ toddler room and is now a full-time Preschool Teacher. She graduated from Novato High School, obtained her Child Development Associate Teacher Permit, and is now majoring in Early Childhood Education in College of Marin. Jasmine loves to play with her dog, listen to music, and spend time with her nieces.



Preschool Floater Teacher **Adriana Mendieta**

Adriana Mendieta has worked at North Marin Community Services since 2020. She is the Floater Teacher, which means she supports and helps out in both the School-Age and ECE Programs. She has taken several Early Childhood Education classes at the College of Marin. Adriana has a passion for children and making a positive impact on their lives. She loves to watch them learn and grow daily. When Adriana is not at work, she is busy taking care of her four young children. In her free time, she loves hiking and enjoys reading with a hot cup of tea.



Kindergarten Teacher/Program Assistant **Ana Ramos**

Ana began her journey with NMCS as a volunteer and Promotora 11 years ago before becoming a staff member in 2015. Ana holds many roles, including driving in the after school program, assisting with the food program, and working as the Kindergarten Teacher. Ana's passion in working with children encouraged her to take ECE classes at College of Marin in order to increase her knowledge and strengthen her skills in early childhood education. She obtained her Child Development Associate Teacher Permit in 2020. She is very enthusiastic about working as the Kindergarten Teacher in the afternoons. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and their dog, Nala.



Friends Room Teacher **Lisbeth DeLeon**

Lisbeth De Leon is a 1st and 2nd grade teacher in the Friends Room. She has been working at North Marin Community Services for 5 years. She was born in Guatemala and is the third of six sisters. She came to California over 25 years ago. Since then, she has lived in San Rafael with her husband and son. In Guatemala, she studied for and graduated as an Accountant Expert. She also studied at College of Marin to earn a certificate in Early Childhood Development and holds an Associate Teacher Child Development Permit. Before working at NMCS, she had worked with children for over 15 years. She has volunteered and worked at Loma Verde Elementary school for 15 years as a Teacher Aide and Yard Supervisor. Lisbeth says, "I am very grateful for having this opportunity to work with children who have helped me grow professionally and to learn from them because each one is unique in their way of learning. In my spare time, I enjoy riding my bike and walking with my family and friends."



Friends Room Teacher Aide **Omahar Diaz**

Omahar Alí Díaz Montenegro has been working with North Marin Community Services as a Teacher Aide since September 2021. He currently works with 1st and 2nd graders in the Friends Room. Omahar moved to the US from Perú in 2019 where he worked for 12 years as a school teacher and 3 years as a school principal. He holds a master's degree in Education and is currently pursuing his teaching credential. To further his bilingual language skills, Omahar is enrolled in English classes at College of Marin. He lives locally with his wife and his three children.



School Age Head Teacher **Gaby Garcia**

Gaby first joined the NMCS team in 2016 as a substitute teacher. While finishing college she did internships in both the general and special education field at the local schools in Chico. She obtained her bachelor's degree in Child Development from California State University, Chico in May 2017. She took a gap year to focus on expanding her skills as an Elementary Teacher, working with the 1st and 2nd graders and often helping out in the ECE and School Age classrooms. She enrolled in the master's program at Sonoma State University in 2018 and obtained her Master's Degree in Education with a concentration in Early Childhood Education in December 2021. In addition to working as a teacher, Gaby has taken on other roles at NMCS such as assisting NMCS staff with various projects, administrative work, and Spanish translation. Gaby was promoted to School Age Head Teacher in October of 2021 and she now works with the 3rd-5th grade group. In her free time, Gaby enjoys hiking with her dog, going to the gym, playing soccer and reading.



Middle School Head Teacher **Allysa Wiltz**

Allysa Wiltz began working at North Marin Community Services in September of 2018 as a School Age Teacher Aide and Driver. Since then, she transitioned to working as a Teacher Assistant for the Middle School program. This is where she found her passion in working with children of this age group. In 2020, she was promoted to Middle School Head Teacher where she focuses on providing an enriching, social-emotional environment for the children. She appreciates being able to connect and build relationships with children and their families. Allysa holds an Associate Teacher Permit and has obtained a bachelor's degree in Psychology with a focus on American Multicultural Studies from Sonoma State University. In her personal time, Allysa loves reading, trying new foods, and traveling.



Floater Teacher **Aracelia Mendoza**

Aracelia has been a long-time NMCS parent whose 4 children have gone through the Child Development program. She joined NMCS as a driver and substitute teacher in 2018. Aracelia has her Associate Teacher permit and continues to take classes in early childhood education and special education. In free time, she enjoys doing activities with her children, baking delicious churros, and working and volunteering with the senior community in Novato.



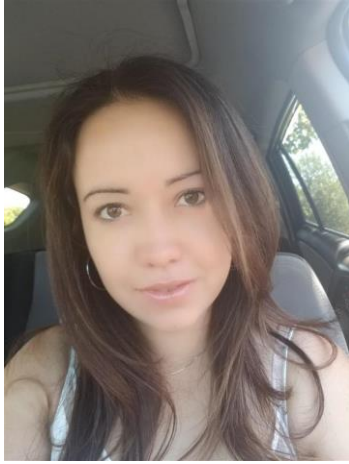
Driver/Fleet Manager **Steve Bugos**

Steve joined NMCS as a driver in 2017 after retiring from a 35 year career with the IRS. He oversees the maintenance and safety of the NMCS vans and transports the elementary school students to NMCS after school and on field trips. Steve has 3 grown children, is a long-time Novato resident, and enjoys playing tennis and racquetball and visiting the public library in his free time.



Driver **Connie Lazzareschi**

Connie is a San Francisco native who has lived in Novato for many years. Her four adult children and two granddaughters have all attended Novato schools. Her background is in customer service including working at a local baby boutique on Grant Avenue in Novato. She has enjoyed working with children including doing daycare when her children were growing up. Needless to say, she did a lot of chauffeuring them around and is familiar with all of the Novato schools. She enjoys decorating, reading and volunteering with local dog rescue organizations.



Head Cook **Maria Albuja**

Maria Albuja has worked for NMCS since September 2014. She started as a morning driver and kitchen assistant. In June 2015, Maria accepted the Head cook position. She has a passion for cooking and a strong belief that her grandmother taught her – ***"food brings family and people together."*** Following that mantra, Maria always searches for new recipes and enjoys integrating traditional Latin food into the children's diets in a healthy way. In addition, she follows the Child and Adult Care Food Program requirements and USDA guidelines. Maria loves working with fresh fruits and vegetables to prepare fresh meals every day full of love for the children. Maria lives locally with her daughter and loves sports, hiking and travel, especially with her family. At the moment, she is attending College of Marin to continue enhancing her bilingual skills and is soon hoping to join a culinary school for a future degree.