



New Hires 2020-21



Kayla Baumgardt
(Resource Teacher)

Hello! My name is Kayla Baumgardt and I will be joining Clarendon Hills Middle School as a resource teacher. I graduated from Illinois State University with my degree in Special Education as a Learning and Behavior Specialist. I am so excited to start in the Fall and begin creating relationships with students, staff and families. I believe in providing students the support they need to empower them to believe in themselves to lead to their success. I am continually learning new strategies and supports to improve my teaching and better support my students. Social Emotional Learning, co-teaching and inclusion are some of my passions in my field!

I am from Yorkville but recently moved to La Grange with my fiance. In my free time I enjoy baking, running and spending time with friends and family. I recently became an aunt and have many young cousins I often spend time with!

I am so excited to join the community at CHMS!



Emily Jasinski
(School Social Worker)

Hi! My name is Emily (Emma) Jasinski. I am so excited to be joining Clarendon Hills Middle School as the new 6th grade social worker! This will be my 6th year in the profession. I previously worked as a social worker in Forest Park. I received my undergrad degree from the University of Iowa and Master's from UIC and Concordia. I believe social emotional learning is so critical in the world today and hope to be a positive influence!

I currently live in Lakeview, Chicago with my sister (who is also a school social worker). In my free time, I enjoy being active outside on the lake shore path, on a patio with friends, or at my family's lake house. I absolutely love being an aunt to my 1 year old nephew and watching him grow! I love pizza, the Cubs, and shopping :)

I am so excited to be here! Everyone I have met so far has been so great and I cannot wait to meet our students & staff!



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Stephanie Kaegebein
(Phys. Ed. & Health Teacher)

Hi! I am Stephanie Kaegebein, and I will be starting my 4th year teaching as a physical education teacher at Clarendon Hills Middle School. I also have four years of being an instructional teacher assistant-- three of those years were at CHMS! I am very excited to be back in the district. My number one priority as a physical education teacher is to guide students to become active individuals throughout their lifetimes. Besides teaching, I love volleyball, and I am the boys varsity volleyball coach at Hinsdale Central High School.

On a personal note, I live in Darien with my husband, Mike, and two dogs: Hossa and Heidi (yes, we are Blackhawks fans). I enjoy cooking and baking, but I also burn those calories by staying active with Barre3 classes, and biking (and anything else to be active for that matter)! I cannot wait to be back at CHMS to see friendly faces, and meet new ones!

Follow me on Twitter: [@Mrs_KaegsPE](https://twitter.com/Mrs_KaegsPE)



Andrew Dzija
(Social Studies Teacher)

Hello there! My name is Andrew Dzija and I am super excited to be joining Clarendon Hills Middle School as a 7th grade social studies teacher! I feel blessed to be given the opportunity to teach a grade level content that focuses heavily on The Constitution and civics at this historical moment in our country. It is the perfect time to instill the relevance and importance of social studies education in a generation that will be taxed with using what they learn to make the United States a better place.

The last ten years I have taught 6th grade social studies and Spanish at Hinsdale Middle School, so I'm a D181 veteran. I received my undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois and my Master's from Concordia. On a personal note, I live in Brookfield with my wife JoElla and our cat Martha Washington Dzija. I love playing and coaching basketball, playing and coaching tennis, listening to NPR, and reading. Teaching is super fun! I love it! I can't wait to get out there with you folks and get to work!! Go Eagles!



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Maria Koeppen
(Science Teacher)

Hello! My name is Maria Koeppen and I am excited and honored to be joining the staff at Clarendon Hills Middle School as the new Science teacher. I received my undergraduate degree from Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, IL and my MS from Madonna University in Livonia, Michigan. My experience in the field of education is varied and includes teaching grades six through eight in Social Studies, Language Arts and Science as well as instructing at the post secondary level. In order to engage students in the science classroom I believe inquiry and hands on science lessons are necessary to promote critical thinking and interest in the subject. Moreover, I value teamwork and make it a priority to partner with colleagues and families to ensure student success.

I live in Palos Heights with my husband, three children (Caroline 17, Charlie 15 and Julia 12) and two dogs. Together, we enjoy vacations, spending time outdoors, and Chicago sports. My hobbies include yoga, walking and reading. I am eager to meet the staff and students of CHMS!! Go Eagles!!!



Elaine Bennington
(Music Teacher)

Hello! My name is Elaine Bennington and I am thrilled to be joining the Clarendon Hills Middle School Music team, where I will be teaching choir, drama, guitar, and general music. I received degrees in Music Education and Vocal Performance from Northern Illinois University, graduating with upper vision honors. I previously taught choir and general music at Plainfield East High School. I worked as the music director at ARIEL Theatrical in Salinas California. I firmly believe in using diverse high quality literature to foster a life-long appreciation for the arts. I am proud to work with the Institute for Composer Diversity, and am an active proponent of the comprehensive musicianship through performance model. I've taught private flute, piano, and voice lessons.

My husband and I enjoy playing dungeons and dragons/board games. Sometimes our two cats, Mara and Azura, like to join us at the table. I love fantasy novels and all things Harry Potter. (Go Ravenclaw!) I love teaching and am looking forward to being part of the CHMS team!



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Christina Van Wetering
(Spanish Teacher)

¡Hola todos! My name is Tina Van Wetering and I am excited to start teaching Spanish at CHMS! I previously taught Spanish for 4 years to 4th-8th graders in Lake Zurich. Since my mom was born in Cuba, I have always had an interest in the Spanish language and cultures. I began taking Spanish at a young age and continued throughout high school. I also had the opportunity to travel to Seville, Spain for a month and complete a study abroad program. I then received my BA in Spanish at Illinois State University and my Foreign Language PEL at National Louis University. I am currently working towards my ESL endorsement as well. I am passionate about teaching Spanish and creating a fun environment for students to learn.

I grew up in Palatine with my parents and 3 older siblings. My mom, sister, brother and sister-in-law are all teachers! It runs in my blood! I currently live in Villa Park with my fiancé. We recently got engaged with a quarantine car parade. It was awesome! I enjoy baking, puzzles, and spending time with my family at my parents lake house. I am looking forward to a new school year and getting to know my new students and colleagues!