



Ami Hanaoka

2nd Grade, Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy
Resident: Karen Schreiner

Hometown: Englewood, Colorado
of Years Teaching: 10
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 5

Why I Teach at Aspire: I like that I am able to meet my students' needs in all subjects at a level that is most beneficial to their learning. Using the standards as a guide to develop curriculum tailored to my students has helped me grow as a professional as well as meet my students' needs. And, of course, the people at Aspire are amazing! The consistent hard work and dedication to the students that you see with everyone on staff is unbeatable.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: It's wonderful to have another set of capable hands in the room who knows the students just as well as you do and is able to help them in the ways that they need help. Every student is getting so much more individualized and differentiated attention as a result. My students' academic growth has really been apparent in our class' reading, math, and writing data!



Brooke Aguirre

4th Grade, Aspire Capitol Heights Academy
Resident: Anita Rodriguez

Hometown: Arbutle, California
of Years Teaching: 5
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 4

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because it's inspiring to work with teachers that truly work hard, and dedicate themselves to helping students succeed! Working at Aspire makes me feel like I am a part of the positive change our educational system needs. Our students not only show growth in academics, but we strive to set them up for success in their future as adults!

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I think the ATR program is genius, how wonderful to get authentic hands-on experience in an Aspire classroom as a resident! Residents are treated like a classroom teacher, and given far more opportunities than in most credential programs. I feel honored to be a part of this great learning experience for a future Aspire teacher. Had this program been around prior to me getting a credential, I would have jumped at the chance!



Courtney Walker

4th/5th Grade, Aspire ERES Academy
Resident: Christa Ogier

of Years Teaching: 8
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I love Aspire's mission, and I've completely fallen in love with our school, scholars, staff and families. Aspire does a wonderful job of maintaining high expectations for academics while also placing tremendous value on developing the individual as a whole. I hope that this will be the key to helping our scholars be successful beyond their academic career

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that ATR is a supportive learning community where scholars and mentors alike are safe to experiment, question, make mistakes, and grow!



Diana Puccio

Kindergarten, Aspire Vincent Shalvey Academy
Resident: Asha Wesley

Hometown: Newport Beach, California
of Years Teaching: 29
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 15

Why I Teach at Aspire: I was originally drawn to Aspire because I saw that the teachers involved shared the same vision and work ethic that was focused on student achievement. I wanted to work with teachers that were excited to work and share best practices and strategies. These principles are the same reason I stay with Aspire today. Furthermore, the teachers at Vincent Shalvey are not only colleagues, but dear friends. We are a family!

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I began my teaching career as an intern in Newport Mesa with an amazing mentor. The start she gave me has been long lasting and I wanted to do the same for new teachers coming into the profession. Working with my resident, Asha, will allow me the opportunity to share my knowledge and passion for children and their learning. I look forward to our new partnership and growing friendship as we begin teaching our new group of students in their first steps to college.



Jay Stack

5th Grade, Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy
Resident: Samuel Lloyd

Hometown: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
of Years Teaching: 8
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 8

Why I Teach at Aspire: I love the work ethic, supportive nature, and collaborative mentality of the people here. I get to work with and learn from some of the best teachers in the game!

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I really appreciate the levels of support offered to teachers before they enter the classroom. Collaborating on everything from lesson plans to daily routines to individualized instruction will be super helpful!



Joanna Bottrell Hayman

3rd Grade, Aspire Inskip Academy
Resident: Kolanje Thomas-Alexander

Hometown: Glendale, California
of Years Teaching: 7
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 7

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I get to work with like-minded and dedicated individuals who share my commitment to ensuring a quality education for all of our students.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate how beneficial ATR is for all involved. Students, mentors, residents, and the broader school community are all positively impacted by the program.



Karma Frame

5th Grade, Aspire River Oaks Charter School
Resident: Shawna Koga

Hometown: Stockton, California
of Years Teaching: 10
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 10

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I believe in individualized, rigorous instruction for all students. I believe in filling kids with a love of learning and the skills to succeed in life.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that my students will get double the attention and opportunities with a teacher. I also appreciate how hard the residents work and that we are nurturing quality teachers to be classroom ready. I love having a teammate in the classroom to reflect with and bounce things off of.



Katie Spencer

7th Grade Education Specialist, Aspire Ollin University Preparatory Academy
Resident: Jennie Wu

Hometown: Los Angeles, California
of Years Teaching: 7
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: I love working with people who have the same passion for teaching and who show up every day with the students first in mind. Aspire has offered me the opportunity to grow as a professional and to collaborate with people who are always working to enhance their practice.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I am looking forward to growing with my resident and to sharing my practice and classroom with someone. I think that this program is ideal for offering a new teacher the opportunity to lead and have much more support than they otherwise would during a first year.



Keith Drucker

8th Grade Humanities, Aspire Ollin University Preparatory Academy
Resident: Ramiro Flores

Hometown: Los Angeles, California
of Years Teaching: 8
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 7

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I believe in the student-centered philosophy espoused here. Aspire puts students first and gives the staff what it needs to ensure that the students are ready to be accepted to, and graduate from the college of their choice.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that the Aspire Teacher Residency program gives residents real world, hands-on experience in the classroom. It is a great way to educate future educators.



Kristy-Anne Fernandez

5th Grade, Aspire Huntington Park Charter School
Resident: Candelario Flores

Hometown: Whittier, California
of Years Teaching: 7
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 6

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I want to instill change in the Los Angeles area. Aspire provides me with an opportunity to tailor my instruction to best fit the needs of my students. I love that I am able to use a data driven model to guide my planning and instruction. This has been most beneficial to my students.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I believe that two heads are better than one, and the Aspire Teacher Residency provides me with a co-teacher that will help me meet the needs of all of our students. Through collaboration and hard work we can take the class further than I would be able to on my own.



Laney Hammond

6th Grade, Aspire ERES Academy
Resident: Heather VanWallendael

Hometown: Oxford, Massachusetts
of Years Teaching: 9
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I believe in our mission. The kids we serve are so deserving and will achieve so much. This organization is unlike any other, and working here pushes me to be a better teacher, learner, and person.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: The program allows for so much growth and support for both residents and mentors. The residency gives residents a true sense of what having their own classroom will *really* be like. The benefit for students is incredible: two loving adults, two skillful teachers, and tons of targeted instruction. This program truly prepares future teachers.



Laura Strait

4th Grade, Aspire ERES Academy
Resident: Emma Simmons

Hometown: Sudbury, Massachusetts
of Years Teaching: 6
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I get to work with dedicated staff and students every day. I value that all my coworkers at ERES share the same mission and vision. I love how Aspire is student centered and college focused. I'm inspired by the growth mindset for teachers and students.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that the mentor and resident can both learn from each other. I think having two hardworking and invested teachers in the classroom is extremely beneficial and rewarding.



Lisa Nguyen

6th Grade Humanities, Aspire Alexander Twilight Secondary Academy
Resident: Amanda Garcia

Hometown: Livermore, California
of Years Teaching: 4
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 4

Why I Teach at Aspire: I love what Aspire is all about; the mission, the passion, and the innovation in education. I love our kids, and I love my staff and my school! I have never had such a rewarding experience in a workplace as I have had here, and as soon as I found Aspire, I just felt like it was the perfect fit with all my educational beliefs and values. It really is the dream job. Aspire makes me strive to always become a better teacher, reminding me that I am always learning and always growing, and I just think that's an amazing way to look at my life, and my career.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: What an amazing way to train teachers to do this difficult work. I appreciate how Aspire always finds a way to make things better; more efficient and effective. I am so excited to have another passionate and invested adult in the room who is also devoted to working with my students all year long, and eager to learn and grow with me.



Maria Vizcaino

Kindergarten, Aspire Junior Collegiate Academy
Resident: Karen More

Hometown: East Los Angeles, California
of Years Teaching: 7
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 7

Why I Teach at Aspire: I love that we are like a family that is committed to getting students ready to succeed in college.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I love that residents get to be in the classroom for a whole year. I feel that I didn't learn how to be a teacher until I had a class of my own. Residents get to incorporate what they learn at seminar and apply it in the classroom immediately.



Mark Montero

2nd Grade, Aspire Titan Academy
Resident: Anel Torres

Hometown: Los Angeles, California
of Years Teaching: 6
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 6

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because of the students and the staff I work with every day. Because the core values are embraced and lived throughout the school community, I see its fruits on a daily basis – from the small moments, like feeling successful during a guided reading session when a student finally decodes a word with which he or she has had difficulty, to the big moments, when a team of compassionate, hard-working, and extremely dedicated educators transform an entire community where every student in the school is college-ready. I love going to work because I know I am part of this catalyst movement, where every child receives an excellent education and where every teacher is developed to his or her highest potential.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: As a founding teacher at Titan Academy, and having stayed here since then, I have received so much support, knowledge, and professional training from my colleagues and principal. Never would I have imagined myself embracing teaching as *my* profession. I want to instill this same love for teaching and teach the good practices that I have learned and am still learning to my own resident. I want to help develop other educators in ways unimaginable, where they feel confident as literacy/reading gurus, math wizards, writing extraordinaires, and behavior management “Cesar Millans.” But most of all, I think about the students and how greatly they will benefit from not only one but *two* teachers in the classroom! The possibilities are endless for both the co-teachers and the students, and I am excited to begin this adventure.



Marlene Singh

7th Grade Math/Science, Aspire Ollin University Preparatory Academy
Resident: Lara Heisser

Hometown: Santa Monica, California
of Years Teaching: 4
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 4

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I believe in the work we do as teachers and Aspire is dedicated to that work as well. The support and collaboration for teachers and students is particularly valued at Aspire and I greatly appreciate it.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate the ATR because it is giving aspiring educators a chance to work hands on in the classroom from day one. The experience gained through the ATR is significant and a great way to prepare for becoming a teacher.



Melissa Brookens

4th/5th Grade, Aspire APEX Academy
Resident: Sheree Parker

Hometown: Stockton, California
of Years Teaching: 6
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 4

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I love how everyone across the entire organization has one goal in mind, college for certain! Each and every day we all put everything into our jobs to ensure we make this a reality.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: What I appreciate most about ATR is the professional development that both resident and mentor get throughout the year.

Raul Gonzalez

1st Grade, Aspire Titan Academy
Resident: Courtney Norton

Hometown: Pomona, California
of Years Teaching: 5
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 3

Why I Teach at Aspire: There is nothing better than teaching at a school where everyone shares the same goal. We are all working toward helping our students reach college so that they too can be successful in their own lives. The collaboration I've experienced while at Aspire is what keeps me motivated to keep my goals as an educator alive! I never feel alone.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: For the past 5 years I've worked towards becoming a great teacher for my students. To be able to transfer everything that I've learned over the years is great! Having my resident with me to observe, question, and participate will eventually lead to another great teacher in our classrooms leading students towards success.



Sandy Hsu

10th Grade Education Specialist, Aspire Pacific Academy
Resident: Bertha Cazares

Hometown: Montville, New Jersey
of Years Teaching: 4
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 4

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I am surrounded by extremely supportive team members who share the same mission and uphold the same values as I do about providing all students with an equal opportunity to access rigorous academic content to prepare them for college. I also love working with the students and seeing their progress from the beginning to the end of the year. It's very fulfilling and important work and I'm excited to continue this work with high school students at Pacific.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that ATR offers this unique and valuable growth and learning opportunity for both mentors and teacher residents. Not only will both the teacher and resident benefit from this experience, but the most positive impact will be on the students because of the increased amount of individualized attention and support they will be receiving. I am really excited to be working with Bertha this upcoming school year! From the first time I met her, I knew she would be a team player and a great person to work with. I know that we will learn a lot together throughout this process.



Sarah Portnov

3rd Grade, Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School
Resident: Bianka Mariscal

Hometown: Long Beach, California
of Years Teaching: 7
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 5

Why I Teach at Aspire: My students, families, and colleagues. I love the collaboration among my grade level team as well as cross grade levels and subject areas throughout my school and Aspire.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: Being able to really reflect on my teaching practice as I explain all the details of what I do daily to my resident. I get to think about why I do things a certain way and think about ways to improve my practice. There is always room for professional growth at Aspire and ATR is one great way for me to develop professionally!



Veronica Romero

4th/5th Grade, Aspire Summit Charter Academy
Resident: Samantha Hill

Hometown: Waterford, California
of Years Teaching: 10
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 5

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because after attending a private school all my life, I really desired to know what public school education was like. After college, I landed a teaching job for the elementary site at my college and it was a great experience. I realized, however, that my experience was very different from the teaching experience of most of my teacher friends who taught at a public school. Moving from Los Angeles after getting married allowed me to explore my options working at a public school. When I found Aspire, I knew that students that we were serving were the population I was meant to work with. I know in my heart that this is where I belong, helping the people that make up the demographics of the area in which I work. I know that we are making a difference in our efforts to send every one of our students to college.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: Aspire is ahead of their time in taking the time to properly train teachers for the "real-life" experience of being an Aspire teacher. Where else would you get a whole year of training that would prepare you for a position with that company for the following year? I've heard of some programs that last a month or maybe several months, but none that pairs you up with highly qualified teachers to learn the ever-changing art of teaching. From the teacher perspective, I appreciate that I have another teacher in the classroom to collaborate with and discuss ideas. Most especially, I love the opportunity that it allows for reflection on my own practice. Like most teachers, I am always looking to improve my ways in and out of the classroom, so I love that I am being asked questions such as "Why are we doing____ this way?" Sometimes, you realize that you never have thought about why you do it that way and that there is a much better, more efficient way we could be doing that practice in the classroom. I invite the reflection piece and think that it only helps me be better at what I do. If I am making strides in my own teaching practice, then ultimately I am going to be a better educator for my students and I can help them along their academic journey towards college.