

Alicia Arenas

Kindergarten, Aspire Triumph Technology Academy
Resident: Janelle Jovellanos

Hometown: El Monte, California

of Years Teaching: 11

of Years Teaching at Aspire: 6

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach for Aspire because I believe in Aspire's mission. I work with an amazing group of teachers who are dedicated and put students first.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that mentors and residents are able to learn from each other and work together to support our students.



Ami Hanaoka

2nd Grade, Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy
Resident: Derek Smith

Hometown: Denver, Colorado

of Years Teaching: 11

of Years Teaching at Aspire: 6

Why I Teach at Aspire: I like that I am able to meet my students' needs in all subjects at a level that is differentiated for everyone. It is teaching 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. 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 much more individualized and differentiated attention as a result. My students' academic growth has really been apparent in our reading, math, and writing data!



Brandy Frakes

2nd/3rd Grade, Aspire University Charter School
Resident: Natalie Gomez

Hometown: Mariposa, California

of Years Teaching: 13

of Years Teaching at Aspire: 5

Why I Teach at Aspire: I am a better teacher because of Aspire. I did not come to Aspire as a new teacher, and I feel as if I have grown more in my time here than all of the years before because of the professional development, collaboration, like-minded desire by all to do what's best for kids, and my sincere belief in a quality education for every child.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that Aspire wants to put quality educators into classrooms. I remember my first two years wanting to do my best, hoping I was, and feeling completely overwhelmed. I know that our residents will come out in a much better place and provide a better education for our students because of the training they have received. Our residency program is an investment in people – teachers and students. I appreciate getting to be part of that process.



Chana Karlin-Neumann

1st Grade, Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School
Resident: Jamie Cole

Hometown: Palo Alto, California

of Years Teaching: 8

of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: I love the positive and collaborative culture at Aspire. We work with incredible students, families, and staff!

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow together.



Christin Hwang

5th Grade, Aspire Inskeep Academy
Resident: Keara Lipscomb

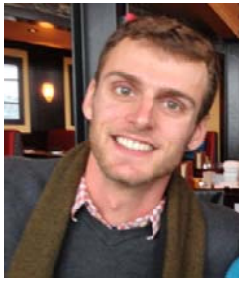
Hometown: Los Angeles, California

of Years Teaching: 4

of Years Teaching at Aspire: 3

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because it is a progressive organization always striving to improve in order to better serve the students and communities. The people at Aspire are extremely dedicated individuals who work towards the common goal of preparing students for success to and through college.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate the partnership formed between the resident and mentor through constant collaboration and reflection, allowing both parties involved to improve their practice. Most importantly, having two teachers in the classroom is tremendously powerful for the students.



Craig Rawe

Precalculus, Calculus, Economics, Aspire California College Preparatory Academy
Resident: Keara Lipscomb

Hometown: Gastonia, North Carolina
of Years Teaching: 4
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 4

Why I Teach at Aspire: Aspire feels like a family that is all committed to the same goal of serving students in significant ways to meet their needs beyond academic instruction. We work to help students for long-term success in ways that are innovative for education – whether it is integrating content between classes, pouring over data, or changing the way we approach discipline. I appreciate that we do this as a team in a collaborative and supportive way, but at the same time we allow for each teacher to be creative and independent in their practice.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: Having been a teacher that was dropped into a full teaching load with little to no prior student-teaching practice, I very much appreciate the Residency program's gradual release model that is implemented over the whole year. I think that the process develops effective educators by allowing for the first-year struggle to happen in a supportive and thoughtful environment. It helps Residents feel comfortable with the wide array of items to consider during full-time instruction by allowing them to focus on one or two skills at a time.



David Cabrera

3rd Grade, Aspire Inskip Academy
Resident: Rachel De Los Reyes

Hometown: Huntington Park, California
of Years Teaching: 4
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 4

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because it's an organization that is dedicated to its students, families, and staff. The culture of collaboration has allowed me to build friendships across the region. I enjoy working with educators that have the same passion toward the empowerment of our students and communities. Aspire has provided a home filled with families and colleagues that cherish educational growth.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: As an alumnus of the ATR program I've seen firsthand how effective the Residency Program is. I value the opportunity to work alongside a dedicated individual willing to master the art of teaching.



Deanna Price

9th-12th Grade Spanish, Aspire Golden State College Preparatory Academy
Resident: Sandy Rodriguez

Hometown: Los Angeles, California
of Years Teaching: 8
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 5

Why I Teach at Aspire: I love the team I work with and I am with family at Aspire. Teaching is not just a profession, but a calling and I love what I do each day.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I love the ability to help provide more kids with great teachers in front of them every day. I love inspiring someone else along their professional journey and watching the progress and success in their eyes and their students.



Deepti Khare

9th-10th Grade Algebra & Geometry, Aspire East Palo Alto Phoenix Academy
Resident: Shikha Jerath

Hometown: Mountain View, California
of Years Teaching: 5
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 3

Why I Teach at Aspire: Every day I am inspired by the dedication, enthusiasm, and optimism of my coworkers, and the energy and drive of our students. The growth mindset here is phenomenal. I wouldn't teach anywhere else.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I love that ATR places amazing people who have a passion for education in classrooms to make sure they are as ready as they can be for their first year of teaching! The opportunity to collaborate and plan together for the same set of students is amazing! I am excited to get feedback everyday and learn from each other in the moment.



Diana Puccio

Kindergarten, Aspire Vincent Shalvey Academy
Resident: Amy Sept

Hometown: Newport Beach, California
of Years Teaching: 30
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 16

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 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.



Emily Wells

SPED Lead/Education Specialist, Aspire Golden State College Preparatory Academy
Resident: Lautrell Smith

Hometown: Portland, Maine
of Years Teaching: 8
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: I am committed to a career in social justice and serving as an urban educator. Every student deserves a great teacher in the classroom every year.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: As a mentor, I appreciate the opportunity to reflect on my practice with a colleague, residents and fellow mentors. Also, I enjoy co-planning, co-teaching, and developing curriculum units with Lautrell. This program has also brought a community and academic approach to coaching and teaching that has been enriching. ATR is especially rewarding because it offers an opportunity to grow professionally as a pedagogue.



Eva Kellogg

8th & 9th Grade English Language Arts, Aspire Lionel Wilson College Preparatory Academy
Resident: Liz Tyson

Hometown: Brighton, Michigan
of Years Teaching: 5
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 5

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I believe that all young people deserve every opportunity and choice in life. Aspire provides excellent educational opportunities and mentorship for all our students, while constantly striving to become more effective practitioners ourselves. I continue to work at Aspire because it provides me with infinite opportunities to grow as a teacher, leader, and person.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate the opportunity for my own professional growth as well as investment in a future educator. Collaborating with my resident pushes my own instructional practice and helps me develop the coaching and leadership skills I can then use to support other teachers across the organization. Working with a group of highly effective and reflective mentor teachers connects me to a wider web of innovative educators and keeps me energized and dedicated day after day.



Heather Romanolo

Elementary Education Specialist, Aspire Capitol Heights Academy
Resident: Garrett Ramsey

Hometown: Sacramento, California
of Years Teaching: 8
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 5

Why I Teach at Aspire: Having taught in other districts, I know that Aspire is on the cutting edge of education in every aspect. I love our open-door policy, and that teachers actually have a say in the decision making of our organization and how we serve kids. Working for Aspire has also pushed me to work outside my comfort zone; growing my teaching practice and allowing me to take on leadership roles at my school and within the organization.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I love that residents get to start experiencing real-time teaching from day one in a classroom. It gives these soon-to-be teachers a chance to put the textbook and theoretical side of their credential program into practice in a real Aspire classroom from the very start. I also love that residents are placed with a single mentor teacher for the entire school year which allows for a stronger partnership to develop between the resident/mentor and provides the resident with a deeper understanding of student learning and growth because they get to be with these students for an entire school year.



Jai David

9th Grade Integrated Science, 10th Grade Biology, 12th Grade Anatomy, Aspire California College Prep Academy
Resident: Hanna Kurowski

Hometown: Oakland, California
of Years Teaching: 5
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 5

Why I Teach at Aspire: I absolutely LOVE working with my colleagues, the students and families!

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: The opportunity to grow as a leader and gain a new and fresh perspective from residents.



Jennifer Calvillo

Elementary Education Specialist, Aspire APEX Academy
Resident: Alisha Galea

Hometown: Elk Grove, California
of Years Teaching: 4
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 4

Why I Teach at Aspire: I believe in the model of inclusion and serving students who need it most

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that the ATR allows me to teach another adult my craft and allows me to look deeper at my practice.



Joanna Beck

1st Grade, Aspire Rosa Parks Academy
Resident: Felicia Surber

Hometown: Modesto, California
of Years Teaching: 8
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 8

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach for Aspire because I want to change the odds for my students. I love collaborating with my team members who are dedicated problem solvers while we create purposeful and engaging lessons.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate ATR because it allows the resident hands-on classroom experience that will make them become a highly effective teacher. I enjoy how closely I work with my resident to reach our goals.



Johana Zuniga

3rd Grade, Aspire Hanley Elementary #1
Resident: Kristina Eddings

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

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I believe in the mission to catalyze change in underserved and underrepresented areas. Through Aspire we are able to provide an equitable education to those that need it most.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: What I appreciate most about ATR is the support both residents and mentors get.



Katie Spencer

9th-10th Grade Education Specialist, Aspire Ollin University Preparatory Academy
Resident: Ashley Cardenas

Hometown: Salida, Colorado
of Years Teaching: 9
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 3

Why I Teach at Aspire: I love teaching at Aspire because I love working with such driven, hardworking educators who believe in all of their students. I love that all of my students know that they are going to college and that getting to and through college is a focus at all Aspire schools.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: The Aspire Teacher Residency program allows me to have a broader impact in education because I can help someone grow in their practice. I love sharing my classes with another teacher and it helps me to be very mindful and reflective about my own practice, in turn also making me a stronger educator.



Keith Drucker

8th Grade Humanities, Aspire Ollin University Preparatory Academy
Resident: Jesse Deshayes

Hometown: Los Angeles, California
of Years Teaching: 10
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 9

Why I Teach at Aspire: I love the student first approach to teaching.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: ATR helps me to reflect on why I do things that have become automatic over the years, so that I can explain the rationale to my resident.



Kim Bavaro

Kindergarten-1st Grade, Aspire Port City Academy
Resident: Carmen Robinson

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

Why I Teach at Aspire: I choose to teach at Aspire because I believe in our mission statement. I enjoy working with our population of students and knowing that I can make a difference in their lives. I also love the family atmosphere that is at our site and within the organization.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I love having another set of capable hands in the class. I like having another person to collaborate with and she always has great ideas that she brings to the table. So far, having a resident has been a blessing.



Laura Strait

4th Grade, Aspire ERES Academy
Resident: Zoë Henion

Hometown: Sudbury, Massachusetts
of Years Teaching: 7
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 3

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.



Leah Peterson

4th Grade, Aspire Port City Academy
Resident: Ryan Jordan

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

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I truly believe that this is where I belong. We make a difference in the lives of our students and communities every day.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate the collaboration between mentor and resident. Also, knowing that they will soon serve Aspire as teachers makes the program feel more purposeful and fulfilling.



Lourdes Colon

7th Grade English & History, Aspire Langston Hughes Academy
Resident: Nena Weinstein

Hometown: Stockton, California
of Years Teaching: 11
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 6

Why I Teach at Aspire: I believe in the mission of preparing my students for college and their future. It is a place where you grow professionally and a place where you are impacting the future generation. Also, I have the opportunity to work with amazing colleagues who also have the same goal for our students.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: The ATR program allows me to be reflective on a daily basis. It gives me the opportunity to help my resident grow in capacity in all levels of education. It also allows me to be a facilitator/coach on a daily basis which is my goal in the future.



Maria Vizcaino

2nd Grade, Aspire Junior Collegiate Academy
Resident: Gisell Medina

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

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. Our students also benefit greatly with having two teachers in the classroom as they receive more individualized instruction.



Nicole Bellis

1st Grade, Aspire Hanley Elementary School
Resident: Latifa Newbill

Hometown: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
of Years Teaching: 3
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: I love that everyone shares the same vision. I know that when I come to work, everyone is there for one reason: the students.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I love the ATR program. It is a great opportunity for both the teachers and the students. The students have the benefit of having two teachers in the classroom for support which can be highly effective. Also, the residents and mentors are learning together and creating a professional relationship geared toward making students successful.



Rachel Gray-Grimes

3rd Grade, Aspire Junior Collegiate Academy
Resident: Emily Ko

Hometown: Pasadena, California
of Years Teaching: 6
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 6

Why I Teach at Aspire: Aspire's culture of learning and collaboration is inspiring. The organization is constantly looking for ways to improve; and they provide the supports necessary to do this. I love the people I work with every day, and the students and parents are simply fantastic.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I believe the best way to learn something is to do it. The hands on, year-long experience residents receive is priceless. They are given a safe environment to learn and practice, fail and succeed. I would have killed to be in a program like this at the start of my teaching career!



Rose Ortiz

4th-5th Grade, Aspire Vincent Shalvey Academy
Resident: Luz Castillo

Hometown: Lodi, California
of Years Teaching: 11
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 7

Why I Teach at Aspire: I chose to teach at Aspire because I wanted to be at a school who ensured that all students felt capable of improvement and learning, and ensured that academic advancement would occur at each grade level. I love the "hands-on" – "show what you know" approach to education because it supports student's belief in their individual abilities to succeed in school and life...and builds a curiosity and excitement about lifelong learning!

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I value the system of teaching in the classroom "realistic" atmosphere so that learning for my resident is applicable and understandable in a real life context. I also value having a second pair of eyes, ears and hands in the classroom to give more individualized attention to our students in areas of their need. I love the sharing, the partnered learning and the camaraderie we have in getting our students from point A to point Z, while at the same time getting her from new resident teacher to a confident, capable Aspire teacher.



Sam Berg

4th Grade, Aspire Monarch Academy
Resident: Josh Taylor

Hometown: Laurel, Montana
of Years Teaching: 12
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 8

Why I Teach at Aspire: I came to Aspire during a time when scripted reading curriculum was being mandated. Aspire was a place where I could make choices that were based on what was the best for my students. I've stayed because of the relationships I've built with students and their families.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: It's a chance to talk about and reflect on teaching. I enjoy the process and it's making me a better teacher.



Shea Quraishi

3rd Grade, Aspire Hanley Elementary #2
Resident: Jessica Phenis

Hometown: Memphis, Tennessee
of Years Teaching: 3
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: Through my graduate program in California, I had the good fortune of working with a phenomenal teacher mentor at EPACS. I knew quickly, seeing her growth mindset and the honest belief that all Aspire teammates have in their scholars' potential, that Aspire would be an excellent fit for my ongoing learning as a professional. I have nothing but admiration for my team and for my scholars.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that Aspire residents have the chance to try on different techniques and philosophies for fit—while in the process of learning about them all in class—before they step into a classroom for which they are solely responsible. Our scholars have two teachers who care about them and who collaborate every day to give them the education they deserve. I appreciate how much my resident teaches me—how much more intentional it makes me be with my own practice when I'm pushed to think about the “why” behind all that I do. Everyone wins.



Stephanie Sittner

Elementary Education Specialist, Aspire Gateway Academy
Resident: Jose Fernandez

Hometown: Portland, Oregon
of Years Teaching: 4
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I believe that all children can find success here. I also believe in building motivation from a young age to achieve more after high school.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate the collaboration, support, and expertise from working with another talented educator.



Taleen Dersaroian

5th Grade, Aspire Gateway Academy
Resident: Kimberly Sazon

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

Why I Teach at Aspire: I work at Aspire because it is invigorating and refreshing being surrounded by educators who not only push their students to excel, but they also push themselves to become stronger educators. At Aspire, our students are surrounded by wonderful educators who all have the same mission: to motivate students all the way through college and beyond.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate that ATR has the faith and confidence in new educators and seeks to grow them into effective practitioners. ATR allows passionate educators to learn the craft of teaching firsthand, while also learning academic theory, and helping them develop into reflective and purposeful educators.



Tamera Malone

5th-6th Grade Education Specialist, Aspire Hanley Elementary #1
Resident: Erin Walsh

Hometown: Memphis, Tennessee
of Years Teaching: 6
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 2

Why I Teach at Aspire: I teach at Aspire because I believe in the vision that every student is prepared to earn a college degree. My passion is to educate children academically and socially so that they can be productive citizens and ready to succeed when they graduate from high school.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow with my resident. I strongly believe that I am not only developing her, but we are developing each other!



Yesenia Trejo

8th Grade Humanities Lead Teacher, Aspire Langston Hughes Academy
Resident: Brittney Smith

Hometown: Paramount, California
of Years Teaching: 6
of Years Teaching at Aspire: 6

Why I Teach at Aspire: I believe in the mission and I am contributing to the mission by reminding students every day that I am a perfect example of why dreams come true.

What I Appreciate Most About ATR: I enjoy the fact that I have the potential to reach so many more students through my resident. Hopefully I can inspire my resident to motivate and help our students believe when at times, they don't see how great their future can be.