



A.J. Treas

Residency Placement: 5th Grade, Aspire Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Jessica Imrie

Hometown: Livermore, CA
Undergraduate University: CSU Sacramento
Degree Earned: BA in Child Development

My Inspiration to Teach: The kids absolutely inspire me to teach. They are amazing and I love to watch that "light bulb" flash on when they enthusiastically connect their understanding to the content.

Why I Chose Aspire: Initially, I was impressed by Aspire's focus on College for Certain. The Aspire Teacher Residency program further drew me in with the co-teaching approach with a gradual release. Moreover, I liked that I would be able to immediately put into action what I was learning in my classes at University of the Pacific. Also, the incredible amount of collaboration and support of the teachers and residents was very appealing.



Allie Smith

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire Junior Collegiate Academy
Mentor: Maria Vizcaino

Hometown: Encinitas, CA
Undergraduate University: Pepperdine University
Degree Earned: BA in Public Relations

My Inspiration to Teach: I am inspired to teach every day because I want to make an impact in my students' lives. I am most fulfilled and passionate when I am in a classroom. Teaching is what makes me happy and I love the population I am serving at Aspire.

Why I Chose Aspire: I was placed at Aspire when I worked for Playworks and it couldn't have been a better fit. I love the "College for Certain" motto and the fact that everyone affiliated with Aspire wants to make a positive impact. The staff at every school is inspirational and dedicated to the students and their futures. Aspire will bring out the best possible teacher in me!



Amanda Haynam

Residency Placement: 3rd Grade, Aspire Summit Charter Academy
Mentor: Kenny France

Hometown: Turlock, CA
Undergraduate University: CSU Stanislaus
Degree Earned: BA in Liberal Studies, Concentration in English

My Inspiration to Teach: I enjoy working with people, especially children, so I wanted a career that had a relational basis. I want to build relationships with my students that inspire them to dream big and accomplish goals that they never thought they could attain. Teachers plant seeds of aspiration in the minds of their students, and I want to be one of those seed planters.

Why I Chose Aspire: I was drawn to the Aspire Teacher Residency program because of the focus that Aspire has on low SES children and students of color. Working for Aspire means that I am living my personal dream of becoming an urban teacher.



Caitlin Schoenfelder

Residency Placement: 5th Grade, Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy
Mentor: Jenna Ogier

Hometown: La Grande, OR
Undergraduate University: Whitman College
Degree Earned: BA in Politics

My Inspiration to Teach: I believe that education is a common denominator for either helping reproduce or ameliorate social inequalities. While working in other areas of education, I realized that it was the teacher - the one in the classroom working with students every day - who could most effectively affect change (or not). I want to be that teacher.

Why I Chose Aspire: I was drawn to the Aspire Teacher Residency because I wanted experience with high-quality instruction serving inner-city youth. I wanted to learn my craft from some of the best - those teachers who have made Aspire stand out as one of the highest-achieving school systems serving socio-economically disadvantaged students.



Charla Kuykendall

Residency Placement: 3rd Grade, Aspire Vincent Shalvey Academy
Mentor: Dawn Drake

Hometown: Lodi, CA
Undergraduate University: UC Davis
Degree Earned: BA in International Relations

My Inspiration to Teach: Seeing young minds make connections and be excited about learning is addicting. The more you see it happen, the more you want to experience it again and again!

Why I Chose Aspire: Aspire is amazing! All three of my children attend Aspire schools and I have witnessed their success, along with that of their classmates. I am so impressed with all staff members, and their dedication to the college for certain promise. I am thrilled to be a part of Aspire!



Christine Whan

Residency Placement: 5th Grade English, Aspire Junior Collegiate Academy
Mentor: Ben Feinberg

Hometown: Columbus, OH
Undergraduate University: Case Western Reserve University
Degree Earned: BA in Psychology and East Asian Religion

My Inspiration to Teach: The hope and expectation is that I can make a difference in my students' lives. When this happens, I believe families change, and ultimately this changes the fabric of the culture and community.

Why I Chose Aspire: What drew me to Aspire was their embrace of innovative methods to achieve successful results for our students. This includes Aspire's adoption of the residency model, which speaks to the organization's commitment to high-quality teacher preparation. Teachers, administrators, office and support staff alike work hard to create a culture of high expectations for students, while simultaneously creating a family-like atmosphere. I am very excited to be part of an organization devoted to changing student outcomes in predominately low-income communities across California!



Jacob Weiler

Residency Placement: 9/10th Grade English & 10th Grade Drama, Aspire Vanguard College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Gary Rohwer

Hometown: Aurora, IL
Undergraduate University: University of Notre Dame
Degree Earned: BA in Anthropology

My Inspiration to Teach: I'm inspired by my students: their potential, their humor, their eagerness and their reticence, their hurts and their hopes. I'm inspired by the belief that my students will make this world a better place.

Why I Chose Aspire: I was drawn to Aspire's Teacher Residency Program because it envisions teaching as a sophisticated art form that is best learned through mentorship and thoughtfully designed practice, in addition to traditional course of study. Teaching is an incredibly important job; my students deserve an expert teacher. It'll take years for me to become an expert, but I can't help feeling like the Aspire Teacher Residency Program is giving me a running start.



Jessica Lobl

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Aspire ERES Academy
Mentor: Claire Hawley

Hometown: Rochester, MN
Undergraduate University: Occidental College
Degree Earned: BA in American Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: I am inspired to teach by the opportunity to support and positively impact future generations by preparing them for whatever life may throw their way.

Why I Chose Aspire: The teacher residency program allows me to learn and grow while working in an incredibly supportive and encouraging environment. Every individual with whom I have come into contact at Aspire is positive, motivated and holds high expectations for themselves and the students. I love that everyone is striving toward the same goal of supporting and challenging students to reach far beyond what society expects of them.



Katie Kelly-Hankin

Residency Placement: 9-12th Grade Science, Aspire California College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Tatiana Lim-Breitbart

Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA
Undergraduate University: Brandeis University
Degree Earned: BA in Environment, Community and Development

My Inspiration to Teach: I began working in education because I believe the struggle for social, racial and economic justice is tied up in the struggle for educational equity in our country. I teach because I believe that every student is entitled to a high quality, rigorous education, allowing them to choose their own path through college and into a fulfilling life's work. And most of all, I teach because every day I have the privilege of coming to work and being energized and inspired by my brilliant, sharp-minded and inexhaustibly impressive students.

Why I Chose Aspire: I was attracted to the Aspire Residency because it uses a medical residency model in its approach to teacher education - combining intensive pedagogical coursework with full-time apprenticeship under a mentor who is a master of their craft.



Katrina Pirnack

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Aspire Antonio Maria Lugo Academy
Mentor: Kelly Lofgren

Hometown: Denver, CO
Undergraduate University: Pomona College
Degree Earned: BA in Spanish Language

My Inspiration to Teach: To me, teaching provides the unique opportunity to directly touch the lives of many children while also working to lessen the achievement gap in our society. With outstanding and equitable teaching, it is possible to forge an equitable society.

Why I Chose Aspire: Aspire embodies what education should be: high expectations for all, quality education for all, and equitable education for all. I was particularly drawn to Aspire's focus in urban, high-poverty areas, which brings quality education to populations that otherwise may not have access to such an education in our society. I also love how Aspire's staff shares a common goal of excellence and works together as a team to achieve just that.



Kaycee Huertas-Makalintal

Residency Placement: 1st Grade, Aspire Vincent Shalvey Academy
Mentor: Diana Puccio

Hometown: Manila, Philippines
Undergraduate University: University of the Philippines, Manila
Degree Earned: BA in Behavioral Sciences

My Inspiration to Teach: I believe in our children. I believe that a brighter future lies in their hands. Sadly, it is now a reality that not every child has access to a quality education. The idea of somehow alleviating this problem by being a well-qualified educator ultimately motivates me to pursue teaching. The thought of teaching the future leaders and citizens of this world really excites me.

Why I Chose Aspire: Aspire Public Schools as an organization has a contagious passion and commitment to providing an outstanding education to their students. Moreover, I am greatly impressed with their dedication to train and educate teachers through the Residency Program. This just goes to show how serious they are in providing only the best for their students and acknowledging the importance of teachers. At Aspire, everybody wins. The teachers get the education and training to equip them with necessary skills and knowledge, the families are supported, and most importantly, the students are developed to become college-ready individuals. Great!



Loreen Lee

Residency Placement: 4th Grade, Aspire Huntington Park Charter School
Mentor: Tommy McGrail

Hometown: Temple City, CA
Undergraduate University: Sarah Lawrence College
Degree Earned: BA in Liberal Studies, Concentrations in Visual Arts and French Language

My Inspiration to Teach: I am inspired to teach by my students, my colleagues, and my family. When I see kids work hard and be academically successful, I want to be there to be a part of their learning process. Also, the really awesome teachers at my school serve as great role models and sources of inspiration. Lastly, the opportunity to build strong relationships with parents and families drives me to teach.

Why I Chose Aspire: I chose to teach with Aspire Public Schools because the organization is committed to creating positive change in low-income communities by providing rigorous, quality instruction and preparing students for college. Outside of the academics, I really like how Aspire schools operate like a family - we involve parents in the student's learning process, teachers and staff collaborate with one another, and there's a shared culture of responsibility for our student's success. Lastly, I love that the staff is ready and willing to find out what works, what doesn't work, and figure out how to better our teaching and educational practices.



Nicholas White

Residency Placement: 4th Grade, Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy
Mentor: Nicole Capriccio

Hometown: San Antonio, TX
Undergraduate University: San Francisco State University
Degree Earned: BA in Liberal Studies, Concentration in Ethnic Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: Giving youth the tools and knowledge to become the ultimate determiner of their success in life is what inspires me to teach.

Why I Chose Aspire: Prior to learning about Aspire Public Schools, my goal as a prospective educator was to work in the schools and neighborhoods that have been written off and left behind. When I learned that Aspire's mission is to target these neighborhoods, in order to open high-quality, public charter schools, I knew this was the school system for me.



Rachel Niederman

Residency Placement: 11/12th Grade English, Aspire California College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Karin Barratt

Hometown: Palo Alto, CA
Undergraduate University: Stanford University
Degree Earned: BA in Human Biology, Children in Society

My Inspiration to Teach: The promise of ensuring every young person has the opportunity to find her voice and fulfill her dream inspires me to teach. Within this context, the opportunity to train young people to value literature, to communicate their feelings and ideas effectively, and to contribute more meaningfully to the world around them compels me to teach English.

Why I Chose Aspire: I was drawn to Aspire because of its organization-wide focus on helping under resourced students be prepared for college. I'm impressed by Aspire's attention to teacher development, culture, self-assessment, and improvement. I love the Residency program so far, and I couldn't think of a better way to launch my teaching career.



Rebecca Lee

Residency Placement: 2nd Grade Aspire Berkley Maynard Academy
Mentor: Ami Hanaoka

Hometown: Pleasant Hill, CA
Undergraduate University: UC San Diego
Degree Earned: BA in Anthropology, Minor in Public Service - Education Studies

My Inspiration to Teach: The most inspiring thing about teaching is seeing the direct results from all the hard work that I put in - seeing the students start to understand the material, engage in class, and become excited about what I'm teaching them.

Why I Chose Aspire: While there are many great aspects about working for Aspire, what stands out to me the most is all the support I receive from my mentor, the other teachers and staff at BMA, the other residents, and the administration both at BMA and the Aspire Home Office. All of these wonderful people really put in a great effort and do everything in their control to set each other up for success. The quality of the people is really what makes Aspire extraordinary - they are thoughtful, caring, efficient, extremely effective at what they do, and make for great models to emulate and learn from.



Valerie Sedillo

Residency Placement: Kindergarten, Aspire Alexander Twilight College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Tawna Turner

Hometown: Phoenix, AZ
Undergraduate University: UC Irvine
Degree Earned: BA in Criminology, Law & Society

My Inspiration to Teach: What inspires me to teach is the desire to connect with students; help them learn, grow and harvest a love for learning, just like the teachers I had as a student.

Why I Chose Aspire: The Aspire Teacher Residency is an amazing program that not only matches me with a master teacher but allows me to be in the classroom learning from day 1. Offering a credential and a Masters, the residency program shows a real drive for educating and preparing teachers.



Yael Villar

Residency Placement: Algebra I and II, Aspire California College Preparatory Academy
Mentor: Sarah Salazar

Hometown: Hayward, CA
Undergraduate University: UC Berkeley
Degree Earned: BA in Environmental Economics and Policy, Minor in Math and Science Education

My Inspiration to Teach: I love math and I love working with youth. Teaching allows me to do both.

Why I Chose Aspire: I love the supportive, family-like environment at Aspire. It is something that I think will be key as I develop into the best teacher I can be.