

Treehouse Preschool & Kindergarten



**Staff Profiles
2011-2012**

**4000 Redwood Rd
Oakland, CA 94619
(510)531-0320**

I Believe in Children

I believe in children – little ones, big ones,
chubby and thin ones.

There is faith in their eyes, love in their touch,
hope in their attitude

I thrill with them at life's joys,
run with them through tall grasses,
bow with them in worship,
and hold them close in tragedy.

I believe in children – the fragile dream of yesterday,
life's radiant reality today,
and the vibrant stuff of tomorrow

Yes I believe in children, for wherever I go,
to the mountain village,
industrial center or open country,
I find yesterday's children who were nurtured
In the things of Christ at work
In the building of the kingdom of God.

Author unknown

Treehouse Board

It is a privilege for me to serve as the Chairperson of the Treehouse Board. The excellence of our program in large part is due to the outstanding leadership of our Director, Jan Nienu, and the ability and dedication of our teachers and staff.

I have been attending First Covenant Church since the 1970's. I met my wife and was married in this church and previously served on the Treehouse Board for many years. Both of my children, Jeff and Emily, attended Treehouse starting from preschool all the way through kindergarten. Treehouse helped build a solid foundation for my children's learning habits and social skills.

This Board is committed to supporting our staff and maintaining the ongoing excellence of our program. We are committed to providing your child with a loving Christian atmosphere which is both nurturing and challenging.

Sincerely,

Kurt Lindquist
Board Chair

Other Treehouse Board Members:

Nancy Lewis, Pastor of Congregational Care

Jan Nienu, Treehouse Director

Catherine Luce, Member-at-large

David Bleckley, Facilities

Helen Tang, Member-at-large

Treehouse Director



Jan E. Nienu

It is a privilege for me to be your Director. I look forward to working with you and your family. We have selected a wonderful staff to teach your precious little ones. They are loving, caring, and love the Lord. I want you to know that your children are in good hands and it is my prayer that your stay at Treehouse will be a pleasant experience for your family.

I have been an Early Childhood Educator for many years. I started teaching in Sunday School and because I enjoyed it so much, I started working as a preschool teacher's aide on a part-time basis while attending college. I later went on to become a preschool teacher and then a director. I have enjoyed working with the children all these years. I am thankful to the Lord for calling me to minister to the children in their formative years and help establish a positive Christian foundation in their lives.

I have my Bachelor's degree from Patten University in Oakland, a Master's from Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, and a Doctorate of Education in Organization and Leadership from the University of San Francisco. I have my Program Director's credential from the State of California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. In addition, I have served as a CORPS advisor for Alameda County of Education for 5 years. I serve as an adjunct faculty at Patten University and Golden Gate Seminary and I am also a professional growth advisor to the early childhood educators in Alameda County.

My husband Vic and I are blessed with two lovely boys. They are both currently in college.

I enjoy cooking and traveling to various countries and learning about their cultures.

Please feel free to stop by my office or give me a call if you have any questions or concerns.

Office Administrator



Denise Bannister

I am excited to begin my first full year here at Treehouse. I truly enjoyed meeting everyone for the 2nd semester last year.

After receiving my BA in Business Administration, I worked for International Window and Round Table Pizza before staying home to raise our family. Twenty-three years and four children later I'm excited to be back in the work force.

I live in Castro Valley with my husband of 26 years, Kimo, and our three younger children, Marissa, Phillip and Rachel. Our oldest, Ashley, lives close by in Dublin. I enjoy reading, crocheting and spending time with my family.

I am here to assist and support you in any way I can. Please feel free to call and let me know how I can best support you and make your stay at Treehouse an enjoyable one.

The staff is wonderful, the children are a delight and I am blessed to be here in this wonderful environment.

From the Treehouse Teachers

*Each child
who spends time
in my classroom
is a gift to me
from his or her parents.
It is my responsibility
to cherish each gift.*

From the Treehouse Teaching Staff
Adapted from Marilyn Grondel, Utah Teacher of the Year

Little Angels Head Teacher



Jill Gilmete

I live in San Leandro with my husband Jack. I was born and raised in Alameda and still have family and friends there.

I truly enjoy serving as the head teacher in the Little Angel's Class. I am blessed to have the privilege to be your first stop at Treehouse. I am always fascinated to watch the children grow in all areas right in front of my eyes. The little ones start out in my class pointing at things with their baby talk and by the end of the school year they are speaking in full sentences.

We will have an amazing year together with lots of hands on fun filled activities. We will paint, draw, work on our puzzles, read lots of books, listen and dance to music, learn about Jesus and also learn many new songs together. It is always fun to meet new families and welcome siblings of former students.

I am so excited and looking forward to working with your precious little ones. Please feel free to come and talk to me about any concerns you may have. We will have a great year together.

Little Angels Teacher



Loretta Nelson

I am very excited about the new school year. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you as well as your children. My goal is to make sure your child enjoys learning in a safe and loving environment. Watching children learn, explore and grow is what I enjoy best about teaching.

God has given me a heart for the young people and I have been teaching for the past twenty years. I have gone to school to expand upon what God has given me. I have many units of Early Childhood classes. I have always felt that formal training is necessary to keep what comes naturally up to date. Currently, I am working towards obtaining my Bachelor's degree.

I am looking forward to a wonderful year together with your family.

Preschool Head Teacher



Beverly Martin

I count it an honor and a privilege to serve you and your children. I was born and raised in San Francisco and I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior at an early age. I've been married for 25 years to Stan Martin, who is the Pastor of Holy Ground Christian Center. We have two beautiful children, Crystal (21 years) and Jordan (17 years), both of whom are the apple of my eye under God's direction.

I worked at Bank of America for 19 years and left in 1999 to answer the call to work with children. I've never regretted it for a moment. It's such a blessing to be able to do what you love to do and my love is to teach children. Shortly after leaving Bank of America, I returned to college to take Early Childhood Development courses. After receiving my teaching certificate, I started teaching preschool and discovered a world full of God's wonderful children and families, families I could serve in the education of their children with the love of Jesus Christ. I truly believe every child has a God given talent/gift that God intended them to use for His Glory.

I am a very easy going person. I love spending time praise dancing, listening to Gospel music, and being with my family. To me, the family structure (loving, teaching, nurturing, trusting, supporting, worshipping, etc.) is so important for creating a healthy, balanced family.

Preschool Teacher



Rhonda Jimenez

I am Rhonda Jimenez and I'm one of the preschool teachers. Currently, I am studying Early Childhood Education at Los Positas College.

My husband Rich and I have been married for 18 years and we have two teenagers that are the light of our lives.

Anthony, 16, is now driving. He is a junior in high school and is on the varsity baseball team at school. He has such a passion for baseball and some day hopes to make it to the pros.

Danielle is 14 and is a freshman in high school. She loves animals, listening to music, texting her friends and playing softball. This year she will either play for the school or experience her third year on a girl's city softball team.

I have been a Christian all my life and I love serving the Lord. My husband and I have taught in kid's church with grade school children and I've been in the nursery, watching over the little ones.

This has been one of my favorite scriptures and it has helped me through my seasons in life.

Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you says the Lord. They are plans to give you a futures and a hope."

I feel that my future here at Treehouse is to serve you in any way that I can. I have enjoyed hearing your children's voices as they sing, laugh and learn. I am looking forward to meeting those families who are new to our class.

Please let me know if I can assist you in any way.

Preschool Teacher



Kristina Olsen

This will be my third year here at Treehouse Preschool. I am so excited to have found enjoyment and my passion here. I graduated from San Leandro High School in 2005. I am working toward my Bachelors Degree in Early Childhood Education at Vanguard University.

Besides working with children, I love creative writing, having cheesy movie marathons with my friends, and hanging out with my nieces and nephews.

I grew up in the Bay Area and have attended First Covenant Church my whole life. Since childhood, I have been absolutely in love with Jesus. My strong family background in this church has been a deep root that has helped me to grow my own tree of faith. I believe that family and faith often go hand in hand, and it's so apparent that Treehouse also values family and faith. It's a pleasure to work in an environment that shares my beliefs.

I love working here at Treehouse and it's because of this school that I believe I have found who is God is calling me to minister to. I look forward to this year and working with your children!

Preschool Teacher



Rebecca Diamond

It is a joy to work with young children with curious minds, striving to explore the world and learn.

I will soon complete my studies at Chabot College in early childhood development. I love the preschool environment and have had a deep connection with it throughout my life. My mother is a Kindergarten teacher, and I watched her make lesson plans each week growing up. I also attended Gan Avraham preschool as a child where I enjoyed learning and exploring. As a young adult I worked as a preschool teacher at Pilgrim Preschool.

I grew up attending First Covenant Church. I have fond memories of being a junior day camp counselor and actively participating in junior and high school activities at the church.

I enjoy spending time with my friends, going to festivals and shopping at the Downtown San Leandro Farmer's Market. My interests include cooking, baking and gardening.

I look forward to another wonderful year with your children.

Pre-Kindergarten Head Teacher



Maegan Dedrick

After a year's absence to be home with my now one-year-old son, I am so excited and thankful to be back at Treehouse! This will be my 5th year here and I cannot wait to see familiar faces and meet new friends.

My educational adventures have resulted in a Bachelor's degree in Human Development with a focus in Early Childhood, and a minor in Speech Pathology and Audiology. I also have my Multiple Subject Teaching Credential (K-8) from San Francisco State University. I have taught preschool, kindergarten, and second grade in both public and private schools – having loved all of it! It is such a blessing to love my job and I am truly grateful to be able to have a few moments of the day with your little ones to help them learn and grow. Thank you for sharing them with us!

I live in Oakland with my husband of 12 years, Daniel, and our beautiful one-year-old son, Logan. In our “spare time” we enjoy all kinds of outdoor adventures, traveling, and spending time with friends and family.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions, concerns, or ideas you may have. I look forward to working with this fantastic team of teachers and to partnering with families to make this the most amazing year yet!

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher



Keo Kong

My name is Keo Kong. I am very excited that God has given me this opportunity to come back and join the staff of Treehouse Preschool. This is going to be my fourth year here and I am looking forward to getting to know new friends. I enjoy working with children and am amazed to see how they grow and learn many new things. I have a Bachelor's degree from San Francisco State University in Child Development with a concentration in Young Child and Family.

I am happily married to my wonderful husband and have two amazing children. We are currently attending New Hope Covenant Church. For fun, I enjoy doing arts and crafts, listening to music and also love going to the movies. Most importantly, I love spending time with my children, watching them grow and explore new things.

I am looking forward to an exciting year working with the children and teachers at Treehouse.

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher



Melinda McClure

I have enjoyed working at Treehouse since 1992. God has called me to work here and I love it – especially teaching Bible and sharing praise songs with the children. My background is in art. I attended art schools in San Francisco and in New York City. I received my early childhood units at Diablo Valley College. My work with children has always enhanced my art.

I am a member of Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church. I have been on mission trips to China, Brazil, Mexico, Nagaland and India. I enjoy using my artistic talents to communicate across cultural barriers. I also enjoy painting murals and designing greeting cards. I pray that all my art would bring glory to the Lord and be a blessing to others.

I'm joyfully looking forward to a great new school year.

P.S. Melinda is a wonderful artist. She uses her talent to create murals and personal portraits. If you are interested in having a mural painted in your child's bedroom or having a sketch done, please see Melinda.

Pre-Kindergarten Teacher



Lorena Torres

My name is Lorena Torres and I will be one of the teacher assistants in the Pre- Kindergarten Class. I worked at Treehouse for many years and I am so excited to be back. Treehouse is a wonderful place to serve and I have missed being here.

I have served as the family coordinator for Manzanita SEED for many years taking care of the families there. I have also worked as a nanny to former Treehouse families. I have my early childhood units from Merritt College in Oakland.

My husband and I have five children and two grandchildren. We have been married for 20 years. I am so excited for the coming year and look forward to an exciting year here at Treehouse.

May God bless your family.

Pre-Kindergarten Afternoon Teacher



Susan Green

As a gifted primary school teacher my mother taught me valuable skills on becoming a teacher myself. I grew up listening to many wonderful stories and poems, so I love to share these. I enjoy introducing children to arts and crafts and teaching songs of the Lord's great love for us!

I have worked in Christian and public schools and I love working in a Christian environment. Treehouse is a wonderful place to be. After receiving my AA degree at Contra Costa College, I went on to UC Berkeley. There I became extremely interested in child psychology. Later I opened my own state licensed daycare and ran it for many years.

When my own children were college bound, I went back to college. I earned my first early childhood teaching permit. Later, while working for Marin Early Head Start, I went back to college again and completed the professional growth units to be awarded my second permit.

I must say that my proudest accomplishment is raising my 2 grown children, through God's grace, as a single parent. My son works successfully for a large company here in Oakland. My daughter is a doctor in rehab medicine. She and her husband live in Chicago, Illinois and are the parents of my wonderful grandchildren, Carly, 4^{1/2} and Caden James, 2^{1/2}. My biggest joy (other than teaching at Treehouse) is flying out to see them!

In my spare time I like to do outings with friends, attending small group Bible study here at First Covenant, and walking my 2 great dogs. I am looking forward to our new school year and getting to know your children and your family!

Kindergarten and K-Prep Head Teacher



Blenda Yung

I have been the head teacher for the Kindergarten and K-Prep classes for 12 years at Treehouse. While receiving my bachelor's degree from Bethany College I taught preschool for two years at their Early Childhood Development Center. After finishing my Teaching Credential at Patten College I spent 6 ½ years at Jack-in-the-Box Preschool in Richmond, teaching Preschool, Kindergarten and K-Prep. I also have my Program Director's Permit from the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

As for my personal life I've been married for 17 years. My husband, Jeff, and I have been blessed with two beautiful girls. We both enjoy spending precious time with our girls.

As always, I look forward to having a great year with the students and parents in the Kindergarten class. Please do not hesitate to see me for any concerns regarding your child.

Blessings to your family.

Kindergarten and K-Prep Teacher



Carmen Bethke

My name is Carmen Bethke and I will be working in the Kindergarten Class. I have my Bachelor's degree from Patten University and my certificate from Merritt College in the Early Childhood Education field. I also attended Saturday workshops offered by Every Child Counts – First 5 Alameda County.

As a member of Christian Cathedral Church for 30 years I have had the privilege of serving in the children's nursery (ages 1 - 5) for about 20 years. I also worked as a nanny for 7 years. I enjoy working with children and their parents.

As for my personal life, I've been married for 20 years and my husband, Norris and I have had the enjoyment of traveling to many wonderful countries on the benefits he receives working for United Airlines. Also in my life I have a beautiful daughter, son-in-law and two wonderful grandsons.

I look forward to having a great year with the children and families in the Kindergarten Class. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your child's future. God Bless you,

100 Years from Now

One hundred years from now

It will not matter

What my bank account was

The type of house I lived in

Or the kind of car I drove

But the world maybe different

Because, I was important in the life of a child.