

Erica Baroudi

Special Education Case Manager, 4th-8th Grades



Erica Baroudi is a Special Education Case Manager for grades 4th-8th at UDCS and has been at UDCS for 11 years. Baroudi went to Holy Family University, where she earned a BA degree, Magna Cum Laude, and a Masters of Education. (Certified, PA Instructional I & II Elementary K-6, Special Education PK-12, Autism Endorsement PK-12). Years ago, Baroudi performed in “Carmina Burana” with her husband at the Kimmel Center. “I love working at UDCS because I am so blessed to be part of the original UDCS staff and be there to see our scholars grow throughout the years! I truly love my UDCS family and community!”

Life Lesson Quote, “The world needs a sense of worth, and it will achieve it only by its people feeling that they are worthwhile.” - Mr. Rogers

Linda Carlson

Special Education Learning Support Teacher, 3rd-6th Grades



Linda Carlson is a 3rd - 6th Grade Special Education Learning Support Teacher at UDCS and has been at UDCS for 2 years. Carlson went to Temple University to earn her Bachelors in Elementary and Special Education (certified, Elementary & Special Education). Carlson grew up in Ivyland, PA and through her travels, she has been on the television show, The Price Is Right twice! “I love working at UDCS because I love our scholars. They are so kind and sweet. I want to see them achieve great things.”

Life Lesson Quote, “Never mistake kindness for weakness.”

Louis D'Alonzo

Life Skills Special Education Teacher, 6th - 8th Grade



Louis D'Alonzo is a 6th - 8th Grade Life Skills Special Education Teacher at UDCS and has been at UDCS for 5 years. D'Alonzo holds a Bachelor of Science in Education of Exceptional Children from Penn State University and a Master of Arts in Education from Gratz College (certified, PA Education of Exceptional Children). D'Alonzo is not just a teacher at UDCS, but he is a mentor and role model to the scholars and the staff members. Growing up in Southwest Philadelphia, D'Alonzo grew a passion for sports, which led him to coach high school football for 35 years. "I love working at UDCS because I never feel like I am alone on an island."

Life Lesson Quote, "You can't always be happy but you can always be positive."

Dana Hirdt

Special Education Case Manager, Kindergarten - 5th Grade



Dana Hirdt is a Special Education Case Manager for grades K-5th at UDCS and has been at UDCS for 11 years. Hirdt graduated from SUNY Stony Brook with a BA in Psychology/Child and Family Studies. Hirdt then received her Master's degree in Early Childhood Special Education from Bank Street College of Education (Certified in Special Education N-12 in PA and NY). Growing up in Brooklyn, NY, Hirdt has been a vegetarian since she was 16 years old and even though she loves pizza, she is now a vegan and doesn't eat pizza anymore. In her free time, Hirdt loves binge watching television shows with her husband and is currently trying to write her very own series. "I love working at UDCS because I love watching our students grow academically, emotionally, and socially. I also love working at UDCS because we're a family - we laugh and cry together, support one another, and learn and grow together. We would do anything for our students and families and our love and support doesn't stop at the classroom doors."

Life Lesson Quote, "I do not exist to impress the world. I exist to live my life in a way that will make me happy. " — Richard Bach, Illusions: The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah

Julie Friedman

English Language Development Teacher



Julie Friedman is an English Language Development Teacher at UDCS and has been part of the Universal Family of Schools for 2 years. Friedman’s position is to work with English Language Learners in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Friedman went to Temple University and earned a Bachelor’s in Elementary & Special Education and a Masters of Science in Special Education, she continued to La Salle University, to obtain her ESOL Program Specialist Certificate. Friedman grew up in Huntingdon Valley, PA, loves dogs, and plays pickleball. “I love working at UDCS, because of the welcoming and helpful atmosphere brought on by all of the staff at UDCS. UDCS is such a wonderful place to work. In addition, the students are eager to learn and are very determined!”

Life Lesson Quote, “Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless.”

Melissa Morrison

Replacement Instructional Classroom Assistant, 6th - 8th Grade



Melissa Morrison is a 6th - 8th Grade Replacement Instructional Classroom Assistant at UDCS. Morrison has been at UDCS for 3 years and went to Holy Family University, graduating with a BA in Psychology. Morrison grew up in Port Richmond, PA, and was coincidentally born on her mothers birthday (3 days before Christmas). “I love working at UDCS because it feels like a family, everyone is willing to assist your needs, and I feel very appreciated by the staff.”

Life Lesson Quote, “Don't live life with any regrets or heartaches, Do what truly makes you happy in any given moment.”

Mary Stickney

Learning Support Teacher, 1st - 4th Grade



Mary Stickney is a 1st - 4th Grade Learning Support Teacher at UDCS and has been at UDCS for 3 years. Stickney makes sure her scholars reach their ELA and Math goals during the school year. Stickney holds a Bachelor's of Science in Dance and a Masters of Science in Elementary Education from Drexel University (certified, PA Elementary Education PreK-4th, Special Education PreK-8). Before finding a home in Philadelphia, Stickney bounced around from New York, North Carolina, and Massachusetts. As a child, Stickney played the violin and became first chair at her school, she is now the Assistant Director for the Freshman Dance Ensemble at Drexel University. "I love working at UDCS because of the loving community!"

**Life Lesson Quote, "Let's rejoice in the little light we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all shadows away."
- Henri Nouwen**

William Stenger

Replacement Instruction Teacher, 3rd - 5th Grade



William Stenger is a 3rd - 5th Grade Replacement Instruction Teacher at UDCS and has been at UDCS for 4 years. After moving around a lot as a child, Stenger moved from Fort Worth, TX to Philadelphia, PA at the age 14 and has been here ever since. Stenger is a big fan of cheesesteaks and TastyKakes.

Stenger went to Temple University and has a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and Special Education (PK-4 Certified, Special Education Certified, 7th-9th Grade Science Certified). In

Stenger's spare time, he loves to hop on his motorcycle and take a long distance ride down the road. "I love working at UDCS because I love working with the students, their families, and fellow teachers."

Life Lesson Quote, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi

Jacqueline Vaughan

Special Education Learning Support Teacher, 7th - 8th Grade



Jacqueline Vaughan is an 7th - 8th Grade Special Education Learning Support Teacher at UDCS and has been at UDCS for 4 years. Vaughan went to the University of Pittsburgh, BS Psychology/Spanish, and earned a Masters in Education/Special Education at Antioch University Philadelphia (Certified, PA Special Education K-12). Vaughan was born and raised in Philadelphia and had perfect attendance while at Masterman Lab. & Dem. Jr. from 5th grade through 12th grade. Even though Vaughan loves to sing, laugh, and eat, she won the Physical Education Award while in grade school at Masterman. “I love working at UDCS because working at UDCS affords me the opportunity to give back to my community by imparting knowledge to our YOUTH, our FUTURE.. I also have learned/grown so much from our so very diverse faculty and staff.”

Life Lesson Quote, “I am better than NOBODY, NOBODY is better than I!”

Courtney Zelena

Intensive Learning Support Teacher, K - 5th Grade



Courtney Zelena is K - 5th Grade Intensive Learning Support Teacher and Case Manager at UDCS and has been at UDCS for 6 years. Zelena holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education & Special Education from Holy Family University and a master's degree in Special Education from Grand Canyon University (certified, PA Instructional II, Elementary Education, and Special Education). Zelena grew up in Philadelphia and loves getting in the wilderness to go camping. Zelena has a huge heart, in 2013, she participated in the Polar Plunge to support the Special Olympics in the Delaware River. "I love working at UDCS because I love working with my students and their families. I love seeing my students make progress from year to year and watching them grow during the time they are in my class."

Life Lesson Quote, "See the Able not the Label or Every student can learn, just not on the same day, or in the same way."