

Staff Bios



Gina Maguire, Director

I am proud to introduce myself as Director of Pleasant Hill Preschool. Children are my passion. I have a degree from Emory University in Marketing and worked in advertising for 9 years until I got married to my wonderful husband Bill. I then decided to make a change and worked as a nanny and preschool teacher before having my son Jack in 2005. Wanting to spend as much time with him as possible, I went back to teaching when he started preschool and never stopped. I taught preschool for 6 years until I became Director of PHP in 2013 and I couldn't be happier. It is a dream come true for me. I truly fall in love with every child I have the privilege to meet.



Gwen Lawrence, 4s Lead Teacher

Hi, I am Gwen Lawrence, and I am excited to be teaching the 4's at Pleasant Hill Preschool! Two of my kids attended preschool here, and I love being a part of the PHP family! I earned a Master's degree in Computer Science from University of South Carolina, and worked in the corporate world for several years. When we moved to Duluth in 1993, I turned in my computer geek card and, soon afterward, picked up a preschool paint brush. I never looked back. I love challenging preschoolers to try new things, be creative, and learn problem-solving skills. These children put a song in my heart! You might see me around town with my family, Will, Addie, Meredith, LeeAnn, and my husband Rob.



Shahana Rahman, 4s Para Pro

My name is Shahana and I was born and raised in England. I moved to the States soon after I got married in 1992. My parents still live in the same house that I grew up in and I try to go back at least every other year to visit them and my 2 brothers. I love living here and decided to settle right here in Duluth to raise my own family. I am a mother of two girls and my youngest attended PHP. I recently went back to college and earned a degree in Business Administration. I have been working with children for over a decade and am looking forward to another exciting year being part of the team at PHP. I hope to help provide each and every child with a fun, caring, and loving environment that will encourage them all to grow and explore!!



Mona Amin, 3s Lead Teacher

Hi, my name is Mona Amin. I have been working at Pleasant Hill Preschool for 13 years!!! I am the Lead Teacher in the three-year-old class. This is a dream job. I was a stay-at-home mom with my two children Arsh (24) and Saarth (21). They started their school life at Pleasant Hill Preschool and that's when I first fell in love with the school. I love my job. Preschool age is the perfect age to impact a child's life in a very positive way in helping them to believe in themselves and guiding them to pursue their dreams and goals.



Gayathri Venkatachalam
3s Para Pro

My name is Gayathri. I have a bachelor's degree in Math. I've lived in Duluth for the past sixteen years with my husband Anand and two kids Akshara (15) and Akshay (6). Both of my kids attended Pleasant Hill Preschool. I love this school, the teachers and the environment they provide for learning so much that I decided to join the teaching staff last year. I started as an assistant teacher in the 3s and will be continuing to do the same this year. I am very excited to work with this team of teachers at Pleasant Hill Preschool and help children learn and grow in their formative years.



Erica Grant, 2s Lead Teacher

Hello, my name is Erica Grant. I am married with 2 children, Avery and Colin. Both of my children were students here at the school, and I loved the affection and education they received from their teachers. I am thrilled to be a part of this school and to have the opportunity to love on your children and help them grow.

I currently live in Lawrenceville and I enjoy relaxing at home, watching sports and being Avery and Colin's mom. 😊



Aynah Rangwala,
2s Para Pro

I am so excited to be a part of the Pleasant Hill Preschool family! I love working in the Two's classroom. My goal as a teacher is to create a nurturing, loving environment where the children can learn and experience new challenges that will help build their confidence while they play. When I'm not at PHP, I am at home with my husband, Firoz, and two amazing kids: Amara (14) and Iliyan (8). I enjoy volunteering at their schools and in the Duluth community. As a mother and teacher, I believe in the importance of early childhood education. I am eager to partner with our parents to ensure the twos have a successful first school experience!



Nancy Dugas, 2s Para Pro

I am a Duluth native--born at Joan Glancy Hospital, attended B.B. Harris Elementary, Duluth Middle, and Duluth High School. I went to Shorter College in Rome, GA and earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1983. I married my husband, Thom, in 1988. I worked in the business world for 7 years until 1990 when my daughter, Casey, was born. I decided to stay home with her full time. In 1993 we added our son, Kevin, to our family. We are members of Pleasant Hill Presbyterian Church and both of our children attended Pleasant Hill Preschool. In 1999, with our children in elementary school, I worked for a year in the church's Mother's Morning Out program. In 2000, I began working as a para-pro in the 2 year old class at Pleasant Hill Preschool. I have been with the 2s ever since, and I really do love it. A two-year-old really reminds you to find joy in tiny, everyday moments. I so enjoy looking at our class at the end of the year and seeing how far they have come and how their confidence has grown.