

# Pythagoras Children's Academy

## Staff Bios 2018-2019



### **Dina Jason, Director**

[djason@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:djason@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in Education, Eastern Illinois University

**Certification:** Illinois State Teaching Certification(03)Elementary Education K-9

**Endorsements:** Language Arts, Social Science

**How long teaching:** 21 years

**How long at PCA:** 20 years (very first teacher at PCA in a multi-age classroom)

**Past teaching and other positions:** PCA Kindergarten teacher 1998-2015;PCA Assistant Director: 2010-2014; PCA Director: 2000-2010. Past nominee for the prestigious Golden Apple teaching award.

**Other activities/organizations:** Volunteer teacher for Vacation Church School (VCS), Girl Scout cookie mom (two troops), PTO Co-President

**Family:** Married, with three daughters—all alumni of PCA



### **Christina Brales, Greek Director; 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade Greek**

[cbrales@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:cbrales@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Greek Philosophy, Studies in Ancient Greek Language and Literature, Aristotelion University, Thessaloniki, Greece

**Certification:** Junior High and High School

**Endorsements:** Studies in Ancient Greek and Latin Language and Literature

**How long teaching:** 19 years

**How long at PCA:** 15 years

**Past teaching and other positions:** current director of Pythagoras Greek School and Pythagoras Saturday Greek School, and Greek teacher for Teen Track (12 years); 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at Athena Greek School (1 year); teacher of Ancient and Modern Greek language and literature in junior high and high school in Greece (5 years) **Other**

**Activities/Organizations:**

**Family:** Married, with 1 son, a PCA student



### **Alexandra Letsos, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grades**

[aletsos@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:aletsos@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education (K-6) AND Special Education (K-12) from Carthage College

**Certification:** Illinois State Teaching Certification (03) Elementary Education (K-6), Special Education (K-12)

**Endorsements:** Learning Behavior Specialist 1

**How long teaching:** 10 years

**How long at PCA:** 5 years

**Past teaching/other positions:** Hilda Walker Intermediate School in Tinley Park, IL (5 years), PSGS Pre-school teacher (1 year), tutored for 10 years

**Other activities/organizations:** Coordinator for Destination Imagination and Sports Club at PCA; past co-president of PPO; co-director of PCA Summer Camp 2015,2017,and 2018; PCA Summer Camp Teacher (3 years),; volunteer teacher for Vacation Church School (10 years), Member of Compassionate Friends Ministry (at The Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios), co-coordinator for Inclusion Awareness Sunday program, Co-Coordinator of Meals on Wheels, Volunteer for church's summer festival and Taste of Greece Fall Glendi

**Family:** Married, with two sons, both current PCA students



**Mary Sipka, T/TH Preschool & MWF Pre-Kindergarten**

[msipka@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:msipka@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in Education, DePaul University

**Certification:** Illinois State Teaching Certification (03) Elementary Education K-9

**Endorsements:** Language Arts, Social Science

**How long teaching:** 11 years

**How long at PCA:** 5 years

**Past teaching and other positions:** PCA pre-kindergarten and kindergarten from 2007-2011. Pre-Kindergarten teacher at Peter Pan Learning Center for 1 year. Kindergarten and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at Ridgeland District 122 for 2 years. Pre-Kindergarten teacher at St. Helen School for 2 years.

**Family:** Married with 1 child.



**Nikoletta Stavrou 1<sup>st</sup> grade**

[nstavrou@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:nstavrou@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Masters in Education, St. Benedictine University; Bachelor of Business Administration, St. Norbert College

**Certification:** Illinois State Teaching Certification(09)Secondary Education

**Endorsements:** Reading, Economics, Social Studies, Marketing

**How long teaching:** 7 years

**How long at PCA:** 4<sup>th</sup> year

**Past teaching and other positions:** Oak Park and River Forest High School – Business and Computer Applications teacher; Gregory Middle School, Computer Applications teacher; Special education aide; reading tutor

**Other activities:** soccer coach; volunteer teacher for Vacation Church School (VCS)

**Family:** Married with 3 children



**Pamela Kostopoulos, Kindergarten**

[pkostopoulos@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:pkostopoulos@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in Education from DePaul University, with a minor in Psychology.

**Certification:** Illinois State Teaching Certificate (03) Elementary Education K-9.

**How long teaching:** 7 years

**How long at PCA:** 6<sup>th</sup> year

**Past teaching and other positions:** Kindergarten Teacher at St. Alphonsus Catholic School; Special Education Teacher Assistant at Prospect Heights School District 23; volunteer teacher at Vacation Church School (VCS); teacher at PCA Summer Camp; chairperson for Apparel and Holiday Shop at my daughters school.

**Family:** Married with two daughters.



**Staci Tagaris, 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> grades**

[atagaris@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:atagaris@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** MA in Teaching from National Louis University; BS in Biology from University of Illinois at Chicago

**Certification:** Illinois State Teaching Certification (09) Secondary Education grades 6-12

**Endorsements:** General Science, Biology, Social Science, and Health

**How long teaching:** 14 years

**How long at PCA:** 5 years

**Past teaching and other positions:** Middle school science and health teacher (3 years); special education classroom assistant for grades 2-8 (7 years)

**Other activities/organizations:** member of The Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios

**Family:** Married, 2 children



**Helen Sarantopoulos, Pre-Kindergarten**

[hsarantopoulos@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:hsarantopoulos@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Bachelors of Science in Elementary Education from DePaul University

**Certification:** Illinois State Teaching Certification (03) Elementary Education K-9 **Endorsements:** Biology

**How Long Teaching:** 12 years

**How Long at PCA:** 4<sup>th</sup> year

**Past teaching and other positions:** Preschool teacher at Hellenic American Academy (5 years); Preschool teacher at Bright Horizons (4 years)



**Peggy Zervas, Monday/Wednesday/Friday Preschool**

[pzervas@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:pzervas@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Bachelor of Arts, University of Illinois at Chicago

**Certification:** Illinois State Teaching Certification (03) Elementary Education K-9

**Endorsements:** General Science, Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Science

**How long teaching:** 16 years (took time off to raise family)

**How long at PCA:** 5 years

**Past teaching and other positions:** Fourth Grade Teacher in District 204, Naperville

**Other activities/organizations:** Volunteer teacher at Vacation Church School (VCS); preschool Sunday School aide

**Family:** Married; 4 children – all PCA alumni



**Joanna Papadakis, Pre-K, Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Greek**

[jpapadakis@pythagoraschildrenscademy.org](mailto:jpapadakis@pythagoraschildrenscademy.org)

**Education:** Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; currently pursuing an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Development.

**Certification:** Certificate for teaching the Greek language

**How long teaching:** 19 years

**How long at PCA:** 5 years

**Past teaching and other positions:** She also teaches Greek language classes at Holy Apostles in Westchester, IL; and St. George in Chicago.

**Family:** Married with 3 sons



**Kathy Vranas, Teaching Assistant**

[kvranas@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:kvranas@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** BA Education, Northeastern University

**Certification:** Illinois State Certification (03) Elementary Education K-9

**Endorsements:** Language Arts, Linguistics

**How long teaching:** 29 years

**How long at PCA:** 6 years

**Past teaching and other positions:** Current teacher at Pythagoras Greek School and Pythagoras Saturday Greek School; Socrates Greek American School (25 years), Holy Apostles Greek Schools (11 years), St. John the Baptist Pythagoras Greek School (2 years)

**Family:** Married, 2 children



**Korina Broca, Preschool Aide**

[kbroca@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:kbroca@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Certificate, Early Childhood Education & Special Education, Economic University of Tirana; BS Business Administration, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

**How long teaching:** 9 years

**How long at PCA:** 5 years

**Past teaching and other positions:** Greek language instructor at Aristotle Greek School ; and at Pythagoras Saturday Greek School.

**Family:** Married with two children



**Sharon Mortakis, Specials: Art, Music & P.E.**

[smortakis@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:smortakis@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Full Scholarship in Music Performance, Eastern Illinois University

**Certification:** Degree in Accident Reconstruction from Northwestern University

**How long teaching:** 3 years

**How long at PCA:** 3 years

**Past teaching and other positions:** Police officer for 9 years

**Other activities/organizations:**

**Family:** Married, current daughter at PCA

## Religious Education



**Father Andrew Georganas, Proistamenos**

Father Andrew came to the community of The Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios in 2001, to assist Father Panagiotis Malamis, and became Proistamenos in 2006. He is a guiding force for our school, and directs the Religious Education program. From leading morning prayers, to Chapel Time, and other religious services and observances, Father Andrew imparts his love of Orthodoxy and Hellenism. He is a constant source of inspiration and enthusiasm for our youth.



**Father Panagiotis Malamis, Protopresbyter**

Father Panagiotis has humbly served the Community of The Greek Orthodox Church of St. Demetrios since 1974. Under his leadership, the church and school buildings were constructed, two chapels (one in the school building at the other at Arlington Cemetery), PCA, and many dynamic ministries were established. A sage and loving individual, Father Panagiotis shares his knowledge and passion for Orthodoxy and Hellenism. In 1999, Archbishop IAKOVOS of North and South America granted him the title, "OfikiontouPresbyteriou," the highest rank and distinction attainable by a married priest.

**Anthony Ruggerio, Youth Director**

Anthony has served our parish and school since August 2016. Dedicated to our youth, Anthony jumps in where needed, and teaches our students about the Orthodox Faith on a weekly basis. His enthusiasm and dedication to the Faith is a fine example for our students.

## Apospasmenous

*Committed to Greek language education outside of Greece, many years ago, The Greek Ministry of Education established a program to send qualified Greek teachers abroad to assist in this mission. We are blessed to have one at our school.*



**Odyssea Rasimoglou, Greek Teacher**

[orasimoglou@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org](mailto:orasimoglou@pythagoraschildrensacademy.org)

**Education:** Bachelor in Science in Preschool Education and Educational Planning from the University of Aegean, Greece

**Certification:** ASEP, Proficiency in the English Language, University of Central Lincolnshire

**Endorsements:** Preschool Education

**How long teaching:** 12 years

**How long at PCA:** 4 years

**Past teaching and other positions:** Teacher and matron in Greek full-time public kindergarten.

**Other activities/organizations:**

**Family:** Married with one son