

### **Meet Our Little Kids Teachers! (2's classroom)**

**Abigail Hedrick** ...Abigail is so excited to be starting as the Lead Teacher in the Little Kids classroom this year. Originally from Texas, she has lived in New York for over ten years and loves exploring the city with little ones and seeing how they make such a big place their own. Abigail holds a Bachelor's degree from Muhlenberg College in Psychology with a focus in Child Development and a Master's degree from Bank Street Graduate School of Education in Infant and Family Development/Early Childhood General and Special Education. Her favorite activities to do with the children are singing and art projects, especially when they involve organic, natural materials from the outside world. She is so thankful to be a part of such a wonderful community and can't wait to see what the year holds! Abigail's hours are 8:30am -4:00pm.

**Claire Chang** is starting her first year as an Assistant Teacher in the Little Kids classroom. A native New Yorker, she always knew that she wanted to work with children and attended New York University, where she obtained a Bachelor's in Child Development and Education. Claire loves reading stories and enjoys building bonds through books, songs, and sensory activities. She is so excited to join the Purple Circle community and can't wait to see what this year has in store! Claire's hours are 8:30am – 4:00pm.

**Sanghamitra Mukherjee**, best known as Tina, joined Purple Circle in 1997 as an assistant teacher in the Middle Kids 2 classroom. She has resided as an assistant teacher in the Little Kids classroom for the last ten years. Tina earned a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Calcutta University in India. She expands upon her early childhood education experience through audited courses at Westchester Community College over the past 5 years. Tina's experience has led to a passion in the documentation of young children. During this process, Tina collects children's work through sets of photographs all the while recording their words and stories for a complete view of the child's work from start to finish. Tina's hours are 8:30am – 2:30pm.

**Evelyn Cruz** is a Late Day teacher in the Little Kids classroom. She has worked at Purple Circle for over 25 years. Her experience with children alongside her colleagues has taught, tutored and trained her to be a responsible, fun-loving teacher of young children. Throughout her longevity at Purple Circle, she has dedicated her service to many families, ensuring the well-being of their children and making their first years at school very positive. She welcomes you to Purple Circle and looks forward to working with your children in the Late Day program. Evelyn's hours are 1:30pm – 6:00pm.

### **Meet our Middle Kids 1 Teachers! (2's/3's classroom)**

**Jasmine Kim** was born and raised in Northern California where she lived until mid-high school. She has, since then, moved to the East Coast, mainly going back and forth between New Jersey and New York. She is bilingual, speaking English and Korean, and holds a BA in English Literature and Early Childhood Education. She is currently enrolled in a M.SEd program for Childhood Education from Lehman College. She first started at Purple Circle as a student teacher back in 2016 and has never wanted to teach anywhere else! Jasmine's hours are 8:30am - 4:00pm.

**Yesica Juarez** has been with Purple Circle for a bit over 10 years. During that time, she has traveled amongst all classrooms and has gained a lot of experience amongst all age groups. She spends most of those years in the Little Kids classroom but is beyond thrilled to explore Middle Kids 1. She has a passion for Art and loves to incorporate it into the exploration and learning of the classroom. She looks forward to supporting the MK1 community and can't wait to learn more about your children as thinkers and learners. Yesica graduated from SUNY Westchester Community College with an AAS degree. There she studied several Early Childhood courses. Yesica's hours are 8:30am – 4:00pm.

**Yoranny Lopez**, better known as Jada was raised in Upper Manhattan, the Heights. Growing up, her family called her Jada and it stayed with her ever since. She is bilingual, fluent in both Spanish and English, but she also understands a bit of French! Jada holds a BA in Science and Social Work from Monroe College, and worked at the Bank Street School for Children for seven years before coming to Purple Circle this year. Jada's hours are 8:30am – 2:30pm.

**Judith Williams** was born in London, England and her family migrated to the United States when she was twelve years old. Judith's teaching career began at Pratt Institute where she pursued her interest in Fine Art and Education. She holds a BFA and also a Masters Degree in Early Childhood Education from City College. Judith has worked in both private and public school settings, and has worked at Purple Circle for over five years. Judith's hours are 2:00pm – 6:00pm and she is our Late Day teacher.

### **Meet our Middle Kids 2 Teachers! (3's/4's classroom)**

**Rachel Evans** took her first Developmental Psychology class at Sarah Lawrence College. Since then she has never looked back, attending the School of Visual Arts to study Art Education and Illustration. After some time in an after-school art program and working as a freelance illustrator, she returned to school to get her MA in Early Childhood Education from

NYU. Since then she's been working in private, Head Start and UPK preschools with ages 3-5. This is her first year at Purple Circle. Rachel's hours are 8:30am – 4:00pm.

**Migdalia Nazario**, better known as Gina throughout the Purple Circle community was born in Puerto Rico and raised in The Bronx. She is bi-lingual and holds an Associates Degree in Infants and Toddlers from the Borough of Manhattan Community College. Gina is a single parent of two men, Brian and Benjamin, She has worked with all the age groups through her 30+ years with Purple Circle, and her son, Benjamin, is a Purple Circle alumnus, Class of 1992! Migdalia's hours are 8:30am – 2:30pm.

**Rhoda Muchoki** was born in Kenya and has been living in the U.S. for many years. She is tri-lingual, fluent in Swahili and Kikuyu. Rhoda has a BA in Education and Fine Arts from Kenyatta University in Kenya and a Child Development Associate credential from Bank Street College of Education. Rhoda has worked in early childhood programs for many years and has been at Purple Circle since 2007.

Rhoda's hours are 10:00am – 6:00pm and she is our Late Day teacher.

#### **Meet our Big Kids Teachers! (4's / 5's classroom)**

**Niambi Murray** joined Purple Circle as the Big Kids Lead Teacher in 2019. Niambi began her college education at UMBC where she earned a BA in African Studies and Political Science with a minor in Dance. After helping her sister open a language school in Cáceres, Spain, Niambi fell in love with the process of education and found her calling to be a teacher. She obtained her MSED in Early Childhood and Childhood Education at Sarah Lawrence College where she also interned amongst the 3's, 4's and 5's before teaching kindergarten in a charter program and at the DOE. Niambi loves exploration and has a passion for humanities and sciences. She hopes to provide a classroom where children can explore more about the world around them starting with a new science station within the Big Kids room. Niambi's hours are typically 8:30am – 4:00pm.

**Antwan Weatherington** has always been fascinated by how a child's attachments in the early years affect their lives as adults. To further investigate this interest, Antwan completed his AAS in Early Childhood Education at SUNY Westchester this past Fall 2019. His field placement led him to Purple Circle where he studied as an intern first in the Little Kids classroom and then in the Spring in the Big Kids classroom before being asked to join our staff part-time for the 2019/2020 school year. Antwan hopes to continue his education in the future and cites Purple Circle as a place that has provided a space for learning and growth for both children and adults. Antwan's hours are typically 8:30am – 4:00pm.

## **Meet our Infant / Toddler Teachers!**

**Ashley Cattaneo** is thrilled to be joining the Purple Circle community this year as the Lead teacher in the Infant 2 class. She is currently in her seventh year of teaching in an Early Childhood environment. Her former experience includes working with children and families in first grade, infants, toddlers and most recently Pre-K. Ashley received her Masters Degree in Early Childhood Special Education, Early Intervention and Infant and Family Development from Bankstreet College of Education in 2018. She has also enjoyed facilitating parent, caregiver and teacher workshops in different areas of child development. Her favorite activity to do with young children is sing and dance to different kinds of music. Ashley's hours are 8:30am-4:00pm.

**Cheryl DiCostanzo** went to college for music and acting, and loves to bring singing and dancing into the classroom in the form of "shows." Cheryl also enjoys cooking with children and often plans healthy recipes to make as part of the classroom curriculum. She started substitute teaching three years ago at various programs like The Bija Project and Union Temple in Brooklyn as well as Presbyterian and the Family Center at Bank Street, each on the Upper West Side. Soon after her substitute work, she started an Assistant Teacher position at Bija in the summer of 2019 where she also prepared lunch with the children and for all of the children and staff daily. She worked in various educational capacities through Spring 2020 before beginning her Fieldwork towards her CDA in the toddler room at the Family Center at Bank Street in June 2021. She has since been hired at Purple Circle as an interim auxiliary teacher before taking on a full-time Assistant Infant / Toddler teacher when the program opens in Fall 2021. She is certified as a Newborn Care Specialist! Cheryl's hours are 8:30am – 4:00pm.