



2025

Retirement Booklet

June 4, 2025

Langley Teachers' Association



2025 List of Retirees

Delene Abraham (Williams)

Shauna Aranas

Sandra Averill

Wendy Chin

Arlana Coady

Diane Courtney

Sue Docherty

Sandra Fast

Dana Ferguson

Sarah Fowlis

Teri Gambrel

Sheridan Grant

Holly Guinan

Carole Guy

Anita Hopton

Kurt Jackson

Luisa Johnston

Barry Kroeker

Nancy Leard

Dean Loeppky

Cindy Loeppky

Tanya Matthon

Gillian Moss

Kirsten Nordby

Janet Porowski

Sheldene Reich

Heidi Sawatzky

Heather Sebastian

Donna Sharkey

Scott Smithson

Terry Stead

Tim Stephenson

Patti Thorpe

Dakota Warren

Patricia Way

2025 Retiree Biographies



Retiree: Shauna Aranas

School Retiring From: Uplands Elementary/ Uplands Montessori

Number of Years Teaching: 37

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

I earned my teaching degree at UVIC in 1988 and started my teaching career in the Okanagan with a Gr. 1/2 class. In 1990, I returned to the Lower Mainland and joined the Langley School District. Here, I started working at Blacklock Elementary as a Resource and Learning Assistance teacher, followed by teaching Gr. 1 at James Kennedy Elementary. Then I moved to South Carvolth Elementary, where I taught Kindergarten/Grade 1. Here, I work corroboratively with a variety of professionals and parents to reimagine the school into an outdoor learning centre, partnering with Campbell Valley Park and Simon Fraser University. When South Carvolth closed in 2006, I moved to Uplands Elementary as the neighborhood Kindergarten teacher. It was here that I embraced the Montessori philosophy, completed my Montessori training and begun working as a Montessori Kindergarten teacher. Throughout my career, I have been committed to working corroboratively with others, and continuous learning, believing that shared knowledge and teamwork is the best way to master the craft of teaching. I am grateful to the many students, parents, educators and administrators who have inspired me along the way.

In my retirement I hope to: do some travelling, and spend more time with my family and friends. Hone my skills in knitting, pursue volunteering opportunities and focus on my health.



Retiree: Sandra Averill

School Retiring From: Instructional Services/Yorkson Creek Middle School

Number of Years Teaching: 35

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

I have taught grades 2-10, starting at Parkside. I was an original teacher at the Fundamental Middle school and Lochiel U-Connect (supporting home schoolers).

2006: Started in Instructional Services - regularly asked to explain to colleagues why the Internet was going to change things!

Magdy Ghobrial and I led the first Technology Plan which included ongoing input from teachers, CUPE, students and parents.

Supported students, parents and teachers with understanding how to safely use the Internet.

Meeting and working with many amazing staff through workshops and working groups.

2010: became an Apple Distinguished Educator

Supported the new Applied Design Skills and Technology curriculum with Stacey Bernier & Alex Baxfield

During Spring Break, 2020, I was asked to assemble a team of educators that could work together to get all teachers up and going with Microsoft Teams to support their students (as we were not returning to classrooms during Covid).

Most of our teachers had never used Teams before. Our team collaborated and had great success.

IDEA-X: Dawne Tomlinson and I pulled together and implemented IDEA-X where teams of secondary students determine solutions to a wicked world problem and present to industry judges. Up to \$20,000 is given in scholarship funds.

In my retirement I hope to:

Travel with my husband, enjoy my family and soon-to-be-here grand-daughter! I will also spend much time with hiking, gardening, scrapbooking, genealogy pursuits, volunteering and enjoying life!



Retiree: Arlana Coady
School Retiring From: Glenwood Elementary
Number of Years Teaching: 36

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

I started my career at Nicomekl Elementary and transferred to Glenwood in my 2nd year. I never left! I have been blessed to belong to the most wonderful school community for 35 of my 36 years teaching. Glenwood was not only where I came to work every day, it became my family and my home. Grades 1, 2 & 3 were my jam and the children's love and excitement for learning was what made me happiest and most fulfilled. I developed the most precious friendships with colleagues and parents that will remain with me for my lifetime. Over the years I have coached girls' volleyball and basketball, put on numerous primary Christmas concerts, been "Mrs. Claus" at our Christmas Craft Fairs, organized and run our "Glenwood Winter Olympics" every four years (those were the best!!), supported movie nights and been chief cotton candy maker and dunk tank dunkee at our June Fun Nights. SO many memories! What I am truly grateful for are the MANY former students who come back, as they turn into teenagers and adults, to visit and catch up on life. Being their children's teacher too has been such a gift. Thank you Glenwood!!!

In my retirement I hope to:

- Travel with family and friends
- Learn to curl and visit as many MLB ballparks as possible
- Return as a TTOC to continue supporting children



Retiree: Diane Courtney
School Retiring From: Aldergrove Community Secondary School
Number of Years Teaching: 18

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

- began TTOCing in Langley in May 2007
- job-shared in Visual Arts at LFAS from 2008-2011/ continued to TTOC
- taught grade 4/5 at North Otter Elementary from 2011-2013
- taught grade 7 at Stafford from 2013-2015 (math, science, visual arts)
- taught grade 8-12 @ACSS from 2015-2025 (visual arts)

In my retirement I hope to:

- make art, garden, volunteer
- travel, go to the cabin more often, kayak
- TTOC! Continue to be a Health & Safety BCTF Facilitator

Retiree: Sue Docherty
School Retiring from: WGSS
Number of Teaching Years: 35

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

I started teaching in 1989 after completing my PDP through UBC. I was a student teacher for my long practicum at LSS under Karen Larsen and Tracy Lee-McCall's guidance. My first teaching job was at H.D. Stafford when it was transitioning from grades 8 to 10 to grades 8-12. During that time, it was difficult to get a teaching job. 40 teachers applied for the position and due to the good words from my sponsor teacher, Karen Larsen, I was hired. I taught Home Economics at H.D. Stafford for 3 years. While at H.D. Stafford, I had 7 preps and shared a Foods room with my Department Head, Sue Jackson. WGSS had recently

been built, and I applied for a job there and was hired. At WGSS I taught all areas of Home Economics including Culinary Arts. Some of my favorite memories include my grade 9 Family Studies classes and catering banquets with Dot Mufford and our culinary arts students. After completing a master's degree in 2009, I transitioned into School Counselling at REMSS. I stayed at REMSS for 5 years and then transitioned back to WGSS as a School Counsellor where I remain until my pending retirement. Special memories I hold include the amazing people I have met over my career, including staff, administration, parents and students.

In my retirement I hope to:

Spend time in Australia with my daughter, her husband and my grandson, Nordic ski in Prince George, Spend a week soaking up the sun in Curaca, Visit Tuscany, Italy, Take piano and guitar lessons, Have fun with watercolour painting and crafts, Enjoy nature, gardening and fitness. TOC.

Retiree: Sarah Fowlis

School Retiring From: Langley Fine Arts

Number of Years Teaching: 36

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

I've only taught at Langley Fine Arts/Fort Junior site in fort Langley.

In my retirement I hope to:

Focus on my health and family. Travel and explore.



Retiree: Sheridan Grant

School Retiring From: Yorkson Creek Middle School

Number of Years Teaching: 36 years

History of my Teaching Career:

Shortreed Elementary: (September 1989 to June 1998) I taught Grade 5/6 with a brief stint of 4/5. As a young teacher I coached volleyball and basketball, supervised

Ski Club and loved participating in any Staff vs. Student sporting activity! Two Camp trips to Chehalis were so much fun! At the end of my first year, my students threw me a "surprise" wedding shower and some of them even sang "Wind Beneath My Wings" at our wedding. A few years later the students threw me a baby shower--" Surprise." Kids love their parties!

Murrayville Elementary: (September 1998 to June 2008) I taught Grade 5/6 until the school was closed. The families of the students and the teaching staff really made this school feel like home to me. I taught in the Historical Annex with noisy plumbing and, students liked to say, the basement was haunted. I platooned with Rosemary Hague and John Blaauw, teaching their French Grade 6 and 7. We shared many laughs, and sadly even some tears. Our Christmas Concerts and Sports Days were highlights for me. Report Card writing sessions late at night, or on the weekends, in the computer lab made me realize I wasn't suffering alone!

HD Stafford Middle School: (September 2008 to June 2014) I taught Humanities Grade 6 and partnered with Lara Lavery when we first opened the middle school. It is fitting that she will also be my last pod partner at YCMS. I occasionally coached volleyball but that became trickier to juggle as I was now a mom of 3 boys. In addition to teaching, I organized the school-wide spelling bees and the speech competition which has now become the District Speak Out.

Yorkson Creek Middle School: (September 2014 to June 2025) We opened the school during a STRIKE year. On the bright side, the staff really got to learn about each other and bond during picket duty. I have enjoyed looping with my students, teaching them in Grade 6 and 7. My students at YCMS have been remarkable, often going above and beyond to produce quality assignments. I feel very blessed. I completed my Graduate Diploma in Teaching Math and Science in 2018. It has been my pleasure to be supported in my efforts by principals: Tim Everson, Kevan Reeve, Stephanie Labby, Deah Paton, and Jessica Bain. The AMLE conference in Florida was so much fun, but that was when I first realized I was getting too old to keep up with the young pups. Then I was faced with the steep learning curve of teaching on-line during Covid! I no longer coach sports but have proudly been the teacher-sponsor of the Yorkson Creek Debate Club for the past 7 years.

In my retirement I hope to: continue to pursue my lifelong love of learning in areas such as crafts, music and languages. I look forward to using our travel trailer more often and travelling when I don't have to pay premium prices!



Retiree: Carole Guy
School Retiring From: Langley Fine Arts
Number of Years Teaching: 32 years

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

It is funny how one's path can veer off in unexpected directions. In university, I envisioned spending my life in a research lab. An opportunity to work for a year in Japan sparked an interest in Education. I taught at private schools in Vancouver before joining the Langley School District to teach Chemistry at D.W. Poppy. I was excited to later take a continuing position in the Science Department at LFAS. There were also temporary positions at Stafford and Aldergrove before eventually coming back to call LFA home. My most enduring memories as a science educator are the many experiences shared with students while doing lab work. Fruit fly genetics experiments, making liquid nitrogen icecream and raising Western Painted Turtles to name a few. One of the most gratifying aspects of teaching is having students come back to say hello, years after graduating. This year a former student of mine not only visited but ended up as my colleague, teaching Science. I feel grateful to have been part of the LFA community for twenty-five years.

In my retirement I hope to: savor having time on my side. Camping and travel are in the mix. I look forward to spending time with my family, enjoying the many unread books in my library, taking on home/garden projects and exploring new trails with my two dogs. There will be no

shortage of learning opportunities to pursue. I can't wait to get started!



Retiree: Kurt Jackson
School Retiring From: Langley Secondary School
Number of Teaching Years: 31

Anecdotes/History about my Teaching Career:

My career can be looked at as taking place in two halves: Part 1: (1994 – 2008) My time teaching at H.D. Stafford Secondary. Getting into the teaching game teaching mainly Jr. Science, Senior Biology and Jr. Math. Some coaching duties included Jr. Volleyball and Ice Hockey. A little bit of time doing Department head duties for science.

Part 2: (2008 – present) With Stafford transitioning to a middle school, I transitioned to Langley Secondary where I continued to teach Jr. Math, Jr. Science, Senior Biology and Chemistry. Department head duties continued (for a while).

What was common to both school settings was the opportunity to teach with some special co-workers. A great science team at both schools where I learnt much from how others did their teaching practice. I really enjoyed the team spirit within our department that was especially evident with our science department here at LSS. I was blessed to have great administrators that allowed our TEAM to try things and not micromanage us. They allowed our strengths to be our strengths. Having at different opportunities student teachers and being (albeit a brief time) a part of the teacher mentorship program, was an enjoyable part of the teaching journey. But the best part of the career was working with the kids: seeing them grasp concepts on the second or third try, spending "one on one" time in the hallway having check-in conversations or just giving them a "generally bad time" to "thicken their skins".

In my retirement I hope to:

Continue a teaching career of some sort and to not drop this profession all together. To take the time to check off

items found on the “to do list”. Finally, when it’s time for my dear lovely wife to retire from her educator position, then, we will spend our time together doing the things that retired couples like to do.
Thank you.

Retiree: Barry Kroeker School: Glenwood

Number of years: 33

Anecdotes/ History about My Teaching Career:

Through my 33 years of teaching, I have met many amazing people and students that have impacted my life. Without their input, I couldn’t have made it through. Thank you all!!!

In my retirement I hope to: Travel, Travel, Travel and then, more Travel.



Retiree: Nancy Leard

School Retiring From: Alex Hope Elementary

Number of Years Teaching: 36

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

I began my teaching career at Parkside Elementary as a Grade 4 teacher. I coached the volleyball team, basketball, and T+F teams. After 6 years at Parkside, I took part in a teaching exchange in St. Andrew’s, Scotland. Upon returning to Parkside, I taught in a grade 6 classroom for 3 years. In Sept. 1998 I moved to Alex Hope Elementary where I began teaching grades 4/5. After having 2 children, I decided to work part time. Over the past 27 years, I have enjoyed my time at Alex Hope immensely. The supportive staff and school community have made my teaching experience fulfilling and rewarding.

In my retirement: I hope to spend more time with family and friends, and keep active with long forest and beach walks with my hubby and dog. I also look forward to traveling, camping, and hiking.



Retiree: Tanya Matthon

School retiring from: Uplands

Number of teaching years: 32

History of my teaching career:

I began my teaching journey at a small Montessori school outside Victoria where I discovered my passion for Montessori and early childhood. Life then took me to Vancouver where I opened the first Kindergarten class at West Point Grey Academy. My adventures continued to Manitoba before I landed at Uplands Montessori in Kindergarten starting the second classroom in the program and becoming where I spent the bulk of my career. I found great joy and connection in teaching multiple siblings in families and in seeing each child grow over the year and years. Some of my highlights have been helping children see themselves as capable, independent and successful learners who love school. I love meeting former students and still seeing their little kids faces and remembering them as they were. Some of my guiding mottos have been, “you never know when you are making a memory” and “every day is a new day”. My core school staff has been like my family and I cherish the memories we’ve had holding each other up and celebrating all the big and little things.

In my retirement I hope to:

Travel, create, adventure, try new things, and teach sporadically



Retiree: Gillian (Jill) Moss

School Retiring From: Uplands Elementary

Number of Teaching Years: 30 years in Langley District

Anecdotes/ History about My Teaching Career:

I have been fortunate to have found my passion in teaching children, and I remember thinking, many times, that the bonus was that I was paid for it. I remember the day that I was accepted into the PDP program at SFU, as one of the most exciting days of my life. Highlights in my career have always involved seeing students proud of themselves, for figuring things out or achieving a goal, and seeing their “light go on”. It was always the best reward for me. Equally, I have absolutely loved working with so many amazing colleagues, learning from them, supporting each other, and becoming close friends.

I started out as a TTOC in Langley and Surrey in January 1995. My first position was a short-term in February 1995 at Fort Langley Elementary. I had short and long-term positions at several schools including Simonds, Langley Fine Arts, County Line Elementary and Langley Meadows. My first continuing position was at Shortreed in September 1999, 4 ½ years later. I was at Shortreed for 10 years, building many friendships with colleagues, as well as learning many teaching skills. While at Shortreed, my husband and I had twin daughters, as well as moved into a new house, which gave me cause to look for a school closer to home, Uplands. My final school was Uplands, where I have loved working for 17 years and have built many close friendships. My teaching career has been all that I had hoped for and more, and I will cherish the memories always.

In my retirement I hope to:

TRAVEL!! I am looking forward to having more time to myself to do the things that I love, to spend more time with family and to travel as much as possible. I have a very, very long “travel bucket list”. I also look forward to rediscovering old passions such as golf, hiking, maybe playing guitar again, going camping more often, working on

the “healthy new me” and finding new activities to keep me busy (maybe Dragon boating). I also plan to be a TTOC in Langley for a few years, when time permits! I am really excited for new experiences, having more time and being with friends and family.



Retiree: Kirsten Nordby Fehr

School Retiring from: Uplands Elementary & Glenwood Elementary (District Counsellor)

Number of Teaching years:

35 Total (26 Teaching & 9 Counselling)

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

In September 1990, after graduating from the University of Victoria with my B.Ed., I started full time at Simonds Elementary. Peterson Road Elementary was my second home, from September 1997. During that time, I also so enjoyed taking my M.Ed. in Educational Practice and the Arts from SFU. In September 2016, I started as a School Counsellor after receiving my M.Ed. in School Counselling from City U. I counselled in three Elementary schools for six years; the third school being Wix Brown, then Coghlan. This past year, however, I was just at my original two: Uplands and Glenwood. Walking side-by-side, over the years, with all my school teams, families, and students, of such character, grit, and love, is a privilege that brings tears to my eyes during any time of reflection. I am so blessed! As for memories: Early in my career, I had the privilege of teaching some music (ukulele and the soprano, tenor, bass recorders) and Grades 4-6 classroom. I so enjoyed this age group and their parents and have some extra-special memories leading the Simonds choir, helping to organize a few productions, and taking groups to Vancouver, in different years, to experience Phantom of the Opera, Showboat, and Les Misérables. I also had the honour of working with excellent student teachers from both SFU and Trinity. Counselling was a big shift in responsibility, as I moved into a vocation that filled me with vision.

Supporting each and every child, parent, and team that trusted me with their emotion and need, either directly or indirectly, and then knowing that, while I worked, I could lean on so many site principals and leaders at the District Office and in the LTA, that are such clear examples of heart and integrity... well, this is something I will never forget! I am incredibly grateful for all the opportunities I was given over my 35 years of work in the Langley School District!! I was supported as I gained experience, guided well through high quality professional opportunities, and heard when I had ideas to share. I am also so indebted to my Elementary Counsellor and school colleagues! What amazing and wise teams to end my career with! In short, my life was enriched by you all! Thank you!

In my Retirement I Hope to:

My husband and I have many hopes for retirement. Of course, we'll relax and gather our wits about us at first. We also have a huge list called "Things we'll Get to When we Retire". LOL! After (& during) that, we'd love to travel, spend time with family and friends, enjoy our home and garden, walk, and help others. Basically, as always, we'll work out how to show love and have faith, while being thankful and talking with God and others every single day!



Retiree: Janet Porowski

School Retiring From: Parkside Elementary

Number of Years Teaching: 35+

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

I worked for five months at the Bella Bella Community School (grade 4) and then 35+ years with the Langley School District at five schools (Uplands, Willoughby, Glenwood, Dorothy Peacock, Parkside).

Caution! Approximate numbers ahead!

- 1200 students (29 years in the classroom grade 3-7; six years with ELL students grade 2-5; nine years of Summer Session grade 2-5)

- 3000 report cards with plenty of stress headaches
- 360 hours of parent conferences
- 350 hours of supervision
- 75 days at Outdoor Education Camp (Evans Lake and Stillwood) including countless sleepless nights, but what a blast!

Worth every wonderful, exciting, painful, tearful, growth-infused experience that I wouldn't trade for the world! My students and their families made me the person I am today.

In my retirement I hope to:

Continue in my caregiver role with my husband who has been a stroke survivor for 12.5 years, and I plan to TTOC in Abbotsford, where we live.



Retiree: Heidi Sawatzky

School Retiring from: Lynn Fripps Elementary School

Number of teaching years: 34.8 years

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

I began my teaching career in 1990 at Parkside Elementary. After teaching three years there, I was reassigned to Nicomekl Elementary school. At Nicomekl Elementary, I embraced new opportunities, including helping to direct the school choir. It was wonderful to see how song brought connection, confidence and joy to the students. I also contributed to the Rec and Read summer program for two years, supporting children's literacy in a fun way.

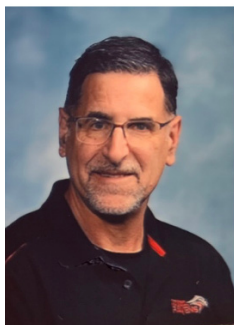
A highlight of my career was participating in a teacher exchange in Paderborn, Germany during the 1999/2000 school year. During this experience, I realized that children are much the same no matter where you teach – they are curious, eager to learn and full of potential.

In 2014, I transferred to Lynn Fripps Elementary, where I have continued to grow as an educator. My school has become more than just a workplace but a place of connection and community and for that I am so grateful. While I look forward to the next chapter, I know I will miss

the early morning conversations with my colleagues, the sound of children excitedly sharing their stories and the celebration of student successes.

In my retirement I hope to:

Prioritize my health and wellness, improve my tennis skills, kayak lakes and coastal areas, make new connections with others, mentor someone young, spend more time with family and friends, visit botanical gardens, attend community events and explore new countries and cultures.



Retiree: Scott Smithson

School Retiring From: Peter Ewart Middle School

Number of Years Teaching: 35

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

- began teaching in December 1990 after finishing PDP at SFU
- my wife & I taught for two years in Japan from 1991 – 1993
- returned to Coquitlam SD and taught at various elementary and middle schools through the 90s
- taught primarily Grades 6 & 7 classroom as well as taking on the role of Drama Coordinator at Citadel Middle and worked on a district Math team developing hands-on resources
- switched to Langley School District after the '99-2000 school year when I was able to get hired for a Grade 3-4 position at Topham because of my Japanese experience
- taught all the intermediate grades at Topham including the opportunity to actually teach each of my own three children
- left Topham after 14 years and went to Lynn Fripps Elementary for a year in preparation for moving to the new middle school
- was part of the staff that opened Yorkson Middle School in 2015 and taught Grades 6 & 7 and took on a Team Leader position.

- left the classroom after four great years and joined the Explorations teach as the Makerspace teacher as well as taking on the Athletic Director role
- moved to Peter Ewart Middle to open the school in 2019. Continued to grow the Makerspace programs and start up the Athletics programs and eventually stepping into the role of Expo Team Leader

In my retirement I hope to:

- enjoy living without school-bells controlling where I need to be and when
- travel extensively with my wife and best friend (who happen to be the same person)
- stay active with tennis, kayaking and other physical pursuits old and new
- take time for myself to explore creative endeavors
- continue learning and loving life



Retiree: Tim Sephenson

School Retiring From: WGSS

Number of Years Teaching: 30

Anecdotes/History about My Teaching Career:

As I look back over my career, it's hard to put into words just how much these years have meant to me. I started at Walnut Grove Secondary in 1995, and over the decades, it's become more than just a place of work — it's been a community, a purpose, and, in many ways, a second home. I'm proud of the contributions I've made — not just to science education, but to the culture of the school. In 2004, I created the school's astronomy course. It became a defining part of my teaching. Somewhere along the way I picked up the nickname astrostephenson, and I wore it proudly. Environmental stewardship was another big part of my journey. Through the Green Team, I worked with students

to promote conservation and sustainability, helping us all think a little more deeply about our footprint and our responsibility. Much of that work focussed on repurposing plastic, particularly that which was removed from the shores and the ocean.

And then, of course, there were the Christmas assemblies — and that odd tradition that began back in 2005: a poem written and read by the “Old Grumpy Guy.” Somehow, that became something people looked forward to each year — equal parts reflection, humour, and a little tug at the heartstrings. All about relationships, connection, and the stories we create together.

I’ve made some of my closest friends at WGSS. Tea time in Deb’s room was never just about tea — it was about laughter, processing the day, and holding each other up when things felt heavy. Whether it was after-school conversations with Brent and Leah, special projects with Jenny, or just hallway chats that turned into lifelong friendships, these are the memories I’ll carry with me.

As for what comes next — retirement for me isn’t about slowing down; it’s about shifting gears. I plan to continue giving public astronomy lectures and sharing science through my podcast and YouTube channel. I want to spend more time outdoors — kayaking the coastlines of B.C., hiking the mountains, and just being immersed in nature as much as possible. These are the places that give me clarity and calm.

In my retirement I hope to:

Most importantly, I’m looking forward to more time with my family. Sheryl and I have many adventures still ahead of us, and I’m also lucky to be a grandpa now. I plan to spend as much time as I can with my grand kids, as well as with my own grown kids, who remain a huge and cherished part of my life.

This chapter is closing, but the story keeps going. I leave feeling deeply grateful — for the people, the purpose, and the privilege of teaching.