

## Introducing Our 2025-26 New Faculty

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Head of School Joy McGrath '92 announced and welcomed the new faculty who will join St. Andrew's in the 2025-26 school year. She expressed gratitude to Dean of Faculty Wilson Everhart '95 and the many students, department chairs, and faculty members who participated in the faculty hiring process this year.



**Jannely Alamonte Ortiz** will serve St. Andrew's in various roles: as a Spanish teacher, dorm parent, and coach, as well as a part-time addition to the academic and college counseling office. A proud Bronx native, Jannely has dedicated her career to independent school education. While she briefly explored corporate human resources, her true calling lies in working with young people. She returned to her alma mater boarding school, where she spent 10 years as a Spanish teacher, coach, international service trip coordinator, and

dorm supervisor, building a strong foundation for her approach to education.

Wanting to be closer to family, Jannely continued her work at an independent day school in New York City for another 10 years. There, she taught Spanish, advised students, coached, mentored faculty, led international trips, and served as a class dean. As an educator, Jannely is deeply committed to helping students recognize their strengths and inherent value in all aspects of their lives.

Jannely joins the St. Andrew's community alongside her husband and two high school-aged children, who are themselves thriving in boarding school environments.

Outside of her professional life, she cherishes time with her family and enjoys running, hiking, and enriching her mind through nonfiction literature.



**Chaz Brackeen**, who will join the school's wellness department, is a dedicated and compassionate licensed master's level social worker with over 15 years of experience supporting youth and families across healthcare, education, and community-based settings. With specialized expertise in adolescent mental health, she brings a trauma-informed, student-centered approach to her new role at St. Andrew's. Chaz most recently served as a pediatric social worker in the emergency department at Nemours

Children's Hospital in Wilmington, Del. In this role, she provided crisis intervention, emergency psychiatric support, and care coordination for children and families navigating acute mental health challenges. Her ability to remain calm, compassionate, and resourceful in high-pressure situations has further deepened her expertise in trauma-informed care and adolescent crisis response.

Prior, Chaz spent 12 years with the State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families, where she worked in Child Protection Services. There, she conducted investigations into abuse and neglect, developed service plans, and advocated for the safety and well-being of children and teens across diverse communities in the state of Connecticut.

Her background also includes work as a clinical therapist, and as a professor in residence at the University of New Haven, where she taught courses in adolescent development psychology, clinical counseling, forensic psychology, health psychology, and abnormal psychology. Chaz is well-versed in cognitive behavioral therapy, dialectical behavior therapy, psychosocial assessment, and collaborative treatment planning.

Chaz is deeply committed to fostering emotionally safe, inclusive environments where students can thrive socially, emotionally, and academically. She is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and Jack and Jill of America, and brings with her a strong foundation in leadership, service, and community engagement.



**Steve Cacciavillano** joins St. Andrew's as director of auxiliary programs, assistant athletic director, assistant football coach, and head wrestling coach. Born and raised in South Jersey, he graduated cum laude from Ursinus College with a bachelor's degree in biology and earned a master's degree in biological sciences from Clemson University.

Steve has worked in education for 13 years in boarding, public, and independent day schools. He began his career at Northfield Mount Hermon

School as a biology teacher, assistant football, wrestling, and lacrosse coach, and dormitory head. Steve most recently worked at Tower Hill School where he served as an upper school science teacher, assistant football and wrestling coach, assistant athletic director, and interim science department chair during the first half of his tenure before becoming the director of athletics in the spring of 2021. He firmly believes in the power of servant leadership and the importance of meticulous attention to detail, and has prioritized both throughout his career.

Outside of school, Steve enjoys spending time with his wife, Hannah, and their three kids, Shaelyn, Stephen, and Hadley. He is a loyal Philadelphia and Penn State sports fan, and continues to torture himself on the golf course whenever time permits. Steve and his family are excited to join the St. Andrew's community!



New English instructor **Mia Franz** grew up the daughter of an independent school English teacher and loved writing and reading, especially poetry and mysteries, and was frequently published in her school's literary magazine. Despite this, she went off to college determined to stay "undecided" in her major for as long as possible, which lasted all of one semester. She graduated with honors with an English degree, a minor in religious studies, and as a proud

member of the first poetry writing concentration class at the University of Virginia. After a year of travel and work, she earned her MFA in creative writing/poetry at Indiana University. Like her father before her, she chose the path that allowed for the joy of connection through relationships: she became an independent school English teacher.

While teaching, coaching, and mentoring at Foxcroft School, Mia met Robert, and when they married in 2010, one of the strong threads that bound them was their love of teaching. In 2015, the family, now including Owen and Gareth, moved to Tampa, Fla. An on-again/off-again runner, Mia decided she needed to find a hobby that she could pursue indoors during the eight months of Florida's summer weather, so she started practicing yoga, and two years later, earned her 200-hour teaching certification. The family took advantage of summer breaks to travel, visiting family and friends up and down the East Coast as well as several national parks and the rainforests and beaches of Costa Rica.

Now, Mia, Robert, Owen (13), and Gareth (11), cats KK and Yeti and dogs Artemis and Astrid, are excited for the next adventure at St. Andrew's. In her free time, Mia can be found reading; walking/jogging; practicing and teaching yoga, meditation, and breathwork; and baking sourdough and sweets.



**Robert Franz** brings nearly three decades of experience in independent schools to his new role in the history department at St. Andrew's, combining a deep passion for teaching with strategic leadership and curricular innovation. Robert served as the head of upper school at Tampa Preparatory School, overseeing the academic and daily life of 500 students and 60 faculty members. His work centered on fostering instructional excellence, building student-centered

programs, and supporting faculty development. While at Tampa Prep, he also led initiatives in equitable assessment reform, AP placement, the integration of generative AI, and designed experiential learning programs including a Civil Rights trip and a curriculum on hate speech and antisemitism.

Before joining Tampa Prep, Robert taught history and ethics at Berkeley Preparatory School, where he co-directed the Berkeley Speaker Series and restructured the U.S. History curriculum to focus on contemporary issues. He also served as head of middle school at Fredericksburg Academy, where he developed leadership programs, service-learning initiatives, and sustainability education.

A hallmark of Robert's career has been his leadership in curriculum design and interdisciplinary learning. As history department chair at both Highland School and Hampton Roads Academy, he advanced global studies initiatives, launched school-wide leadership programming, and created pathways that emphasized 21st-century skills. He has also contributed nationally through his work with the Gardner Carney Leadership Institute, serving as faculty, mentor, and symposium organizer.

Robert holds extensive experience in faculty evaluation, accreditation, and program design. He has presented at NAIS, FCIS, and VAIS conferences.

Whether in the classroom or through institutional leadership, Robert remains committed

to student growth, civil discourse, and educational equity. He believes in schools as communities of inquiry, belonging, and character, and brings this ethos to every role he holds.



**Kate Hardwick '07** returns to St. Andrew's as a history teacher, bringing nearly 15 years of experience in public and independent schools. She most recently served as history department chair at St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School in Alexandria, Virginia, where she taught a range of courses including World and American History, research seminars, and electives on human rights and global issues. In addition to her teaching, she served as an advisor and global travel chaperone

and contributed to several committees, including admissions and professional growth.

Kate holds a master's in independent school leadership from Vanderbilt University and a bachelor's in history from The George Washington University, where she graduated summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa.

Having grown up on a boarding school campus, Kate is excited to return to boarding school life. She loves working closely with students and helping them engage meaningfully with the past and present. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family, reading, cheering on the Washington Nationals, and exploring the world through travel.





**Devondra McMillan** joins St. Andrew's as a classics instructor. An accomplished educator with a deep passion for classical languages and student development, Devondra has engaged in the full life of her residential school communities for the past two decades. She joins SAS from The Webb School, where she served as a Latin teacher, dorm parent, and assistant coach for cross-country and track. Her experience includes leadership positions like dean of students at The

Lawrenceville School (2021-2023) and assistant head of the upper school at The Walker School (2020-2021), where she was instrumental in guiding student life, residential programs, and faculty development. Prior to these roles, Devondra dedicated many years to The Lawrenceville School as language department chair (2016-2020), II Form level director (2014-2020), and classics master, teaching various levels of Latin, designing electives, and leading international travel programs. Her early career also includes teaching positions at Middlesex School and SEED Public Charter School. Academically, Devondra pursued coursework toward an M.A. in Classical Languages at the University of Georgia (2012-2014) and earned her B.A. in Classics with a concentration in Latin from Yale University (1996-2000), following her diploma from Saint George's School (1992-1996). Her commitment to education is further evidenced by numerous professional development certifications, grants, and awards, including a Fulbright Grant and two distinguished teaching chairs. Devondra is also an active member of several professional organizations, including the American Classical League and the Society for Classical Studies.

Originally from the Eastern Shore of Maryland, new arts instructor **Charlese Phillips** graduated from Salisbury University in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in fine arts. There she focused her studies on ceramics and wheel-thrown pottery. In 2019, she earned her master's degree in elementary education studies from Wilmington University.

Charlese's experience in teaching expands from substitute teaching, to managing a public school digital photography classroom for four years. During that time, she also became the advisor for the school's yearbook, an assistant coach for the track and field team, and head coach for one season of outdoor track. Her coaching tenure included helping two athletes earn state championship titles in high jump and set new school records. She has also taught workshops at multiple art institutions, and served as a Resident Teaching Artist across the state for the Delaware Institute for Arts in Education.



A 2023 Delaware Division of the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship Grant recipient, Charlese has taken the past few years to develop her artistry and grow her creative reach as a practicing artist. Her personal art focuses on the themes of identity, color, texture, and nature. She pulls a variety of mediums together in her work, which often includes an element of fiber or weaving. Since receiving her fellowship, Charlese has received multiple awards for her art, including "Best in Show" in 2024 at the Rehoboth Art League's 11th Regional Juried Biennial Exhibition.



**Noah Rickolt '14** joins St. Andrew's as a math teacher, crew coach, and squash coach. Originally from Landenberg, Pa., Noah graduated with a BS in physics and a minor in applied mathematics from Davidson College where he also taught the college's sailing and water skiing PE classes. While attending St. Andrew's and Davidson, he spent four summers as a counselor at a large overnight camp where he wore various



hats including sailing instructor, medical assistant, and kitchen staff.

Prior to returning to St. Andrew's, Noah worked in finance, first as an investment banking analyst in Charlotte, N.C., and then as a real estate acquisitions professional at private equity firms in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. During his time in private equity, he closed over \$1.4B in new investments across nine U.S. metros. While living in Charlotte, he volunteered at Heart Math Tutoring, which supports students at local public elementary schools.

In his free time, Noah enjoys adventuring outdoors as much as possible and is an avid runner, hiker, cyclist, and skier. His favorite book series is *A Song of Ice and Fire*, and he once won a Game of Thrones trivia competition while touring the film locations in Northern Ireland. A former member of the St. Andrew's Pipes & Drums, Noah is excited to bring bagpipes back to campus.

**Will Scully** joins St. Andrew's as a physics instructor and head boys crew coach. Originally from West Simsbury, Conn., Will graduated from Trinity College in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in physics and German. While at Trinity, Will was a four-year member of the rowing team, where he won two New England Rowing Championships and served as the team captain his senior year. Will was also a member of the Trinity Accidentals, an all-male acapella group.



After graduating, Will continued his rowing career at Penn AC in Philadelphia, where he represented the club at U23 Trials and Canadian Henley, and then at Mosman Rowing Club in Sydney, Australia, where he trained with members of the Australian U23 and Senior National teams and competed with the club at the Sydney International Rowing Regatta.

Prior to joining St. Andrew's, Will spent nine years at The Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where he taught math and physics, lived in a dorm of 72 upper-form boys, and served as the head boys coach for Hill's upstart rowing program. Under Will, the Hill boys secured multiple Stotesbury Cup finals appearances, including a win in the Junior 4+ in 2018. During his summers, Will serves as the head boys coach for Penn AC Gold on Boathouse Row in Philadelphia, where he has coached multiple summer national championship winning crews and has led the team to two consecutive Independence Day Regatta team points trophies and most recently, the USRowing Colgan Cup Team points trophy. Will also dedicates a few weeks of his summers to coaching sculling camps at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center in Craftsbury, Vermont.

Will is looking forward to moving to campus with his wife, Samantha, and their Australian shepherd, Cortado. Will enjoys playing music and likes to spend his free time cycling or hiking.