
FALCON UPDATE

INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS OF OUR FALCON FAMILY!



We welcome Jessica Simmons-Brown back to our South Lewis staff. Jessica and her family moved back to Lewis County eight years ago. Prior to taking the new position as a 4th grade AIS provider, Jessica worked in our Middle School Special Education department and the High School Alternative Learning Center. She has a passion for teaching reading and is looking forward to sharing that passion with her new 4th Grade Teaching Team. In addition to 4th Grade AIS, Jessica plans to support our youth athletics by coaching Middle School Intramural Basketball.



Meg Buell is a South Lewis alumni who is new in Ms. Paluck's classroom. Meg went to SUNY Potsdam for childhood education and has previously been a teaching assistant at LACS. She also has spent many years working outside of the education field for the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation. She is married and has two children, Bayleigh and Ethan, who attend Beaver River Elementary. Meg also officiates girls' and boys' swimming and diving, so you may see her on the pool deck. When not at school Meg is usually elbow-deep in tie-dye, reading in her hammock at camp (the Buells are avid campers), or spending time outside with her kids and family.



George Fox started working for SL as a substitute on 6/23/23 and was hired full-time as a cleaner on 8/23/23. George was born and raised in Constableville and attended Constableville Elementary then went on to SL Middle/High. He worked for Sears Oil Co. in Rome, NY as a maintenance man for approximately 20 years. He enjoys his family, hunting, helping community members, and devotes a lot of time to the Constableville Volunteer Fire Department.



Hunter Fenton started working for South Lewis back in April as a substitute and was hired as a full-time cleaner on 8/23/23. Hunter is an avid snowmobiler, hunter, fisherman, and golfer. He was raised in the Town of Watson and attended South Lewis. Hunter worked for Nelson's Tree Service prior to joining the South Lewis family.



Karissa Gerdon joins the South Lewis family as the Middle School Counseling Secretary. Karissa is a 2018 Beaver River graduate and has an Associate Degree in Humanities and Social Sciences from Jefferson Community College. When she's not in the office you can find her hiking in the Adirondacks, kayaking, reading, baking, or playing with her puppy, Violet! Karissa is so thankful for the opportunity to work at South Lewis.

She looks forward to getting to know everyone and helping out as much as she can.



This year Courtney Hastwell joins the South Lewis family as an aide in the high school after spending half of last year in the middle school as a BOCES aide. She is also a graduate of South Lewis Central School District. Courtney attended Mohawk Valley Community College where she earned an Associate's Degree in Applied Science. She currently lives in Lyons Falls with her husband, Jeremy, and their three boys, Carter who is twelve, Bryce who is eleven and Owen who is six. Her boys are into sports, mostly baseball and football. Courtney also volunteers as treasurer of the Lyons Falls Little League. She is very excited to be part of the South Lewis family this year and is extremely thankful to the District for this opportunity.



Yvonne Houppert joined the South Lewis Family as the Middle School Keyboard Specialist to assist the Middle School Principal in July 2023, after serving the last 29 years working with the Johnson Newspaper Corporation in various capacities. She graduated from SUNY Plattsburgh in 1994 with a BA in Journalism and immediately went to work at the Journal and Republican. Yvonne and her husband Kevin live in Glenfield and have two grown children. Olivia is a recent graduate from Nazareth University with her Master's Degree in Art Therapy and is employed by the Jefferson County Children's Home. Nicholas is a senior at SUNY Cortland, majoring in History. Yvonne and Kevin love to travel and spend time in Florida whenever possible. Gardening, running, and spending time with her family are also some of her favorite things to do in her spare time. She is very excited to have been given the opportunity to work in such a wonderful school system!



Dennis Knoblauch grew up in Constableville and graduated from South Lewis in 1990. After graduation, he worked on the family farm, taking over the operation in 2016. In 2022, he sold his herd of dairy cattle and became a crop farmer. Once he made that change, he joined the South Lewis family in the Transportation Department as a bus driver.



Nicole Kraeger joined South Lewis in December as a 12:1:3:1 Aide. Prior to her employment at South Lewis, Nicole was employed through BOCES, also as a 12:1:3:1 Aide. When Nicole isn't working at school, she can often be found working as a Caregiver to the elderly. Nicole has been married to Charles for 19 years. Together they share seven beautiful children and two grandchildren. Nicole loves taking care of people and plants and enjoys camping and spending time with family and friends.



Colleen Millick joined South Lewis in August 2023 as an aide in the kindergarten classrooms. Colleen has an Associate's Degree in Business and was most recently employed with Lewis County Head Start in the three-year-old classroom. In her free time, Colleen enjoys spending time adventuring with her husband and six-month-old son. Colleen is excited to be a part of the South Lewis family.



Christina O'Brien (Platt), a former student (class of 2016) joined us full-time in November 2022 as the Health and Adapted P.E. teacher. After graduating from South Lewis, she went to JCC for her Associate's Degree in Physical Education and then to Utica College for her Bachelors and Masters degrees for Health, Wellness, Physical, and Adventure Education. While in college, Christina was a part-time employee at South Lewis subbing in many grade levels/subjects and also coaching Modified Girls Track and Field starting in 2018-2021. After graduating from college, she worked at South Jefferson for one year as a Middle School Health Teacher and Assistant Coach for the Varsity Cross Country, Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field before coming back to South Lewis. Originally from Constableville, she now resides in Lowville, NY with her husband Alex O'Brien, and their two children Charlee O'Brien and Liam O'Brien, where they and their family own a dairy farm and local cheese curd and milk business (O'Brien's Family Dairy). Christina is very excited to finally be a full-time member of the South Lewis Family and is looking forward to the rest of her career at South Lewis.



Matthew O'Brien recently joined South Lewis Central School in the transportation department as a bus driver. Prior to South Lewis, he worked in the telecommunications field for almost thirty years before being diagnosed with Grey Zone Lymphoma and decided to close that business and stay close to home and go through treatments. He and his girlfriend, Lacey, also run Cold Brook Campsites and have two adult Bassett Hounds and recently added a puppy. Matthew says he likes to stay busy. We can tell! Welcome to the South Lewis family!



Michelle Pfendler, an Adirondack graduate, joins us as a cleaner this school year. Prior to South Lewis she worked at a steel mill, the Elks Club in Boonville, and the Boondocks Bar and Restaurant. In her free time, she and her husband Keith, and three children, Avery, Autumn, and Logan, spend their time working in their horse barn and haying. We welcome this busy lady to our Falcon family!



Zack Polanco started working for South Lewis as a custodian on 1/23/23. Zack was born in Austin, Texas, then went on to the Army in 2020. He enjoys the outdoors and likes to hunt and fish in his spare time.



In December 2022 Kim Pominville joined the South Lewis Family as an aide in the 12:1:3 classroom. Kim is a South Lewis graduate and is a lifelong resident of Lewis County. After graduating from South Lewis, she worked at P&C/Tops for 25 years. From 2007-2022 she worked for Jefferson/Lewis BOCES. She enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She is looking forward to working at South Lewis.



Kristy Post has lived in Lyons Falls her entire life and is an alumna of the class of 2008! She is a wife and mother of two beautiful girls, one is in 6th grade and the other is a kindergartener at South Lewis! Before joining the South Lewis family, she worked for Otis Technology for 13 years, and then for BOCES as a 1:1 aide.



A 2018 South Lewis graduate, Julianne Schindler joins South Lewis this 2023-2024 school year as a fifth-grade English Language Arts and Social Studies educator. Julianne received both her Bachelor's Degree in childhood education and her Master's Degree in Literacy from SUNY Oswego. Her additional certifications include Birth-Grade 2, Grades 7-12 English, and Literacy Specialist. Turin is Julianne's hometown where she has grown up with her three siblings, dad, and mom.

Outside of school, you can find Julianne with her family, reading, gardening, or sipping coffee. As we enter this school year, Miss Schindler is most eager to help her students grow in knowledge and skill and to fall in love with the journey of learning!



Dan Skiff started working for South Lewis in February of 2023 as a substitute and was hired permanently as a cleaner this July. Dan was born and raised in Glenfield and graduated from South Lewis in 1976. He enjoys camping and helping his stepson with woodworking projects. Dan came to South Lewis from Kraft where he had been employed for 34 years.



Robert Vogt may be a Copenhagen graduate but he's a Falcon now! A former employee for the Town of West Turin, Robert is our new Maintenance Worker. He and his wife Jennifer are the proud parents of two South Lewis students, Liberty and Jacob. In his free time he enjoys hunting, fishing, and trapping.



Rick Ward was born in Watertown, New York, graduated High School in San Bernardino, California and finished his college degrees in San Diego, California. He taught College English at various institutions in New Jersey before finding his niche in creating Workforce Development Programs at City Colleges of Chicago. He took that experience to Maryland where he finished his career in education at Carroll Community College. He always knew he would return to the North Country to pursue his favorite pastimes of fishing, camping and canoeing. He is happy to be part of the South Lewis Family as a bus driver and substitute teacher.

ONE DISTRICT - ONE BUILDING - ONE FAMILY