

## **L.E.E.P. Teacher Biographies**

### **Debbie Thrash:**

During my 27 years of teaching, I have enjoyed being able to educate in public, private, and home school settings from kindergarten to eighth grade. I delight in sharing my passion for learning with families in their homeschooling adventures. Since graduating from Auburn University in 1990 with a Bachelor's of Science Degree in both Elementary and Early Childhood Education, my varied teaching experiences have molded my eclectic style of instruction. Due to all these experiences, I delight in adapting the way I teach each class/subject based on the needs and personalities of the students that God places in my classes. My husband and I moved to Opelika in 1991 when I accepted a job teaching kindergarten at Trinity Christian School, before they began using a classical program. In 1995, when my oldest son was born, I decided to become a stay-at-home mommy. My home became my new classroom. After my second son was born, it became apparent that both boys, later diagnosed with dyslexia, would struggle in the traditional classroom. Along with their little sister, we began our home schooling journey.

While desiring for my children to have a classroom experience, in 2007 I created my first writing workshop class for a group of students at First Baptist Church in Opelika. The next year, I taught for Once Upon a Book, a literature/composition program, held at Trinity Methodist Church in Opelika. We had a blast learning about writing techniques from quality literature in my third and fifth grade classes. (Those students are almost grown up now! Currently, I am teaching several of their younger siblings either at LEEP or at the Auburn Parks and Rec.) Then, I met the founder of Auburn Classical Academy and was introduced to the classical approach. The early ACA was a cottage school model where classes were offered a couple a days a week. During this time, I learned how to teach the Shurley English Method, Spell to Write and Read, and Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW) as well as gained a deep appreciation for memorization, narration, and dictation. When ACA evolved into a full-time private school, I opened my own cottage school in Opelika and eventually moved it to Auburn. The last five years, I taught at the Auburn Parks and Recreation Center and for LEEP. I am extremely thankful to Deborah Stabler for her undying support along with Sarah Snead's and Anne Ingram's hard work and dedication for making it possible for me to teach at Lakeview.

### **Kathy Lynch:**

I graduated from Auburn University in 1979 with a B.S. in Elementary Education. Upon graduation I began teaching in the Lee County school system and continued teaching until 1995 when I began homeschooling my own two children. While home schooling I taught part-time on campus at Ballard Christian School from 1995 to 1997. In 2004 I began teaching composition classes to homeschoolers. At the Homeschool Connection, I taught students from elementary ages through seniors in high school. I withdrew from teaching during the 2011-2012 school year to care for my husband who was diagnosed with a rare neurological disease. After his passing in August 2013, I returned to teaching homeschoolers as God called me to do long ago. I recently married Jerry Lynch. Currently I teach classes for Lakeview Christian School and Grace Heritage Church. Working with students is one of my greatest passions.

### **Carrie Fellows:**

I'm thankful and blessed to have gotten my undergraduate and master's degree in Special Education at Auburn University. I also played soccer for four incredible years for Auburn University. I taught Special Education for Auburn City Schools for six years and while working there I started and was the head coach of the Auburn High girls' soccer and volleyball teams. For the past seven years, I have homeschooled my four awesome kids! Our family did Classical Conversations for three years, in which I was a tutor for two of those years. Our family has been involved in Lakeview's LEEP (2 years of teaching PE), Jr. High, and High School programs for 5 years now and have truly appreciated its consistency and challenge in academics and the integrity and encouragement of the teachers. All of these experiences have taught me hard work, determination, discipline, patience, teamwork and most importantly to live by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ!

I love sports! And I truly believe there is a connection between physical activity and brain development, so let's get moving and have fun!

### **Julie Brown:**

My name is Julie Brown. I have 4 children, ages 18-13, and have lived in Auburn almost 12 years. I received my undergraduate degree in Special Education for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing in 1995 from The University of Alabama and a M.Ed in 1999 from AUM. I taught for 3 years at Vaughn Road Elementary School in Montgomery before having my first child, who we discovered by age 3 had special needs. That set my family on a whole journey of exploring how to teach a child who did not learn in a "traditional" manner. These many years later, I can say honestly that I've learned more about teaching as a parent than I ever learned in school. I have homeschooled my younger 3 children for five years, was a "tutor" with Classical Conversations Foundations program 4 of those years, as well as taught Latin (Henle, First and Second Form) for both mine and other children the past two years. Last year, I taught First Form with LEEP, and I am looking forward to teaching again this year! It was sign language that actually attracted me to special education years ago, as I love learning other languages. I had 8 1/2 years combined of Romance languages (French/Spanish) in high school and college which has helped greatly to prepare me to study/teach Latin the last two years. Philosophy My philosophy in teaching, specifically in memorization, which is so much of early learning, whether science, Latin or another subject is to add variety and fun alongside drill and practice. The more intensity and fun learning can be for anyone, the more quickly it is mastered. Auditory, visual, tactile and movement methods contribute to the various ways the same information can be input into a student, hopefully resulting in quicker transfer from short term to longer term memory.

### **Michelle Giddens:**

Michelle Giddens is the Owner and Creative Director of The Art Studio. Prior to opening her studio, Michelle worked as an artist while staying at home with her children. She taught elementary and middle school art at Fellowship Christian School in Roswell, GA, from 2004-2006. While there, she developed the art curriculum and established a school-wide art club. Michelle holds a BFA in Art Education from

Georgia State University and has her Alabama teaching license with an endorsement in Art. She has a BA in Communication from Auburn University. Michelle has expertise in drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, and art history. She studied art in Cortona, Italy, and traveled to Rome, Florence, Naples, and Venice. Michelle lives on a farm outside of Auburn with her husband, James, and their two children, Thomas and Andrew.