



**Zeeland Quest**  
LEARNING WITHOUT LIMITS

## MEET THE 2019/2020 ZQUEST TEAM!



I'm Leslie Rindfliesch! I was born and raised in Port Huron, MI. My family made the move from one lake to the other 12 years ago (and I must say that we absolutely LOVE the west-side of Michigan!). I attended Central Michigan University and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with a minor in language arts and mathematics. In 2010, I graduated from Saginaw Valley State University with a Masters in Educational Leadership.

This is my 19th year in the educational field, my 12th year with Zeeland Public Schools and I'm entering my 8th year at Zeeland Quest! I have taught every grade level, kindergarten through 8th grade in my career, and I am so proud to be the Principal of the most amazing, non-traditional public school in the area! We are so lucky to have educational options here in Zeeland like ZQuest! My husband, Mark, and I enjoy doing all types of outdoor activities with our girls, Alexis, 10th grade (we made it through our 1st year of high school at Zeeland West High School with flying colors!) and Tessa, 8th grade (who you will find at ZQuest for one final year--insert sad face), going to ZPS high school sporting events, traveling to Penn State football and volleyball games, and watching the girls participate in their activities (primarily I'm a taxi, getting them to their practices on time...for the most part...but excited to start the driver's training journey with Alexis this summer)! I very much enjoy listening to music, learning more about and improving education, relaxing in the sun (when I get a chance), baking and of course shopping!

This year will prove to be very rewarding, and I am more than excited to get started! My goal this year is to continue the great work we've started together as a team of teachers, parents and kids, to take Zeeland Quest students and teachers to the next level of outside-of-the-box learning, strive to continue our uniqueness within the great district of ZPS! We have a wonderful school in front of us, great teachers facilitating the education of your learners and leading the way to changing education by offering different opportunities to our community! The kids of ZQuest are taking the lead in these new ways of learning and will prove to be leaders of their learning and our ever growing and changing community! There are no limits on how, where and when we learn at Zeeland Quest and that excites me more than anything!

## Zeeland Quest Early Elementary Teachers



Hello! My name is Kristy Zimmer and I am so excited to start my second year teaching Kindergarten at ZQuest. I went to Hope College (2012) for my undergrad and GVSU (2016) for a special education certification. While at Hope, I student taught Kindergarten and fell in love with teaching this grade level. It is such a fun age group to work with and to see them learn new skills. I lived in Washington DC after college and worked at Jill's House, a respite home for children with disabilities. It was an incredible experience to care for children with special needs and give parents respite and rest. Since then I have been teaching at multiple grade levels, special education and gen ed. I am very happy to have landed Kindergarten! I was raised by my wonderful parents in Holland MI, along with my older sister. My husband, Mike and I got married in November 2017. We love spending time at his family cottage in the summers. We adopted our Labradane puppy, Kirby, in November 2018 and love taking him on walks and runs! In our spare time we love to play games with our friends, garden and do DIY projects around the house. I have been running races with my dad for 10 years, we started off with just 5k's and worked our way up to a marathon in 2016!



Hello! My name is Amy Funk and I am one of the 1st-2nd grade teachers. This will be my 8th year teaching with Zeeland Quest. I love watching my students develop a love for learning and how they push me because they want to go above and beyond of what is required of them. During break weeks and over the summer my students continue to contact me on what they are learning and what they have achieved. A goal for me and my students this year will be to help them develop their critical thinking, problem solving and 21st Century skills to become self directed learners to reach their highest level of achievement. I have a Marketing Degree from Eastern Michigan University and a Teaching Degree from Grand Valley State University. I currently live in Grand Haven with my Husband. We have 2 Biological Children. Kyle is living in Washington D.C. and works as a Research Associate for National League of Cities. Derek is taking classes at Grand Valley State University, working towards his Bachelor Degree. In April 2018, we adopted a young man who needed a family and a home. His name is Carlos. He works at Alliance Distribution Beverage Co. in Grand Rapids.. In my spare time I love to read, play games, spend time with my family, travel and spend time at the beach.



Hi! I'm Shannon Foerch and I am one of the 1st-2nd grade teachers. I grew up in Mid-Michigan and have now fallen in love with West Michigan. I am a Hope College graduate and earned my master's degree in Early Childhood Education from Western Michigan University in 2014. This will be my 13th year of teaching, all in K-2 classrooms. I had a great opportunity to live and teach in Georgia, but am happy to be home in Michigan :) I love ZQuest for the multi-age aspect and the ability to meet learners where they are at - it's a great challenge and so neat to see my students' knowledge and abilities grow exponentially! Every year, my hope is that I can create a loving and safe learning environment for my students so that they will love learning.

My husband Luke and I have been married for 11 years and we have two children, Nora (3.5 years old) and Josiah (1.5 years old) who keep us busy! We enjoy spending time with our friends & families, being outside - hiking, swimming and biking - as well as completing DIY projects for our home (and for my classroom)!

## Zeeland Quest Upper Elementary & Middle School Teachers



Hi! My name is Kimberly Villanueva and this will be my 12th year of teaching! I graduated from Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids, MI with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education. I also have my certification in teaching Academically and Intellectually Gifted students from North Carolina Central University. I moved to Raleigh, North Carolina in 2008 where I taught 2nd grade for 1 year and 3rd grade for 4 years. I miss those warm winters and those scorching summers as well as the mountains and oceans, but love the quiet of Lake Michigan and the calm of Spring and Fall.

My husband Jeffery and I have been married for almost 11 years. We have an awesome little girl named Ellery Faith. Ellery is 7 and starting Second Grade this Fall! As a family, we stay incredibly busy with soccer, cheer, T-ball, and dance. We love the chaos of it all (most of the time.)

I have enjoyed being a part of ZQuest for the past 6 years and I look forward to another great year! It has been such a joy to be a part of a school that values kids and their learning, as well as a part of this team and change the way we educate our kids. I love sharing my passion for Social Studies with kids and getting them excited about learning about the world around the world. My goal for my kiddos this year is to challenge them in their approach to things that are difficult. Keeping a positive mindset and developing an "I Can" attitude are keys to their success.



Hello! My name is Lindsey Droppers and I am excited to begin my fifth year at ZQuest! I am the 3rd and 4th grade teacher along with Kim Villanueva. Third and fourth grade has been such a fun age to teach and I can't wait to see what this year brings. I am so thankful to be a part of such an amazing school!

In May of 2015 I graduated from Hope College with a major in English Language Arts and minor in Elementary Education. During my time at Hope I enjoyed getting involved in Greek Life and opportunities through the education department. In the summer of 2017 I graduated from Western Governors University with my Masters in Instructional

Design. I learned so much about the implementation of curriculum and it has been rewarding to see my students benefit from what I have learned!

I was born and raised in Hamilton, Michigan along with my brother (Nick) and sister-in-law (Alisha) and attended Hamilton Community Schools. In my free time I enjoy spending time outdoors with my husband Joey and our dog Lola. We love to hike, camp and go to the beach! We also share a passion for running. I have run several half marathons and two marathons. We live in Grand Rapids and enjoy living close to downtown!

One of many goals I have for this year is to challenge and encourage my students to be critical thinkers and to teach them how to have ownership of their learning. I am eager to get to know each of my students and their learning styles. ZQuest students show a great passion for learning which is unique to our school. Teaching in this environment has given me such great joy!



Hello ZQuest Families! My name is Liz Hampton. I am very excited to start my eighth year at ZQuest as one of the lead teachers for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade room!

During the first year of ZQuest I was a paraprofessional for the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grade room. My second year, I was a paraprofessional in the middle school room and in February I moved into the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade room as a long-term substitute teacher. For the next two years, I enjoyed my time as a lead teacher in the 4/5 room. I am very much looking forward to my fourth year working with 5th and 6th graders!

What I love most about ZQuest is the opportunity for students to learn 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that will prove to be very beneficial in our classroom and in their future!

Before ZQuest, I graduated from Grand Valley with a major in Social Studies and a minor in Elementary Education. I was born and raised in Holland, MI along with my sister (Kate) and brothers (Dave and Tom). My sister, after living in Atlanta for 7 years is now moving back to Holland! She brings along my two nieces so I am very thankful to have them close by for the first time in their lives! I plan to take many trips to the beach with them this July. One brother lives in Lake Tahoe and the other in San Francisco, I love to visit them when I can! In

my spare time I love to stay active and be outdoors! I also love to read, bake, and do crafty things..

One goal I have for this year is to encourage a growth mindset in our classroom, for example, instead of thinking, "This is too hard!" we will try to think, "This may take some time and effort." This mindset will challenge students to persevere and become more independent with their learning.



Hello! My name is Amy Bultena, and I am one of the 5th/6th grade teachers. I am thrilled to be at ZQuest for my fifth year!

I was born and raised in Farmington Hills in the Metro Detroit area, and lived there my whole life before attending Grand Valley State University. I'm a two-time graduate of GVSU- I received my Bachelor's Degree in Social Studies in 2011, and my Master's Degree in Literacy Studies in 2018. I truly enjoyed having so many opportunities to learn new things to bring back to my classroom!

I've lived in West Michigan ever since marrying my husband, Andrew, in July of 2013. We have one spunky cat named Oliver. I miss the hustle and bustle of the Detroit area, but have grown to love the beauty of West Michigan and its' close-knit community feel. There's nothing quite like having Lake Michigan just a few miles away (although I could do without the lake effect snow!). I try my best to take advantage of the beautiful weather by going to the beach, riding bikes, or reading outside in the sun! I also love to travel whenever I get the opportunity, and try to spend time with family and friends as much as possible, especially my parents in the Metro Detroit area, and my brother and sister-in-law in Florida.

ZQuest is an amazing place to grow and learn, and I'm thankful to be able to teach here! I am looking forward to a wonderful year for our 5th/6th grade students.



Hello! I'm Marcy Blowers and I will be celebrating my eighth year of learning, teaching, and growing at ZQuest! My path to ZQuest started when I chose to pursue my lifelong passion for teaching by attending Hope College, where I graduated summa cum laude in May 2012 with a major in special education and a minor in mathematics education. Shortly after graduating, I was given the amazing opportunity to join ZQuest in its pilot year and to help shape a school that puts students first, not standards. Not many teachers get the unique blessing of being able to witness and nurture the growths in academics, maturity, and self-awareness that students go through in those consecutive middle school years. Seeing that blossoming of confidence and identity is the best thing about

teaching!

I am a few months away from earning my Masters of Education in STEM Leadership and am thrilled to have more knowledge, strategies, and innovative practices to bring into the classroom. I'm also extremely excited to continue pushing the the 7th/8th

classroom to the next level with my teaching partner, Zach. We achieved some amazing results with our PBLs last year and I know we are both eagerly anticipating the great things that PBL will bring this year. As always, we are focusing on creating learning experiences that are challenging, engaging, flexible, and authentic--all while maintaining the trademark 7/8 "fun factor."

Amongst the students at ZQuest, I'm known as the teacher who loves cats, Diet Coke, purple, and *The Wizard of Oz*. I also hold the title of "Teacher Most Likely to Get Mistaken For a Student." When I'm not teaching, you will probably find me reading on the beach in the summer, or snuggled up with my cats, Pippa and Izzy, and a book in the winter. This summer, I'll also be focused on planning my October wedding.

My mom and younger sister, who reside in the suburbs of Chicago, love to visit and take advantage of the beach and all the tasty produce in West Michigan. My brother recently moved closer to home, from Utah to Wisconsin, so I'm looking forward to more family time with all of them and my future niece or nephew!



Hi, my name is Zachary Adams and I am excited to begin my sixth year teaching overall and my second year teaching 7th and 8th grade with Miss Marcy! I was born and raised in the Columbus, Ohio area. I am the youngest of four children in my family, which includes two older sisters and one older brother. My parents raised me to be a responsible, respectful, and intelligent person who is driven to be the best man that I possibly can be. I find joy in reading, which I developed from my father, and I also enjoy staying active whether that is playing soccer, riding bikes, or going on runs with my wife Katie. My wife and I love to travel during the ZQuest break weeks and I often connect these vacations to a topic that I am teaching. This summer I will be

competing in my first triathlon. After the triathlon I will begin my training for a marathon, which will take place in October.

In August I will complete the requirements for my Masters in Educational Technology from Michigan State University. Go Green! I am passionate about providing my students with the best education possible and that means providing them with many opportunities to engage in creating with technology. I am continuously encouraged and challenged by the things I have learned in my Masters program as well as by Miss Marcy to develop outstanding PBLs where students can foster their love of learning and express their personal interest.

My goals as a teacher include teaching the students to be independent learners as well as problem solvers. At ZQuest we focus around Project Based Learning where students are encouraged to communicate and collaborate with each other to answer questions and fully understand the content. I have a passion for reaching the students on an individual level and making sure their learning style is being accounted for. In my class we will be using technology not to substitute for learning, but to enhance the learning that is already taking place. I will strive to help my students to love the learning process. In my class we are a team and treat one another like family so that every individual feels like they are loved and respected in the

classroom. I know that I am in the classroom to teach the students, but I am also there to learn from the students how I can be a more influential teacher.

## Zeeland Quest Special Education and Specialists



Hello my name is Courtney Pyle and I am ZQuest's resource teacher. I received my degree from Aquinas College in May of 2011. Through this degree I am certified to teach K-12 Special Education, 6-8 Language Arts and all subjects K-5. Since 2012 I've been the resource teacher for Zeeland Quest, Roosevelt and Lincoln before deciding that Zeeland Quest would be my permanent home. In 2014, I started the year split between ½ and resource to start the year and then switched to full time ½ in October. The following year I headed back to the resource position as I found that it was truly my passion to work with struggling learners. I'm thrilled that ZQuest embraces inclusion for the resource students, but also recognizes that for some, the best learning environment is being pulled out to build up those lower level skills!

I have been married for almost 5 years to my Husband Michael. And we have a two year old daughter Ryleigh. She has brought so much joy to our lives! We will be adding another kiddo to our Family around July 1st and can't wait for what the adventure of having two rugrats around is going to be like!

In my free time I enjoy spending time with family and friends, at our family's cottage, camping, playing games, hiking, biking, kayaking, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, and many more outdoor activities!

I love working at ZQuest and having the flexibility to push-in and pull-out based upon the specific needs of each individual student. We have a great group of teachers and specialists that help make sure every student is able to learn and be involved no matter what type of learner they are.



### **Lorna Nelson, Spanish, K-8**

Hello ZQuest family!

My name is Lorna Nelson and I am so excited to begin my 2nd year at ZQuest (and lucky 13th year teaching) as the K-8 Spanish teacher.

A little about my background... I moved to Zeeland at the age of 3 from the Columbus, OH area. The 3rd of 5 children, I attended Zeeland Public Schools for my K-12 education. After graduating from Zeeland High School (yes, at that time there was only one!), I attended St. Thomas Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, from which I earned a double major in Spanish and Communication with an emphasis in Public Speaking. I also earned my K-12 teaching certificate before graduating in the spring of 2006. During my college career, I was a member of the Varsity Softball team and traveled to and lived in Salamanca, Spain for a semester. I was blessed to be able to travel to many European

countries during my 4 months abroad. The summer after graduation, I moved to Cuernavaca, Mexico all by myself to fully immerse myself in a Spanish-speaking country... although I already had a broad knowledge of the language and culture before living there, this was the time and place in my life that I feel like I really fell in love with Spanish. In the summer of 2007, I accepted a high school teaching position in Arizona and stayed there for 11 years. During that time I earned my Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Phoenix (2010). In February of 2017, my husband Nathan and I welcomed a son, Conrad, into the world and within a year we realized how much we wanted for him to get to be a bigger part of his grandparents', aunts'/uncles' and cousins' lives, so we made the move back to Zeeland in the spring of 2018.

It was only a few months later that I was honored to accept the K-8 Spanish teacher position at ZQuest. During my 1st year here, I was amazed at how welcomed I felt by the staff, students and families. I look forward to building upon those relationships this year and for the years to come. I feel so lucky to be able to have students year after year, to be a witness to their growth in the Spanish language over time, but also in deepening our relationships.

Finally, during our free time, my husband and I love to camp, grill, take our miniature schnauzer (Lola) for walks, go to the beach and pretty much do anything playing outside with our son and spending time with our families. Also, we are ecstatic to announce that we are expecting our 2nd child sometime in the beginning of September 2019. This year is going to be an exciting one filled with love, laughter and lots of fun! I can't wait!!

## Zeeland Quest Intervention Team



Hello! My name is Krista Schopmeyer and I am thrilled to be a part of the ZQuest staff again this year. I am a graduate of Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Science in Child Development and Elementary Education as well as a Master of Arts in Education. I am passionate about supporting students as they understand their learning process and develop their skills and abilities.

I began my career 12 years ago in North Carolina, teaching primarily Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten. I loved guiding children to become successful students as they developed their curiosity and discovery into life-long learning practices. After returning to Michigan to be closer to family, I joined Zeeland Public Schools as an interventionist. Last year I took on the role of Reading Teacher at ZQuest. I love the way ZQuest encourages students to take ownership of their learning and empowers them to become independent learners.

My husband, Jesse, and I have been married since 2007; our son, Owen, is 8 years old and in 3rd grade at ZQuest. We enjoy reading and playing games together, visiting museums in Grand Rapids and Chicago, and spending time with our extended family.



### **Interventionist, Pat VanderZee**

Hi! My name is Pat VanderZee, and I just completed my first year as an interventionist for ZQuest. Before ZQuest, I was in Godwin Heights for 18 years during which I taught Kindergarten and First Grade classes. I have a BA in English/Language Arts, and my Masters is in Early Childhood Education. At ZQuest, I love working with the dedicated and talented staff and am enjoying teaching some **really great** students. I'm looking forward to another fabulous year!

I live in the Marne area. My husband and I recently moved a little closer to our children and grandchildren. We spend a lot of our time being a part of renovation projects at my son's house (built in 1870) and my daughter's house (built in 1874). I also cherish my time with my grandchildren, Alora 14, Violet 12, and Gavin 11, and family in general.

## **Zeeland Quest Aides**



### **Micki Hyma, Special Education Paraprofessional**

I am Micki Hyma, special education paraprofessional for Zquest. I was born and raised in Holland but currently live in Hudsonville. This is my sixth year working in this position. I feel so fortunate to be able to hang out with not only the kids I get to work with everyday but all of the great kids that attend Zquest.

My husband and I have been married for almost 21 years and we have three great kids, two English Mastiffs, and a Yorkie named Tank. Our oldest son is twenty three and attends GRCC. We have another son that will be a senior at Zeeland East this year and our daughter will be a sophomore.

After our oldest moved out my family decided to open up our empty bedroom and home to foster children. We have been able to do this for almost a year now and have had two children come and go from our home. It's an incredible unpredictable journey that we intend to continue.



### **Shelly Vandlen, Health Aide**

I'm Shelly Vandlen and I am a health aide at ZQuest. This is my third year as an aide and I'm excited to work with the students again at ZQuest. I enjoy working with the students and they sure can put a smile on your face and make the day brighter.

I grew up in Cadillac, MI, and moved to the Grand Rapids area for college in 1987.

I have worked in the medical profession for 30 years as a certified nurse aide, physical therapy assistant and home care aide.

I was married in 1989 to a wonderful man who passed away with ALS in 2003. We have two beautiful kids together. I met my husband, Tom and his two children, and we married in 2006, and now have a wonderful combined family.

We enjoy family time, camping and riding our ATVs and dirt bikes. Spending time with family is something that I always enjoy. I am a photographer and enjoy going on my own mini adventures for relaxation and to take photos. One of my favorite quotes to support my love of photography is, "Photography takes an instant out of time, altering life by holding it still." ~Dorothea Lange



### **Student Success Coordinator, Jil Hartman**

Hello my name is Jil Hartman and I am the Student Success Coordinator for Z Quest. My position was newly created in 2018/2019 school year. My job is to be an extra layer of support for staff and students here at school with behavioral, social and emotional support in any situation the teachers think it would be helpful for me to come alongside a student and offer extra support. I love that each of my days are different and that I can be available to support any student who might need a little extra

love that day. I feel truly blessed to be in this position. I am not an unfamiliar face around school as my kids started at Z Quest when it first began and I have been an active volunteer ever since. This year my daughter, Maggie, will be a 9th grader at Zeeland West and my son, Gerrit, will be an 8th grader here at Z- Quest. My husband Chris and I were high school sweethearts who attended different high school and have been married for 19 years. We are both graduates of Grand Valley State University. When I'm not at school you can usually find me driving my kids to and from their various events, helping my daughter run her non profit flower business Maggie's Flowers or doing projects on our 1900 farmhouse.

