



Advancing
the Community
of Tomorrow

About the Staff

In the following pages you will be introduced to all of our full-time staff members, but we think it is important to note that ACT is able to offer our robust programming because we employ a variety of invaluable, caring, trained part-time staff, including:

- Summer program group leaders and leaders-in-training
- After-school group leaders
- Visual arts, sports, and performing arts specialists
- Parent-toddler class instructors
- Hangout Haven support staff

Every staff member is valuable and integral to our organization!

Marie Del Tejo

Executive Director



Marie has been working in the educational field since 1980, and has been working at ACT since 1990. She holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters of Science in Education from Hunter College. She has attended Columbia University programs such as Middle Management for Youth Services and Developing Leaders. Across the past four decades, Marie has been a classroom teacher, a mentor to teachers and group leaders, and an advisor to parents and community home-based daycares who need supportive behavioral management. She sits on the board of The Meeting House, an organization that offers a wide array of social emotional learning programs for all ages, and Musica Sacra, whose mission is to educate and expose children to choral music through participation. Marie grew up on the West Side, and uses her knowledge to help families navigate the New York City admissions process and choose the right educational path for their children.

Email: mdeltejo@stjohndivine.org



Orissa Woods

School-Age Coordinator



Orissa has nine years of experience as an early childhood education teacher. In 2003, she established Unity Group Family Daycare Services and administered the entire operation while remaining committed to maintaining a healthy educational environment for all children. During the year, Orissa serves as Divine Party Manager in addition to overseeing the Afterschool program at ACT. Orissa has worked at ACT for 15 years.

Email: owoods@stjohndivine.org



Emma Schneider
Administrative Director



Emma's experience at ACT began back in 2003, when they were a 7-year-old going to summer camp for the first time. During the summers they would return to ACT to work as a camp counselor. They have worked as a Summer Camp and Afterschool group leader as well as an Early Years assistant teacher. After 12 years working at ACT, they are well prepared to support the program and staff in an administrative capacity.

Email: eschneider@stjohndivine.org

Charlotte Flatley
Office Manager



Charlotte has been a part of the ACT team since September 2025. She loves welcoming Early Years students early in the morning and helping families navigate Afterschool pick-ups at the end of the day. Whether you have been coming to ACT for years or are new to any of our programs, Charlotte can always be found in the Front Office with a big smile on her face, ready to help you with whatever you need!

Email: cflatley@stjohndivine.org

Karen Blancq

Head Pre-K Teacher



Karen has been a teacher in public and private early childhood education programs for over 30 years. She attended NYU Film School and has earned a B.A. in Psychology from Hunter College and a Masters Degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education from Bank Street College. She participates regularly in professional development opportunities including touring the renowned schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, and belongs to several international professional educators' organizations. She is particularly proud of the fact that the fun and learning in the ACT PreK program takes place primarily in one of the only outdoor classrooms in the NYC UPK program. She is passionate about working with young children and believes wholeheartedly that teaching is her calling, not simply her profession.

Email: kmacleanblancq@stjohndivine.org



Melody Colon

Assistant Pre-K Teacher



Melody is an Assistant Teacher who loves working with students and helping make learning fun, supportive, and meaningful. She takes pride in being patient and encouraging, while creating a positive classroom environment where every child feels valued, confident, and motivated to grow.



Ann Shepherd
Head 3K Teacher



Ann, better known as Ms. Ann to our Nursery school children, has been teaching for almost two decades. A graduate of Wells College, with studies in English Literature, Ms. Ann has experience in a wide range of settings with children between the ages of two and eight years old. She has worked in Head Start and at the YMCA Co-op Nursery. Before becoming a Head Teacher, she did a student internship at P.S. 234 and tutored children at the Northside Center of Child Development.

Email: ashepherd@stjohndivine.org

Astry Wells
Assistant 3K Teacher



Astry Wells has been teaching young learners for over 32 years. She began her career at a Montessori school, where she developed a strong foundation in hands-on learning and fostering independence in children. Astry is passionate about early childhood education and believes preschool is a special time for curiosity, creativity, and growth. She creates a warm, nurturing classroom environment where children feel safe, supported, and excited to learn through play. With decades of experience, Astry is dedicated to helping each child build confidence, social skills, and a lifelong love of learning.