



Stoa Family Academy Instructor Bios

Alcazar, Ellen

Ellen Alcazar has served as a speech and debate coach and is currently the director of Invictus Fides Speech and Debate Club. Her undergraduate work is in sociology and psychology, and she holds a Master's in Elementary Education. She has taught junior and senior high school in economically challenged areas and within specialized schools designed to serve the entire range of disabilities in fully integrated classrooms. One of her most engaging roles was as a classroom mentor in a program designed to work with struggling new teachers to redirect failing classroom dynamics. She has taught conflict resolution, classroom management, resume-building, and interview skills. She taught high school world geography to improve her directional skills. It didn't work. If you can't find her, she's lost.

Ellen has homeschooled the four Alcazar children—Joseph recently graduated from DBU and married Ellen's favorite daughter-in-law, Sofia; David is a junior at Union University studying journalism while educating Ellen about art and music on the side; Grace graduated from high school and is off to UTA to study nursing. Ellen hopes Grace will still give her skincare tips even though she'll be very busy, and Jane, the youngest, graduated in May of this year.

Ankrum, Ralina

Over the past decade, Ralina has served the Stoa community in Colorado in many ways including directing script submission and tournaments, coaching and teaching, and staffing at tournaments in various roles. She is passionate about training and encouraging students to speak boldly for Christ and most notably loves every stage of platform speeches from planning and writing to presenting and polishing. She and her husband, Aaron, homeschooled all four of their children from kindergarten through 12th grade and just graduated their youngest. They will be launching a new Stoa club in Colorado Springs this fall, Plumb Forensics.

Arroyave, Alex

Alex was born and raised in Guatemala and moved to the U.S. at the age of 15. He and his wife Susan have two sons who participated in Stoa – Nathaniel and Benjamin. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell College, majoring in Spanish, and was a credentialed teacher in Iowa at the age of 20. After teaching for three and a half years, he left the profession and was hired as a Special Agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration. He earned a Master of Science Degree in Forensic Science while working at the DEA. After completing training at the FBI Academy, he was assigned to the Calexico, California office in October of 1991. In 2004, he was hired as a Special Agent with the Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General, and retired from federal service in May 2023. Since retirement, he has continued to serve as the lead for the Safety Ministry at his church. He enjoys singing and sing in the bass section of the Imperial Valley Master Chorale.

He started the Stoa journey as most dads do, showing up to judge and being blown away and impressed by the quality of the people he met from day one. Not too long after that, he was asked to help with script submission, and eventually led script submission for multiple tournaments. He started serving on the Safety Team at NITOC the first year Stoa was at Union, and has served at most NITOCs since then. Alex and his wife Susan were one of the founding families of Ex Nihilo and they served in leadership at Paradigm Speech and Debate. He has helped coach some of the best students in the league, and has tried to serve at tournaments and camps in any role necessary to help students achieve their highest, giving all glory to God.

One of his desires has been to encourage more dads to participate in the Stoa family as he has grown to love and care for the Stoa family deeply.

Aschmutat, Tasha

Tasha Aschmutat has been homeschooling her 9 children for 28 years. Eighteen years ago, when her first child started speech and debate and she saw what he learned through this activity, she decided it was going to be an integral part of her curriculum. Back then, Tasha was a drop-off, uninvolved parent, but through the years she evolved to become a club manager, coach, tournament director, and Stoa speech committee member. When she is not teaching her own children or traveling to tournaments, Tasha teaches English and literature to homeschooled teenagers at a local co-op and works as a writing tutor and adjunct professor at Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi.

Benton, Margaret	<p>Margaret has been involved with Stoa for five years. She is privileged to serve as a coach for WD40 in Colorado. At most tournaments, you can find Margaret serving on the Logistics team. At NITOC in 2024, Margaret was honored to lead the Logistics team. She and her husband Corey have been married for 24 years and have three children. Two are current Stoa competitors and one is now an alumnus. Margaret feels most passionate about using the classical tools of learning to disciple competitors. Her favorite event to coach and to proctor is Parliamentary debate.</p>
Boyes, Taryn	<p>Taryn Murphy Boyes is a Stoa alumni ('17) and the Director of Marketing at Classic Learning Test (CLT). During her time in Stoa, Taryn was a two-time NITOC Tournament Champion; her all-time favorite event was the Broadcasting wildcard during the 2014-2015 season. In 2021, Taryn graduated with a degree in Philosophy and Religion from Hillsdale College. Now, Taryn resides in North Carolina with her husband and 4-month old daughter. In her spare time, she coaches students in speech and debate and scholarship applications.</p>
Carabelos, Maggie	<p>Maggie Carabelos was a founding member in establishing homeschool speech and debate in Colorado and has been at its core ever since. She has been coaching Homeschool Forensics and the SALT (Speaking As Living Testimonies) club since 1999. Maggie also has extensive experience in tournament directing and administration.</p> <p>She served on the Directors' Team for NITOC 2012 as the Tournament Assistant for NITOC 2013, and she worked hard as the 2020 Tournament Director before the unprecedented cancellation of NITOC due to COVID-19. Maggie and Sharon Nagatani were honored to direct the NITOC 2021 in person at Union University in Tennessee.</p> <p>Maggie served on the Stoa Debate Committee for six years and was President of the Stoa Board of Directors from 2021-2023. She is currently serving once again on the Debate Committee.</p> <p>She and her husband Leonard have been happily married for 34 years and have two adult sons who were both homeschooled and are alumni debaters. Her happiest role to date is grandmother to Avery and Harper.</p>
Danielson, Sue	<p>Sue Danielson has been involved with speech and debate since 2006 as both a parent and speech coach in Washington State. She serves on the state leadership team and leads tournaments. Sue has served on the Stoa Speech Committee since 2013. She is passionate about preparing students for life beyond competition using the skills from speech and debate, especially those in Mars Hill and Interpretations.</p>
Diaz, Mike	<p>Mike and his wife Michelle reside in Washington State and have been involved in Stoa for 9 years. They have 8 children, two are now Stoa Alumni, two currently competing, and 4 younger ones.</p> <p>Mike currently serves as chair of the Tools and Tabulation Committee. The committee is currently developing the StoaHub software project.</p>
Elliot, Dovey	<p>Dovey Elliott is a homeschooling mom of eight and has been married to her college sweetheart (Ryan) for 25 years. Their eight children range in age from 8 to 22 - three of whom are Stoa grads. They live in the foothills of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains in Loudoun County, VA just minutes from the Appalachian Trail. Dovey has been involved with Stoa since 2017 with her local club, Vector, where she and Ryan serve on the board. Vector hosts the Patrick Henry College Challenge every March. Dovey served on the Stoa Training and Development Committee for a year before joining the Speech Committee in October of 2023.</p>

<p>Enos, Colleen</p>	<p>Colleen Enos is a Stoa coach who lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado, with her family. She has been involved in speech and debate since 2004. All eight of her children have competed in speech and debate, and two are current Stoa competitors. Colleen and Larry Sparks co-founded the speech and debate club Resolve in Colorado in 2007. She has served on the Stoa Debate Committee since 2015.</p> <p>Colleen is passionate about training the next generation to winsomely articulate the gospel to a dying world. She believes Stoa students will use their rhetorical skills to sprinkle salt and shine light on our nation. Her background is in advocacy for the unborn in debate and political settings. Colleen received her B.S. in Business Management and is a certified paralegal.</p>
<p>Eschen, Jeff</p>	<p>Jeff Eschen lives in Carson City, Nevada, with his wonderful wife Jessica and their eight children, three of whom have graduated from Stoa. He has been involved with Stoa since 2012, initially as a community judge before becoming a Stoa parent in 2014. Jeff, alongside his twin brother and sister-in-law, are coaches for the club Ag & Au (Silver and Gold), which they have been leading for the past three years. Jeff currently serves on the Stoa Board of Directors.</p>
<p>Farley, Kimberly</p>	<p>Kimberly joined a local Stoa club in 2014 and began her time as a Stoa mom. After four years of being a parent, volunteering in the local club, and attending many tournaments, she felt called to start a new club closer to her home. With the original club's leadership blessing, Kimberly and her family began a new club, Impact Speech and Debate. She has served as director and coach there since 2018. She has served on Stoa's Training and Development Committee for the last two and a half years. She is passionate about training families to help coach their students well so they can boldly speak for Christ. Kimberly currently serves on Stoa's Board of Directors.</p>
<p>Fear, Peter</p>	<p>Peter was first introduced to home school debate when, as a legal assistant at HSLDA in Virginia, he was asked to be a community judge at the first national home school debate tournament. Amazed by the caliber of these debaters, even in the infancy of home school debate competition, he wished that this had been available to him when he was home schooled in the early 80's and 90's.</p> <p>After moving to California to practice law, Peter occasionally judged local home school debate tournaments, and on one such occasion took his oldest daughter, then ten years old, to watch. Walking out of a debate round, she grabbed his arm and whispered, "Dad, I want to do THIS!" Thus began the Fear family immersion into the world of home school forensics! All seven of his children have been involved in Stoa. Two have graduated, three are currently competing, and two can't wait to move from juniors to varsity competition.</p> <p>Peter and his wife, Debra, help to lead a local Stoa affiliate club in central California, known as Fortitude. Peter focuses his coaching time on LD and Apologetics, as well as leading a weekly Apologetics Bible study. The focus of Fortitude is discipleship, using the means of speech and debate. (You can read more here). He and Debra also lead the Central Valley Challenge tournament in Fresno, California.</p> <p>As a lawyer and a partner in a local bankruptcy law firm, Peter enjoys helping businesses, farmers, individuals, and others involved in distressed financial situations to find solutions. He also serves as professor at Oak Brook College of Law, currently teaching Bankruptcy and Appellate Advocacy, and is involved in discipling at the weekly men's Bible study at his local church.</p>
<p>Feldi, Nelly</p>	<p>Nelly Feldi is the Senior Admissions Counselor at Patrick Henry College. She was saved at the age of 18 and graduated with a B.A. in English from the University of Pennsylvania. She is married to Matt Feldi, who works as the Church Administrator at Grace Bible Church. She and Matt have two adult children, who Nelly homeschooled. Prior to coming to Patrick Henry College, Nelly taught History and AP Government and Politics at a private Christian school. When she isn't interacting with PHC applicants and serving her family and her church, she loves to run, play piano, and explore the world around her.</p>

Luis Garcia	Luis Garcia was the 2011 undefeated champion of Apologetics, winning the four major CA tournaments including the NITOC title. He was also blessed with the 2011 NITOC Impromptu title, making him #1 on http://Speechranks.com for the season. He competed for a total of three years and then coached for five years traveling to different states for coaching and discipleship through apologetics. He received a B.A. degree from Liberty University and his M.Div. from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Today, his greatest titles and honors are husband to Hannah, father to Ezra, Brooklyn, Jason, and pastor of Grace Church Santee in San Diego, CA.
Harding, Ty	Ty Harding is a native of Dallas, Texas. He competed for five years in the NCFCA and Stoa, where he participated in Policy, Parli, and Value debate. He continues to serve the Stoa community through his work with the Debate Committee.
Hawkinson, Michelle	Michelle Hawkinson and her husband Andrew have six kids, all of whom have competed in Stoa (one alumnus and two juniors are in this mix!) over the last six years. Her family serves the Lord year-round at Kansas Bible Camp. Michelle enjoys helping in any and every tournament role! Some favorite roles are tournament coordinating, script sub, logistics, extemp proctor, ballot push, and tab. Michelle loves encouraging people in the halls and was blessed to serve as the Facilities and Logistics lead at NITOC in 2022. Her current goal is to surpass her personal record of recruiting 100 community judges at her local tournament. She enjoys chocolate and helping others. Michelle currently serves as the Chair Stoa's Training and Development Committee.
Hayes, Alyssa	Alyssa Hayes began her Stoa journey in 2014 with her oldest of 10 children. She graduated from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs with an emphasis in pre-med and has enjoyed working with various non-profits in the Colorado Springs area. Alyssa is a former Prudential Youth Leadership Coach, a Center for Creative Leadership's Community Leadership Program graduate, and previous director of multiple Classical Conversations Challenge levels. She is currently COO and owner of a landscape design and construction company specializing in logistics and marketing. She has adored being part of the Stoa community and enjoys working on the Stoa Marketing Committee.

Heggem, Win	<p>Mrs. Winifred (Win) Heggem has been a teacher and speech coach for 45 years. She began as a middle school and high school English teacher after earning a B.A. in English Education. For the last 25 years, she has specialized in training hundreds of competitive speakers as well as thousands of tweens, teens, and adults in public speaking. Since 2001, scores of Win's students have been state and national speech finalists and champions. She also has served as a board member for the Clash Debate Club, and as one of the founding members of the National Rules Committee for the Stoa Speech and Debate League.</p> <p>Currently Win is a founder and the Chief Education Officer of Foundations of Communication (www.foundationsofcommunication.com) which offers online courses in public speaking, first impressions, conversation, and leadership skills. She also teaches live public speaking classes, camps, and conferences throughout the country. In addition to private coaching, Win is also a certified etiquette consultant.</p> <p>Win has been married to Rick for 43 years and they have 9 children, all of whom were homeschooled. She and Rick live in north Idaho now and other than her devotion to her family, she is dedicated to helping her students and clients develop and strengthen their "voices" as they impact the next generation with greater confidence, conviction, and clarity.</p>
Herche, Katie	Katie Herche joined the Modesto Debate team in high school, and learned at the feet of Mike and Mary Winther. She competed in NCFCA for three years, taking 2 nd place in the 2007 Nationals in Team Policy Debate. Katie competed another two years in college, winning 1 st place in Impromptu and Communication Analysis at the 2009 National Phi Rho Pi tournament. Over the course of her time participating, Katie competed in Team Policy Debate, Parliamentary Debate, and almost every speech event possible. Since then,

	<p>Katie has coached speech & debate for homeschool groups, public schools, and private schools (15 years total). Katie currently serves on the Stoa Debate Committee. She married her former debate opponent, Logan, and lives in Virginia with her family.</p>
<p>Jacobs, Micah</p>	<p>Micah Jacobs - Micah Jacobs competed in Stoa for six years with Resolve Speech and Debate. Her favorite events included Mars Hill Impromptu, Humorous Interpretation, Dramatic Interpretation, Parli, and LD. She now attends College of the Ozarks in Branson, MO, where she is studying Public Relations with minors in Business Administration and Social Media</p>
<p>Johnson, Wayne</p>	<p>Wayne and his wonderful wife of 34 years, Candace, have seven children who have all been homeschooled. All have competed in Stoa since 2011. During his Stoa journey over the last twelve years, Wayne has led his club (EPIC2) in Southern California and taught apologetics and debate. He has run Stoa tournaments (the Inland Club Challenge), taught at Stoa Academy, served as a tab director for 30 tournaments (including NITOC 2021 and 2024), worked in tab rooms at 93 tournaments, and led the Stoa Tab Committee from 2019 to 2021. He currently serves on the Stoa Debate Committee and the Stoa Tools & Tab Committee. Wayne will begin a 4-year tenure as a member of Stoa's Board of Directors in August of this year.</p>
<p>Lyda, Danny</p>	<p>Danny Lyda is a computer engineer by day and debate coach by night. In 2014, some friends introduced Danny to the world of Stoa speech and debate, and he was hooked. In 2016, he stepped up to coach the club Contend in Northern California. Danny's specialties are Lincoln Douglas Debate and Apologetics. He loves seeing his students use their skills to grow in their faith and become ambassadors for Christ, and he likes that debate teaches skills that apply to all areas of life. Danny has served on the Stoa Debate Committee since 2022.</p>
<p>Mauldin, Tracy</p>	<p>Tracy Mauldin is a homeschooling mom of 10 years and has been involved in her local speech and debate club for four years. She has three kids who have all been involved in their juniors program, including junior debate. Tracy has been on a team that has helped direct several junior tournaments, and she thoroughly enjoyed being the juniors lead coach for her local club for the 2022–2023 school year. Tracy is always up for learning something new and going on new adventures.</p>
<p>Millard, Samantha</p>	<p>Samantha Millard is a veteran homeschooler of 21 years and just graduated her last student in 2024. She and her daughter discovered Stoa six years ago and both agree that it was the best education decision they ever made! Samantha is a club leader and coach in SOAR Speech and Debate Club in Little Rock, Arkansas, and is Co-Director of the Kickoff Challenge and the Arkansas Diamond tournaments sponsored by her club. She and her husband Michael have three children and live in Hot Springs, Arkansas.</p>
<p>Miller, Suzanne</p>	<p>Suzanne McKenzie Miller has been a part of Stoa since 2016. With no background in forensics or debate, her first exposure to Stoa was a Stoa Academy. She soon realized she had found her people. "You don't know it yet, but you are debaters!" she told her kids as soon as she got home. They were initially dubious, but soon loved it. Her college-age children have echoed a common sentiment in Stoa – that of all the activities they pursued, this caliber of speech and debate prepared them the best for college and adulthood.</p> <p>Suzanne's MS is in microbiology, and she was an instructor for biology and A&P at the local community college before retiring to homeschool. She is currently the club leader for Prairie Fire Speech and Debate. Suzanne also directs Shakespeare on the Porch, a youth theatre company. She and her husband, Delmar, live in rural Kansas where they raise wheat, beans, sheep, garlic, and six children.</p>
<p>Plummer, Anna</p>	<p>Married for 35 years and a mother of three daughters, Anna Plummer has completed 22 years of homeschooling and 15 years in speech and debate. Her passion is coaching interpretive speeches. Watching students grow and change with their speeches motivates and inspires Anna. For the past three years, Anna served on the Stoa speech committee, and her heart is to see Stoa Speech and Debate supported, developed, and promoted.</p>

Rafferty, Callie	Coming Soon!
Rehmke, Greg	Gregory Rehmke, directs educational programs for Economic Thinking, a Seattle nonprofit. Mr. Rehmke graduated from the University of Washington and has directed programs at the Reason Foundation, the Foundation for Economic Education, and other nonprofits. Mr. Rehmke articles have appeared in <i>The Freeman</i> , <i>Reason</i> , and on MasterResource (and WUWT) He is coauthor of the <i>Complete Idiot's Guide to Global Economics</i> and the Goodman Institute brief, Did the Government Make Us Fat? . In addition Mr. Rehmke posts on health care and nutrition on EconomicThinking.org and at NormalNutrition.substack.com . Videos can be found at www.youtube.com/economicthinking
Richardson, Michelle	Michelle Richardson is a 14-year homeschool veteran mom from Southern California. Her family is going into their 8th year of competing and serving in Stoa. While her last child graduated in 2024, Michelle and her husband will continue to serve as the leaders of their local club, Set Apart. Michelle is passionate about training both students and parents.
Shiple, Matthew	Matthew Shipley is a Stoa speech and debate dad whose kids have competed in the league for the last eleven years, and in 2024-2025 his youngest will be competing in her senior year. Matthew served on the Stoa Speech committee for a number of years, and he coaches speech and debate for his own kids and others. Over the years, Matthew has served Stoa tournaments in a variety of capacities, including Tab Director, Tab Staff, Lead Extemp Proctor, Ballot Push, Ballot Return, Facilities, Awards, Adjudication Committee, and Tournament Director, and he has served as the Lead Extemp Proctor at NITOC several times in recent years. Professionally, Matthew serves as the Superintendent of a public school district in Modesto, California.
Sloneker, Lynda	<p>Lynda Sloneker has been involved in Stoa since 2014, with three of the six Sloneker children participating in and growing up in Stoa. She was one of the founding members of Surgamus Speech and Debate Club in Northwest Arkansas, and has served there as club director and tournament director since the beginning. Lynda has worked in almost every tournament role, including Tab Director, Ballot Push Lead, Judge Orientation, and Ballot Return. In addition, she served as Tournament Director for the 2022 NITOC in Dallas, Texas and will be co-directing NITOC 2025 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. On the national level, she served on the Training & Development Committee for two years, the Tools & Tabulation Committee for four years, and has been on the Stoa Board of Directors for four years. She is the current President of the Board of Directors of Stoa.</p> <p>Lynda has been a Lincoln Douglas Debate coach for ten years and also enjoys coaching all Limited Prep and Platform events. She loves seeing students grow and flourish in their speaking and debating skills for the purpose of fulfilling the Lord's calling on their lives.</p>
Sparks, Larry	Larry Sparks is a business insurance agent in Colorado Springs, where he lives with Kristina, his wife of thirty-six years. He began competing in speech and debate in 1981. In 2007 Colleen Enos and he formed the Resolve Speech and Debate Club. He has coached Apologetics, Extemp, and Debate in the NCFCA and Stoa. He especially enjoys coaching Lincoln Douglas and Team Policy debate. Although Resolve has enjoyed competitive success, the most rewarding experience is seeing young people learn to think critically, research thoroughly, and communicate passionately.
Speed, Allisha	Allisha Speed is a happy mom of six communicative children. Desiring to see them learn with other like-minded friends, she founded Logos OK in the Tulsa area with a handful of families in 2011 and continues to serve as the club director and tournament director. Allisha loves seeing students grow in their skills and understanding as they learn to communicate the love of Christ with sincerity. She has served on the Communications Committee since 2019 and currently serves on the Speech Committee and leads the Stoa Prayer Team.

<p>Tham, Janice</p>	<p>Janice Tham has a diploma in elementary education and an accounting degree. She worked for years as a school teacher before becoming a tax accountant. When her firstborn was ready for schooling, she moved into full-time homeschooling.</p> <p>Over the years, Janice has put her love for teaching to good use by being a tutor, coaching speech and debate, and working as a music director of a local children’s theater group. Additionally, her interest in numbers drew her to the world of Stoa Tabulation, and she has had the privilege to work in that area for a few years, including leading the NITOC 2022 and NITOC 2023 Tab Teams.</p> <p>The Tham family just completed their eighth year in Stoa. In 2019 Janice and Darla Magness started LAUNCH, a hybrid (occasionally in-person but primarily online) club based in Oklahoma. Janice currently serves on the Stoa Board of Directors.</p>
<p>Steven Vaughan</p>	<p>Coming Soon!</p>
<p>Wright, Matthew</p>	<p>Matthew Wright - Matthew Wright is a Stoa dad and an associate professor in the Torrey Honors College at Biola University, where he teaches the classics of Western civilization. He loves the challenge of discerning how culture gives evidence of the image of God in man and how best to use that to draw people toward more of God’s truth.</p>
<p>Wurpts, Emily</p>	<p>Emily Wurpts has been involved in speech and debate for four years. All four of her kids have participated in the juniors program, including junior debate. She has been the lead coach for 44 juniors during one club year and has helped direct multiple junior tournaments. Currently, she serves on the leadership committee for her local club.</p> <p>Emily holds a Master's degree in Child Development from Iowa State University and has served on the board of the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children as the public policy chair. She has experience with lobbying and advocacy at the state and federal level, as well as with consultation, adult education, and training in the field of early childhood.</p> <p>Emily moved to Northwest Arkansas 12 years ago to join a mission mobilization ministry called Via and helped develop resources for parents for the Perspectives course. She enjoys being the missionary and foster care support contact at her church. Additionally, Emily has been a tutor for Classical Conversations for the last seven years, a leader for American Heritage Girls, and involved with Bible Study Fellowship. As a weekly tradition, Emily and her family have pizza and movie night and enjoy popcorn with M&M's every Friday when the school week is done.</p>