

Laura Soulages, Founder

Laura founded The Cottage School in 2002. She has been a teacher for 22 years at early childhood, elementary, high school and college levels. She graduated from the Instituto de Educación Superior "Roberto Themis Speroni" in La Plata, Argentina, in 1988 with a degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. After graduating, Laura continued graduate studies in Music Education, Dance, and Foreign Languages at the same College.

Laura lives in Califon with her husband, Sebastian, and their children, Juana and Francisco. Laura's native language is Spanish.

"The expansion of the school through 4th grade is the continuation of my life-long mission to guide children to develop and keep alive a desire of learning that, in turn, will last them a lifetime.

Ashley McNeill-Pohle, Director

Ashley contributes experience from The Cottage School community, where she teaches French and has been engaged since its inception in 2002. A long-time resident of the region, McNeill-Pohle is a home-schooling mother of two, has been actively involved in a charter school community, has taught ballet, and held positions in market research, data systems and statistical programming. She holds a B.A. in Applied Mathematics and French from Goucher College.

Daniel Berek, Teacher

Having grown up in India, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Belgium, and traveled extensively in the US and abroad, Daniel Berek comes to The Cottage Elementary School with a deep appreciation of world cultures, including the poetry, song, and folklore that form an integral part of The Cottage Elementary School curriculum. Dan holds a BA in History (Muhlenberg College) and an MA in Classics, with work in archaeology, art history, and cultural anthropology (Rutgers University); in addition, he has more than eight years of experience as an educator and earned an MAT in Elementary School Teaching (FDU) and a full NJ certification as a Teacher for Students with Disabilities (Centenary College). His hobbies include aviation, photography, collecting folk toys from around the world, and spending time with his wife and two daughters. Dan speaks Spanish, Dutch, German and French in addition to English (his mother language).

The Cottage Elementary School
88 Claremont Road
Saint Bernard's Episcopal Church
Bernardsville, NJ 07924
www.thecottageelementaryschool.org

The Cottage Elementary School



The Cottage Elementary School teaches children ages 5 through 10, expanding beyond the well-established early education program of The Cottage School, founded in 2002. The Cottage Elementary School serves families with school-age children from the surrounding communities who are looking for a unique, well-rounded academic program.

Saint Bernard's Episcopal Church
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The Cottage Elementary School at 88 Claremont Rd. (St. Bernard's Episcopal Church), offers a unique educational program for grades K-4. *The Cottage Elementary School* expands upon the well-established early childhood education program of The Cottage School, which continues to offer its programs in Gladstone, with additional pre-K enrollment available in Bernardsville.



The Cottage Elementary School's academic program integrates the traditional subject areas of language and literature, mathematics, social studies, natural sciences, fine arts and physical education in a cooperative, non-competitive environment, teaching by immersion without the use of textbooks or tests.

The Cottage Elementary School will meet or exceed state requirements for primary education, using the principles of *The Cottage School* and the educational philosophy it represents.



The School fosters a unique environment for learning by:

- expecting the best that each child can offer, not in comparison to the group;
- encouraging children to discover, explore, and develop their innate abilities;
- supporting creativity in all activities and subject areas;
- inspiring expression, curiosity, and imagination;
- allowing ample time for children to focus, create, and fully develop the project at hand;
- using an open classroom model;
- rotating teacher assignments to model community support and provide opportunities for teachers and students alike to stretch beyond their comfort zones;
- using natural materials and hand-made teaching tools;
- hearing and telling folktales from around the world;
- reading and reciting poetry;
- reading classic literature;
- immersing children in foreign language as an integral part of the curriculum;
- dancing and participating in drama and music;
- visiting museums, farms, libraries, and other workplaces;
- participating in community service projects, building responsible citizenship.

“At The Cottage School and The Cottage Elementary School, teachers are committed to doing research and studying from original material, inspiring students to do the same and go deeper in knowledge. Great importance is placed on the learning process to develop patterns of learning; free of pressure and sustained by a spirit of discovery. When schools are too concentrated on testing, children and teachers alike may lose the joy of learning and teaching,” said Laura Soulages regarding the school's emphasis on learning in an alternative environment.



*I*nitial enrollment is offered to all applicants on a first-come, first-served, non-selective basis. Enrollment continues year-round with priority given to current students and their siblings. *The Cottage Elementary School* does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. The school is graciously welcoming tax-deductible contributions.

Registration materials for the 2010-2011 school year are available now. To find out more about the schools' unique, well-established early childhood and elementary education programs, please call (908)766-4418 or www.thecottageelementaryschool.org