



## **CWC Los Angeles Leadership Team**

### **Amy Dresser Held**

*CWCLA Executive Director*

Amy Dresser Held joined the board of Citizens of the World Charter Schools in January and became Executive Director in July 2010. Prior to joining CWCLA, Amy served as Executive Director of Palisades Charter High School, a diverse, high performing charter high school of more than 2,700 students and 200 staff. In her capacity as Executive Director, Amy oversaw academics, finance (a \$22 million annual budget), facilities, labor relations, legal, and communications. Prior to joining Pali High in 2006, Amy worked for several years at the Los Angeles Unified School District on the staff of then-School Board President Caprice Young, then as a Special Assistant to Senior Deputy Superintendent Maria Ott, and finally as Director of Policy and Communications with then-LAUSD School Board President Marlene Canter.

Amy began her career as a Teach for America corps member, teaching a bilingual fifth grade class in Phoenix, followed by a position with Kaplan and completion of the Coro Public Affairs Leadership Training Post-Graduate Fellowship in Los Angeles. Amy received her B.S. in Humanities in International Affairs from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. Amy is passionate about the mission and vision of Citizens of the World Charter. Amy is a language aficionado and a world traveler who has lived abroad in France and Mexico, and considers herself a citizen of the world. As a mother of two toddlers and a veteran educator, Amy considers CWCLA an ideal environment to nurture and develop in children not only exceptional academic achievement but a deep appreciation of the rich diversity of our society and a commitment to be of service to the local community and the larger world in which we live.

### **Marissa Berman**

*CWC Hollywood Founding Principal*

Marissa received her B.A. from Columbia University and her Master's in Education from UC Berkeley. Most recently, she was an administrator and teacher at the North Oakland Community Charter School (NOCCS), including a three year stint on their Board of Directors. Given her time at NOCCS as a K/1 and 2/3 teacher, Marissa is a hands-on instructional leader who is closely connected to her own experience as a classroom teacher and developer of curriculum. In her administrative functions at NOCCS, she helped lead fundraising efforts, while also having redesigned their after-school program, created a school-wide service-learning curriculum and developed a structure for after-school math intervention. Similar to her role at CWC, Marissa participated in teacher mentoring and professional development. Previous to her time at NOCCS, Marissa worked at various public and independent elementary schools in San Francisco and the Bay Area. She is a Project Zero Fellow at Harvard University's Graduate School

of Education, where she has led teacher training workshops and study groups on the Teaching for Understanding curriculum development framework, which CWC uses to structure thematic and interdisciplinary units at each grade level.

Marissa is a true "citizen of the world," growing up in Chicago and having lived in New York and San Francisco respectively for several years. Additionally, Marissa feels privileged to have had amazing opportunities living in Cameroon and France as well. With a true passion for travel, Marissa has learned a great deal from time spent in Africa, India, Southeast Asia, Australia, South America, Europe and North America. She speaks French and some basic Spanish.

Marissa is incredibly passionate about the mission and vision for CWC - she said when she was first reading our website she felt like we had written it personally for her! Her enthusiasm and leadership around CWC's core values is truly contagious. Marissa's great aim is that Citizens of the World will exist as proof that a progressive public school like ours will thrive in offering a diverse group of students an innovative, thought-provoking and educational experience - to, in essence, develop a new generation of positive leaders and thoughtful citizens of the world.

### **Ramona Patrick**

*CWC Silver Lake Founding Principal*

Ramona Patrick graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Southern Methodist University, and went on to lead Teach For America's Los Angeles program to outstanding student achievement. As Program Director, Ramona led 44 teachers in 24 schools to surpass regional student achievement goals with either 80% mastery of content or 1.5 years worth of growth by students.

In addition to being a Program Director, Ramona has been both a literacy and math coach working with teachers in grades kindergarten through high school in four districts. Ramona completed her Ed.D. at the University of Southern California where her dissertation focused on the allocation of educational resources to improve student achievement at four high performing charter schools in California. A 2011 Ryan Fellow, she completed her field work at KIPP Empower Academy.

### **Alison Kerr**

*CWC Mar Vista Founding Principal*

Alison is a passionate leader, who throughout her thirteen years in education has remained a teacher at heart. Alison's prior leadership and educational experiences have led her naturally to the role of founding principal at CWC Mar Vista. She brings extensive experience working in rural, urban, private and public schools, both in the U.K. and in the U.S., which has allowed her to understand how diverse populations of students and families can learn from each other. In addition to classroom teaching and school leadership, Alison has also led school-wide trainings in curriculum design and assessment, including service-learning and global citizenship to teachers and parents.

Alison was chosen to collaborate with the Council of International Schools (CIS), accrediting schools and leading them in self-evaluation, focusing on student learning and a mission-driven environment. Alison is no stranger to starting and growing new schools and serving as an instructional leader and mentor to teachers. As a member of the founding staff of two schools in Chicago and Santa Monica, Alison played a fundamental role in their growth and success. In Chicago, a "Leader of Learning" for a

large team, Alison recruited and mentored teachers during her seven years as a classroom teacher within pre-K, K, 1st and 2nd grades. In Santa Monica, Alison utilized the skills she learned as a teacher and Leader of the Lower School for three years to become the interim Head of School there.

Most recently, she has been thrilled to create the social, emotional and mindfulness curriculum at CWC Silver Lake. Alison graduated from the University of Edinburgh and has continued to be a life-long learner, seeking out new ways to grow professionally. Delighted to be continuing her journey with the CWC family, Alison believes that her capacity for big picture thinking combined with her authentic passion for the mission and vision will inspire all members of the CWC Mar Vista community to work together to create a dynamic, high-performing and innovative school.