

2018-2019 Youth Counselor & Teacher Biographies

Chris Blythe

Counselor Since: 1998

I have been a member of LUMC since I was in the second grade and have been working with the youth since 1998. As a member of the youth group, the lessons I learned helped me with the challenges of being a teenager and gave me a solid foundation for my life. And that is my goal as a youth counselor, to help give the youth of a Christian foundation to rely on. I am employed by imageTech Marketing (CA).

Erica Blythe

Counselor Since: 2016

My name is Erica Blythe (no relation to Chris Blythe except for being BFF's), but I also go by Rica B or Ms. AmErica depending on who you talk to. 😊 I've been a member of Lakewood since 1997, and was an active member of the youth group until I graduated high school in 2010. I've been teaching for the past 8 years but decided to make a big change this year and I am now the new office manager at Lakewood Chiropractic Clinic. I love being a small piece of the Lakewood family and I hope to continue to pass along the love and support to the current youth that I received from the counselors and congregation growing up. I'm a huge book nerd, I have a goofy puppy named Scout, and an even goofier cat named Penelope. You can usually find me at the library checking out a million books or watching funny animal videos.

Alex Brown

Wednesday Night Small Group Leader & Sunday School Teacher Since: 2017

I became a member of Lakewood United Methodist Church after I became engaged to my wife Jaquelyn Brown in 2010. We have five children that love coming to church. I have helped teach Sunday school in the children's building, helped my wife teach the middle school Sunday school class and worked with the kids on Wednesday nights. I am employed by St. Vincent's Healthcare in one of their urgent care facilities. I also volunteer with multiple high schools around Jacksonville as their team physician.

Bethany Coleman

Counselor Since: 2016

I have been a part of Lakewood UMC for 42 years, since I was born basically. I started working for the church as the Director of Children's Ministries in 2004. I have been married to my husband, Sam, since 2001 (after we met in 1997 in the youth program). We have four children; Dane (14), Walker (11), Delaney (8), and Harrison (4). I also assist with the preschool and Family Promise as I can. I am very excited to continue working with the kids that have moved from the children's ministry into the youth ministry.

Anna Ewing

Counselor Since: 1999

I have been a counselor since the fall of '99. I was a part of the Lakewood youth group from my 8th grade year through senior year. I loved being a part of the group and feel it was a big part of shaping me into the person I am today. I enjoy having fun with the youth on trips and Sunday nights while they learn to love Christ, others and themselves more.

2018-2019 Youth Counselor & Teacher Biographies

Amanda Figart

Wednesday Night Small Group Leader Since: 2014

I am married to Larry Figart. We have 2 boys; Mitchell and Aaron who both enjoyed being in the youth group. We have been members of Lakewood since 1995. I have been working for the Navy as an Information Technology Specialist for over 30 years. It has been an honor watching and helping the youth grow in Christ and teaching them to lean on Christ in all aspects of their lives.

Cami Foster

Counselor Since: 2015 & Youth Director Since: October 2018

I have been attending LUMC since 2002 and joined in 2006. I've been a counselor since 2015. I used to teach at our awesome preschool then went to work as a Legal Assistant at the Office of the Public Defender before I was called to serve as the Youth Director of Lakewood. I know that my passion for the youth of Lakewood is one of the reasons why God put it on my heart to lead this already amazing group. I am married to Brandon Foster and together we have two amazing children (Marley-12 and Brody-7). Brandon & I teach the 5th/6th grade Sunday school class this year and I have volunteered with Club 56 on Wednesday nights off and on for many years. I love this youth group, this church, children, family, friendships, Jesus, Mountain Dew, and York Peppermint Patties (not necessarily in that order).

Brandy Henderson

Sunday School Teacher Since: 2018

i am married to David and mom of tallulah (5) and theo (3). i was part of the lakewood youth group from 1993 - 1999. i regularly helped as a counselor with the youth from 2003 - 2013. i started teaching the middle school sunday school class every other month at the beginning of this year. i've really enjoyed getting to know some of the youth and being able to study the Word alongside them.

David Henderson

Counselor Since: 1998

I am married to Brandy and proud dad of Tallulah (5) and Theo (3). I loved being in the Lakewood youth group from 1992-98. I enjoy working as a counselor because it gives me the opportunity to try to help the youth enter into a more full and mature relationship and life with Jesus. It is an honor to be a part of passing down such a rich faith tradition that was, and continues to be, modeled for me by the people at Lakewood. I enjoy making things and learning things. And basketball.

Jeff Jacqmein

Sunday School Teacher Since: 2007

Why would someone want to return to Lakewood youth? Because of these cool and crazy kids. My youth leaders helped point me to Christ. Laura fell in love with me during the MYF Rotten Fruit and Vegetable Wars of 1987. I still sleep under trail "plastique." I can't get enough of this stuff. When I'm not thinking about basketball, I'm dreaming of youth choir days. Lakewood Youth is where it's at!

2018-2019 Youth Counselor & Teacher Biographies

Laura Jacqmein

Sunday School Teacher Since: 2007

My good friend Jeff Jacqmein brought me to Lakewood as a college visitor in the summer of 1987, and I experienced the joy of the Lord in this fellowship. Jeff and I later served as youth counselors for several years after we moved back to Jacksonville in 1995. We have now been married since 1992, and all three of our children were blessed to grow up in this church and youth group. We have the honor of being with the high school youth every Sunday morning, and there is no Sunday school class we would rather be in. It is a joy to share the abundant life in Christ with the youth and to continue to grow alongside them!

Jeff Johnson

Counselor Since: 1994

Jeff is famous for saying that he just “came with the youth group.” After growing up at Lakewood UMC, Jeff continued his involvement with the youth first as a college counselor, then a counselor, and in addition to all of that, Jeff soon became the youth choir director. He loves working with the kids, especially in developing their musical abilities, and has worked hard to create a strong leadership structure within the youth choir. The longest standing counselor we have at Lakewood UMC, the group would not be the same without him. Jeff is employed by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida.

Jimmy Johnson

Counselor Since: 2005

Jimmy, like his brother Jeff, grew up at Lakewood UMC, graduating from the youth group in 1999. Jimmy earned his bachelor’s degree from UNF and then went to work on an International MBA, which led him to study extensively in Europe. Jimmy brings a love for history, archaeology, and the Scriptures to the youth group. Jimmy currently leads the Wednesday night boys bible study with Alex.

Amy LoPiano

Counselor Since: 2016

I have been active at Lakewood UMC since 2009 and became a member in 2013. I have three children; Hannah, Leah (currently in youth), and Jake. I am now the Director of Lakewood UM Preschool. I am excited for the opportunity to work with the youth of this church.

Molly Rhoden

Counselor Since: 2016

I have been married to Robby Rhoden for 19 years and have 3 wonderful kids, Maggie (currently in youth), Abby (currently in youth) and Ryan. I have called Lakewood UMC my church home since I was a child. I loved spending my time in this youth group from 1990 - 1995. I attended FSU and graduated with an Elementary Education degree. I have taught First grade, preK 4, and currently teach Kindergarten at Riverside Presbyterian Day School. I’m so excited and honored to be working with these great kids on a weekly basis and see how Jesus moves in their lives as they navigate the teenage years.

2018-2019 Youth Counselor & Teacher Biographies

Olivia Smith

Counselor Since: 2013

Hi! I'm Olivia Wolfe and I spent 4 years in the youth group before I graduated. The Lakewood Youth group became my home during high school and it was where a lot of the pieces that make me up were put together. The counselors and youth taught me what community and love look like when they're intertwined. Choir Tours led me to the realization that serving people is where I feel God's presence the most. That's part of the reason that I love being a counselor. I get to serve youth in a really unique way. I spent 2 years in Jacksonville heavily involved in a campus ministry, and don't get me wrong-I loved it and am eternally thankful for the opportunities it gave me, but it really revealed to me how much I love Lakewood and our youth group. I'm still in school finishing my degree in early childhood education. I'm not quite positive what God wants me to do but I am 100% positive he'll use me wherever I am.

Melody Taylor

Sunday School Teacher Since: 2017

I grew up in Jacksonville and first came to Lakewood as a high school youth in the '90s (go Stanton Blue Devils). Now I'm married to Matt and mom to Sheridan (former youth/current FSU student) and Ansley (current youth). We went to a different local church for 10 years but have been back at Lakewood since 2010. I work for Adecco as a proposal writer and I also freelance as a reporter for Jacksonville Magazine. I started co-teaching 7th & 8th grade Sunday school along with Brandy Henderson about a year ago. The middle school and high school years were really formative in my own life, and I love sharing with and learning from this group and their experiences. I enjoy travel, writing, music, crafting, watching baseball and football, and being a wife, mom and friend.

Mindy Wilcox

Counselor Since: 2002

My name is Mindy Wilcox, and I have been a counselor with the youth group for 16 years. I grew up at Lakewood and was very active in the youth when I was in middle and high school. I attended the University of Florida and currently teach at Hyde Park Elementary School. Along with working with the youth, I also sing in Hosanna! at church.