**Author: Andrea Gardner**

**School:** White Center Heights Elementary

**Subject/Grade:** Extended Day Outcomes Coordinator, K-6

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**About the Author**

My name is Andrea Gardner, I am an educator in Washington State. My current position is very unique: as the *Extended Day Outcomes Coordinator* at White Center Heights Elementary, I have worked to create, grow, and sustain an after-school program. The major aspects include knowing students and families in order to provide the precisely desired activities to promote academic and social/emotional success. Through community collaboration, grant writing, and collaboration with teachers, I have gained traction in offering free programs to nearly 325 of our 600 K-6 students at White Center Heights Elementary.

I grew up in the great state of Maine and in pursuit of Ancient Mesoamerican knowledge, I ended up in Seattle. It took me a wonderful 13 years to get through my undergraduate and graduate degrees. Between traveling and acquiring far too many credits, I finally landed on Education as my focus (and I LOVE it!). I have had many careers including: Photographer, Web/Graphic Designer, and Professional Jump-Roper. I have travelled throughout Mexico and Italy studying ancient civilizations while teaching English and Jump Roping. For the past 3 years motherhood has taken over as my primary responsibility, ambition, and passion. My daughter is 3-years old and very excited to go to Maine while mom goes to China!

My excitement for this trip stems from my passion for education and travel. After speaking with the other teachers at my school, I am even more excited for this trip. I have their full support, encouragement, and excitement pushing me to learn and bring back exciting first-hand knowledge to share. I feel like I am truly representing the entire school and seeking information for ALL students and teachers.

I look forward to creating dynamic lesson plans and being an active participant in the Cultural Explorations family for this summer and beyond! I’ve already started packing!