

Catalyst 2006 Board of Directors

Andrew Carter -- Catalyst Co-Founder and Chair of the Board.

Currently, [Andrew Carter](#) is developing this site and the Printables Library and working as a volunteer tutor.

After graduation from college, he worked as a journalist for City Pages where he covered education (selected clips on education: [Simple Division](#) | [Reading, Writing, and Revenue](#) | [Time is Money](#) | [Brought to You By](#))

At the same time, he worked as a tutor at the for-profit Sylvan Learning Centers in Minnetonka, teaching Chemistry, Physics, Calculus, and ACT prep. He worked at Sylvan for two years. Ever since that time, he has tutored privately and/or as a volunteer tutor. It was during his time at Sylvan in 1999 that the first seeds of the plan for Catalyst were planted.

In 2000, he joined the semiconductor company MathStar. Currently, he works half-time as a Signal Integrity Engineer for the memory manufacturer [Micron Inc.](#)

Andrew Carter graduated summa cum laude from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Computer and Electrical Engineering in 1998.

Erika Sass -- Catalyst Co-Founder and Vice-Chair of the Board.

Erika Sass co-founded Catalyst with Andrew in January 2006 and volunteers for Catalyst as a program coordinator and is overseeing the initial pilot project.

Currently, she's employed as the High School Programs Coordinator at Urban Ventures Learning Lab. She is excited about the technology that Catalyst is developing and feels it will help many urban tutoring centers be more effective and efficient.

Erika Sass graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Outdoor Recreation in 1999. In 2003, she received her teaching license and Masters Degree in Education from Loyola Marymount University.

After teaching in non-traditional settings, Erika joined Teach for America where she was placed in South Central, Los Angeles. During her three years of classroom teaching in South Central Los Angeles, Erika learned the realities of teaching in over-crowded, under resourced schools with unmet student needs. In South Central, ninety-eight percent of her students were English Language Learners.

Erika's passion is to teach and empower marginalized youth who are falling through the cracks in traditional schools.

Chris Murphy -- Urban Ventures Director of Youth and Education Programs and Board Member.

Chris Murphy is head of educational programs at Urban Ventures and is also helping to oversee Catalyst's initial pilot project.

In addition to the excellent education programs offered at Urban Ventures, Chris Murphy believes that the one-on-one tutoring technology, materials and programs Catalyst are designing are an excellent fit for many of her students and can help urban tutoring centers (like Urban Ventures) better execute on their mission. She further feels that Catalyst will serve as an excellent complement to the programs offered by her organization.

Chris Murphy has been a teacher in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and surrounding cities in public and private schools for over twenty years. Before that she taught in the Denver area public schools for two years.

She received a BA in Education from Regis

University in 1981 and has completed one year of her Masters in Education training.

Abby Roza -- Board Member.

A passion for empowerment through education has guided Abby throughout her career.

After graduating with an undergraduate degree in Sociology, Abby Roza then went on to receive a Masters in Education from Loyola Marymount in 2002. At the same time, she joined the Teach for America program and worked in a middle school in Compton Unified School District in California for five years. There, she taught math, language arts, English as a Second Language and social studies.

In addition, she served as an 8th grade advisor for the Math, Engineering, Science Achievement (M.E.S.A.) program, a college preparatory program run in partnership with U.C. Irvine.

Abby continues learn about education and empowerment through her work with people with cognitive disabilities at Opportunity Partners.

Corey Needleman -- Board Member.

Corey Needleman is a Band instructor in the St. Paul Public Schools at Capitol Hill Gifted and Talented Magnet and Adams Spanish Immersion.

After college, Corey got first hand knowledge of the unique needs and challenges facing economically disadvantaged students while working for six years as the instrumental music instructor at Olson Middle School in North Minneapolis. While in Minneapolis, Corey also worked with the GEMS program (Girls in Engineering, Math, and Sciences).

Currently, he is also a director with the Minnesota Institute for Talented Youth Jazz program housed at Macalaster College. Corey is also an active political activist as well as deeply involved in his Powderhorn neighborhood in South Minneapolis.

Corey Needleman graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Music Education in

1999. Additionally, he has completed the Jazz at Lincoln Center, Essentially Ellington Band Director Academy in Aspen, CO.

Jill Gjevre -- Treasurer of the Board.

Jill Gjevre is managing Catalyst's financials and all necessary nonprofit auditing and reporting activities.

Jill Gjevre is a certified public accountant licensed in the State of Minnesota. Currently, she is a manager in the Minneapolis office of Larson Allen. Jill has worked in public accounting since 1997 and provides audit, tax and consulting services to clients. Jill has a Bachelor of Accountancy degree from the University of North Dakota. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and the Minnesota Society of Certified Public Accountants (MNCPA).

This is the second nonprofit Jill Gjevre has worked with, having helped the nonprofit [Global Deaf Connection](#) during its startup stages. Jill served as a volunteer finance committee member and her involvement included assisting with the monthly financial reporting.

Randy Karels -- Catalyst Web Designer and Secretary of the Board.

Randy Karels is a freelance computer programmer, photographer, and graphic designer. Randy is helping with the graphic design of Catalyst's website and teaching materials.

He initially got involved in youth programs in college, first as a tutor with the YMCA, and later as a canoe guide for Camp Menogyn in the Boundary Waters.

After receiving his Electrical Engineering degree (University of Minnesota 1998, cumma sum laude) he was heavily involved in the [Collaborative for High Performance Schools](#), a design and engineering group committed to improving the healthfulness and energy efficiency of schools in California.