

FALL 2026 RISE COURSE FACILITATORS

Carol Anderson A 50+ year resident of the Nashua area with a finance background, but with a keen interest in local businesses and our diversified community.

Nancy Baker After many years of teaching classical languages, philosophy, and the history of ideas, Nancy now spends her time volunteering. She is currently on the Board of Guild of Volunteers at the Currier Museum of Art and is an active docent there. Nancy gives talks on art, language and the history of ideas at the Currier, libraries, senior enrichment programs, and community groups in the greater area. She is Chairman of the Amherst Library Board of Trustees and is an enthusiastic supporter of the role of the free public library in communities.

Bob Beck, a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, retired to NH with his wife, Meg, in 2020 after a 30+ year career overseas with the United States Government. In retirement, he teaches foreign policy classes for Keene State's CALL program and RISE, speaks frequently across the Monadnock region on the discipline, and writes a monthly column on international relations for the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript and the Brattleboro Reformer. Bob has a BA in Soviet/Eastern European Studies from the University of Maryland and an MA in International Relations from Boston University.

Martha Brooks, CZT, is a Certified Zentangle Teacher. She finds great joy sharing this fun, relaxing, and easy-to-do art method! Martha is a retired Speech Pathologist who loves family/friend gatherings, rescuing greyhounds and the Coast of Maine.

Judy Brophy has been translating technology into understandable English for over 40 years. After a career as an educational technologist in industry and academia, she currently teaches seniors in area colleges and libraries. In the computer versus human game, she is rooting for the humans.

Gloria Bry has more than 20 years' experience teaching classes with a focus on adult personal growth and development. She earned her BS degree as an adult, with double majors in Psychology/Behavioral Science and Adult Learning/Training and Development. Gloria teaches adults at local YMCAs and school systems. She also presents workshops and seminars for adults.

Joanne Carota graduated from Rivier University with an M.A. in Writing and Literature and holds an M.F.A. from the Solstice Program. She is the author of *THE DOCKS*, (Neptune Books) and has been published in *Pink Panther*, *Solstice Literary*, *Merrimack Journal*, *Chelmsford Independent*, *Middlesex Beat*, *Andover Townsman*, and *Subtopian*. Recently retired, she previously taught writing at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Favorite retirement pastimes include spending time with her granddaughter, who has more books than the average child.

Paul Carr has a BS and MS from MIT as well as a Ph.D. from Brandeis University. He is an IEEE Life Fellow who led a branch of the Air Force Research Lab that developed the SAW components used in cell phones and radar. He taught philosophy courses at University of Massachusetts Lowell that inspired his book *Beauty in Science and Spirit*. His web page is www.MirrorOfNature.org.

Amy Jo Cielinski is a certified Yoga Teacher who trained in the shakti flow tradition of at OM Yoga in Concord, NH and Bethel Farm Yoga in Hillsborough, NH. She has received additional training through the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, yoga for hip/knee replacements, and yoga for osteoporosis. Amy has a BS in Math and Physics from Wagner College and an MS in Physics, with a concentration in Optics from Stevens Institute of Technology.

Michael Conley, Ed.D. has been a special education teacher for many years. Along the way he has studied Eastern religions, meditation techniques and the Enneagram. Over the past few years he has taught RISE courses on James Joyce, the Romantics and the Hippies, and the Enneagram.

Susan Deschenes was the RISE Coordinator for more than two years. She worked as a public librarian in New Hampshire and often chose movies for libraries' collections. Susan developed her love of film at the University of Rochester, where she volunteered in the Film Studies Center during her undergraduate years and worked with her friends to create their student films.

Bonnie Dudley is a communication coach, author, and family caregiver advocate who works with individuals navigating complex conversations at work and at home. With over two decades of experience as a small business owner and 16 years in the senior industry, she brings a practical, real-world perspective to communication challenges that arise as roles and responsibilities change. Bonnie is the author of *Working It Out: Mastering Business and Caregiving* and *When Shortcuts Become Roadblocks: Questioning Assumptions That Mess With Your Mind at Work, Home, and in Caregiving*, where she focuses on helping people respond with intention, reduce stress, and create more positive outcomes.

Barry Jackson is a Professor Emeritus from Rivier University, where he taught for 25 years and served as the Chair of Modern Languages and Chair of the Rivier Honors Program. Following retirement, he taught English in China for four years and is now happy to be a RISE Facilitator.

Cal Knickerbocker, a former instructor and education manager at IBM, has taught at the University of Texas, Dallas, and at RISE since 1999.

Yvonne La-Garde has dedicated her career to improving the lives of seniors and individuals with disabilities through education, advocacy, and program development. She is a certified Diabetes Self-Management Trainer, nutrition educator, and fitness instructor, and currently teaches programs on healthy aging, caregiving, and dementia care throughout Southern New Hampshire. She also co-founded Pelham's first Caregivers Support Group and is an active community leader, writer, and founder of Pelham Pathways, a nonprofit promoting health, wellness, and accessibility through outdoor initiatives.

Bobby LaMattina character, educational specialist, I specialize in health fitness and longevity

Lorraine Ludwicki is a Life Coach and a Sacred Sound Practitioner. As a personal development coach, she shares tools and techniques to cultivate new interests and wake up latent aspirations for living life creatively with imagination and clarity. Expanding her experience to include Sound Therapy she helps individuals achieve relaxation while playing her crystal and Tibetan sound bowls. She's integrated the healing resonance of sound and practical life coaching skills to serve others on a journey to well-being.

Julie Lustig is a prolific reader and writer, connecting with RISE because of her love of learning. After devoting many years volunteering in the schools her three children attended, Julie worked in the mortgage industry as an underwriter. She is thankful to her fellow Shared Writing Experience writers for their support and encouragement.

Lorraine Matkowsky I've been teaching water aerobics for over 10 years now. I have a certification with the Aqua Exercise Association and CPR certified.

Dr. Ann McGreevey is a longtime educator and writer. She was a professor at Notre Dame College in NH and now lives in Marblehead, MA.

David McNeil has an MA in Education. He taught Social Studies for more than 30 years and is a long-time RISE facilitator.

Joanne Merrill was the Director of Athletics at Rivier University and has been a longtime instructor for the RISE Exercise Class. Let's get moving again!

Nancy Merz Nordstrom, a past RISE President, is a frequent RISE facilitator. She is Chair of the RISE Curriculum Committee and the author of "Learning Later, Living Greater: The Secret for Making the Most of Your After-50 Years." Prior to retirement, Nancy was the Director of the Road Scholar Institute Network.

Suzanne-Marie Rak is a community advocate and Rivier Alum. She has presented a number of topics to the library social groups and retirement homes. Always looking for a new way to have fun and expand on creating communication in groups, a forever teacher and social bug can't wait to make a group laugh and joke with simple puzzles.

Valerie Raudonis is a native of Nashua where she practiced law for over 40 years, primarily in the areas of estate planning, probate, and family law. She is a former instructor in Rivier College's paralegal program. Valerie is the author of the poetry collection *Sea Glass Secrets* and was a member of Poetry Society of NH's board of directors. She initiated and co-hosts the monthly poetry readings of Poetry Nashua at the Nashua Public Library

Wade Robbins Wade Robbins is a retired Radar Systems Engineer. He worked for Raytheon for over 37 years and retired in 2018. He is a film buff and a sports enthusiast who enjoys traveling. Wade has been a member of RISE since 2024.

William Sawyer holds an MBA from the University of Pennsylvania, a Ph.D. from the University of New York, and an MA from Boston College in Spirituality and Ministry. He presented workshops on spiritual transformation at two Franciscan centers and two prisons for more than 10 years.

Susan Schenck Susan is a retired teacher and reading consultant with 13+ years of experience teaching theatre to K-12 students. In addition, she has experience in directing and producing shows with adult performers. In the spring of 2025, she started the Friends Across Ages Community Theatre Troupe at Pilgrim Congregational Church in Nashua. This group of adults ages 18 and up has performed a holiday show, and an audience participation Mystery theatre play, with plans for a Christmas play December 2026. Bringing the joy of theatre to people of all ages is the focus of her theatre and drama work.

John Stromgren is a choral conductor, teacher, and workshop leader who has worked with choirs in Minnesota, Texas, Washington, and New Hampshire. He graduated from Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota and completed a Master of Music degree in Fort Worth, Texas. He currently

sings with the Parish Choir at St. John's Episcopal Church in Portsmouth, NH and directs the Compline Choir there during the season of Lent.

Lynn Thieret is an RN who has taught in the nursing department at Rivier University for 30 years. She has an MSN from the University of Delaware and is a cardiothoracic clinical nurse specialist. She has taught card making and paper crafting classes for 28 years and has been an active participant in the RISE program for 15 years. She enjoys using her creativity to promote paper crafting. Each class is a fun and exciting time.

Barbara Toohey is a retired English teacher who has taught several literature courses at RISE. Her passion for poetry leads her to offer classes featuring poets such as Dickinson, Bronte, and Millay. Barbara has also participated in poetry workshops both at RISE and in other venues.