

# Meet the Counselors



## Mrs. Jamie Hasselberger, Supervisor

Since 1998, Mrs. Hasselberger has been a member of the Scarlet family. Her journey as a School Counselor at RPJSHS began in September 2011, following a 13-year tenure as a 9th-grade English teacher. In January 2013, she elevated her role to become the Supervisor of the School Counseling Department. "What I value most about my job is the opportunity to establish connections with students, families, and colleagues. By working collectively, we are able to assist students in overcoming personal, academic, and social obstacles. An essential part of my educational role is to help students realize their full potential, which is both meaningful and rewarding." Outside of her professional life, Mrs. Hasselberger loves planning adventures with her family and friends, traveling across the nation to cheer on her daughter's All-Star cheerleading pursuits, reading, CrossFit, and indulging in delicious food!

## Ms. Emily Anderson, Counselor

Ms. Anderson has been a part of the RPJSHS counseling department since 2020 where she is the 9th grade school counselor. She works at RPHS on Monday, Wednesday and Friday providing all 9th-grade students with academic, social, and emotional support. On Tuesday and Thursday, Ms. Anderson works as the 8th grade school counselor at Memorial Middle School in Little Ferry. She has a unique role in transitioning students from middle to high school. A part of her role includes organizing the "Scarlet for a Day" program where Little Ferry 8th-grade students visit RPHS for the day. "My favorite part of my job is getting to make a difference in the lives of students."



## Mrs. Aileen Di Meola, Counselor

Mrs. DiMeola began her School Counseling career at Ridgefield Park Jr. Sr HS in September 2000 after graduating from Fordham University. "My personal goal as a school counselor is to assist students and their families in the development of academic and personal excellence. My favorite part of being a School Counselor is getting the chance to be able to make a difference in my students' lives. It is not always easy working with teenagers, but it is very rewarding." In her free time, Mrs. Di Meola enjoys spending time with friends and family, traveling and cheering on her son at his hockey games.

## Mrs. Ava Gonzalez, School Social Worker

Our School Social Worker is best known as "Ms. Ava". She proudly attended Bergen Community College and completed her education at Fordham University with a Master's degree in Social Work. She is also a Teen Mental Health First Aid Instructor where she educates the 11th graders on how to support a friend who may be experiencing a mental health challenge. "I love helping students reach their highest potential by providing a safe and non-judgmental space to freely discuss their goals and challenges. In their time with me, students learn and practice coping skills to help manage challenges that may arise." In her free time, Ms. Ava enjoys playing tennis, cooking and eating, watching true crime shows, and playing Pokémon Go.



## Ms. Suzanne Hemedá, Counselor

Ms. Hemedá has worked in K-12 and higher education since 2012. Prior to joining the RP staff in 2018, she worked as an elementary teacher, high school counselor, and academic advisor in Jersey City, Englewood, and Montclair, NJ. Ms. Hemedá earned a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from New Jersey City University and a Master's degree in Counseling from Montclair State University. She later completed post-Master's certifications in Educational Administration at Kean University. "My favorite part of being a counselor is cultivating self-sufficiency, self-awareness, and coping skills that will help students navigate their adult lives. I encourage students to make informed decisions and develop a growth mindset." When not at work, Ms. Hemedá enjoys quality time with her loved ones, running, CrossFit, eating at new (and tried and true) restaurants, and traveling.

## Mrs. Stacey Kopec, Counselor

Mrs. Kopec earned a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Ramapo College and a Master of Counseling Degree from New Jersey City University. Ridgefield Park Jr-Sr High School has been her second home since 2001. "My favorite thing about being a School Counselor is that every day is different and there are so many layers to what we do. I love helping students plan for the future through scheduling and career exploration, as well as helping them through difficult times of discomfort and stress." When she is not at school, Mrs. Kopec enjoys spending time with family and friends, attending concerts, traveling, and watching sports.



## Ms. Debra Pinto, Counselor

Ms. Pinto has been part of the Ridgefield Park community for the past 28 years. She first had the honor of being a teacher in the district and then transitioned into the counseling department 21 years ago. She currently serves as the counselor for junior high students in the 7th and 8th grades. "I absolutely love my job. My job allows me to connect with all the students on a different level. Throughout the year, I will visit classes and bring important information to the students." Ms. Pinto is a valuable asset when it comes to navigating the transition from elementary to junior high and all the academic and social changes that follow.

*"It's a great day to be a Scarlet!"*