

Professional Biography

Entering my senior year of high school, I was set on becoming an anthropologist with a focus on archaeology. I distinctly remember a guest speaker named Mr. Smiley coming into my 3rd grade classroom (he also happened to be my youth soccer coach), and explaining to us the field of archaeology, complete with visual and kinesthetic aids such as arrowheads, throwing spears, and a spear-throwing device called an atlatl. Mr. Smiley immediately had me hooked on all things ancient and fascinating, which, combined with my natural curiosity and love of learning, led me to believe I would be an archaeologist someday.

Then a marvelous thing happened. I had been working at a gymnastics facility that also ran a day care for school-age kids throughout high school, mostly as a summer job, but occasionally I would work there after school as well. The summer before I was to enroll in college, I started to realize what a gift I had with children and how much I enjoyed working with them. I found it was very natural for me to connect with kids and to develop a mentorship role with ease. Upon realizing what I had been blessed with, I knew then that I would be changing my stated anthropology major into something that would allow me to exercise this gift. When I arrived at Colorado State University that summer for orientation, I immediately switched my major to Health and Exercise Science, which was a perfect blend of my love of sports and the outdoors with my love of working with children.

Throughout my collegiate career, the spark for educating children grew within me until it was a blazing wildfire. I could not wait until I was given the opportunity to student teach, and eventually graduate and have a classroom of my

own. In the meantime, I sought opportunities to continue learning my craft through volunteer mentorship programs, youth coaching opportunities, and classwork that consistently allowed me to get into the local school to observe, co-teach, and serve the teachers any way that I could.

About a week before my college graduation in 2002, I received a call from a school principal in Colorado Springs who was opening a brand new school in Falcon School District, and was needing to hire a PE Teacher. I was thrilled that she saw my résumé, and wanted to conduct an interview. After a phone interview, and a visit and tour at the school (which was still under construction, so the first time I met my new principal, she was wearing a hard hat), I was hired to be the first ever PE teacher at Springs Ranch Elementary School, where I have been teaching ever since.

Now, thirteen years later, I still relish the opportunity to work with the students here and I constantly tell them that my favorite part of my job as the PE teacher is that I get the chance to know each and every student in the school, and that I am privileged to have some of them for six years in a row. I marvel at and am often humbled by the impact that I can make on a student's life, whether it takes six minutes or six years to do so. I am reminded at times of the influence that I do have with the students in ways I do not even realize, such as when I bump into a former student, and they say something like, "It really stuck with me when you said..." and I have no recollection of saying that, but it had an obvious impact on that student on that day way back when. In short, each and every day at school is both a blessing and a weighty responsibility, which I do not take lightly.