



Ms. Larson

University of San Diego

Science

A Learning Experience that Changed Me:

I was a student interested in science when I started down the pathway of environmental science. I had the most fortunate opportunity with Cornell University to study marine science at The Shoals Marine Laboratory on an island in the Gulf of Maine. As a student there I contributed to data detailing dynamics of intertidal species. I marveled at the tiny, delicate and colorful nudibranch, *Doto coronata*, and was equally impressed as gull hatchlings survived the first venture flying from jagged cliffs. I would never be the same and as a result continued my journey where I developed a strong sense of stewardship for the environment. I wish to pass on it on to future generations through my teaching and inspire a lifeline of care for our planet.

My Favorite Book:

High, Wide, and Lonesome by Hal Borland (Growing Up on the Colorado Frontier)

My Hobbies and Interests:

I am a Cycling Instructor at the YMCA. I enjoy creating my own playlists and many of the participants have become lifelong friends. I look forward to returning to the Y when pandemic restrictions permit.

Prior Experience in Education:

Education has been a focus for my entire life. After graduating from Denver Public Schools, Manual High School, I went on to the University of San Diego (USD) to earn a Bachelor's of Arts in Biology with a Chemistry minor. While at USD I spent summers at the Shoals Marine Laboratory. I worked for several environmental laboratories in both San Diego and Denver eventually leading to a Master's of Science in Environmental Science at the University of Colorado, Denver. I later became a Reading Paraprofessional for the Denver Public Schools, Traylor Academy, where my daughters attended elementary school. In time I earned a professional teaching license and began teaching middle school science at Merrill Middle School. I was at Merrill for the next 11 years. I enjoyed lesson planning as a creative outlet and differentiated to reach each student. I delighted in student success.

Something Super-Unique About Me:

I had a season pass at Winter Park when Mary Jane first opened.

Why I am Excited About Working at DSST:

I am excited to work at DSST because it is a values-driven organization. Of the values listed the most important and perhaps the overarching value is integrity. The phrase "walk-the-walk" comes to mind where expectations align words and actions. In this way, boundaries for academic and classroom behavior can be defined and enforced with respect for both educators and students. It is a way for students to take ownership of their academic experience and drive for success. I like the idea of utilizing integrity in a values-driven school as a norm with focus on honesty, fairness, and thoughtfulness to create a culturally safe learning environment.