

KARRIE (Hochgesang) WOLF

Teaching and Coaching: The Best of Both Worlds

Graduate: Class of 1997 Chemistry Teacher By Dana Schlachter, Spring, 2010

Karrie (Hochgesang) Wolf graduated from Forest Park High School in 1997 and now teaches chemistry at Forest Park. After graduating from the University of Southern Indiana with a bachelor's degree in science, Karrie had some difficulty finding a job, since it was half way through the semester. As summer came around, a teaching position opened up at Forest Park. "I was fortunate to end up with a perfect job at the school I wanted to be a part of," states the eight- year educator. Recently, Karrie received her master's degree in secondary education from Indiana Wesleyan University.

When Karrie first entered college, she planned to major in physical therapy; however, she quickly realized that physical therapy did not suit her. Karrie ended up changing her major to science teaching. She comments, "I couldn't be happier about my decision!" Wondering who inspired Karrie to pursue a teaching career in chemistry? Mr. Tom Meyer, former chemistry teacher at Forest Park, ignited the spark. "He was always funny and made the learning fun for us," she recalls. "I thank him for that and for helping inspire me to become a chemistry teacher myself."

As a teacher, Karrie puts in many hours outside of the eight-to-three school day. She arrives at school around 7:15 in the morning to finish grading papers, to enter grades into the computer, or to set up labs. Not only does Karrie teach Chemistry I, but she also teaches Chemistry AP and life science. "Having three different classes to prep for can be tough," points out Karrie. Likewise, her evenings are frequently consumed by tasks uncompleted during the day: grading papers, preparing notes, and making tests.

I love when students really understand the material, when the 'light bulb' comes on," exclaims the enthusiastic instructor. Educating the students about chemistry gives her a feeling that she loves. Some of her greatest highlights involve having past graduates visit or write to tell her how much they appreciated the material they covered.

While attending the University of Southern Indiana, Karrie played basketball. "I not only experienced a well-rounded academic atmosphere, but I also experienced the athletic side of things," explains Karrie. She developed a close relationship with her

teammates and even received the privilege of playing in an Elite Eight game in the NCAA tournament her senior year.

Along with teaching, Karrie also coaches two sports. She coaches cross country in the fall and shifts to basketball in the winter. “Coaching is an exciting part of teaching because it allows me to get to know the kids on a different level outside of the classroom,” she mentions. Karrie, an avid runner, ran in the Flying Pig Marathon in 2009. She has hopes of running in a second marathon someday. Happily married to Phillip for eight years, the St. Anthony couple enjoys raising three little boys-Spencer, Reece, and Parker.

As a Forest Park alumna, Karrie recognizes the positive benefits of an education received at Forest Park. Trusting and listening to your teachers is the advice Karrie gives to the current students at Forest Park. “Consider yourself lucky,” she advises. “You have been blessed with a terrific high school atmosphere, with caring, intelligent teachers and a great community!”