



News Release

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Ferris State Alumni and Reeths-Puffer Graduate Returns to Alma Mater to Teach and Coach

For most people, choosing a career takes time. It's a process of learning about yourself, understanding your strengths and weaknesses, and finding what motivates you. It can take years to find your calling, and who knows if it might change overnight? This wasn't the case for Sarah Ferenz. As a fifth grader, she made her decision and stuck with it. Sarah knew she wanted to be a teacher.

Mrs. Snowden was Sarah's fifth grade social studies teacher. She also happened to teach Sarah's dad when he was in fifth grade. Mrs. Snowden introduced Sarah to her passion for education.

"For whatever reason, I had this awesome teacher, and it was social studies believe it or not," Sarah said, "I don't know what it was, but I said I want to be a teacher, and ever since then I never changed my mind."

Sarah grew up in Muskegon, Michigan and attended Reeths-Puffer Schools. She was involved in many extra-circular activities, including theatre, choir, and several sports. Sarah was passionate about many things, but one activity reigned supreme. Sarah loved softball. She loved watching, talking, practicing, learning, teaching, and most importantly playing the sport.

Sarah played softball all four years in high school, where she made priceless memories with her teammates and friends. Then, she continued playing at Muskegon Community College for two years after graduating high school. Around this time, Sarah attended a softball camp at Ferris State University.

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“I really liked the atmosphere and the energy and the intensity of everything,” Sarah said about the camp, “And then I walked the campus and it just felt like home.”

Sarah decided to bring her talents to Big Rapids where she played softball and studied Early Education. However, like many students spending their first year away from home, Sarah felt homesick. She missed all her close friends she made at Reeths-Puffer and her family in Muskegon.

“My mom actually had my whole family and friends write letters and send them to me, so that really helped me get through it,” Sarah said.

Later during her time at Ferris, Sarah suffered another setback. In the fall of 2017, Sarah’s grandpa passed away unexpectedly. He was the biggest fan all of his grandchildren and their greatest supporter in whatever they did. He was always so proud to wear his many hats from all the schools they attended.

Although this event seemed untimely, Sarah was lucky to know three girls who knew what she was going through. Within a one-year span, three of Sarah’s teammates also lost a grandpa. They were fortunate to have each other to get through the hard times. Also, Sarah was a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) at Ferris, where Pastor Mike played a huge role in alleviating the grieving process.

“He was so helpful through it all,” Sarah said, “He met with me outside of school and helped talk through everything.”

Despite these challenges, Sarah worked tenaciously to balance her education with her student athlete commitments. Her school years consisted of a fall softball season followed by a winter of conditioning. The regular season begins in early spring and finishes late into the semester. Then, they’re given workouts to do in the summer. Her college years were a non-stop grind, but her efforts paid off when she graduated in the spring of 2018.

Sarah had a short list of schools she wanted to work for. Not long after graduating, Sarah received a phone call about a job opening at her number one choice. She went in for an interview and was quickly offered a position at her alma mater, Reeths-Puffer High School. Along with her new teaching job, Sarah also recently became the varsity softball coach.

“I think because I’m young and I’m freshly out of college, I have new ideas,” Sarah said, “And I’m not far enough away from the game as a player that I still understand what it’s like to be a player.”

As for the classroom, Sarah believes her age and experience allows her to relate to her students and understand what they are going through on a daily basis. Having been involved with so many school activities, she can connect with her students’ interests.

“It’s kind of cool because I can share the same experiences with my students, like you’re in madrigals, you’re in the musical, you play softball, volleyball, NHS, and I think, ‘Oh yeah I remember what it was like,’” Sarah said, “and my students, they appreciate that.”

Sarah currently resides in Muskegon, Michigan and plans to continue doing so for the foreseeable future. She wants to give back to the community and school that gave her so much when she was a student. Sarah credits much of her success to her time at Ferris State University, as well as helping her become who she is today.

Ferris State University was founded in 1884 by Woodbridge and Helen Ferris. The four-year public university is known for its quality instruction and large selection of academic programs. For more information, please visit www.ferris.edu.



Former Ferris State softball player Sarah Frenz with her grandparents after winning back-to-back games on Tuesday, April 19, 2016. Sarah's grandparents traveled from Muskegon, MI to watch their granddaughter participate in two day games. The Bulldogs beat the Northwood Timberwolves 5-3 and 4-2.