

Carolyn Kirkpatrick

Education and schools have been central to Carolyn's life. She has either worked at a school or lived on a campus most of her life. She was even born on a boarding school campus! Both Carolyn's parents were lifelong educators. Before retirement, her father was the founding head of an independent kindergarten to twelfth grade school outside Washington D.C.

Carolyn left for university with no intention to teach. She began her university studies in literature and then discovered science. She holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in Biology and a Masters of Science degree in Environmental Engineering. Initially Carolyn did marine biology research in the Caribbean Islands and then worked as an environmental engineer in the United States, focused on alternative technologies for drinking water disinfection. While not directly related to teaching, Carolyn's diverse academic interests and varied studies during this period would later help her as a teacher to be able to connect with students over a wide range of interests.

After several years as an engineer, Carolyn realized she actually missed the vibrancy and challenges of the learning environment and decided to become a teacher much to her surprise, and her parents'.

Carolyn started her teaching career in 1996, teaching at The Athenian School, an independent secondary school in California (US). At Athenian, Carolyn taught mathematics, and she and her husband were dorm parents in the boys' dormitory. As a "Round Square School", Athenian is a member of an international network of member schools that collaborate on holistic education and promote six IDEALS of learning: Internationalism, Democracy, Environment, Adventure, Leadership and Service. Beyond academic excellence, students at these schools commit to personal development and responsibility. Athenian's focus on growing the whole child resonated with Carolyn.

When her family moved to Colorado, Carolyn taught at the Logan School, a highly selective, independent school for kindergarten to US eighth grade students (4-14 year olds), with a full time gifted and talented programme emphasizing experiential and individualized curriculum. In addition to the three traditional R's, Logan stresses three additional R's: research, recording and reasoning. Carolyn taught mathematics and in a 10-12 year old classroom. Teaching at the Logan School both inspired Carolyn and fundamentally changed her understanding of teaching, learning, and education. Logan empowers students and creates autonomous learners connected to their community. Carolyn's two sons also attended the Logan School, which allowed her to also see the powerful effects of this learning environment from a parent's perspective.

Carolyn and her family have lived in New Zealand for 7 years and became NZ citizens in 2013. For her first few years in NZ, Carolyn volunteered in the gifted and talented programmes at her sons' local primary school and then at their high school. In addition, Carolyn served on several boards for education initiatives, including serving as a founding board member on a trust to raise money and support for local gifted students. She is also on a board for the development of a new residential programme for high ability NZ and international students (plans are still in development).

Most recently Carolyn was the gifted and talented coordinator at Wakatipu High School in Queenstown, NZ. She was tasked with re-developing the programme, including writing policies and procedures and developing programming. In 2014 Carolyn also enrolled in the REACH Certificate of Effective Practice in Gifted Education, to ensure that she understood gifted learning in the NZ context and to connect with educators interested in gifted learning and education, and achieved the Certificate with Distinction.

Carolyn and her family are avid travellers. Their most recent trip was three months in China exploring the ancient silk routes in the Xinjiang, tramping in Yunnan and homestays in Beijing and Chengde (several hours north of Beijing). Carolyn returned to being a student with Chinese language study. Carolyn also enjoys hiking and being outdoors, the ocean and lots of reading.