

## **Sarah Jergenson Operations Manager**

### **Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in a small town called Cumberland in Northwest Wisconsin. It's about 100 miles from Minneapolis.

### **What were your experiences in High School?**

I was involved in "the arts" in high school. I was in Concert and Chamber choirs, as well as Concert, Jazz, and Marching band. I also did a lot of musical theater from age 6 thru high school. I was a big nerd, obviously, but my school administration put a lot of money and resources in the arts programs so lots of kids did them, not just the nerdy kids like me!



### **Where did you go to school?**

I went to college at Augsburg College here in Minneapolis! I majored in Sociology and minored in Women's Studies. I learned so much at Augsburg, not just academically, but also about who I was as a citizen, worker, and community member.

### **Why did you become a teacher / para / other?**

I didn't really know what I wanted to do after graduating college, so as I was searching for jobs, I came across a position as a Promise Fellow at AFA. As soon I read about AFA I knew I wanted to work there. I started out at AFA as an AmeriCorps Promise Fellow, then became the Administrative Assistant, and am now the Operations Manager! It's been very cool to work in so many different roles in the same organization.

### **Where did you work before Augsburg Fairview Academy?**

In high school I worked as a barista at a local coffee shop, and then in college I had some on campus work working with students to job search and develop their resumes. I also had two internships at Pro-Choice Resources, and worked in retail at Target and Ann Taylor.

### **Why did you choose to work at Augsburg Fairview Academy? Why a charter school and not a public school?**

I chose AFA because of its mission and vision. The dedication that AFA has to breaking down barriers to education for students in the twin cities area was very compelling to me. I had never worked, or even been inside of a charter school, so I was interested to see how they differ from a public school.

### **What was your first impression of Augsburg Fairview Academy?**

I remember feeling very welcomed by the staff and students. I know now that this tends to always be how we operate here, but it was nice to not feel super intimidated or uncomfortable because I was new and unsure of how things worked about here.

**What has surprised you most about working at Augsburg Fairview Academy?**

I think I'm constantly surprised by the resilience of the students. AFA has some of the best students in the world and I'm so grateful to be a witness to their greatness.

**What do you like about Augsburg Fairview Academy?**

I like that AFA works so diligently at providing an education for all students. No barrier is too great.

**What don't you like about Augsburg Fairview Academy?**

I think that because it is such a small school, there is potential for a small negative attitude to have a large impact.

**What do you wish other people knew about Augsburg Fairview Academy?**

I wish other people knew that AFA is working on several different levels to make education equitable for all including working with students in the building, creating and maintaining relationships with other organizations outside of AFA, and working with legislators on a governmental level.

**What would you say are some of your strongest beliefs about education?**

I believe that all can learn and all should be able to learn. I think that education looks different for different people and a standardized test isn't the best way to tell if you're educated. I believe that learning should be personal and that there should be no shame in education.



**What's your personal philosophy on what should be done about education?**

I think that there needs to be more funding for education and more educators involved in determining where funding goes. I think that the achievement gap nationwide (and locally!) needs to be addressed and measures need to be taken to eliminate it.

**What would you tell someone who is thinking about enrolling at Augsburg Fairview Academy?**

I would tell them that AFA is a great place to come to feel supported. We have many resources outside of education and want to do our best to provide you with an education that will serve you.

**What are your hobbies?**

I watch a lot of TV. Usually while I'm watching TV I'm also doing something else like embroidery or cross stitching, jigsaw puzzles, or word puzzles. Essentially, when I'm home, I turn into a 75 year-old woman. I do also like to spend time with friends and go out to eat. I like to hike and bike and see animals.

**If you weren't working at Augsburg Fairview Academy, what would you be doing instead, or what would your life be like?**

I'm not sure what I would be doing if I wasn't working at AFA. I would eventually like to go to graduate school to become a social worker.



**What might someone be surprised to know about you?**

I think people are often surprised to learn that I grew up on a sheep farm. I think I fit in pretty well as a "city kid," but I have deep farm roots. I can drive a tractor and carry hay bales and know how to help a ewe (female sheep) deliver her lambs (baby sheep)!

**How would your students describe you?**

Students have, on occasion, described me as "doing too much". I would also like to think that they would describe me as funny, consistent, and helpful.