

Julie Amberg

CASCADES ACADEMY

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Q What is the single best thing you have learned from working with children?

A Children are exceptionally good at living in the present. When my kids spot a lizard or a deer (for the 100th time), their screams of excitement would make one think they had just discovered a new planet. They teach me every single day to slow down and be grateful for just how amazing life is.

Q What did you learn from your parents about parenting?

A My parents always emphasized life experiences over material things. "No one can ever take your experiences away from you," they would say. They prioritized things like camping, hiking, and traveling. Having such easy access to these kinds of experiences here in Central Oregon for my own children is a tremendous gift.

Q What do you hope your children have learned from you?

A I hope they've learned that it's totally normal to make mistakes. When I was a kid I assumed that making mistakes was only something that kids did. I've probably made my biggest and most public mistakes as an adult, a parent, and a professional.

Q What Superhero power do you wish you had as a parent?

A "Captain Calm" would arrive on the scene in those moments of distress and frustration when my children are taking five times longer than necessary to get out of the house for school. Captain Calm

would somehow magically speed up the pace with neither a reminder nor a raised voice. All would get done efficiently, and we would never be late!

Q How are kids today different than when you were a kid?

A Kids today are exposed to so much more, and there are a lot of real challenges with that. But, I prefer to see how much more open-minded

and inclusive children are as a result. When I was a child, no one was talking opening about the LGBTQ community. Now kids readily accept diversity in such powerful and beautiful ways.

Q How do you keep from being overwhelmed?

A The major strategies for me include exercise, getting outside, and finding some nuggets of precious alone time. I try to go to yoga twice a week no matter what. I joke that it's like getting exercise and going to church but in half the time.

Q What do you think the next generation has in store for us?

A I think the next generation is going to prioritize sustainability in ways that will have an enormous, positive impact. They are much more conscientious about our planet and resources because sustainability has never felt optional to them.

Q If parents were to, "Ask not what your school can do for you, but what you can do for your school" what would that be?

A I would encourage parents to be less anxious about their kids. Research has shown that parent anxiety is at an all-time high, and this anxiety is often transferred to teachers and schools in negative ways. Balanced, engaged, and happy parents = balanced, engaged and happy kids. That's one equation everyone likes.

After serving for ten years as the Associate Head of School at Cascades Academy, Julie Amberg took over as the Head of School in 2015. She was recently named to the Northwest Association of Independent Schools Board of Governors. Her family, including her husband, 7-year-old son, and 5-year-old daughter, can often be found camping in their 1985 VW Westfalia bus, affectionately known as "The Loaf."