

SARA VERDERBER



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ABOUT MYSELF

LHS CLASS OF 1997

I was born and raised in Lakewood, Ohio. As a matter of fact, I have lived on three Lakewood streets my entire life. My parents first lived in a double on Nicholson, later moving to Edgewater just west of Lakewood Park, then finished on Lake Rd, where I lived until I left for college. As an adult, I lived on Nicholson again, just a bit north of that first double, then moved down the street on Edgewater, this time on the east side of the park!

I first attended Lakewood Lutheran School (now a drug store across from the library), then changed to St. Thomas Lutheran in Rocky River. As a competitive swimmer, my decision for high school was an obvious one, and off to Lakewood High School I went. I remember walking through the enormous high school for the first time-my home room was on the 4th floor of the old building! I never thought I would learn my way around. That quickly changed thanks to some wonderful friends and helpful faculty. After my homeroom teacher learned that I spent my early mornings at swim practice, he let me skip the long trek and I was able to head right for 1st period. What a lifesaver that was. Swimming took up most of my time, but I truly loved my high school experience at Lakewood. I didn't realize how much it prepared me for the real world until I left to continue my education and swimming career at the University of Miami in Florida. I graduated from Miami with a bachelor of science in Education, and spent the next several years teaching;

first at St. Paul Lutheran in Westlake, then at the Avon Local Schools. During my time at Avon, I worked towards earning a master's degree in education with a specialization in reading from Baldwin Wallace University. I also helped to start the Avon High School Swim team, coaching for three years.

Shortly after graduating from college, I met my husband, Jason Verderber. In 2003 we were married and enjoyed newlywed life! For a short time we lived in Rocky River, but the heartbeat of Lakewood drew us to our first home together, my second stint on Nicholson. In 2008 we welcomed our first child, a son named Riley. Then, in 2011, our family was complete thanks to the addition of our daughter Penelope. It was never a question where our children would attend school, so off to Emerson they went! Imagine my surprise, when I discovered one of my high school swim coaches was a teacher at Emerson! Mrs. Mollison was able to teach our son twice, once in 3rd grade and again in 5th. Our daughter very much is looking forward to having her this year. The kids love to hear stories of my high school days from their teacher!

Although I left the classroom when our son was born, I always found ways to use my experience as a teacher. I became very involved in the Lakewood Early Childhood PTA, serving as the treasurer, organizer of the city-wide event Meet the Trucks, and the Tours chair-person (think field trip for parents with kids younger than Kindergarten.) As my kids grew older, my volunteer time moved with them, and I stepped into the role of PTO president at Emerson Elementary. As our son moved on to Garfield, I found time to help out their PTSA, while still working with Emerson. Our children are very active in sports in and around Lakewood, so much of our family time is spent at the pool, football and baseball fields, basketball and volleyball courts.

I was drawn to the Lakewood Rangers Education Foundation by former trustee Mike Bentley. Not only was it a great way to give back to my alma mater, but it is wonderful to know that our efforts help not only current Lakewood City Schools students, but my own children as well.