



HOLDREGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Giving Back to Education

HHS Alumni Recognition Feature!

Dear HHS Alumni and HPS Foundation Supporters,

Holdrege High School is fortunate to have many very successful graduates. We are excited to continue sharing the stories of some of those HHS Alums thanks to the journalistic talents of Kristine (Long) Jacobson, Class of 1990.

We also welcome your suggestions and comments.

Sincerely,

*Teresa Kroll, Chairman
HPS Foundation Committee*

Kraig Sproles - Class of 1986

Sproles Embraces Diversity in Life and Career

By Kristine Jacobson

Kraig Sproles' quest for travel and adventure and his appreciation for different cultures and world views have shaped his adult life.

The 1986 HHS graduate spent time playing football in Europe after college, worked several summers on fishing boats in Alaska to fund his travel passions and then lead outdoor expeditions in the boundary waters of Minnesota before finding his true passion of working with youth.

Kraig found his career path in education and currently serves as principal at South Shore Elementary, a dual-language K-5 school in Albany, Oregon. His work in education allows him to embrace kids of many cultures and provide them support and encouragement for a strong future - like the kind of support and encouragement he found in Holdrege.

"Being in a place like Holdrege where the community is so strong, I just felt embraced by the community and very supported, especially with



the basketball team,"
Kraig said. "The way that
everyone in the

*Kraig Sproles and some of his South Shore
Elementary School students.*

community embraced the team was special, and I want to replicate that for kids. I think schools play a really important role as a community."

Kraig's family moved to Holdrege from Chadron just in time for basketball season his freshman year. "It was a really easy transition," Kraig said of the move to Holdrege. "I really felt embraced by the Holdrege community right away. People were super welcoming. I jumped right into sports and that helped being part of a sports team."

Kraig found his niche, a solid group of friends and success playing high school football and basketball. He was part of the 1986 HHS State Basketball Championship team. "I never played with a group that was like that," Kraig said of his basketball team. "We really had a team chemistry that functioned well together and Coach (Craig) Jacobson really knew how to bring that team together."

He has carried those lessons learned from Coach Jacobson into his life as a principal and coach. "A lot of the things I learned from sports, and particularly with that team, I can apply to this job," Kraig said. When he has 70 staff people and 450 kids to encourage and lead, he remembers some of those lessons.

College

After graduating from HHS, Kraig attended the University of Sioux Falls, where he earned a degree in organization communication and psychology and played football.

Through a connection he made in Holdrege, he worked with a scout who set up his opportunity to play football after college in Europe and Austria for about 6 months. "It was really just more of an excuse to get to Europe, more than anything else," Kraig said.

After his European experience, he wanted to travel more but didn't have the money. So, he moved to Kodiak, Alaska, where he worked at an organization that helped troubled youth. While there, he made connections in the commercial fishing industry and was hired to work on salmon fishing and crabbing boats out of Dutch Harbor.

During fishing season, he basically lived on the small boat with three or four other fisherman. In the cramped boat, they got to know each other well. "The people there had really different values and world views than I was used to," Kraig said. "I think that molded me a lot. I gained an appreciation for difference."

Work on the fishing boat was demanding and consumed all of his time for about four months out of the year. Then, he traveled the rest of the year. "A lot of my twenties were spent intensely working or intensely not working," Kraig said. He enjoyed the breath-taking views of Alaska during his fishing work, and he enjoyed the views of Prague, Hawaii, and other destinations he visited during the off-season.

Also during the off-season, Kraig began studying at the University of Minnesota to earn a master's degree. He eventually moved to Minnesota and started working for Wilderness Inquiry, a group that leads outdoor adventures, such as kayaking and canoeing, in the Boundary Waters of Minnesota.

That's also where he met
his future wife, Inara Scott,



Kraig & Inara Sproles

whose family immigrated from Latvia.

It was also during his job at Wilderness Inquiry that he discovered his passion for working with youth while leading youth outdoor adventures.

Kraig went on to earn his master's degree in experiential education, and he and Inara moved to Oregon for her to attend law school. "I instantly fell in love with Oregon and the West Coast," Kraig said, and they have been there ever since.

Professional Career

Kraig started his education career in 1998, first teaching high school and then middle school and then becoming a vice principal and eventually principal for the past seven years.

He was hired to start a dual-language school in another Oregon community and then began work two years ago at South Shore, also a dual-language school. Although Kraig

doesn't speak Spanish, he thrives in a culturally-diverse environment and sees huge academic benefits to kids learning in both English and Spanish at a young age.

"I just really, really, like working in these types of schools," Kraig said. "I enjoy interacting with people who have a different perspective than I do or a different cultural upbringing." Kraig said dual-language schools are popular in Oregon, and many have a waiting list for admission.

South Shore is a neighborhood school, meaning that it first recruits students from the surrounding area. About 60 percent of his students are Hispanic immigrants, and about 80 percent of his school students qualify for free and reduced lunches.

Kraig said he enjoys and embraces change, and he's already looking toward his next career step as he is in his third year of a PhD program in education and hopes to someday become a school superintendent. He is already thinking about his dissertation in which he will study joy in schools and how to create a joyful learning community for students and teachers while maintaining rigorous

academic standards. "How do we balance those two things, and how do we create schools where kids want to be and teachers want to be, yet we have high academic standards?" Kraig said.



Kraig and Leo

Although his life has taken him to many places and many adventures, Kraig said he always has a special place in his heart for Holdrege. "I still look back on those times as foundational and important times in my life," Kraig said of his high school years at HHS. "As you put my life together, there's these little chunks of time. I spent a lot of time in different places, and I really look back fondly at the Holdrege time."



Kraig & Annija

Outside of his studies and work, Kraig enjoys mountain biking and coaching his two children, Leo, who is a junior in high school, and Annija, a seventh-grader. Kraig said he wants to be a good role model for his children as his dad was to him. He appreciated his dad's commitment to church and the community and the importance of a life of service.

"I feel really strongly that this is where I'm supposed to be, and this is the work I'm supposed to be doing," Kraig said.

About Us

The mission of the HPS Foundation is to support and enhance the educational efforts of students and teachers of Holdrege Public Schools by providing funding for innovative and challenging programs, learning experiences, and activities.

Holdrege Public Schools Foundation

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