



Meet

Coach
Sharon

Director of Athletics



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When asked to share some of my experiences having been at Unity School for 33 years, all I say is my heart has been blessed and is full. I have so many memories throughout all of my years. The moments I have had here on campus fill my soul on many occasions. I am humbled and grateful to have been able to go to work and love what I do for the past 33 years. I was blessed to work under the most well-known Head of School, Maria Barber, who taught me the value in education, resilience, work ethic, and honesty. Maria, I am humbled and grateful to have been under your wing. Your vision for this little private school was and continues to be amazing through the eyes of the new Head of School Genevieve Hoppe. Overall, Unity is not Unity without the commUNITY of us all.

What is my coaching philosophy?

When I think of coaching philosophy I think of words like responsibility, purpose, gift, life, pursuit, work, connection among others. As a coach of many sports at a middle school level it is my responsibility to provide my athletes with the tools necessary not only to play a successful game, but to live their individual lives as positively as they can by using the same tools to reach their optimal potential outside of sports as well. Through this style of coaching, I can guide athletes through thinking and decision-making. Teaching and mentoring life skills through coaching, directs conversations to real life experiences.

How do you develop talent?

Each athlete brings a different story. Talent follows once you develop a connection with the athlete. I can tell you about my practice plans, how hard they are, the stations of fitness, but unless my athletes believe I am there for them and in it with them they will not develop. When at practice it is about becoming vulnerable. It is the exposure of the possibility of making mistakes in front of others, personal drive, sweat, fears, grit, bravery, listening, sacrifice, improvement, hard work, failure, goals, joy, anxiety, and focus. Getting to know your players at grades fifth through eighth is essential. I am not a coach about winning or losing, I am a coach about doing your job, trusting your teammates, and supporting each other. Mindset, goals, the importance of progress and not perfection.

What is my greatest personal achievement as a coach and teacher?

My greatest accomplishment is getting to coach with so many amazing people and athletes, such as Mindy Parsons, Beth Wagner, Tammy Brown, Christ Evert, Bill D'Addio, Rob Wurzburger, Scott Wainman, PJ Goldberg, Stephanie Romano, Dad Phillips, Torres Young, and many others. Cari Walsh, from my mom's hometown in Oregon, always made it feel like my family, also from Maine, was here. Lou Ferraro, my first partner and coach, taught me to help the kids believe in themselves. Today, I work with Coach Z, and we are gifted the opportunity to make the same difference in children's lives.

What is the most gratifying aspect of teaching and coaching?

When I first started at Unity there was no back field, no playground, and no gymnasium. We had the west parking lot on the tar with a chain link fence and today's middle school math classroom, as well as the front lawn and lawn in front of the middle school building. The most gratifying aspect is to see how far the program has come, the possibility of change coming to fruition. When I see alumni come back and remember what we did together, that is gratifying. It is important to me they know Unity School is there for them and will always be. Family is family and it does not stop when you graduate. It is special when I see former students touring the campus and the memories of 30 + years ago flood the campus. There is nothing more personal about teaching and coaching than sharing moments of connection.

Why did I choose Unity School?

I happened to be at a Unity School picnic, at Calusa Park with Max Arioli, he was in first grade at the time. It was 33 years ago. Max was off playing, and I asked to join in a basketball game with some (not knowing) girl dads!! I told them if I did not blend in, I would not play. Well, Dr. Olivella, Wender, Ferraro, and Luckman thanks for letting me play. I have been at Unity School ever since. Thanks girl dads!! The rest is history. Unity chose me and I chose Unity.

What makes the school's PE program unique?

What makes our program unique is that the focus is on each student as an individual. I make it my mission to make sure each student in each class has their name called for doing something right and associated with something great.

These little moments become big moments and create a unique way to build confidence no matter what level of ability a student has. All students have different strengths and abilities. It is important teachers acknowledge and recognize those moments.

How has Unity changed your life and lifestyle?

Unity changed my perspective on how I have been able to see things. I believe how I conduct myself is a direct mirror of how I want those around me to conduct themselves. Sometimes I miss the mark and sometimes I am spot on. Most of the time I realize I am human.... I am okay with that. Unity School has given me the ability to reflect on the virtues as I walk down the peace walk every morning to keep myself in check, to admit when I am wrong, say I am sorry, move on when necessary, and to celebrate the successes of life as they arrive. Unity School has been a second home to me. I have been blessed and am forever grateful for being able to teach, coach, and have been touched by so many amazing families. I have an opportunity here to say thank you all for the memories and continued memories. I appreciate all of you who touched my life. Moments matter.

Coach Sharon's background and experience

I have seven siblings: four brothers and three sisters. Both of my parents were Marine veterans. My father fought in three wars. I grew up in Maine. I had learned a great deal of life through sports as a child teamwork, strategy, work ethic, communication, support, and so much more.

I'm a proud mother of a Unity Alumni Myah and Nani of grand twins Khloe and Ciara.

I currently hold four bachelors (PE, General Psychology, Exercise Science, and Health & Wellness), two masters (General Education & Sports Psychology) and a current dissertation doctorate (Doctorate in Education (EdD), Performance, Improvement Leadership).