

Karissa (Pignone) Fitzell

SJRCS Graduate 1994



Better known as “Mrs. Fitzell” by her students, Karissa previously taught third and fourth graders at St. Joseph Regional Catholic School. After her own graduation from the school, she went on to attend the Academy of Notre Dame in Tyngsboro, MA and then Colby-Sawyer College in New London, NH. She discovered her desire to teach during an on-campus early childhood internship in her junior year of college. After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Child Development in 2003, Karissa taught preschool at the Children’s Place on the campus of Phillips Academy in Andover, MA for three years, leaving to accept a position at St. Joseph School teaching third grade. She completed her Master of Education degree in 2007 through a one- year intensive program offered by Franklin Pierce University while continuing to teach at St. Joseph’s.

Karissa still remembers her own first grade teacher, Mrs. Provencher, who “enchanted me with her gentle and fun teaching style.” Immediately realizing that “St. Joseph’s was the perfect place for me,” Karissa credits her alma mater with being a school where “my curiosity about God and religion was cultivated.” As a student, she always considered her school a home, and she now recalls, “This feeling of being at home lingered throughout my time at St. Joseph’s. It remained in my life throughout the years, bringing me back twenty years later to re-attach myself to the community that once so warmly welcomed my family and me. I feel blessed with the utmost responsibility for instilling in my own students the values that I attained as a St. Joseph student. I will always remember my student years at St. Joseph’s as the ones that had the most impact on my quest to know God, my desire to learn, my appreciation for community and charity, my lifelong friendships, and my understanding of the responsibility to respect others. Karissa is currently teaching at St. Thomas Aquinas School in Derry, NH.



