



### **Meet Carrie O'Donnell, NEF Executive Director**

Carrie O'Donnell is a Newburyport resident and joined the Newburyport Education Foundation in March 2018 as the new Marketing and Development Manager. Carrie brings 20+ years of marketing, corporate sponsorship, and donor relations experience through her previous roles as the Manager of Corporate Partnerships at the SeaFestival of Trees/Blue Ocean Music Hall and Marketing Manager at Verizon Wireless. Carrie also has non-profit experience, having served on the Board of Directors of the Light Foundation for five years. Carrie is an alumnae of Saint Michael's College where she graduated with a degree in English. She has spent the majority of her life living in Newburyport and Salisbury and graduated from Triton Regional High School.

### **An Interview with Carrie**

#### ***What drew you to the NEF?***

I can't think of a more rewarding way for me to utilize my skill set than being able to directly impact the quality of education the children in Newburyport receive, including my own two boys. We are so fortunate to have such an amazing school system here in Newburyport and I have marveled at all the NEF has been able to do to provide resources and renovations that would never have happened had it not been for its effort and commitment. I am delighted to be part of this organization and its talented, dedicated board.

#### ***What has been your proudest professional moment?***

As the Sports Marketing Manager at Verizon Wireless I was fortunate to work with New England's sports teams for 15+ years. Because of the work I did managing and expanding Verizon's sponsorship of the Boston Red Sox for many years, as well as the contracts for many Red Sox players, the team awarded my company a World Series ring after the 2011 season. Accepting that ring and being able to share it with Verizon Wireless employees and customers was incredibly humbling as I am a life-long Sox fan. It made me even more proud to bring that ring into the Newburyport Public Schools and share it with the students, allowing them to try it on, take photos with it and see first-hand what a World Series ring looks and feels like.

#### ***What was your favorite subject in school?***

I didn't even have to think about this one: English. For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated at the emotion that words on a page can elicit. When I was in grade school I was enveloped in The Boxcar Children series and although I knew they were just books, the writing made me want to meet those characters. As I got older, the works of Maya Angelou and Walt Whitman not only kept my interest but really helped me find my voice and express so many of my opinions, beliefs and feelings on paper. I am still told by those who know me that I wear my heart on my sleeve, which I believe has a direct relation to surrounding myself with words as

often as possible at such a young age. I also know it is what led me to my profession as marketing has so much to do with the power of words and how they affect people.

***Having two children in the Newburyport School System, what has impressed you the most?***

I have loved watching how the city not only supports but takes charge when it comes to the schools' needs. In the time my kids have been in school, we have built a new elementary school, completely renovated the high school stadium, modernized the middle school auditorium, created a STEM lab, and built a new track to name a few...all because people, businesses and organizations cared enough to come together, work hard, and make each of them a reality.

***What do you like to do when you are not at work?***

Nothing makes me happier than spending time with my two boys, Christopher and Brady, and my husband Chris, which typically entails starting off our weekend by getting a bagel, coffee and walking around downtown; the beauty of our city is something I never take for granted. I love being able to cheer my boys on whether it be soccer, basketball, skiing or art. My husband is a member of the Portermen, Newburyport's own a cappella Sea Shanty group, and listening to them is one of my favorite ways to have fun. Feeding my soul is important to me as well and I do this two ways. Playing with paper and creating cards and gifts for people I love is something I have to do each week in order to feel complete, but the beach is by far my happy place where I go to refuel year-round.