

Class of 1996

Winter 2015 Class Agent Letter

January 2015

Hi there, class of 1996!

2015 – What?? Really? How did we get here so quickly?? We were just studying for finals a few decades ago!

Ok, well that puts things in perspective a bit. Just a *little* time has passed since our days at Augie. Much has changed. Life has taken on directions you always dreamed of – or perhaps never dreamed of. But one trip back to the Viking Days football game or parade, one visit to campus, one Vespers or band concert later, and it feels like you are right back where you belong.

We share the gift of coming from a really great place. And where we come from matters.

Our family officially put down roots once again in South Dakota this year. We knew when our kids started school our flexible traveling days would come to an end – at least for a few years. Happily, the decision to return to Sioux Falls was an easy one. We loved many things about Arizona and will definitely miss the warm winters, but there really is a spirit of community and family that is unique to the Midwest, and this is where we want our kids to grow up. We come from a great place (cold winters and all!).

I was particularly reminded of that when I spoke to a class of Augie education students this past week. I was impressed by their enthusiasm and commitment to their future profession, but even more to their dedication to social justice issues. They were a diverse group of *really* intelligent students who showed great interest in connecting with the community to share their gifts and knowledge. One young woman was an outstanding soccer player who said she was interested in volunteering. As I spoke to her about possible connections here in Sioux Falls, I learned she had already (a number of years ago) helped establish an organization that teaches soccer to kids who would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn the sport. She reported with a huge smile that some of the first participants in the program graduated this past year with scholarships to college – to play soccer!

This remarkable young woman would have probably done great things regardless of where she chose to study – but at Augustana she was surrounded by a community of scholars and learners who supported her desire to make a difference and helped make it happen.

Augie alums, we came from a powerful place. We entered to learn and exited to serve. We benefitted from the knowledge and passion of amazing mentors and educators. Our lives were shaped by those experiences.

Let's make a commitment to pay it forward.

Whether through financial gifts, gifts of mentoring, providing internships, or encouraging future scholars to explore Augustana, let's make 2015 the year of giving back – and making others aware of this amazing place we have come from.

Please check out the Scoop for more information on the great news around campus, and please don't forget to drop a note every now and then to update classmates on your most recent ventures! You might be surprised at the number of connections you now have (or still have) with classmates in similar places in life. We would love to hear from you!

Happy 2015, classmates! May this be your best year yet!

Blessings to all of you,

Cari Skogberg Eastman

ALUMNI NEWS

Catherine (Lerseth) Marks and husband Ted welcomed a baby boy, Edward Henry Marks V, on March 3, 2014.

Emily (Hanson) Meyer is a librarian at McKinley Elementary Library in Watertown, SD.

Tereasa Payne is currently playing in the orchestra on Broadway for Disney's "The Lion King." She also plays for several other orchestras, theaters and acts in New York City.

Kristi (Kruger) Peterson recently completed the Social Media Marketing Certificate program at the University of St. Thomas Opus Business School. Kristi has also been appointed chair of the Petroleum Equipment Institute's Women Committee, a new group within the national trade association to help women grow personally and professionally and to contribute to their organizations' success. PEI is a national trade association for the petroleum market. Kristi was also elected 2015 president of the Executive Women's Golf Association, Minnesota Metro Chapter.