

WE ❤️ OUR VOLUNTEERS

## Sarah Mathisen Shipboard Instructor/Board Member

Shipboard Instructor and Board Member Sarah Mathisen's first experience with Pacific Marine Research was with the Marine Science Afloat™ program... as a third grader back in 1989! Sarah, her marine biologist mother, and 50 of her classmates from the Bertschi School attended a trip with their science teacher Julie Blystad, who still teaches at the Bertschi school and still organizes trips with PMR 28 years later. Sarah remembers dissecting a California Sea Cucumber, noticing its five rows

“The impact the Marine Science Afloat™ program has on students is palpable,” she said. “The novelty and excitement of being out on the water and actually doing the marine science is a very special experience for the kids. They get to learn in an unconventional and hands-on way and that is something that is becoming rare in our current education system.”

Her favorite part of the job is the “oooh and ahhs” she hears when students fo-



*Sarah Mathisen on the Snowgoose, the Marine Science Afloat™ classroom in 1989, with her third grade classmates from Seattle's Bertschi School.*

Mathisen joined the board in 2013 at a time when the organization's fate was in question. With the Executive Director and most of the board retiring, the organization was at risk of shutting down. But Mathisen, along with a few other passionate staff members, stepped in. She took over school bookings and “came along for the ride,” as she puts it.

She looks forward to expanding PMR programming, making sure the Marine Science Afloat™ program remains the centerpiece of the organization.

“Our main message kids take home from the boat is to understand the concept of a watershed and what that means for the health of Puget Sound,” explained Mathisen. “There is a lot we could do to further the understanding of a watershed. Its becoming more and more urgent for students to catch the science bug like I did, if not to study science, to at least appreciate and respect it.”



### WHY I DONATE

“I donate because I want children to experience the awe and wonder of Puget Sound; an amazing, productive, and diverse habitat in our backyard so that they care enough to become stewards of this ecosystem. ”

of muscles running down the length of their body. These marine experiences inspired her to study Biology at Connecticut College, ultimately leading to her current position at Shaw Center for the Salish Sea, a non-profit aquarium in Sidney, BC on Vancouver Island.

She began working as a shipboard instructor for PMR in 2009 and quickly found it to be one of the most rewarding positions she has ever held.

cus in on plankton under their microscopes for the first time.

“Once you explain the microscopes you wait to see if you need to step in and help,” she explained. “But when you hear those ooohs and aaahs uttered, you know they are getting it and seeing something that is truly wondrous. It is an awesome feeling to share that wonder.”