

Staci Deschryver, Certified AMS Teacher

About Staci: Staci is a teacher at Cherokee Trail High School in Aurora, Colorado, and is the recipient of the 2016 AMS K–12 Distinguished Educator Award. She has served as chair of the K_12 Battan Award committee, is a member of the AMS Board on Pre-college Education (BPCE), and provided essential teacher input during the development of the new Certified AMS Teacher (CAT) program. CAT, built off the backbone of the five teacher professional development courses offered by the Society, was established by AMS to recognize and support educators actively engaged in raising Earth science literacy. She was also a committee member for the 29th Conference on Education at the 100th AMS Annual Meeting.



What excites you most about becoming a Certified AMS Teacher?
This is going to sound so ridiculous, but I love reading the ribbons on AMS Annual Meeting attendees’ badges . . . CBM, CCM, Past President, and so on. I can’t wait to have a ribbon on my badge that says CAT. It elevates our profession in the atmospheric science community. There’s something official and reciprocal about that certification that tells the weather and climate community, “I worked hard for this certification. Thanks for supporting me. I’m with you and I’m for you!”
The certification for teachers deeply invests in the future of atmospheric science. Every CAT teacher is committed to ensuring atmospheric sciences stay relevant in public education. It’s a huge honor to be a part of that. I keep picturing myself walking from one session to another and having someone stop me to ask, “Hey, what does ‘CAT’ stand for?”, which will give me an opportunity to tell another AMS member about the certification and let them know that K_12 education is working hard to keep atmospheric science at the forefront of science education.

How did you first become involved with AMS?
I learned the basics of meteorology in school, but wanted to learn what those basics meant in a broader academic setting. When I saw the application for Project Atmosphere, a two-week professional development, I applied.

While I was there, Jeff Yuhas, who was leading the course, encouraged me to join AMS, and I’ve been an active member ever since.

What would you like to tell others about AMS Education Programs?
The programs treat educators like scientists. I view a science teacher as someone who merges professions—a teacher and a scientist—though I’m not sure which one comes first for me on most days. I like that AMS honors the scientist who lives in the teacher.
While through AMS education programs we build and learn how to use outstanding coursework for our classrooms, a lot of what we do is to keep up-to-date with the most recent scientific findings.

What benefit has your engagement with AMS had on your career?
AMS has been pivotal to my career. I now teach a semester-long high school meteorology course, which has introduced the subject to close to 400 students in three short years. They now have a distinct advantage over other potential job candidates who have limited exposure to weather concepts.

What excites you most about being a member of the AMS community?
I have made lifelong friends and gained colleagues who are dedicated to making sure future generations know and care deeply about atmospheric science. That brings so much value to me.

What else do you do for fun besides engaging in weather, water, and climate education?
I’m a competitive body builder, although the word “competitive” should be taken with a grain of salt. My husband and I stay busy with his podcasting production studio/business, and our two hedgehogs, Tank and Willa. ●

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CHAPTER SPOTLIGHT

In May 2019, members of the AMS Blue Ridge Chapter participated in the two-week Hokie Storm Chase on the Great Plains. Dave Carroll, a meteorology professor at Virginia Tech, led the chase and guided forecasts into reality using his years of experience. The group witnessed two tornadoes, numerous shelf clouds, and storms just about every day.

