



Anniversary Story

“Was it Kismet?”

By Jamie Kelley, former Groundwater Foundation Program Manager

August 24, 2015



Jamie Kelley presents at the Nebraska Children's Groundwater Festival, which she also attended as a student.

The Groundwater Foundation has seemed to weave in and out of my life since I was young. As a girl in elementary school, the first time I heard of The Groundwater Foundation, or anything about groundwater for that matter, was when my class was invited to attend the Children's Groundwater Festival. This was a special opportunity, not all classes got to go. It was like we had won the lottery. We arrived to school early that day to get on the bus and traveled to Grand Island. It was a big deal to be spending the day learning about groundwater.

Fast forward to my senior year of high school, I was doing a project for class. My partner and I wanted to find out about local groundwater issues so we interviewed Susan Seacrest, the founder and then president of The Groundwater Foundation. We met at her house and jotted down notes about the importance of motivating others to care for and about groundwater. Her enthusiasm for the cause was invigorating.

The next time The Groundwater Foundation crossed my path was in college. A small sign posted in my advisor, Bob Kuzelka's, office jumped out to me. The Groundwater Foundation was looking for an intern. Was it fate that all those years ago I attended The Children's Groundwater Festival and then interviewed Susan for a class project in high school?

Four years of college flew by, interning at The Groundwater Foundation was a huge part of those years. My spring breaks were spent in Grand Island at The Children's Groundwater Festival, my summers were spent at The Groundwater Foundation office, and my senior thesis was focused on community asset mapping and behavior change, studying Groundwater Guardian Communities. As my college career came to an end, my time with The Groundwater Foundation was just beginning. After I graduated I was offered a full time job with The Groundwater Foundation. The fresh faced young college graduate excited about environmental education and about inspiring others to make a difference gladly accepted the opportunity to continue to work for a great organization.

I spent over 11 years working at The Groundwater Foundation and saw many times how the work being done made a difference. Was it a coincidence that The Groundwater Foundation impacted many lives, just like it had mine? An encounter with a young girl at the Outdoor Adventures in H2O summer camp is just one of these examples. On the first day of camp she arrived wearing a white sweater. We were puzzled by this, the camp's name pretty clearly explains that we will be outside, going on adventures. So we asked her if she had another shirt, something more comfortable for the hot June day. It was then that she told us that it was not her idea to come to camp, that she did not like nature, and that her mom

signed her up. Although she didn't pretend to be enthused the first day, she came back, and each day she was more adventurous, more willing to dig into the exploration activities. By the end of the week she was having a good time...Success! But then camp was over and summer came to an end. You don't know what impact those days at camp might have on the young students. Maybe they raise their hand in science class to answer a groundwater related question, maybe they told a parent not to water the lawn as much to conserve groundwater. Usually don't know the impact. However, this camper's story continued on to the next year. The first day of camp, there she was, ready, looking forward to the adventures of the week, and not wearing white or a sweater. Not only was she prepared and enthusiastic about the week ahead but she had brought friends along and they too were eager for what was to come.

Her story, my story, maybe its kismet how our lives were changed because of our interaction with The Groundwater Foundation. Maybe enthusiasm is spread through groundwater... No, is not luck or fate or some magic in groundwater. It is a passionate founder, Susan Seacrest, it is successful projects, it is innovative ideas, it is a dedicated and committed staff, board members, and Groundwater Guardians. It is all of these reasons that The Groundwater Foundation reaches so many lives, impacts so many communities, and makes a difference throughout the nation. It was not kismet at all. It is The Groundwater Foundation.

Celebrate with us at the [2015 Groundwater Foundation National Conference!](#)