



**Maria Ortiz, Park High School Gymnastics Community Ed. Supervisor**

Gymnastics is life! I love it! I live for it! I have been involved with gymnastics since I was 3 years old. By 10 years old I was fortunate enough to be a level 9 National competitor in the USAG Jr. Olympic program traveling around the country. I am a 3 time national competitor ranking as high as 27<sup>th</sup> in the country. I was lucky to have my sister Cristina Ortiz with me, making us one of the first sister-acts from Minnesota to make it to nationals. As a high school athlete, our team worked hard to become the 2003-2004 State Champions. Adding to the rich history of Park Gymnastics!

I have been coaching gymnastics for approximately 13 years. Parent-child classes, recreational, competitive and high school level gymnastics. I started my coaching career at Park High School under the supervision of Mark Sikich, the former head coach and Community Ed. Supervisor. While in college at Hamline University I studied Social Justice, Early Childhood Development, and Legal studies. I was involved in the Midway community action through service learning and light rail community development and planning. I was privileged to be honored as a Ronald E. McNair scholar through St. Thomas University my senior year in college and was able to publish research related to homeless youth and education. I continued coaching at Roseville Gymnastics Center with the competitive USA Gymnastics program level 4-6 compulsory. Upon my graduation from Hamline University I spent 4 years teaching Pre-K in Roseville. I have also coached with Rising Stars Gymnastics Academy, working with their USA Gymnastics program level 3-7.

I was fortunate enough to land a dream job here with District 833 in December of 2013. Over the past year and half we have made changes in the community education program at Park High School to reflect progression based gymnastics, emphasizing safety, building life skills and promoting a love for gymnastics. Our program has grown tremendously owed to the hard work, diligence and dedication of the coaching staff. We have been thankful for the many individual and Midwest Amateur Gymnastics Association (M.A.G.A.) team successes. I look forward to the future challenges, successes and memories.