

Hi, United Community families! My name is Trace Houge Brakke and I have been teaching for 35 years; over 30 of those years as the reading specialist here are United Community. I grew up on an acreage just south of Ames, graduated from Ballard High School with honors, then went on to graduate with distinction with my Bachelor of Science in elementary education with an endorsement in reading from Iowa State University. I continued at Iowa State and got my Master of Education degree in Curriculum & Instruction with emphases in both reading and multicultural/gender-fair studies.

My husband, an Ames native and ISU grad in civil engineering, and I live in Ames and have a son and four daughters (Cale, Dree, Hope, Sari, and Evan Bay) and two dogs (Nala Bee and Jack Trice). Our family treks to the wilderness of Canada each year to fish, and we also enjoy attending ISU basketball games and Broadway musicals, concerts, and shows at CY Stephens Auditorium. I love to sing and am the singer in my praise band at church, but my very favorite pastime is reading!

Teaching is a great passion for me, and if you know me, you know how much I adore children! I also get such a thrill teaching the children of my former students! I have taught reading to thousands of children in my career, and ALL of my students can and do learn to read. My goal is to make my classroom a safe, calm, and positive space for children to make mistakes, be vulnerable, learn hard things, understand their value, and grow to be both fabulous readers and humans!

Fun Fact: Though both of my parents graduated from Ames High, my dad grew up on a farm just south of United Community and attended the Jordan school until 9<sup>th</sup> grade (and would have been in the 1959 graduating class at UC)!