

**Get to Know....**  
**RACHEL OLSEN**  
**of**



Rachel Olsen moved to Red Cloud almost three years ago with her husband Jarrod McCartney and their daughter Louise. In her past professional life, she was a college English teacher and writing center director. In addition to working at the Willa Cather Foundation and the Kaley House, she runs a micro-business called Prairie Plum Coffee, which is a mobile specialty coffee service. She serves pour overs, cold brew, drip coffee, matcha, and coffee sodas.

**Why did you decide to start a small business in Red Cloud?**

Right after graduating from college, I had a second job as a barista. I loved making coffee, drinking coffee, and talking to people who came to buy coffee. Since the right teaching job wasn't available in or near Red Cloud, and I was staying home at least part-time with our daughter, I took moving here as a chance to do something I would never be able to try in a big city. So I completed barista certification and started my coffee business.

**What is your favorite thing about Red Cloud so far?**

My favorite thing about Red Cloud is the small town culture that enables people to be truly involved in their community. I also love the energy swirling around Red Cloud in terms of its revitalization. There are some great people here doing great things!



**Along those same lines, do you have any advice for community leaders to help get young professionals to stay in Red Cloud long term?**

My advice would be to keep doing what you're doing. Since I've moved here, there is a beautifully renovated block of buildings, an expanded Cather center, affordable and reliable childcare, a locally-owned grocery store, more places to eat and drink, a new bank, plans for a new hotel, and low cost of living. There's even a visiting yoga instructor! If Red Cloud's economic development continues and we work hard to keep great teachers at our schools, well I can't see why young families and professionals wouldn't want to put down roots here.

**What are some of your favorite businesses to shop at in Red Cloud? Why?**

I love the children's toys at Lizzy's, the rotisserie chicken and brussel sprouts at Hometown Market, and the wine selection at On the Brix. These businesses are some of my favorites because they carry high quality items.

**What do you wish everyone knew about Prairie Plum Coffee?**

I would like everyone to know how much I enjoy visiting with customers when they come in for coffee. Ultimately, the coffee business is about people. I also strive to provide a quality product just like my favorite community businesses. A cup of black coffee looks very simple, and it is, but I am committed to serving beans that are ethically sourced, freshly roasted, and expertly brewed.



Pictured L to R: Rachel's father Rob Olsen, husband Jarrod McCartney, daughter Louise Olsen-McCartney, Rachel, brother James Olsen, sister-in-law Becky Alt-Olsen, and niece Caroline Olsen.

**If you could have a superpower what would it be and why?**

Oh that's easy. I would want to read minds because I like to know everything.

**Do you have any hobbies or interests you'd like to share?**

I love cooking & baking, going to the movies, and yoga. I also enjoy doing art projects with my daughter.

**Do you have any pets?**

We have an ancient cat named Olive.

**What would your high school teachers or guidance counselor say about you if we asked?**

They would say I am an original thinker and hard worker who sometimes second guesses herself.



**What are you most proud of?**

I am most proud of my family and my education.

**Do you have a mantra or mission statement you live by?**

I think my mantra would be work hard, be kind, and embrace your fears.

**What historical figure or celebrity would you most like to have dinner with? Why?**

Beyonce. I'd like to know how she gets it all done.

**Do you have any advice for someone looking to relocate to rural Nebraska?**

I would say to look for ways to get involved in the community.

**What is your favorite song and/or recording artist?**

Prince

**Who is your favorite writer?**

As a person with English degrees, this question is nearly impossible to answer. I love Louise Erdrich, Zadie Smith, Sylvia Plath, Alice Munro, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. As a child I was really drawn to stories about the American frontier, and I think that's one reason why Willa Cather's work speaks to me.

## What is your dream vacation?

Tokyo. I'd like to wander through the city, eat ramen and sushi, and visit museums.

## What's your favorite place to visit in Nebraska?

My family visited the Ashfall fossil beds last summer and had a great time. We also like to visit the Joslyn Art Museum and Film Streams in Omaha.

## Who has been the biggest influence in your life? Explain why.

My late mother has been the biggest influence in my life. She taught me to be a lifelong learner and to think for myself. She also passed on a love of the arts and working in the kitchen. I can't remember a time in my life when I wasn't concerned about making her proud.





## Contact Info

Rachel Olsen  
(785) 341-4783  
[rlolsen78@gmail.com](mailto:rlolsen78@gmail.com)

Prairie Plum Coffee is located at 437 N. Webster St. inside of On the Brix Tasting Room.

Hours: M, T, and R from 7am-11am, special events, and every 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday from 7am-11am

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