

# Get to Know the Math Faculty: Allison Henrich

*Part of a series of Math faculty profiles*

Where did you grow up?

book *Living Proof: Stories of Resilience Along the Mathematical Journey*. It's a collection of essays written by successful mathematicians about times they struggled in their education or careers and how they got through those difficult times. The authors discuss issues such as losing confidence in themselves and feeling like an imposter, experiencing racism and sexism, not being well prepared for a graduate program and almost failing or failing out of the program, or being told that they don't have what it takes to be a mathematician. The stories are really powerful. The book was co-published by the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) and the American Mathematical Society (AMS), and it is available for free download from both organizations (see [maa.org/livingproof](http://maa.org/livingproof)). Since it came out, professors from all over the world have used it in their teaching, and students have taken comfort and inspiration from the stories inside. I've also helped to launch a Living Proof blog with the AMS, and I am currently working on a team of five researchers from different disciplines on a project to study the stories and other experiences of the people who wrote them. We are beginning our research with a focus on the Black mathematicians who contributed to the book.

What is your favorite pastime, other than math?

I have a baby and a toddler, so my life is completely filled with spending time with my kids (and cleaning up after them!) when I'm not working. I'm pictured with my little boy above, Charlie who's almost three. My little girl, Matilda Mae, is seven months old.

What is your most prized possession?

My phone. Sadly, I'm addicted to it.

If you could give college students one piece of advice for success in school, what would it be?

When things get tough, don't give up. If you are struggling, find a community. Reach out for support. Find friends who will give you pep talks and study with you. Find professors who want to see you succeed—those who will help you learn and advocate for you. Find out about SU's resources for help and use them. Some of the most amazingly successful people I know have experienced times where they have felt stupid and unsure of whether they were capable of accomplishing their goals. They persevered by reaching out to others for support, working hard, and believing in themselves.

If you could give college students one piece of advice for success in life, what would it be?

Don't get too comfortable. If you're not doing things that are at least a little out of your comfort zone, you're not challenging yourself.