



# BOBCAT BEAT

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## The Richardson School-Beloit Campus communicates Bobcat Pride with **THE ROAR**

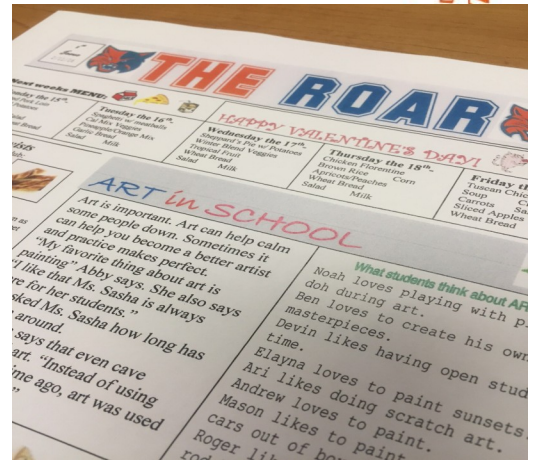
**H**owl. Squall. Roar. All are the natural sounds of a lion or large animal made to communicate with other lions and lionesses within the pride. Now, imagine a group of students conducting research and collaborating effectively for one common goal: communicating important information with their fellow peers. Sound familiar to the roar of a lion....or in this case, a Bobcat?

Kathleen Brewer, a para-professional at the Richardson School in Beloit, started the newspaper to build a sense of community for both students and staff. She had taken part in her own high school newspaper, and wanted to give TRS students the same opportunities she had as a student.

“Just because we are a therapeutic day school doesn’t mean we shouldn’t offer these educational activities,” says Brewer. “A lot of our kids are such good writers, and so creative. I wanted to showcase that.”

Brainstorming sessions can be very lively, she adds. The name of the paper was a result of both brainstorming and a school vote—and the fact that The Richardson School is known as *The Bobcats*.

But how does a school newspaper attract children who elect additional writing opportunities within their school day?



“I like to write stories,” says Abby, a student at the Beloit campus. “It is fun.”

The process encourages students to be aware of the world around them by suggesting topics that interest them. Brewer says she suggests article topics, but ultimately leaves it up to the students to make the final decision about what stories actually go in their paper.

**“A lot of our kids are such good writers, and so creative. I wanted to showcase that.”**

**- Kathleen Brewer**

Abby says that she feels she has a choice in what to write—and really likes to write about

the recipes. She added that their ideas usually come from online research, and reading stories from other publications.

*Continued on page 2*



The Richardson School



## BOBCATS

### Our Mission

*The Richardson School is devoted to educating students with diagnoses of developmental/ neurological disabilities and behavioral or emotional issues that significantly interfere with their learning process and ability to learn in a more traditional educational setting.*

*The Richardson School individually tailors services to each child with an emphasis on re-integrating the child back to the home school setting as soon as possible.*

*The Richardson School strives to provide an optimal therapeutic environment, and therapeutic behavioral interventions in conjunction with highly individualized curriculum approaches.*

[RichardsonSchool.com](http://RichardsonSchool.com)



## From the Director's Desk...

I often receive questions like where did the name "Richardson" come from.

Believe it or not, our school is named after a very special young lady. When we were searching for a name to start a school just over 5 years ago, Aaliyah Richardson was the one that came to mind that also brought all the elements we held dear to the creation and concept of the school.

I had an opportunity to speak with Aaliyah's family about the idea of naming the school in her honor; they were very pleased with us remembering her in such a way. Aaliyah resided within the Oconomowoc Family of Companies at our residential location in Oconomowoc. She

passed suddenly one night after spending a weekend away with her family celebrating her birthday.

Below are a few words from her mother, Mrs. Njuguna: "With love in her heart and a smile on her face, Aaliyah brought joy and smiles to all who knew her. She expressed her love for you through hugs and laughter. She danced her way into many hearts. She was here physically for a short time, but mentally and emotionally she is here forever. She is truly missed. I know she is giggling in God's arms now."

March 7, 2016 marked a five-year anniversary for TRS. Five years since the first student walked into the



hallways of our school. It has been an amazing journey and I am sure Aaliyah is smiling, laughing and dancing with joy.



*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."*

*-Helen Keller*

## The Roar

*Continued from page 1*

Equally important to the students' choice for articles is that they are respected and treated as fellow collaborators, researchers, and writers. Respect is an important part of working with others both now and in the future, and it entails trust. The process really teaches students about teamwork, problem-solving, and self-control, which are skills that The Richardson School works on every day with its kids.

Not surprising is that students are feeling challenged.

When asked about her own personal challenges as part of the newspaper Abby adds, "I don't like interviewing people. I just don't like talking to people."

School newspapers are not busy work, but rather a continuous series of challenging assignments that offer a tangible beginning, middle, and final completion of each issue.

Newspapers provide an authentic product that others can and will read and see.

Brewer's goal is to keep producing the newspaper twice per month, but there may be times when the newspaper is delayed. She would like to get more school happenings in the paper, as well, but she feels the students have gotten off to a good start with the first few issues.

While there may be drawbacks, such as all the work involved that goes into each issue, and after the newspaper is read it usually ends up in the garbage, there are way more benefits. Students gain important job skills, and the ability to work together as a team. They develop trust, and a keen sense for communicating facts in an interesting way.

Now that's something to roar about!

# STUDENT Highlight

**Adrienne**  
Has eyes on the future

“Life is like a game of chess. You’re going to have to pick wisely in your first, second and third moves because it is going to lead out the rest of your life—and there could be consequences for the wrong choices.”

The voice of Adrienne, a high school student at The Richardson School, bursts with enthusiasm as she explains her guiding force that methodically moves her through life’s decisions. And that’s just the beginning. Volunteering, helping people, family, and playing with her dog all help motivate her to be successful and focus her sights on her future.

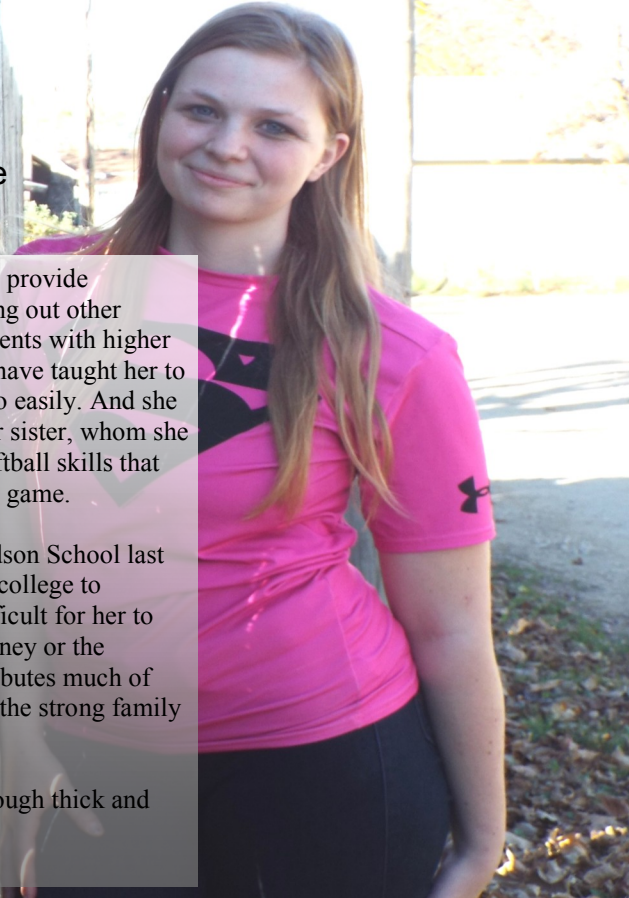
“I see success as never giving up on what you want to do in life,” she describes.

After explaining how The Richardson School has helped open doors to understanding her own

challenges in life, she moves on to provide examples of how she enjoys helping out other people, including some of the students with higher sensory profiles. Her experiences have taught her to be patient, and not get frustrated so easily. And she even applies this aptitude with her sister, whom she helps on weekends by teaching softball skills that improve her sister’s Little League game.

Adrienne, who joined The Richardson School last fall, has already decided to attend college to become a doctor or nurse. It is difficult for her to predict whether success is the journey or the result, but unquestionably she attributes much of her decision-making as a result of the strong family support system she has.

“My mother has been with me through thick and thin,” she says. “She is my rock.”



# ESY

## what does it stand for?

At The Richardson School, we hear the question “What does ESY stand for?” a lot! What follows is usually a discussion about an educational opportunity TRS offers, that is unknown to many.

“ESY” stands for Extended School Year, and provides a time for students to access academics as a continuation of the school year, throughout the summer months. Classes run Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am – 2:45 pm for 30 days. Students work toward IEP goals with our licensed Special Education teachers and Instructional Aides. They also attend either Physical Education or Art Therapy every day, as well as participate in Life Skill activities.

Erica Branson, the Education and Curriculum Coordinator in West Allis and Brookfield, says, “It’s great to be able to provide predictable summer programming, in a consistent setting, that is individualized to the specific needs of a student, so they can be prepared for the start of the school year in fall.” ESY students at The Richardson School receive instruction from the same teachers they have during the school year. Seeing the same faces and having the same procedures proves beneficial to students who may struggle with transitions.

Overall, the goal is to help each ESY student be ready to go on the first day of school. For the 2016-17 school year, that day is Thursday, September 1.

## Did You Know?

**Y**ou don’t have to be a current TRS student to attend ESY.

**S**ometimes, programming that meets a student’s needs is not available in a school district. In that case, TRS could be a great option for the summer.

**P**articipation in ESY is an IEP team decision, just like enrollment at TRS during the school year.

**A**t TRS-West Allis this summer, students will be planting and caring for crops in their new raised planters. Students will use the harvest for food preparation in the newly remodeled Den. There are also plans to visit a farm in Waukesha, as well as the Urban Ecology Center for vocational training.



## Upcoming Events

**April 29**

No School

**May 30**

No School, Memorial Day

**June 8**

Field Day

Last Day of School

**June 13**

First Day of Bobcat Camp

**June 21**

First Day of ESY

Check out the school  
calendar on our website!

### **Beloit**

321 Olympian Blvd.  
Beloit, WI 53511  
608.473.3244

### **Brookfield**

175 S. Barker Rd.  
Brookfield, WI 53045  
262.468.0700

### **West Allis**

6753 W. Rogers St.  
West Allis, WI 53219  
414.540.8500

# Brings New Flavor Teaching Culinary

to TRS-West Allis

“Blooming yeast,” ...”Proofing dough,”  
...”Poaching bread.”

To students in Classroom 208, these terms have taken on a whole new meaning. They are part of an enthusiastic group of students participating in a brand new option learning culinary skills that launched in February at The Richardson School-West Allis.

The goal of learning culinary skills is to advance students’ skill sets and knowledge-base, pertinent to job and career options in the food service industry. The sessions will focus on topics such as safe food handling/kitchen hygiene, kitchen tool and utensil safety and skills, food preparation, the science behind cooking, recipe conversions and even cake decorating.

There are also hopes to expand students’ experience beyond school walls to area restaurants, banquet halls, as well as many other food-related businesses, to offer field experience in the food industry.

Students in Classroom 208 are hungry not just for what they are preparing every week, but to learn more about how the food works and the science behind it. Some students bring home the food they make to share with their families; the sense of pride they feel is almost palpable. TRS believes that this opportunity to learn culinary skills will build confidence, promote teamwork and foster independence.

## **The Richardson School**

175 S. Barker Rd.  
Brookfield, WI 53045

