



The Richardson School

BOBCAT BEAT

Winter 2020

Commit | Respond | Educate

Bobcat Pride Comes to the Fox Valley

The Richardson School (TRS) is excited to announce the launch of its fifth campus, located in Appleton, Wisconsin! With its first student enrolled on February 5th, TRS-Appleton is the first Richardson School for the Fox Valley area, adding to the other locations in Beloit, Brookfield, Madison, and West Allis. With the knowledge and experience of the four other locations, TRS-Appleton expands our supports for more school districts.

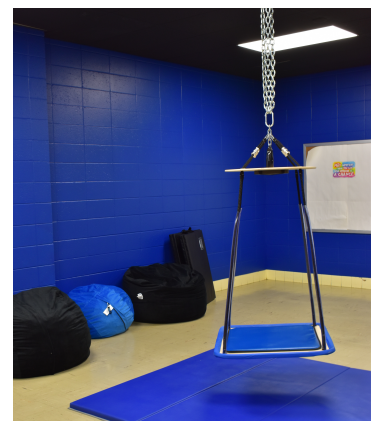
Like the other TRS campuses, TRS-Appleton has renovated a vacant school building set in a convenient neighborhood location. After what has felt like forever, the former grade school at St. Bernadette’s Parish now has the look and feel of a full Richardson School campus. Local school districts have been meeting with the TRS-Appleton team to discuss possible students and education offerings. The excitement is growing!

The person leading this charge in Appleton is Day School Director, Dan Fourness. For the last four years Dan was the Special Education Supervisor at TRS-Brookfield. When asked about opening the new TRS location he said, “The past four years have been an amazing experience to watch TRS-Brookfield grow from around 25 students to 50+ students, and to see the passion and drive it takes to create a well-oiled therapeutic day school. We are beyond excited to build new relationships with students, districts and families in the Fox Valley region and to establish a quality school offering for kids in need of some additional support.” Dan is originally from the Fox Valley area and you can find out more about him in the Returning Home section on page 3.

Bobcat pride is evident in all TRS locations. To be able to share our passion with the surrounding community is something TRS is grateful for.



The TRS Bobcat jumping for joy in front of his new home in Appleton! See more views of TRS-Appleton below!



Our Motto:
Be the change

Meet your new
S.E.C.

Marissa Urban

Hi! My name is Marissa Urban and I am the new Special Education Coordinator for TRS. I have an office at our Brookfield campus, but will have a strong presence at all school locations soon enough! I graduated from UW-Whitewater with a degree in Cross Categorical Special Education and have taught in both Wisconsin and Texas in a variety of classroom settings (I even worked previously at our sister school, Genesee Lake School, before moving). When my family and I moved back to Wisconsin I worked in the non-profit field managing different vocational program sites to help transition-aged students and adults with disabilities become employed. I have a 6-month-old daughter and a large brown pup at home. I love to run in my free time and try to run in a few different fundraising events per year. I am very happy to have joined TRS!!



Marissa after running a 15k benefiting the Stars and Strips Honor Flight



Bobcat Study

As schools across the state closed to reduce the spread of 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19), many families and students were left in limbo. How were they supposed to provide the same type of structured education and services their child had been receiving and thriving in? Families were forced to balance work, life, and their child's individualized needs.

The Richardson School (TRS) had just the answer and launched a new, exciting program called Bobcat Study. Bobcat Study was designed to help students with special education needs build and maintain their stride both academically and socially.

TRS teamed with Dane and Rock County Human Services and the *Children's Long-Term Support (CLTS) Waiver* Program. TRS learned many students were struggling with their district's virtual learning platform. The change in routine and decrease in direct support options was negatively impacting their ability to make academic progress.

Bobcat Study was created to provide three hours of facilitated academic support as a partner to district-led virtual/blended instruction, and three hours of social interaction and support. The academic hours are overseen by our Special Education Supervisor, a Licensed Cross-Categorical special educator. The three hours of enrichment and social skill activities include virtual field trips, themed events, movies, arts/crafts, gym activities and sensory play, and are overseen by our Instructional Aide Supervisor. The goal is to combine the expertise of our Day School and Camp supports into a unique offering.

Bobcat Study is currently offered at the Madison Campus. TRS is grateful to have the support of Dane and Rock County and the CLTS waiver team in the development of this new opportunity.

Our Mission:

Be the change for students,
their families and districts





PAWSOME SUCCESS AT TRS!

The continued in-person and safe support of students during these uncertain times has been The Richardson School's (TRS) topmost priority. TRS takes pride in our continued supports that help students learn the skills they need to succeed.

Today we share a success story of a TRS-Beloit student and her family. Chelsea's mom states "I am SO thankful for the Richardson school. Peace and hope have been brought into our lives again. I don't know where we'd be without you!"

Chelsea's mom stated that before her daughter enrolled at TRS, the family experienced "phone calls, followed by office visits, meetings, homeschooling, therapy, medication, (as well as) changing of public schools, IEP's, counselors... (Chelsea) was struggling. She felt misunderstood and alone."

In February 2020, TRS entered the picture to support Chelsea and her family. When she enrolled at TRS, mom stated, "the phone calls home stopped immediately, daily reports came home with detailed notes, which encouraged her to converse in depth about her day and after a while, she started mentioning favorite teachers and classmates."

TRS' goal is for all students to learn the skills they need to be successful and return to their home school district. Mom reports, "We have seen Chelsea utilize self-calming techniques without a thought and the tantrums at home have nearly vanished. She's laughing, completing chores, talking (so much talking) and most importantly, she's finding her worth."

Way to go, Chelsea!



Our Vision:

For all students to develop skills for academic and behavioral growth, allowing them to return to their home school settings.



Dan spending some quality time with his family

Returning Home

The story of Dan Fourness

From growing up in Appleton, Wisconsin to getting his Masters in Special Education at the University of La Crosse, to joining the Peace Corps, Dan Fourness has always wanted to make a difference. After returning from the Peace Corps, he continued on that path and became the Director of a camp for kids and adults with disabilities.

After many summers as a camp Director, Dan found his way to Brookfield, Wisconsin where he became the Special Education Supervisor for The Richardson School. After four years in Brookfield, Dan took advantage of an opportunity to return home to Appleton and help open a Richardson School campus in his hometown. "I'm very excited about the chance to grow professionally and raise my family in a great place like the Fox Valley. Go Bobcats!"



From the
Director's Desk

The Coronavirus, COVID-19, global pandemic, electrostatic sprayers, thermo-imaging cameras, quarantine, close contact, exposure risk, social distancing, viral testing, antibody testing, zoom, google hangouts, virtual education and so on...unfortunately these are all too common words and thoughts for us today. The world has forever changed over the past year, education will never be the same. These are the moments that will be documented and I am hopeful to eventually say "remember when...". We are thankful for all the support and trust each of you has placed in TRS by allowing your student to continue their education here. We believe in-person academic delivery is incredibly important for our students' success.

It would be very easy to dwell in how difficult things are, how different they are, how much has to be accomplished through new pathways, but in doing so we would strip away the very essence that makes us unique. From the beginning, TRS was designed with a hope to offer a different approach for a student when all other approaches appeared unsuccessful. Our mission statement at TRS is to "Be the change for students, their families and districts". This mission is more true now than ever during our 10 year history. It is from this mission that TRS continues to evolve, even during a pandemic.

Our work did not stop while the pandemic first began last spring, instead we increased our efforts ten-fold. I am pleased to highlight a few new evolutions for TRS that have been our focus during the past few months. As you will read in this edition of the Bobcat Beat, over the past 3 months a constant focus on safety, renovations and updates have occurred in a school building that is now bringing our supports to the Fox Valley region. Despite a pandemic, we are launching a new school! TRS also took time to relook and rethink a support position for our students and staff. I am happy to share the announcement of a new TRS member, Marissa Urban as our new Special Education Coordinator. Her role is a redesign and refocus of a previous position, designed now to directly support the students. TRS has also launched a new option called "Bobcat Study". This is a blend between our full academic program and camp programs! Finally, TRS is in the early stages of training and deploying a new therapeutic tool across all our campuses (much more to come on this topic in the coming months).

Thank you again for all your trust and support during these unprecedented times.

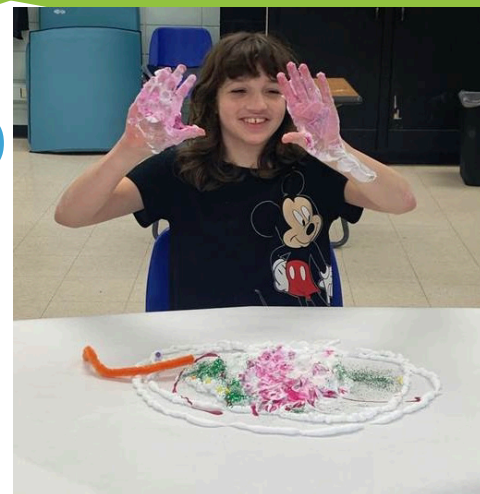
Sincerely,
Kevin Silkey
Executive Director

BOBCAT CAMP

During school breaks TRS provides a therapeutic, community based program which provides structured activities for individuals ages 5-21 with a wide range of disabilities. Call your local TRS to find out more!

2021 Camp Dates:

March 29th - April 5th
June 14th- August 20th
December 23rd - 31st



APPLETON

2331 E. Lourdes Dr.
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920-944-9996

BELOIT

321 Olympian Blvd.
Beloit, WI 53511
608-473-3244

BROOKFIELD

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Brookfield, WI 53045
262-468-0700

MADISON

2802 International Ln.
Madison, WI 53704
608-421-5267

WEST ALLIS

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West Allis, WI 53219
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