

November Teacher Feature: Marianne Trcka, High School Special Education (SLD) Teacher

Self-belief and hard work will always earn you success.

~Virat Kohli



Marianne Trcka is in her fourth year at Clearbrook-Gonvick. Before being hired, some of her best times at the U of MN were spent at the Itasca Biological Station. This experience had a huge influence on Marianne moving up to area about 20 years ago.

She was raised on the eastside of St. Paul which is where her family still lives. After attending Harding High School (go Knights!), Marianne went to the U of MN-Twin Cities. Her last couple of years were spent on the

St. Paul campus and the Itasca Biological Station in Itasca State Park. After six years, she finally earned a degree in Biology-Ecology, Evolution and Behavior. In 2017, she earned her Master's of Education in Special Education. Marianne lives in the Bagley area. She has three children: Jacob (18), Sam (16) and Carly (13). Jacob is in his first year at NDSU studying mechanical engineering. Sam and Carly both attend Bagley High School.

Why did you choose to become a teacher? The short answer is I was supporting myself and my three children on a paraprofessional's wage and it was tough so I decided to go back to school and become a special education teacher.

What did you do before coming to Clearbrook-Gonvick? The longer answer to the previous question was I worked in Bagley in the preschool program as a paraprofessional for seven years. I then moved up to the elementary and worked in the DCD program as a special ed para for three years. I was very involved in early childhood programs. Two of my three children were in Head Start. I was on the Head Start policy

council, on the board for the Minnesota Head Start Association, and on the board at Inter County Community Council (ICCC). I was also the co-chair for the Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) in Bagley. All of these positions taught me so much about each organization, myself, and children. Once I moved to the DCD program it became a natural transition to go back to school and earn a teaching license.

What is the best part of your job at Clearbrook-Gonvick?

Working with Joanne Lavin and Darlene Bergman! The three of us are a team and I couldn't do my job without them. There are really a lot of great things about CG. I enjoy working with all of the high school teachers. Being in Mrs. DeVries and Mr. Kaucher's English classes these last two years have been a great experience for me and have benefitted the students more than I can ever write. I am able to work and really get to know my students and their families which I love and is also one of my favorite things about my job.

What is the biggest challenge of your job? The biggest challenge is the paperwork.

If you could have any job in the world - what would it be? Right where I am today, working at Clearbrook-Gonvick.

What do you do when you are not working at the school? Sleeping! Going to my kids sporting and band/choir events. I like biking and walking with friends. I've been involved with Boy Scouts for many years now. I am also involved at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Bagley.

Please take a moment and share some of the things you are most thankful for in your life? Everything I have is tied to these three things: friends, family, and students. I'm extremely grateful to be working at Clearbrook-Gonvick with great coworkers and students. My family keeps me rooted and my friends keep me on the path of sanity.

What are your favorite aspects of the Clearbrook-Gonvick community?

When I had truck trouble last winter and needed to rely on coworker's to get to work, they were there for me. I know there is always someone out there if I need help.

And now a word or two about Ms. Trcka from her students...

What do you think Ms. Trcka does when she is not at school? "I think she does her homework." "She sings in her church choir." "Plays Fortnite with her kids." "Hangs

out with her kids” “Goes on walks, takes care of her kids, does church stuff” “Goes to the movies” “Sleeps and does paperwork”

What is the best thing about Ms. Trcka? “The best thing about Ms. Trcka is how she listens to all of the students.” “She cracks me up!” “She is always positive and in a good mood.” “She is very helpful.” “Her personality” “She always has the best snacks.” “She is nice and helps me with my English.”

What do you think Ms. Trcka was like when she was in high school? “I think she was really, really, really TALL and she was a hard worker.” “Funny, but serious at the same time.” “Funny, but focused.” “A very nice person” “Always laughing and happy!” “Rowdy and smart” “She was a rebel in grades 1-4 then she started getting nicer after that.”

What do you think is Ms. Trcka favorite subject? “English” “English/Math” “Math or English” “Math/English” “Math” “Math” “English”

If you could send Ms. Trcka on a vacation anywhere in the world, where would you send her? Why would you send her there? Hawaii because it is relaxing there.” “Narnia, why? Why not?” “She wants to go to the Bahamas.” “The tropics” “Hawaii. She needs a tan.” “Bahamas, she needs a break.” Brazil because it is exotic and pretty.”

Besides being a teacher, what is another job you could see Ms. Trcka doing? “Directing in a choir” “A manager at McDonalds, making BANK!” “Directing a choir” “The people at Walmart that greet you and give kids stickers.” “Something with Boy Scouts” “A sports trainer or coach” “Working at Dairy Queen”

What is one thing Ms. Trcka ALWAYS says? “This is FUN!” “C’mon guys! [Insert subject here] is fun!” “Good!” “That’s funny.” “This is fun!” “Hey! Knock it off!” “Okay, let’s read”