

February Spotlight on Support Staff: Kim Cousins, Academic Counselor



Kim Cousins is in her second year as Academic Counselor at Clearbrook-Gonvick Public School. She was raised on a Colorado farm at a time when going skiing in the middle of the week was considered an excused absence from school. She received a bachelor's degree in Food Crop Horticulture from Colorado State University because she planned on becoming the Secretary of Agriculture one day.

Although the agriculture dream didn't materialize, she found a great job with the MN Extension Service teaching horticulture on the White Earth, Red Lake, Leech Lake and Fond du

Lac Reservations. The extension job led me to the University of Minnesota Crookston (UMC) where I worked as a science/math tutor and later as an academic advisor. In-between family responsibilities and work, I earned a master's degree in Education from Bemidji State University (BSU) and a doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of North Dakota (UND).

Kim lives in Gonvick with her wonderful husband named Woodie and the two have a combined family of five children and nine grandchildren. Kim adores her family.

Why did you choose to be an academic counselor? Academic counseling is a terrific career for me because I love to work with people in diverse situations. One day, I'll write letters of recommendation, talk with college representatives, and answer financial aid questions, and on another day, I'll change student schedules, compute transfer credits, and confer with teachers. This is a perfect position for a social butterfly that likes to stay busy.

What did you do before coming to Clearbrook-Gonvick? It wasn't a straight path to Clearbrook-Gonvick because I: worked as an academic advisor for the University of Wyoming, managed a branch library for the Pikes Peak Library District, helped supervise The Pathways to Educational Partnerships with five Northern Minnesota Indian Reservations and the extension service, taught freshmen biology labs at UMC and a doctoral policy course at UND, and provided academic, personal, and career counseling for UMC students.

What is the best part of your job at Clearbrook-Gonvick? The people. The students, faculty, staff, parents, and administrators make coming to work an absolute joy.

What is the biggest challenge of your job? I'm still learning all the details of this position and that can be challenging.

If you could have any job in the world – what would it be? Why? Just one job? There are so many things I'd like to do. I'd like to set up a wildlife refuge on our farm to give old circus elephants a quiet place to retire. I'd also like to be a bush pilot and fly into perilous places to deliver necessary provisions. I daydream of unique and thrilling jobs all the time because I love new adventures. As an example, Woodie taught me how to drive a motorcycle a few years ago because I was looking for a new challenge and realized that earning a pilot's license was an expensive endeavor.

What do you do when you are not at school teaching? I like to garden, read, walk my dog, and spend time with Woodie and friends. Woodie and I also travel to visit our children and extended families because none of our family lives in Minnesota.

What are your favorite aspects of the Clearbrook-Gonvick community? I love the teamwork at the Clearbrook-Gonvick School. No one has to be an expert in everything; faculty, staff and administrators share the workload. We're all specialists in some areas and generalists in other areas so we change hats many times a day to accomplish our tasks. We want students to achieve personal and academic success and we combine our efforts to pursue those goals.

Any other favorites you would like to share? "I was only kidding about an elephant farm in Gonvick because Minnesota is too cold for those precious animals. Wait a minute, maybe if we bought a farm in Kentucky, we could set up a wildlife refuge there.....hmm, something to think about when I'm not juggling student schedules."

And now a word or two about Kim Cousins from the staff...

"Kim is a very kind person with a genuine, happy smile for everyone she meets." "Kim is very positive. Her office is a beautiful, welcoming place to be." "Kim is always so cheerful and full of smiles and her giggle is contagious. She is very good with our students and always makes times for them." "Kim always has a smile on her face. She is always positive and wants what is best for students." "Kim is always so smiley when she greets all of the students and staff. She is very passionate about her work and works hard to make sure all of the students are taken care of." "She always has a smile on her face and it is a joy to work with her. The students are fortunate to have her help them plan their futures after high school." "Kim is great to work with. She is very compassionate and always concerned about the student's best interest. Her smile and positive attitude are infectious to everyone she comes in contact with. We are very fortunate to have her here working with our students. She has been a great addition to our staff."