

April Teacher Feature: Marinda Balcer, Fifth Grade Teacher

“Learning is not the product of teaching. Learning is the product of the activity of learners.”
~John Holt



Marinda Balcer started student teaching with Mrs. Hammes in the spring of 2010. She was a substitute teacher for the district until she was hired full time in 2011. This is her seventh year teaching fifth grade and eighth year at the school.

Marinda grew up in Bemidji, going to school K-12 and also attended Bemidji State University. She graduated in 2010 with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and a Minor in Psychology. She has lived in the area her whole life. She has a son Logan who is 2 and daughter, Claire, who is 6.

Why did you choose to be a teacher? I liked the idea of school starting out really young but was extremely shy growing up. So when I

finally got to school, I liked it but I felt uncertain about myself and just went through the motions. Then in 3rd grade, my teacher Mrs. Otterson encouraged me to be proud of my successes. I wanted to be a teacher after that!

What did you do before coming to Clearbrook-Gonvick? I liked to work a lot! While going to high school and college, I worked full-time as a cashier at a couple places.

What is the best part of your job at Clearbrook-Gonvick? There's a routine to the day but I like that the job changes every day. It's also really exciting to see kids learn and grow up throughout the school year! It's pretty special getting to be such a big part of their lives.

What is the biggest challenge of your job? I think I agree with most teachers! Time! There aren't enough hours in the day. There's so much to do and talk about in one day.

If you could have any job in the world - what would it be? Why? I always wanted to be a dance instructor! Dance was a big part of growing up for me. It can help people become more active

while also learning how to have individual talent AND rely on a team. I also love science and was curious about getting into something with Astronomy or Chemistry. I had so many topics that I really enjoyed learning about so I think that was a factor in why I wanted to become a teacher.

What do you do when you are not working at the school? When I'm not at school, I'm usually hanging out with my family. We love being outdoors, especially camping and fishing. I also enjoy reading when I get a chance. My weekends usually include family time though, that's pretty important to me.

What is your favorite part of Spring? The change in everyone's mood! It's amazing what sunshine and warmer weather can do to lift a person's spirits. I really like being able to be outside more.

What are your favorite aspects of the Clearbrook-Gonvick community? Our community has a knack for taking care of each other. I noticed that right away when I moved up here. I feel like the community and school are constantly working together. I love having my family be a part of the community and our school!

And now a few words from the students about Ms. Balcer...

What do you think Ms. Balcer was like when she was in 5th grade? *"Kind and a teacher's pet." "Kind." "Nice and kind, lots of friends." "Emotional." "Funny and quiet." "Smart, comedy star." "Nice." "Polite and funny."*

What do you think Ms. Balcer does when she is not here at school? *"Play with Logan and Claire." "Grades our tests." "Being a hard worker of her kids, cleaning and probably doing teacher stuff." "Take care of her kids and grades paperwork." "Eats pizza and watches TV with family." "Spends time with her family, and thinks about her class and does school work." "Playing with her children."*

What job do you think Ms. Balcer would have if she was not a teacher? *"A hairstylist." "A dentist." "A undercover spy." "A comedian." "Babysitter." "A nurse." "A babysitter!"*

What is one of the best things about Ms. Balcer? *"She is awesome." "She is nice." "She is nice and funny." "She is very kind." "Her corny jokes." "She is funny." "She makes everything a lot of fun." "She is funny."*

What do you think is Ms. Balcer's favorite thing to do? *"Teach." "Spend time with her students." "Grade papers." "Teach 5th grade." "Hangout with 5th graders." "Hang with her students and be with family." "Teach kids." "Teach."*

What is one thing Ms. Balcer ALWAYS says? *"5, 4, 3, 2, 1!" "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1!" "5, 4, 3, 2, 1." "Fake it 'til ya make it." "Get it, got it, good." "Go for it!" "Think of this fraction of paper." "Fake it 'til ya make it and try your best."*