

THE PRESS

Vol. XLIV - No. 46 THE PRESS - 930-660 Newsstand price 50¢ - November 14, 2014
Official newspaper of the Villages of Ashwaubenon, Hobart, Howard & Suamico
and their School Districts

Ashwaubenon • Howard/Suamico • Hobart Ashwaubenon Alums Help At Home & Abroad



Ashwaubenon High School alumni Erika Anderson (left) and Amy Campbell (right) have impacted the lives of countless individuals with Autism and other speech disorders through an innovative teaching method called Rapid Prompting Method (RPM). The duo opened ACE Teaching and Consulting at 1515 6th Street in Green Bay and through their efforts have inspired success in others. Anderson serves as ACE Executive Director of Education and Campbell serves as ACE Executive Director. Photo by Shannon Stoner.

By Staff Reporter Shannon Nichola Stoner

Ashwaubenon High School alumni Amy Campbell (Class of 2003) and Erika Anderson (Class of 2002) have impacted the lives of countless individuals with Autism and their families through an innovative teaching method called Rapid Prompting Method (RPM). Anderson is the second higher service provider of RPM in the world, which has improved communication for people with Autism and other speech disorders. Campbell and Anderson have helped individuals with speech difficulties, brain damage, Down Syndrome and Cerebral Palsy, by teaching them to communicate and become successful.

Campbell and Anderson formed Anderson Campbell Educational (ACE) Teaching and Consulting at 1515 Sixth Street in Green Bay. Anderson apprenticed under the developer of RPM, Soma Mukhopadhyay, for three years. While in college, Anderson enjoyed her part time job working with students across the Autism spectrum. Campbell had pursued a nursing degree when she followed Anderson to Texas to experience RPM and its impact on individual lives.

Through RPM, learners utilize a stencil letter board or an electronic device to spell what they wish to say. Many non-verbal students have been able to communicate to their families using the RPM method. "RPM teaches individuals based on their learning style using visual, auditory, or kinesthetics to teach them how to spell and respond on the board or on a computer device."

Campbell and Anderson have created a non-profit RPM support program for families who want to try the this method. A board of students have helped design fundraisers and, through their service, learned how businesses make decisions. They have also started RPM Academy, which provides tutoring for individuals along the Autism and related disorder spectrum. For more information about ACE Teaching and Consulting, visit www.acetc.info or call 920-884-2990.

Many families have experienced success with RPM and have been overjoyed to communicate with their family member. "Today was the moment when we were able to have a conversation with our son for the first time in almost ten years," said Melanie Sheppard, a mother whose son attends ACE regularly. "With Erika's help, Will talked to his Dad using the letter board via Facetime on their iPad. It was deeply moving and completely beautiful. RPM and ACE are the best things that have ever happened to Will. I can't think of a more incredible birthday present for my husband than his youngest son saying 'Love You' unprompted for the first time ever." Using his letter board, Will composed an award-winning essay for the Polar Express "I Believe" contest in 2013. Will said although he has difficulty speaking, he was excited that he could express himself through RPM and ACE. "For years my communication was limited and yet I carried the belief that someday I could communicate with my family," Will wrote. "When my parents found RPM, I knew I had an opportunity to show what I could say. Did it come easy? No, but I believed in myself. I didn't give up. Now I can communicate. Now I am heard." Will's story is one of many success stories to come from ACE. One individual started a blog using RPM. The 52-year-old man was able to communicate for the first time using RPM. Ann Hamlin started her own blog to chronicle her journey through using RPM. Her blog can be found at www.opinionslearnedfromrmpmandautism.com.

Cont. on Pg. 2

planned a workshop in Australia to teach the method to instructors.

Campbell became the Executive Director of ACE and Anderson assumed the role of Executive Director of Education. "I wanted to provide assistance and help families in their time of need and this suited me better than a nursing degree," said Campbell. Anderson pursued learning about Autism since she knew she would have a child with Autism in her class. "It's a very rewarding job," said Anderson. "While a student at Ashwaubenon High School, I saw the difference that a good teacher can do in a student's life."

Campbell graduated from Ashwaubenon High School in 2003 where she played softball, volleyball, and basketball. She received her Small Business and Entrepreneurship degree from the University of Phoenix in 2013. Campbell said Ashwaubenon prepared her academically for post-secondary education. She had fond memories of retired Psychology and History teacher Nancy Daniels, through whom she took Advanced Placement (AP) classes. "Mrs. Daniels helped me learn how to take a test and evaluate higher level material. She took extra time to help me through difficult times in the class," said Campbell. "Ashwaubenon prepared me to take the next steps in my education. Ashwaubenon has great teachers who really motivated me to find what I wanted to do." Her advice to high school students was to be open to changes in career path.

Anderson was a member of the swim team and graduated from Ashwaubenon High School in 2002. She received a Bachelor's Degree in Education with a minor in Human Development from University of Wisconsin-Green Bay in 2007. She was inspired to become a teacher by Ashwaubenon High School teacher John Fischer. "He pushed you beyond your comfort level and made you feel successful and that is one of the biggest values in my life," said Anderson. "Every child and adult whom we see has potential. They just need someone to believe in them and push them to the next level." She encouraged high school students to take classes that would be beneficial in college and become involved in different learning experiences.