

News Release

U of M Crookston Junior and Elementary Education Major Matt Huot, Morris, Minn., Knows Classroom is Like Family

By Itolfe on Wednesday, April 8, 2015 For college students, volunteering, community service, and internships are designed to provide opportunities for personal and professional growth. For Junior Matt Huot, assisting in Kim Davidson's second-grade classroom at Highland School deepened a passion he has long held for teaching.

The elementary education major from Morris, Minn., began working in Davidson's classroom three years ago through the America Reads program in the Office of Community Engagement at the University of Minnesota Crookston. Huot never looked back. "Everything I learned in the college classroom, I could see being put into action by teachers in the elementary classrooms I have been in," he says. "And, I have been able to put my learning into practice before I ever graduate."

His remarks are something Lisa Loegering, assistant director in the Office for Community Engagement, says demonstrate the real benefit of service in the community. "Elementary teachers are so busy, and their students all learn at different speeds and in different ways," Loegering says. "The opportunity for one of our students to tutor or assist in the classroom benefits everyone: the classroom teacher, the elementary student, and the college student."



Huot first realized his teaching potential as part of "Ag in the Classroom," a program he participated in through FFA in high school. "I had the opportunity to teach city kids about agriculture and I really enjoyed it," he says. "After that experience, I felt teaching was something I could be successful at and really laid the foundation for my decision to major in elementary education."

This summer Huot will be teaching through an internship with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Working out of Hutchinson, Minn., and through the MinnAqua Program, he will hold clinics on area lakes to teach children and families about fishing. An avid fisherman himself, Huot is looking forward to combining fishing and teaching. "It will be a great opportunity to teach on a topic I am personally excited to share with kids," he says.

He also shared another passion with kids by coaching third, fourth, and fifth grade students playing hockey this past winter. Coaching Squirts was another avenue for him to interact with elementary school students, and he continues to enjoy seeing his players at Highland during the school week.

Huot's advisor Associate Professor Marsha Odom notes how he has grown over time. "Matt makes meaningful connections between knowledge of best practices in elementary education and strategies to teach elementary classroom lessons," Odom says. "He is an enthusiastic student who listens well, reflects on what he is learning, and strives to improve his effectiveness in planning and implementing those lessons. His professional growth as a beginning educator has been fun to witness."

One of the biggest challenges facing teachers is managing learning styles along with the myriad of things students bring to the classroom from their personal lives. "A classroom is a family," Huot says. "The teacher sets the tone and the rules right from the start, and as you grow together, you get to know and understand your students. It is really an art to manage a classroom well." He appreciates all he has learned from professors in his classes at the U of M Crookston.

"They strive to see you succeed and have their students' best interests in mind," he says. "I appreciate the way we are encouraged to learn in the field and find it to be one of the real advantages of going to school here."

Initially, Huot came to Crookston because he has a lot of family in the area, including a grandmother who lives in Dorothy, Minn. "It was an easy choice for me," he says. "I have been coming to Crookston my entire life and choosing the Crookston campus felt like the natural next step."

The University of Minnesota Crookston now delivers 31 bachelor's degree programs, 22 minors, and 36 concentrations on campus as well as 14 degree programs entirely online.

These degrees are offered in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from more than 20 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.



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