

December 2017

TISCHER CREEK LIVING

A Social Publication For The Residents Of Congdon Park and Northland Estates



OUR STORIES. OUR PHOTOS. OUR COMMUNITY.

Photo by Tanya Wick



Photo by THREE Irish Girls

impact By Elsie Davis

Nicole Bakken

Nicole Bakken has made quite an impact as a board member of the Montessori School of Duluth (MSD)- PreK-6th Grade. She began volunteering on a smaller scale 2 years ago when her oldest child started preschool. Last Spring, she was asked to join as School Board Secretary.

The Spanish Bilingual Program was launched this past summer. Nicole hosted a Cinco de Mayo fundraiser at her home, with all proceeds going to the new program. This was a project of great interest to Nicole, being that she was born in Mexico City to a German Father and an American Mother. She was raised with multiple languages, which opened countless doors for her when she later applied for colleges and jobs. Understanding different cultures and speaking different languages is a gift that she and her husband hope to give to their children.

Nicole has helped with interviewing elementary teachers, as well as the new head of school. Bakken says, "I am happy to report that we welcomed extremely competent and caring professionals into our Montessori family." From meeting with contractors regarding installation of new windows and future school expansion ideas, to being responsible for bi-weekly documentation for meeting minutes, Nicole is one busy board member. This past Valentine's, she helped to facilitate monetary donations to Project Joy through Northern Lakes Food Bank. Montessori students wrote Valentine messages, which were delivered and placed in children's backpacks throughout Duluth, along with food rations. The school plans on adopting this as an annual school tradition.

Bakken is a Nurse Practitioner by profession but is currently a stay at home mother to Ingrid (almost 5) and Johan (3). Her own mother was always very involved with her schooling, from preschool, all the way to high school. Nicole remembers feeling very fortunate and grateful to have such a committed and caring mother, that she wanted to do the same for her own children.

Nicole states that it is a privilege to work closely with such informed and caring educators and parents. Together they are working to create an exceptional educational experience that offers a combination of academic rigor and independent learning to PreK- Grade 6 children. It has been both rewarding and encouraging for Bakken to witness firsthand how the school develops a positive relationship to learning, to overcoming setbacks, and to solving conflicts.

Bakken and her family moved to Duluth in 2012. Her husband Johan had finished his GI Fellowship at Mayo Clinic and she had just completed her doctoral degree in nursing. Johan grew up in Duluth, and his parents still live in town. Nicole's parents retired to Duluth from Los Angeles, and oddly enough her sister married

a man from Duluth as well. Nicole thought, "Duluth makes great people, and once I saw Lake Superior I didn't need much convincing!" Having lived in Los Angeles, she LOVES that there is no traffic here. Bakken cherishes that their children are surrounded by quick escapes into nature, and she can't imagine a better community of people to raise a family in.

Call **218-728-4600** to schedule a visit or go to **montessoriduluthmn.org** if you are interested in volunteering. MSD also has yearlong open enrollment for grades 1-6.



Are you or do you know someone making a positive impact in our community? Contact Elsie Davis at elsiedavis@gmail.com.

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