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Swoop Selects

Poison Ivy: Thorns

The Retelling of a Classic DC Villain Origin Story

Ian Deyoung

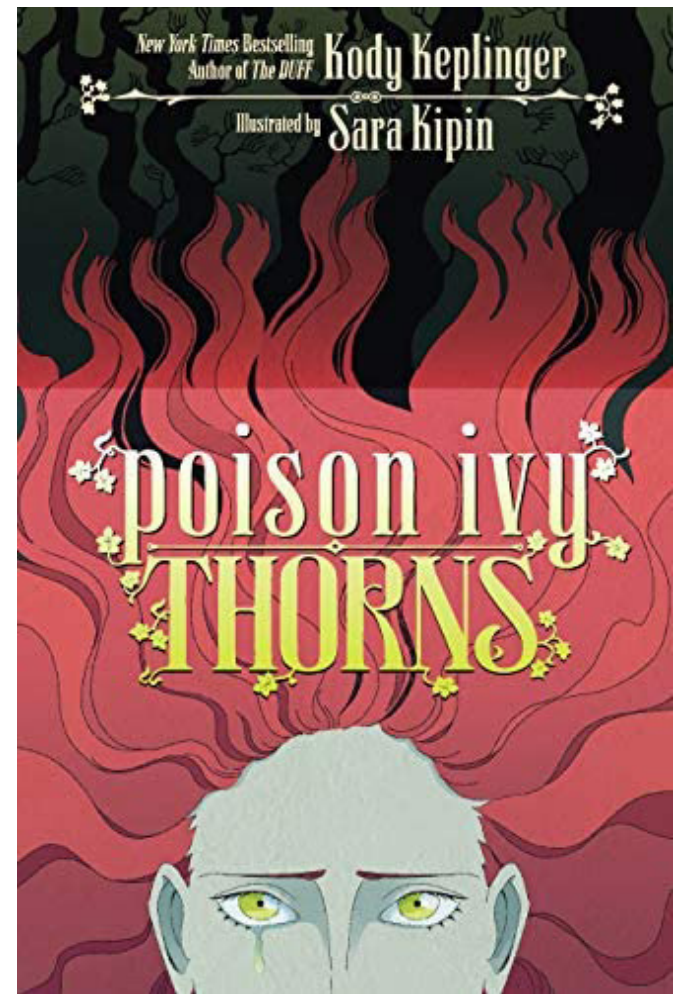
Contributor

Author Kody Keplinger and illustrator Sara Kipin are not newbies to the field; both have extensive background in both literature and illustration. From writing the 2015 film “The DUFF” to being involved with several Netflix heavy hitters, these two combine their talents in a beautiful dark retelling of a classic DC villain, Poison Ivy. Keplinger’s expressive storytelling and Kipin’s unquestionably beautiful artwork combine to seamlessly create a heart wrenching tale of a girl pushed to do unspeakable things for love and freedom.

This story follows young Pamela Isley before she becomes the infamous villain Poison Ivy. Living in a house full of secrets, she spends more of her time with plants than people. However, when cute goth girl Alice comes into her life, she begins to realize that not all humans are rotten—and some may even be worth killing for.

The artwork of this story is delicately expressive. Kipin’s intricate linework matched with her unique and expressive use of color and tone never fails to impress. Every panel is a piece of art and I applaud Kipin for her level of detail. You can see this book came from a love for Poison Ivy’s story.

This story is a beautiful and fresh depiction of what makes Poison Ivy the alluring character she is. The depiction of Ivy as LGBT+ adds depth to her character. This story is a must read for anyone wanting a beautiful look into the makings of a villainess.



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Adjunct Faculty on the Rise at NMC

Sara Bagley
Staff Writer

“[Adjuncts play] an incredibly important role,” said Nick Nissley, president of Northwestern Michigan College (NMC). “They bring a heightened relevance of what’s happening now, and really help broaden curriculum in some times.”

US News lists NMC as tied for the number one public college. And behind every great educational institution is a group of caring, hardworking professors. NMC is no different. With 290 instructors covering more than 80 areas of study, NMC strives to offer the best education and resources possible for every student that comes through its doors, whether they are there for a two or four-year degree.

Of those 290 instructors, 209 are adjunct faculty. Adjunct faculty, sometimes known as at-will or part-time employees, operate on semester-long contracts. “Adjuncts usually have full-time jobs,” Nissley said. “They have a love for teaching and engaging with students.” Nissley, who worked as an adjunct professor himself between 1995 and 2000, described his experience. Despite working 60-70 hours per week, he showed up at the college on Saturday mornings to work with students who also had jobs and lives.

While both full-time and adjunct faculty have the same educational and field experience requirements before being hired, adjuncts have no job security and no union to protect them. However, adjunct faculty do have access to programs, including tuition reimbursement for themselves and family members, and receive funding access for teaching and field development.

“We’re very mindful about how we compensate,” Nissley said. “We try to get [NMC] adjuncts within the top 20% of adjunct faculty.” He stressed the importance of acknowledging their contribution with the Adjunct Excellence Award given at commencement ceremonies, and making sure adjunct faculty participate in committee boards throughout the college, including the committee for the new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Initiative.

Even still, some adjunct faculty have not felt appreciated.

“The definition of adjunct is not essential. We’re a thing added on,” said Andrea Gerring, an adjunct professor currently teaching art history. She has held her position at NMC for 12 years. Soon after she started, a full-time instructor of art history retired, and she hoped to take over that position. Instead, NMC eliminated the full-time position—and adjunct faculty filled the hole.

Over the 2020-21 and 2021-22 academic years, six full-time instructors retired. According to Mark Liebling, associate vice president of human resources at NMC, there have been four

regular faculty and 37 adjunct faculty hired so far this year.

“A lot of full-time positions, people are retiring, and they’re replaced with adjuncts. It doesn’t serve the students,” Coreene Kreiser, a former humanities adjunct faculty member, explained. “You’re not fully invested in the college because the college isn’t fully invested in you.”

Kreiser, the sole instructor for Photography I and Photography II, as well as an instructor for 2D design, claimed that she had several issues with administration during her four years at NMC, including bullying, neglect, and dismissal of her concerns. “It was drilled in me. I was just an adjunct. I was disposable,” Kreiser said. “They listen to your complaints, nobody does anything.”

Gerring claimed to have had similar experiences. NMC gave her courses to a full-time teacher so that they could get overload pay, according to Gerring, and she didn’t know where to turn for help. She said she experienced a less-qualified, full-time instructor take over the online class she built, while NMC forced her to teach in-person. “There’s too much ‘he said,’ he said,” she shared, adding, “NMC seems to make decisions before asking if this is in the best interest of the students.”

After this experience, Gerring has challenged whether the quality of the course is sustained when courses switch hands, as students put trust in NMC to provide them the best education possible.

Kreiser, after accepting a full-time teaching position at Greenspire High School, found herself questioning the college’s commitment to the students as well. With the full-time position taking over her days, she requested to move her office hours or necessary in-person sessions to evenings. NMC denied her request and released her three weeks before the spring semester started.

NMC reassigned her photography classes to a drawing instructor who taught the course using the existing Moodle content.

However, when Kreiser left, she took the Moodle content with her, as it was all information and lessons created by her based on her skills and experiences as a professional photographer. Eventually, NMC canceled the class. “The students and the college are the ones losing out,” Kreiser said. “I got into teaching to help people and teach people.”

Even given their different experiences, Kreiser, Gerring, and Nissley all agree that teaching is for the love of the student. “The ultimate goal is about student success,” Nissley said. “In the end, you’re the one who receives that education.”

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Traverse City Rejects Proposal 1

Is it Still a Quaint Town, or a Bustling City?

Aidan Pool
Staff Writer

Large urban areas bring to mind images of skyscrapers, interstate highways, and densely populated areas. However, these cities didn't always exist. There is a point in any populated area's history when it was just a village or settlement. Over time, that village becomes a town, then that town becomes a city, then a tourist attraction, then a bustling metropolis.

City Proposal 1, which Traverse City voters rejected in the Nov. 8 election, sought to greenlight the construction of a new mixed-use, 88-unit apartment complex on two vacant Hall Street parcels between The Candle Factory and BATA transfer station. City representatives initially granted approval for the project, however local group Save Our Downtown filed a lawsuit claiming that this would violate Section 28 of the City Charter.

Section 28 states:

"It is hereby declared that buildings over 60 feet are generally inconsistent with the residential and historical character of Traverse City. Therefore, any proposal for construction of a building with a height above 60 feet, shall not be approved by the City or City Commission, until after the proposal is submitted to and approved by a majority of the City electors at a regular election, or at a special election."

Developers claim the Hall Street building itself meets the 60-foot requirement, but opponents claim the rooftop additions, including elevator shafts and a patio, make the final height closer to 80 feet. The issue has been fought in the courts and on Oct. 13, the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that the rooftop amenities could not be considered part of the building's height. However, they did find that the total height was two feet taller than the city allows and therefore required voter approval or a change in the building design.

Proposal 1 failed, with 58.35% of Traverse City residents voting against the tall building waiver for the Hall Street development. The developers plan on adjusting the building plans to comply with the 60-foot limit.

Taller buildings could change Traverse City in ways similar to other areas that have expanded, gentrified, and urbanized. In 1970, the city of Austin, Texas had a population of just over 250,000. Today the city is close to having a population of a million people, with a projection of tripling that number by 2030.

Historically the area has always been quaint, yet each year more tourists come curious about the wonders that the city has to offer. It could only be a matter of time before Traverse City is more than just a summer tourist destination.



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Theater Classes Return to NMC

Sara Bagley
Staff Writer

After a long hiatus, NMC is offering theater classes. While this is exciting for many students who participated in drama and theater programs in high school (or wished that they had), theater welcomes anyone willing to step outside their comfort zone. Rachael Harrell, who has a master's degree in Fine Arts, is a local actor and director and an instructor for Drama Kids, an international drama enrichment program offered through NMC's extended education program. Harrell has happily taken on the challenge of re-instituting theater courses at NMC.

Currently, the college offers Basic Acting and Acting II. Basic Acting is the introduction course to the program, running this fall semester with 10 students. Harrell says that the class will prepare students to transfer to any acting program at a college of their choice. "[There are] so many techniques and ways of thinking about theater acting," she explained. "I want to give students a wide view." Acting II, which is available for the Spring 2023 semester, will serve as a continuation of Basic Acting and will offer students the chance to explore the styles they are studying.

However, theater classes don't just benefit students who love performing. Harrell expressed that theater can help students in several ways, regardless of whether they are interested in pursuing an acting degree. Students can gain "awareness of self, become more comfortable taking up space in the world being seen and heard, and gain a way to study people and motivations."

Brian Hurst, an NMC student seeking an associate degree in English, agreed. "It's good for me on a spiritual level," he said. "We've done a lot of work on vulnerability and awareness and understanding of self and others." Though he mentioned enjoying partaking in skits in high school, he never intended on chasing an acting career. When asked why he joined the class, Hurst said that he "had no clue what it was all about. It was like a little glimpse of a world I [didn't understand]. By studying characters and what's going on with them, you learn how to do it for yourself."

Experience in theater has the potential to benefit many careers, including social work, education, and therapy, according to Harrell. Theater classes can encourage team building and grow leadership skills and self-efficacy, which is something Harrell hopes her students leave with. "A lot of what we do is experiential; do it and reflect on it. It's an empowerment sort of thing," she said. Theater classes can also help students improve public speaking skills, interpersonal skills, and develop a greater appreciation for the arts, according to Harrell.

Whether students are longtime lovers of drama, or they'd rather curl up in a hole than step on a stage, theater is a place for everyone. Hurst reveals that despite being interested in the class initially, he still was hesitant to sign up. A conversation with a mentor is what finally sealed the deal. He had shared with them his dilemma and they replied with some simple advice: "You'll either love it or hate it." After a few months of experiencing the community and playfulness in Basic Acting, he has one thing left to say, "I'm glad I love it."



Photo Credit: Sarah Bagley



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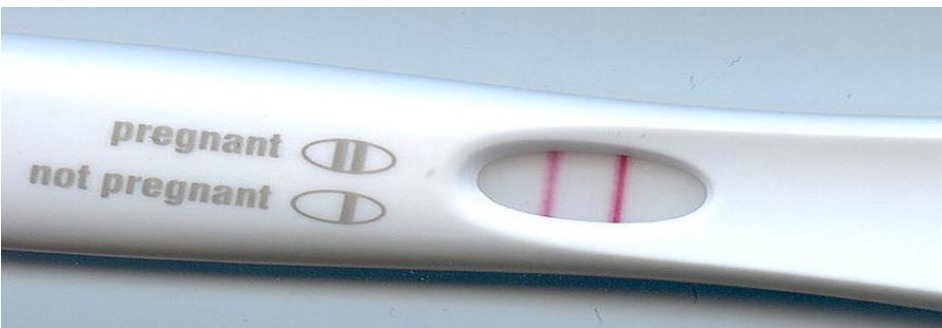
Reproductive Care Services Are Ready to Help After Proposal 3 Passes

Sara Bagley
Staff Writer

On November 8, 2022, almost 2.5 million Michigan voters came together to protect abortion rights by voting yes on Proposal 3. Winning with a 56.7% vote, Proposal 3 amends the state constitution to allow individuals to make pregnancy-related decisions. These rights range from choices regarding prenatal and postpartum care, abortion, contraception, miscarriage, and infertility care. On top of that, it prevents discrimination or prosecution against people for exercising their right to reproductive freedom.

After *Roe v. Wade* was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court on June 24, each state received the power to introduce individual legislation about abortion, leading to complete bans in 12 states, including Texas, Louisiana, and Idaho. Michigan had a law banning abortion, Act 328 passed in 1931, and, post-Roe, there was uncertainty whether that law would return. The passing of Proposal 3 in the 2022 election has enshrined reproductive rights in the state constitution.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of pregnancies occur nationwide. Just under half of them are unintended, according to The State of World Population 2022 report, released in March by the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). In cases of unplanned pregnancy, having the reproductive freedom that Proposal 3 guarantees is paramount. While Traverse City is home to several health clinics, including Munson hospital and day-to-day primary doctor's offices, it is still a struggle to figure out where to go when you think you might be facing an unplanned pregnancy.



One option is Thrive. Thrive is a pregnancy confirmation center that focuses mainly on offering physical and emotional resources to people experiencing unplanned pregnancies. As well as establishing that the pregnancy is there. As a pregnancy confirmation center, its services include ultrasounds and pregnancy testing, but aside from those offerings, Thrive is a primarily nonmedical center.

"We want people to thrive, not just be existing," says Joanna Law, who has been with Thrive for seven years and currently holds the position of marketing director.

Thrive offers two main nonmedical programs, Thrive Forward and Thrive Essential. Thrive Forward is intended for patients who are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy and is a one-on-one mentoring program for men and women. "It's really tailored to what each person needs," Law said. Thrive Essential offers more practical support for families, including baby and maternity clothing and hygiene products.

Thrive works with a broad range of patients, from ages 15 to 45. It is completely donor funded so services are free. "Many people come because it is confidential and very private," said Law, adding that this is the case even when patients already have a primary doctor.

On the medical side, Thrive's staff includes a licensed sonographer, a registered nurse, and a licensed OB-GYN, who serves as the medical director of the facility. The sonography and pregnancy testing services are meant to establish whether a patient is pregnant, as well as how far along they may be, and determine where the pregnancy is located to check if it is an ectopic pregnancy. After that, patients pursue further medical help at a clinic of their own choosing. Law explains that Thrive is not a referral clinic. "It's just that first step of what they need," she says. "From there, they find the rest on their own."

On its website, Thrive specifies that it does not offer abortion services or referrals. Since Thrive is strictly a pregnancy confirmation center, Michigan's recently passed Proposal 3 doesn't directly affect its work. "It's been happening for the last 30 years we've been here; it will keep happening," Law said. "It doesn't impact our services, mainly the people that we care about."

However, the Friends of Thrive Medical Center more clearly state their opposition to abortion. "We firmly believe that Thrive Medical Clinic is a ministry belonging to God," their website reads. Another portion states, "God has called us to be pro abundant



life, and this requires us to work hard to save innocent, unborn babies lives from abortion AND unconditionally love the women and men we serve as much as God loves us."

Traverse City also has a branch of Planned Parenthood, known as the Walker Center. Despite being associated mainly with abortions by the political right, with instances of pro-life advocates stationed outside of Planned Parenthood's entrance both nationwide and locally, abortion is not the focus of the Walker Center. Many other programs are available to patients, whether they are pregnant or not.

As a health clinic, they offer a wide range of services, from primary care to gender-affirming care to reproductive care. According to their website, the Walker Center's available services include emergency contraception such as the morning-after pill, general contraception with different options for birth control, STD/STI testing and treatment, and pregnancy testing and related services. Planned Parenthood also offers sexual and reproductive education to enable patients to better care for their sexual and reproductive health.

Amidst national discussion and events surrounding abortion rights, from *Roe v. Wade* overturning to the passing of Michigan's Proposal 3, Walker Center and Planned Parenthood also provide patients access to safe abortions or abortion referrals, just as they've done for years.

They put great emphasis on the comfort of the patient. The reception staff is friendly, and even the phrasing of the information on the website removes some of the fear around receiving treatments or testing for everything from HIV to STIs. Planned Parenthood treats all health conditions, pregnancy, or birth control requests with as much normalcy and acceptance as going to get some groceries from the store.

A third option still is the Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD), which has a reproductive care clinic available to patients. As a part of their reproductive health program, they offer several methods of birth control, including IUDs, implants, and birth control pills. They also offer pregnancy testing, confidential STD and HIV testing, emergency contraception, exams for men and women, including cervical and breast cancer exams, and free condoms available in the waiting room.

Patti Friedli, a provider at the GTCHD reproductive health clinic, outlined the ease of getting into an appointment. "No one is turned away based on financial status," she said. "Patients who come in have the option to bill insurance, but they can also bill patients on a sliding-scale measure based on their income, making costs less of a concern. "Services are not only confidential in healthcare regard, but in financial regard," said Emmy Schumacher, the outreach coordinator and public information officer for the GTCHD.

Making an appointment is as easy as calling the clinic, and between telehealth, BATA access, financial options, and quick appointment availability, GTCHD has made itself very accessible for anyone who may be seeking out their services. "I think having access [to reproductive care] is really important," said Friedli. "Everybody's entitled to have healthcare."

Unplanned pregnancy and reproductive health issues are ignorant of age, life circumstances, and personal well-being; when it happens, it happens. Regardless of who that person is, or their situation, there are people ready and waiting to provide the help and services needed. Thrive, the Grand Traverse County Health Department, and the Walker Center are a part of that team.

FEATURE

Road to Healing

Alexandra Dailey
Contributor

On Saturday, August 13, 2022, I had the honor of attending one of the national Road to Healing events, orchestrated by the U.S. Department of the Interior at Pellston High School in Emmet County, located about two hours north of Traverse City. The U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, and the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, Bryan Newland, a Michigan native, are overseeing this year-long tour of engagements in which they are providing a platform for survivors of the federal Indian boarding schools to share their experiences and grievances.

"I think it's important for every American to know what happened," said Haaland, whose grandparents were taken from their homes and deposited at one boarding school. Haaland is, notably, the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary in any U.S. administration; she is a member of the Pueblo of Laguna and a 35th-generation New Mexican.

Between 1819 and 1969, our federal government operated and funded more than 400 Indian boarding schools. More than 50 schools have marked and unmarked burial sites containing the remains of children who succumbed while separated from their families.

Prior to attending the Road to Healing event, I read the entire 106-page Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report, which detailed the abduction, abuse, and forced assimilation of the indigenous peoples around North America, all in the name of "civilizing" them.

Government individuals hunted down children and young adults in the woods and came to their homes to take them away from their families. Once at the schools, children experienced mental, physical, emotional, and verbal abuse that carved deep scars and rifts of trauma into their lives, which would irrevocably impact their futures and the futures of those around them.

The idea that the indigenous peoples were bad, impure, and undisciplined heathens who needed to be broken and molded into the "right" kind of human is abhorrent. Yet, men admired and revered by the history books—George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson—viewed the indigenous peoples as a blight to be dealt with; those in power needed to civilize them, and they did so in the most uncivilized ways.

The Initiative, issued in June 2021, with the investigative report completed in April 2022, is geared toward the consequences and intergenerational trauma caused by the federal Indian boarding schools, their policies, and their staff. The boarding schools strove for assimilation and dispossession—taking the cultures, languages, and voices away from the indigenous peoples—and the Initiative seeks to give them their voices back.

During this national tour, which will run through Spring 2023, victims, survivors, and descendants will receive the support they so long have deserved and the opportunity to tell their stories of what they experienced in the boarding schools—with the program technically ending in 1969 (yet one school in Michigan remained active until 1983), the survivors range in age from their 40s to 70s, but their children and grandchildren also suffered lasting generational effects.

At the Pellston event back in August, great care was taken to prepare the location—the opening ceremony included drumming and chanting; the school gymnasium was smudged and saged; a pipe ceremony occurred at sunrise. All of this was done to welcome the ancestors and to guard against the trauma. Tribes from Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa were present to support and speak up.

"Everyone has been sickened by the boarding school system—whether we attended or not—and all are healing," said Renee Diller of the Odawa Tribe, people of the Crooked Tree. "We will be healing for many years."

In her opening statement, Haaland said:

"I want you all to know that I'm with you on this journey. I will listen. I will grieve with you. As we mourn what we lost, please know that we still have much to gain."

After Haaland and Newland welcomed everyone, they opened the floor for people to speak. As Newland put it, "This is an opportunity for us at the Department of the Interior to hear from survivors and their descendants."

Michigan was home to five federal Indian boarding schools—Indian Industrial Boarding School in Mount Pleasant; Holy Name of Jesus Indian Mission in the Upper Peninsula's Baraga, also known as Chippewa Boarding and Day School; The Catholic Chippewa Boarding School in Schoolcraft County; Mackinac Mission School on Mackinac Island; and Harbor Springs' no-longer-standing Holy Childhood Boarding School of Emmet County.

Given that this event was held in Emmet County, it came as no surprise that the latter was the location that many spoke up against as the site of their abuse and trauma. Survivors listed rape, sodomy, broken bones, choking, ridicule, brainwashing, isolation and ostracization, beatings, and not being allowed to see their families as things they were subjected to while at Holy Childhood. Moreover, Halloween was an excuse for adults to



Photo Courtesy of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

U.S. Interior Secretary Deb Haaland met Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore Superintendent Scott Tucker on Aug. 11, two days before her Road to Healing event in Pellston.

terrorize the children; nuns told them that they were going to Hell. Children's spirits were broken, which manifested later in many adults' lives as they partook in harmful habits, abandoned and abused their own families, experienced homelessness, and more.

Members of our local tribes were taken, as well, and sometimes they were made to attend schools outside of Michigan.

"We have records of our people who were sent to out-of-state schools, too," David Arroyo, chairman of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, said after the Pellston event. "Just because you were born in this state doesn't mean that you were sent to a boarding school in this state."

Many survivors had never told their families or children what they had experienced—this day in a warm, public school gymnasium was the first time that many learned about what their family members had gone through.

Accountability is a big part of this initiative, as is reconciliation.

"Our next steps include identifying marked and unmarked graves and determining a total amount of federal spending and support for the Indian boarding school system," Newland explained.

But amidst all of the sorrow and suffering witnessed, strength still exists.

The Road to Healing event was a time of fellowship, connection, communing, old faces, new friends, long-lost relationships, healing, and support. It was beautiful to see reunions occur, tears of joy shed, laughter shared, and hands of support laid upon those speaking of their childhood trauma—things that no child should experience or be subjected to.

This year as I sat at the Thanksgiving table with my loved ones, many of my family members cited being thankful for our homes and shelters, our jobs, etc. I told the table that I recognize my privilege of not having familial trauma associated with the Indian boarding school system, and I will be grateful for the healing that is occurring within the tribal communities—grateful that I was able to witness the beginnings of the healing that is yet to come for our Native neighbors.

This story was originally published in the Glen Arbor Sun newspaper.

Photos Credit/DEVON BRUNER



After a weather delay in mid-November, Santa touched down in Traverse City on Tuesday, Nov. 29, to light up the downtown Christmas tree.



SPONSORED CONTENT

NMC provides strong foundation for student to enroll in Grand Valley's physician assistant studies program

Michele Coffill
Grand Valley State University

When Anne-Marie Deming graduated from Glen Lake High School, she was unsure of what to study in college.

Northwestern Michigan College provided Deming an opportunity to explore many avenues, including the sciences that had become a passion of hers during high school. She earned an associate degree from NMC, which created a smooth transition for Deming to enroll at Grand Valley State University's Traverse City Regional Center and earn a bachelor's degree in allied health sciences.

Deming has since continued her education and is now enrolled in Grand Valley's Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) master's degree program. She is pleased to be able to continue to live in northern Michigan and work, when needed, at her family's 140-acre cherry farm.

"I knew I wanted to stay in this area after high school to help on the farm, so I started at NMC and it was such a great fit," Deming said.

Before graduating from NMC, Deming would talk with various university representatives at the college about the next steps. She said Grand Valley's Traverse City program felt right.

"The people I met were so incredibly welcoming and so supportive. I was able to continue taking a blend of NMC courses with professors I knew and hybrid Grand Valley classes at the University Center, which gave me variety," she said.

Deming noticed advertisements for the PAS program and felt compelled to investigate. Grand Valley opened its satellite PAS program in Traverse City in 2015, to educate students who want to stay in northern Michigan and provide patient care. Since that program began, more than 70 percent of students who earn PAS degrees work in the area.

"I liked what I saw, I liked the emphasis on rural health care. We're caring for my 98-year-old grandmother, and I like the support network she has here," Deming said.

In January, Deming and others in her PAS cohort will begin clinical rotations to continue their medical training. Currently, they are shadowing physician assistants at various hospital and health care sites.



Anne-Marie Deming

The PAS students in Deming's cohort are regularly connected via ITV to Grand Valley's Grand Rapids cohort, which meets on the Health Campus on the Medical Mile. "It's almost like

we are in the same room, having the same experiences through interactive television," she said.

When Deming graduates, she hopes to work in the greater Traverse City area and be an agent for change.

"I see that staffing is an issue as is transportation, getting to a provider. Hopefully, more telehealth capabilities can help change that," she said.

About the PAS program at Grand Valley:

Grand Valley opened its satellite Physician Assistant Studies program in Traverse City in 2015, in an effort to educate students who want to stay in northern Michigan and provide patient care in rural and underserved communities. The TC PAS cohort connects regularly with the larger Grand Rapids PAS cohort via interactive television. The interactive television allows instructors from either campus to deliver lecture-based material to the PAS students. Additionally, there are faculty located at both campuses who teach small group and lab-based classes.

The PAS program has an articulation agreement with NMC that grants preferred admission to the program at the Traverse City Center for two qualified NMC students who meet admission criteria. Learn more about programs and pathways from NMC at www.gvsu.edu/tcprograms.