

Kenneth Zimmerman 2013



Kenny has been a member of the TRiO family since 1996. He participated in TRiO Educational Talent Search (ETS) in grades 7-12 at Humboldt High School where he took advantage of everything the program offered—tutoring, mentoring, workshops, college visits, and summer programs. With the help of his TRiO advisors and mentors, with a TRiO Scholarship in hand he attended St. Olaf College from 2002-2006. At St. Olaf he joined TRiO Student Support Services (SSS), worked as an office assistant in the TRiO offices, volunteered as a mentor and tutor for TRiO, sat on student panels and attended SSS retreats and activities. He started working for the TRiO Upward Bound (UB) Summer Program after his sophomore year as a residential staff and returned as a UB summer staff for seven years, his final four years as residential supervisor.

The first person in both his immediate and extended family to attend college, Kenny earned his Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and Anthropology in 2006. After graduation he was hired as an Academic Advisor with St. Olaf's GEAR UP program. He learned so much about education, equity and counseling from his TRiO colleagues that after two years as an advisor Kenny decided to return to school. He began his graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls in the spring of 2008 and continued taking classes while working full time with TRiO and GEAR UP. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin – River Falls with a Master's Degree in Science Education – School Counseling in December 2011.

Kenny applied for a school counselor position at his alma mater – Humboldt High School, and he signed his contract in January, 2012. Today he continues serving students in the same building he took classes in, helping coordinate the school's college access programming and learning so much every day about education and counseling.

Kenny has taught summer camp classes, presented at local, regional and national professional development conferences, interned at an adolescent correctional facility, and was selected commencement speaker by Humboldt High School's 2011 graduating class, a group of students he worked with for five years. He says the greatest thing TRiO did for him was help him believe that he was worthy of a college education and academic success. The mentors he met through TRiO gave him the self-confidence to work hard and take risks and showed him what it meant to be a self-advocate.

Kenny married his beautiful and brilliant wife Desiree last summer and they're expecting a baby boy this summer. He met Desiree at St. Olaf, a place he admits he would have never heard of or been connected to had TRiO never walked into his life. He wants to return to school once the kids are older, to study Social Psychology – maybe a PhD. He says in the meantime he'll continue working on his new website and writing bits of his autobiography, tentatively titled [A Wild Dream Realized](#). Dropping hugs, high-fives, and handshakes, he lives and learns and loves the wonderful life TRiO helped him build!