

NEWS RELEASE

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PTC alumni give back, volunteer as literacy tutors

PINE CITY, Minn. – Two Pine Technical College alumni, Echo Yerke and Sarah Kepschull, currently are serving in the [Minnesota Reading Corps](#), a statewide program with an ambitious goal of getting every Minnesota child to become a successful reader by the end of third grade. Yerke and Kepschull are serving for a full year as MRC literacy tutors, providing free in-school literacy tutoring to children ages three through third grade across Minnesota who are struggling to read.

“I love being a literacy tutor with the Minnesota Reading Corps. I’ve been fortunate to go to college and polish my reading, writing and speaking skill set, and now it’s time for me to contribute and give back,” says Yerke. “I’m just proud to be able to provide this service, and it’s so fulfilling to be working with children and families. It’s especially rewarding to see the kids’ excitement when they know they are really making progress,” Yerke adds.

Yerke earned a certificate from PTC’s legal secretary program in 1992 and also was recognized as Legal Secretary Student of the Year that same year. (The legal secretary program is no longer offered at PTC.) Today, Yerke lives in Rock Creek, Minn. and serves as a Minnesota Reading Corps tutor at Jacobson Elementary School in Rush City, Minn. Kepschull is currently working toward completing an A.A.S. degree in early childhood development and plans to transfer to a bachelor-degree-granting institution to earn a teaching degree; Kepschull currently is serving as a Minnesota Reading Corps tutor for preschool-age children at Hinckley Elementary School in Hinckley, Minn.

The Minnesota Reading Corps, one of the largest [AmeriCorps](#) programs in the country, places tutors in preschool and elementary schools to implement researched-based, early-literacy instruction efforts to help struggling readers. MRC research shows one of every four Minnesota third-graders does not read at grade level, and in response, the MRC is in the midst of an aggressive recruitment campaign to attract more than 800 tutors for the 2011-2012 school year, up from 670 this year.

Tutors work either full-time or part-time in locations around the state, including elementary schools, Head Start programs, community preschools, and Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) classrooms. The program matches trained AmeriCorps tutors and community volunteers with children from age 3 to grade 3 who are at risk for not reading at grade level. Since 2003, the program has worked with more than 25,000 children.

Pine Technical College, established in 1965 and accredited by the [Higher Learning Commission](#), serves more than 1,000 students and awards certificates, diplomas and associate degrees. PTC’s notable

programs include accounting, American Sign Language, automotive technology, business administration, computer programming, computer science, early childhood development, gunsmithing technology, practical nursing, precision manufacturing/machining (CNC), public welfare financial worker, and many more.

PTC is a proud member of the [Minnesota State Colleges and Universities](#) system, which is comprised of 32 state universities and community and technical colleges serving the higher education needs of Minnesota. The system serves about 277,000 students per year in credit-based courses and an additional 157,000 students in noncredit courses.

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