

# Rindler: Teaching kindergarten is 'a privilege'

## Class Act

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PIQUA — Any good school system is a combination of veteran, skilled staff and energetic, enthusiastic young teachers. One of Piqua City Schools dynamic newer educators is third-year kindergarten teacher Mara Rindler.

Rindler grew up on a farm in Mercer County. The farming family background was a big influence on her.

"My mother Janet Rindler and my sister Leah Knapke pushed me to work hard to reach my goals," Rindler said. "My family always encouraged me to strive forward to



MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO

Mara Rindler works with one of her kindergarten students at Nicklin Learning Center last week.

achieve my dreams." And, they encouraged Rindler to achieve her dream of becoming an educator.

She graduated from St. Henry High School in 2006. Rindler was very active in high school. She served as secretary for the Student Council and was a member of the National Honor Society, the Spanish Club, and the Science Club. She was in Future Teachers of America and volunteered in the elementary classrooms. She played softball and volleyball for the Redskins. Her junior year, the volleyball team won the Division 4 state championship.

The FTA experience sparked her interest in becoming a teacher, so after high school, she enrolled at Wright State University in the Honors Program and majored in early

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childhood education. "I chose Wright State because it was close to home, and my two brothers attended there," she said. Rindler worked her way through college with two jobs. She worked in the WSU Budget Office and worked at Primrose Daycare Center. Primrose reinforced her desire to teach younger children.

While at WSU, Rindler had the opportunity to travel to Concepcion, Chile in South America for six weeks. "I student taught at Thomas Jefferson, a bilingual school," she said. "It opened my eyes to diversity and culture. I gained valuable experience dealing with bilingual students." Rindler returned to WSU and earned her bachelor's degree in 2010. Currently, she is finishing work on a master's degree in early literacy education from Nova Southeastern University.

After Wright State, Rindler was hired by Piqua City schools to teach kindergarten at Nicklin. "I was lucky to get a teaching position right out of college," she said. "And, I am very blessed to be teaching where I am. I am very fortunate to work with such supportive and helpful co-workers." There are 23 students in Rindler's all-day class. Nicklin has nine all-day kindergarten classes and four half-day classes.

"Teaching kindergarten is such a privi-

lege," she said. "Every child begins their lifetime of learning with us. It is our job to make learning fun and to inspire children to love to learn." Rindler wants to help her students believe in themselves. "I want my students to achieve their dreams if they are willing to work hard," she said. "I tell them to strive to reach high expectations." The classroom motto is 'super smart.'

A favorite project for the kindergarteners is learning about the habitats of different animals. "Each student does a report about their favorite animal," Rindler said. "The kids will do crafts and create visuals to show where their animal lives." Brukner Nature Center comes to Nicklin to talk to students about habitats. Rindler's students enjoy investigating each habitat.

Outside her classroom, Rindler serves on the Ready Schools Committee, the Halloween Family Literacy Committee, and the Nicklin Leadership committee. She co-chairs Breakfast with Santa and the December Family Reading assembly. In the spring, Rindler volunteers to assist in screening children for the coming school year.

At home, Rindler enjoys reading, watching movies, bike riding, running, and spending time with family and friends. She still plays volleyball and coaches her church's CYO girls' basketball team.