

Memorial Resolution – Troy Dassler
October 19, 1968 – December 22, 2020

Troy Dassler, a beloved Professional Learning Specialist at WIDA in the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, housed in the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, died on Tuesday, December 22, 2020 at St Mary’s hospital in Madison, Wisconsin.

Troy was born on October 19, 1968. He grew up in a bilingual household in Sheboygan, Wisconsin speaking Spanish and English. He went to Lakeland College where he earned his Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education. He earned a teaching license in English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education from UW Whitewater.

Troy had a true heart for Service. His heart for service led him to serve as a proud member of the Peace Corps from 1991 -1993. He began working as a volunteer in Los Chiles de Alajuela in Costa Rica with teachers and community members to help support educational efforts in the community.

Troy was an educator at Aldo Leopold Elementary School for almost 13 years in the Madison Metropolitan School District. As a classroom teacher Troy was the recipient of a Grant for Innovative Learning Programs: Microexplorers to the unsung Heroes Grant Program. His experiences with his students never left him and he connected these experiences to his work in adult education and science for the rest of his life. In 2011, Troy did a TedX Talk discussing the project of nanoscience with elementary teachers and the importance of bringing up our next generation of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians.

Also in 2011, Troy leaned into his love and passion for science and began working at the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation managing research and outreach labs in the Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery. In 2013, Troy found his perfect fit where he could combine his love of science, education, and bilingual skills, when he began working at WIDA. He would stay at WIDA, until his death, adhering to the WIDA Values of: Innovation, Service, Can Do Philosophy, Collaboration, and Social Justice.

Troy worked as Professional Learning Specialist connecting with educators in Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Amsterdam, Brussels, Lima, Taipei, Seoul, and more. Domestically, State Department Leaders for English Language Learners requested Troy consistently to visit their state to facilitate workshops with their educators working with multilingual learners. He facilitated more workshops than any other Professional Learning Specialist at WIDA. Troy was a force to be reckoned with when it came to equity, multilingual learners and science. He was a member of the Making Science Multilingual Team at WIDA that worked in partnership with National Science Teachers Association. He was a Subject Matter Expert designing multiple Workshops at WIDA: Engaging Multilingual Learners in Science, Educators Collaborating to engage Multilingual Learners, School Leaders: Ensuring Equity for Multilingual Learners, Planning with the WIDA ELD Standards Framework, and Doing and Talking Stem, just to name a few.

Troy married his husband and true match, Rob Winters, in Ontario Canada, in August of 2004. He was also the legal guardian of Eddie Vaughns, who he met during his work with REM Wisconsin. Troy recognized that Eddie needed someone to advocate for Eddie's best life, so he took on the legal responsibility of guardian and the social responsibility of caring friend. He talked to Eddie everyday, until his death. Troy is survived by his brothers, father, and nieces and nephews. He is missed every single day.