

Two Rivers YMCA marketing director and Black Hawk College graduate Abbey Taets has an eye for design.

She launched her graphic design and marketing career after earning her Associate in Applied Science degree in visual communication in 2013.

Initially when Taets enrolled at Black Hawk College, she wanted to study psychology. She planned on transferring to a four-year college to pursue a degree in experimental psychology.

After discussing her high school activities with an advisor, though, the advisor encouraged her to consider the graphic design field. Taets quickly realized it would be a great fit.

“It all made sense,” she said.

At United Township High School she served as layout and design editor of the school newspaper, worked on the yearbook and created T-shirt designs.

Learning at Black Hawk College

Taets switched her educational focus to earning an Associate in Applied Science degree in visual communication, and didn’t look back.

Taets loved her art classes, and she enjoyed learning from instructors Zaiga Thorson and Paul Lange. She said Lange did an excellent job teaching Adobe Illustrator, which is a program she uses daily at work.

“The art department has a great bunch of instructors, and the courses are extremely beneficial and worthwhile,” Taets said. “I would recommend it to any art students. Whether they plan to finish with an associate degree or go on to further their education, their time at Black Hawk will be well spent.”

The United Township High School alumna decided to attend Black Hawk College because she was a Presidential Scholar. The top 10 percent of graduating seniors at in-district high schools receive full-tuition scholarships through the Presidential Scholars program.

Launching her career

Taets worked for Two Rivers YMCA while studying at Black Hawk College and reached out to the marketing director about the possibility of a graphic design internship.

“To my luck, she agreed. I interned under her from January through May 2013, and it solidified my love of graphic designing and of the YMCA itself,” Taets said.



After graduating in 2013, Taets reached out to staffing agency The Sedona Group in Moline while job hunting. Sedona offered her a summer position internally as a paid marketing intern.

With the encouragement of her supervisor at Sedona, she applied to work at Edwards Creative in Milan as a full-time graphic designer.

She worked for Edwards Creative for several years until a new opportunity at a familiar place caught her interest. In 2018, the marketing director at Two Rivers YMCA retired. Taets applied and was thrilled to be selected for the job.

As marketing director, she manages the website, social media, printed materials and advertisements. She said she knows Two Rivers YMCA is where she is meant to be.

“I love that I work for an organization that I fully stand behind, a non-profit that exists for the good of the community,” Taets said. “I love that my job is practically bragging on and

sharing my love of this organization with everyone.”

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