

Advocate Health - Midwest

SHARE @ Advocate Health - Midwest

Aurora Psychiatric Hospital Books, Documents,
and Pamphlets

Aurora Psychiatric Hospital

July 2019

History of Kradwell School, by Mark Bialzik

Jonathan T. Van Beckum
jon.vanbeckum@aah.org

Follow this and additional works at: https://institutionalrepository.aah.org/aph_books

Kradwell School®

HISTORY

During the early 1960s Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital began treating more and more adolescent patients. The activities program started offering high school classes taught by Wisconsin-certified teachers. By 1963, the educational program, known as "The High School" was formalized and occupied the current Bldg. 2.

In 1968, the school program separated from the activities program. This separation was precipitated by a contract between Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital and Milwaukee County to serve the special needs of children involved with Social Services. At this time, the program moved into West House and later expanded into the 2nd floor of North House. Also, the program was renamed Kradwell High School in honor of Dr. William Kradwell. Dr. Kradwell joined the then Milwaukee Sanitarium as staff psychiatrist in 1905, when psychiatry was virtually unknown in the state. In 1946, he set up a \$100,000 fund for promotion of public health in the fields of psychiatry and neurology in memory of his wife, who had died in 1939. In 1957, he received a Pere Marquette award from Marquette University for his work in mental health. Dr. Kradwell lived in the same building that later became the first home of Kradwell School. His portrait and high school diploma are on display in the entryway of Kradwell School.

The passage of the Federal Special Education Law in 1975 resulted in the cancellation of the previously mentioned contract that June. The program was restructured to exclusively serve the needs of inpatient adolescents.

The current school program dates to 1978, when the school faculty of four, in cooperation with the medical staff of Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital, launched the Kradwell Day School program. This program, which grew into Kradwell School, was established in response to the continuing educational needs of an adolescent inpatient approaching hospital discharge.

Shortly after the launch of the Day School Program, Kradwell School was approached by the Waukesha Public School District who placed their first student in Kradwell. The Elmbrook School System placed their first student in 1979. Additional referrals came from therapists, Kradwell students and their parents.

During the fall of 1986, an elementary teacher was added to the Kradwell faculty to teach the new Schroeder Children's Center inpatient population. In light of the fact Kradwell now served Kindergarten through twelfth graders, the school name was changed to Kradwell School.

Kradwell School inpatient services ended in June of 1995 as a result of a growing Day School population and inpatient services restructuring. At the same time, Kradwell School added a summer school program that offers a full range of academic classes.

Also, in 1995, again in response to the continuing needs of an adolescent inpatient, the Board of Directors of Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital established a renewable full tuition scholarship

subsequently funded directly by Kradwell School. In 1998, the Medical Staff of Milwaukee Psychiatric Hospital established a \$1,000 scholarship that was raised to \$1,500 in 2002. During the summer of 2005 the Elizabeth Brinn Foundation provided scholarships for five City of Milwaukee students. This scholarship was expanded to include van service at the start of the 2006-07 school year.

During the 2002-03 school year a "Student Practicum" was designed in response to the growing need for additional transitions services. It is a cooperative effort between Kradwell School and Aurora Psychiatric Hospital. The program provides a supportive vocational learning experience for Kradwell School seniors with the opportunity to explore clinical and non-clinical health care career options. Students earn high school credit for participation.

Approximately half of our middle and high school population are special education students referred by twenty-seven school districts ranging from Oak Creek to the south, Whitewater to the west and West Bend and Port Washington to the north. The remainder of the student population are private tuition students. Kradwell School presents both eighth grade and high school diplomas at formal graduation ceremonies in June at Mt. Mary College.

In the fall of 2004 a Capital Campaign was launched to fund remodeling and expansion of the school building. Construction began in November of 2005 and was completed in June of 2006. A separate middle school program for 5th through 8th graders opened at the start of the 2006-2007 school year.

Ground was broken in the spring of 2010 for the Learning Gardens of Kradwell. The Learning Gardens wrap around the school and the following themed gardens: sensory, cutting, shade, upland prairie, vegetable, and rain gardens. Other features include a waterfall and pond, natural amphitheater, greenhouse, ornamental shed, nonagon gazebo and metal sculpture donated by Dr. Lance Longo.