



Rawhide Youth Services Launches Community-Based Alternative Education Program Focused on Mental Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW LONDON, Wis. – August 25, 2026: Rawhide Youth Services, a leading provider of youth and family mental health services, is launching a new community-based alternative education program on September 1, 2026, for K-5 elementary students in the Fox Valley.

After conversations with superintendents, educators, and school staff throughout the region, Rawhide identified a critical need for an alternative education program designed specifically for elementary students who struggle to succeed in traditional classroom settings.

In response, Rawhide has expanded programming to provide elementary students with a supportive educational environment that integrates academics with therapeutic, trauma-informed care.

"For over 60 years, we've helped youth heal from trauma, build resilience, and find success through compassionate, trauma-informed care," said Alan Loux, President and Chief Executive Officer at Rawhide. "Our team understands how life experiences affect learning, emotions, and relationships, and provides the therapeutic support needed to help children thrive. Now, we're extending that expertise to serve more students and families in our community."

Located on Rawhide's New London campus, Starr Academy is accredited by Wisconsin Religious and Independent Schools Accreditation (WRISA). The new elementary program is designed to meet students where they are academically, socially, and emotionally while helping prepare them for long-term success.

Led by a dedicated special education teacher and teacher assistants, the newly remodeled classroom was intentionally designed to reduce barriers to learning and promote student engagement, emotional regulation, and academic growth. Smaller class sizes and individualized support allow staff to respond to each student's unique strengths and needs.

Therapeutic services will be available to all students as an integrated part of the program, including individual therapeutic support, equine-assisted therapy, and occupational therapy.



"This is more than an alternative classroom. This is a therapeutic learning environment where students heal, grow, and rediscover their potential," said Michelle Saucier, Principal at Starr Academy.

The program builds on Rawhide's decades of experience serving youth and families and reflects the organization's continued commitment to addressing unmet needs within Wisconsin communities. By bringing education and mental health support together in one environment, Rawhide aims to help students strengthen the skills and confidence they need to succeed both inside and outside the classroom.

Rawhide remains committed to expanding access to high-quality mental health services and ensuring youth and families across Wisconsin receive the support they need to thrive.

To learn more, visit www.rawhide.org/alt-ed. School districts interested in partnering with Rawhide can email the Enrollment Team at alted@rawhide.org.

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About Rawhide Youth Services: Since 1965, Rawhide Youth Services has served thousands of at-risk youth and their families throughout Wisconsin as a premier mental and behavioral health agency. As a faith-based 501(c)(3) charity, we provide comprehensive family-centered care, treatment, and education through residential and community-based services. Our mission, "Being dependent on God, we inspire and equip at-risk youth and their families to lead healthy and responsible lives," guides us along with our core values of unconditional love, unwavering faith, eternal hope, and relentless perseverance. Through professional, personalized support services, we empower individuals to overcome their challenges and thrive. Visit www.rawhide.org for more information.

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