

Students of Character

Celebrating quiet leaders in Region 5

April 10, 2019 | 5-8 p.m.



Students of Character



Savannah Jacobs

AITKIN HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Meredith Sander, school counselor

Savannah is a hard-working, dedicated student. She has a passion for working with animals and is planning to enroll in the veterinary technician program at Vermillion Community College. She has overcome many obstacles in her life but has done so with great maturity. Savannah has a great personality and is deserving of this recognition!

Jesse Collins

BERTHA-HEWITT HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Aaron Paulson, band director

Jesse is a leader in the band room, but it extends beyond that as well. Jesse is a leader in his school, and a great example for the younger students. He strives to do his best and does anything asked of him, which is an amazing quality in a young man. Jesse is the kind of person who can talk to anyone, whether it is a kindergartener or a staff member. This year, Jesse has also been helping with his school's Targeted Services program, helping elementary students who struggle academically. Jesse exemplifies every day what it means to be a Student of Character!



Erica VanDenheuvel

BERTHA-HEWITT HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Alan Hanson, science teacher

Erica has many exceptional qualities that make her deserving of this: her charisma, huge heart, quick wit, positive energy, pleasant demeanor, great work ethic, and most importantly an immeasurable dedication to the greater good of us all. Words can only go so far to describe what a completely outstanding individual Erica is. Erica always treats other students and staff with the utmost respect. She is very dedicated to her school work, while also being a three-season sport athlete and involved in many extracurricular activities. Erica approaches every challenge with a smile and represents her school and community with the greatest of dignity.



Matthew Denio

BRAINERD HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Jessica Haapajoki, Brainerd Learning Center principal

Matt came to the Brainerd Learning Center as a freshman for a fresh start. In the last four years, Matt realized education and his future were important to him. He started attending school and earning credits on a consistent basis, showing perseverance and determination. Matt has been accepted at Central Lakes College, where he will study welding.

Isaac Winter

BRAINERD HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Jeff Howard, school counselor

Isaac is the perfect example of a student who has overcome great challenges and become a success. He left his home during his junior year and transferred to Brainerd High School. He was looking for a new start after facing great family and personal challenges. Despite dealing with homelessness, poverty, and reinventing himself, Isaac has become a good student, a varsity football player, and a person with goals. Next year, Isaac will attend Central Lakes College to prepare for a career in the music entertainment industry.



Kaylee Esterberg

BROWERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Brandon Puck, mathematics teacher

Kaylee's years in high school haven't all been smooth. However, she displayed both courage and determination when she transferred to Browerville during her junior year. Kaylee has worked hard to be her best and has a lot to be proud of, including 11 college mathematics credits this year alone.

Students of Character



Daniel Thompson

BROWERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Denise Olander, business teacher

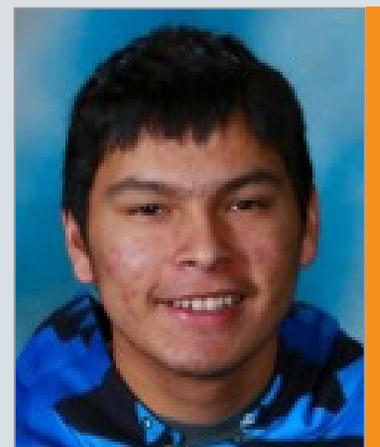
When nominations were asked for among staff, Daniel was the first student submitted. When other staff heard Daniel was nominated, they all agreed he was a tremendous candidate for an award based on character and effort. His conduct through his entire career at Browerville was exceptional. He is a fine student and a sterling example for an award titled, “Student of Character.”

Jared Brown

CASS LAKE-BENA HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Luann Frazer, director of American Indian education programs

Jared is a committed and talented student. He is also a gifted athlete and leader and has a quiet sense of humor and an infectious smile. He is a very humble young man, which, in part, may be attributed to the cultural values that are part of who he is. Jared absorbed all the Ojibwe language, cultural teachings, and history classes offered in the district. He leads by example and always has time for others, especially the younger ones who look up to him.

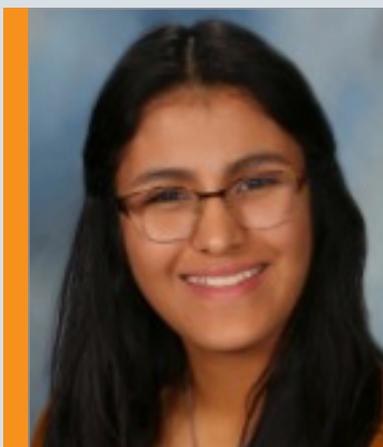


Aiyanna Tibbetts

CASS LAKE-BENA HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Luann Frazer, director of American Indian education programs

There is no doubt Aiyanna is one of the most exemplary American Indian students in the state. She has maintained a 3.6 GPA throughout her high school years, as well as being a talented student in several extracurricular activities. Aiyanna has always been that student who works the hardest behind the scenes but doesn't always get the credit because that's not the most important thing to her. Being raised by her family with strong cultural and traditional values has taught her that every piece of the puzzle is important, no piece more important than the next.





Elizabeth Frink

CROSBY-IRONTON HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Jennie Planer, band teacher

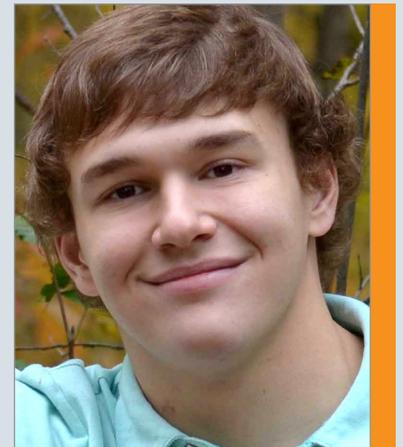
Since seventh grade, Elizabeth has proven herself as a leader in the percussion section in band. She has always been willing to help other percussionists, including one student with high special education needs. Lizzy is always the first one to stop what she is doing to help this student with his part. She was also the first female to be confident enough to play drum set during pep band for Crosby-Ironton varsity games in over eight years.

Ethan Helie

CROSBY-IRONTON HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Mike Gindorff, science teacher

Ethan is a great example of a behind-the-scenes leader. He is a good athlete at Crosby-Ironton High School, but his most admirable accomplishments are the times he spends with young athletes in youth programs and with Special Olympic athletes. Ethan is also strong academically and is always kind, quick to volunteer, and giving of his time to help his classmates. Outside of school, he also gives of his time in his community, volunteering through his church and for other worthy causes.



Travis Brau

LITTLE FALLS HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Kolbi Grant, guidance counselor

Dedicated, genuine, conscientious, and dependable are all ways to describe Travis. School did not always come easy for him; however, he dedicated himself to doing his best every day. His hardworking, unselfish commitment to excellence is exemplified by his decision to join the baseball team. The characteristics Travis displays daily have transformed him into a respected student and person. Travis is a worthy recipient and an excellent example for this award.

Students of Character



ReBecca Pollard

LITTLE FALLS HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Kolbi Grant, guidance counselor

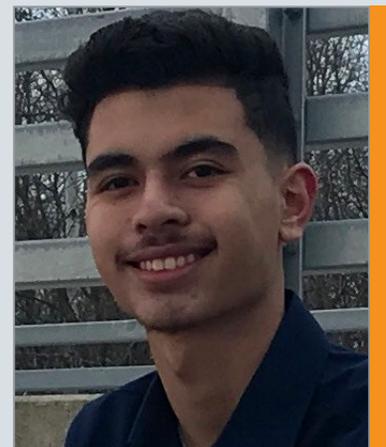
ReBecca's success can be credited to her drive, work ethic, and optimism. Quite simply, ReBecca approaches everything she does with a radiant smile and a great deal of gusto! As a student, she challenges herself by taking college classes and participating in an internship program to explore elementary and special education. Despite the demands of her advanced coursework, she finds time to be involved in extracurricular activities, work, and her church community, and is a role model for her younger siblings.

Kevin Nuno

LONG PRAIRIE-GREY EAGLE HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Nedda Zetah, teacher

Kevin is a student who quietly goes above and beyond as shown by his aspiration of becoming an architect. He sets a great example in the way he conducts himself in terms of work ethic, character, and focus on his school work. He consistently makes the academic honor roll, which is even more incredible when considering that English is his second language. Kevin is polite, pleasant, and always gives his best. This model behavior and character are what set him apart from other students and will undoubtedly lead to success in his college and adult life.



Berrous Rekemesik

LONG PRAIRIE-GREY EAGLE HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Stacey Custer, teacher

Throughout the years, Berrous has consistently exemplified selflessness, dedication, and compassion for others. Whether she takes extra time from her day to complete tasks as part of her role as a teacher assistant or stops to seek advice on behalf of a classmate, Berrous continually keeps the needs of others at the forefront of her mind. Her sincere, good-natured personality contributes positively to the classroom environment every day and is appreciated by both students and staff.



Kevin Jones

MENAHGA HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Jamie Simon-Linkowitz, teacher

Kevin Jones is an unsung hero of Menahga Schools. On Jan. 9, Kevin's world was tipped upside down when his father was killed in a snowmobile accident. From that day forward, Kevin decided to focus on the positive. Each morning, he opens the door for students and staff and gives them a, "Good morning!" with a nod. Even though he has endured a tragedy and his future is a bit uncertain, he still takes time to acknowledge the small stuff like a beautiful sunrise or the full moon glistening on the snow. His kind heart and positive attitude are a lesson for all of us!

Sufa Shahin

MENAHGA HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Tara Weaver, teacher

Sufa has overcome tremendous language barriers, extreme cultural differences, and challenging social norms. She has a very diverse family structure and has experienced drastic environmental changes. Sufa is an artistic genius, hardworking, respectful, and humble. Her kindness to her classmates and teachers is immeasurable.



Logan Monroe

NORTHLAND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Scott Peterson, counselor

Logan is a quiet leader for many of his peers at school and in his community. He is gentle, soft spoken, and very intelligent. Logan is dedicated and committed to his heritage and culture. While he can go unnoticed because of his quiet demeanor, Logan has the ability and fortitude to do whatever he sets his sights on.

Students of Character



Meg Myers

NORTHLAND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Terri Shepard, social worker

Meg is very committed to her academics and extracurricular activities. She will earn her high school diploma as well as her A.A. degree from Central Lakes College this spring. Meg has been a member of the Northland Student Leadership Team for several years and is very involved in many community service activities. She shows great compassion and commitment to her family, friends, and community.

Isaac Gerber

PEQUOT LAKES HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Marc Helmricks, athletic director

Isaac is a warm and genuine young man who demonstrates the characteristics of kindness and humility every day. A quiet leader, Isaac has distinguished himself in service to his school and, furthermore, in his desire to serve his country after school. An Air Force commit, Isaac has given his future the same thoughtful consideration he has given his studies at Pequot Lakes High School, leading him on a path of distinguishment for exemplary service. Easy in conversation, Isaac can be found in deep discussions around problem solving the next challenge he faces with the Robotics team. Beset with some difficulty in his school experience, Isaac has shown the fortitude that makes us proud to call him a member of the Patriot family.

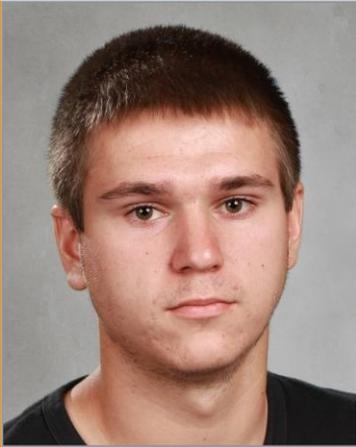


Ashlynn Reynolds

PEQUOT LAKES HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Chris Palmer, teacher

Ashlynn represents the success Pequot Lakes High School desires for every student. Confident, poised, and future focused, she has shown exceptional resolve and determination in overcoming the death of a parent. Ashlynn has worked hard to distinguish herself as a selfless leader and an academic all-star. She's a member of National Honor Society, has participated in Girls State, and planned PLHS Veterans Day activities. Ashlynn demonstrates compassion and care toward her peers, fostering a culture of acceptance. She has been accepted to New York Tech and plans to study art.



Jordan Brambrink

PIERZ-HEALY HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Karen Gruber and Patti Block, education assistants

A few words to describe Jordan include generous, honest, respectful, and authentic. With plenty of everyday temptations to give Jordan the opportunity to make a bad choice, he uses his self-control to make good ones. When fellow students struggle with assignments, Jordan sits with them and takes the time to teach them how to do the work. He goes above and beyond, which shows how generous he is. Respectful and respectable: out of school he is an usher at his church. Respect is Jordan's second nature – just an all-around great and authentic young man.

Laura Tautges

PIERZ-HEALY HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Kim Horning, Spanish teacher

Laura is an extremely respectful, inquisitive, intelligent, and thoughtful student. She is willing to challenge herself and go above and beyond in both academics and her extracurricular activities. Laura models what it means to be a global citizen through her four years of Spanish study, her commitment to service in Spanish Club, Peer Helping, and Minnesota Honor Society, and her high level of cultural competence. She is so inclusive of others and is a quiet, humble leader. She is also a dedicated member of the Healy High School band, student book club, and golf team.



Alex Rettke

PILLAGER HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Jason Savage, principal

Alex has experienced many adverse challenges in her life that have affected her ability to “do school” well. During her freshman year in high school, Alex struggled both in and out of the classroom. By the time she was a sophomore, she realized she didn't want to waste her education. Alex worked hard to improve her grades and started focusing on her future. Today, she often speaks to younger students to do their best even when situations around them are difficult. Alex has managed to continually improve as a student and as a person, and her ability to overcome obstacles and keep herself focused on the positive serves her well.



Students of Character



Melanie Vance

PILLAGER HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Kim Lund, physical education instructor

Melanie is very quiet but always kind and thinking of others before herself. She is willing to help anyone who needs it and gives of herself without wanting the praise or attention of her peers. Melanie has had to face different challenges in her life, but through those challenges, she always has a smile on her face, a positive attitude, and a sincere willingness to serve others.

Madison Abraham

PINE RIVER-BACKUS

Nominated by: Kim Sheley, FACS teacher

Maddie is fiercely independent, exhibiting a toughness and work ethic that have helped her in school and in life. In addition to helping take care of younger family members, Maddie balances school and work so she can pay for most everything she needs and wants. Something that stands out as a, “Maddie thing,” is when she took it upon herself to bring coffee and doughnuts to groups of PRB staff just to show her appreciation for all they do.



Meghan Jarvi

PINE RIVER-BACKUS

Nominated by: Nicosia Danielowski, English teacher; and Naomi Horn, choir teacher

Meghan works hard, shows exemplary work, and is driven. She has persevered through the emotional challenges of losing a family member and friend. She is a quiet leader who unselfishly devotes her time to help other students, traits that led to her election as concert choir president. Her willingness to improve herself has shown others that tough times do not have to define you. Meghan plans to attend Vermilion Community College in the veterinary technician program. Her kind and compassionate nature will serve her well in this field.



Logan Crenna

ROYALTON HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Joel Swenson, principal

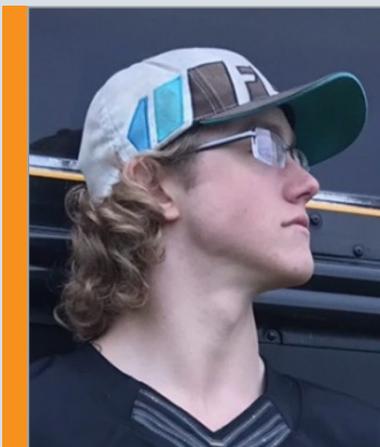
Logan has been a leader among his classmates, especially in FFA and in his role as the group's president. Logan is responsible, hard-working, genuine, and trustworthy. He and his dad have been leading fishing launch excursions on Mille Lacs for years. Logan is now eligible to lead his own excursions, which, if based on his leadership and ability, will be very successful. Logan does things the right way and is someone younger students can look to as a role model.

Carter Huber

ROYALTON HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Joel Swenson, principal

Carter is a student who has worked hard, been involved in activities, and does so without receiving much recognition. He is an excellent student and has always acted as a positive role model for younger students in our building. Carter's strong academic performance has set him up for success in whatever post-secondary career he chooses to pursue.



Gator Bettin

SEBEKA HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Jacob Oyster, agriculture teacher

Whether he's reading with an eighth-grade student and encouraging him to do his work, accompanying a second-grade student every day to PE class, or being a role model to a fifth-grade student and having daily one-on-one time playing catch with him, Gator is always more than willing to work with younger students who need someone to look up to. He is a varsity wrestler who leads by example, putting in extra work. He takes time to work with the younger wrestlers, finding ways to teach and uplift them. He understands that there is no substitute for hard work and no way to achieve worthy goals without it. Gator's sense of humor and pleasant attitude make him an absolute joy to be around.

Students of Character



Tomi Paurus

SEBEKA HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Kristin Hoff, art teacher

Tomi is truly an unsung hero. She always has a positive attitude and loves to help wherever she can. Tomi has volunteered over 150 hours at the Wadena Animal Shelter. She has a very caring heart, especially for animals. As a student, Tomi works hard on her studies. She went from being a student who needed special education support to taking college classes her senior year. Tomi is a talented artist. She has served as a helper in the art room this year, and her curiosity for learning new concepts and ideas makes her a wonderful teacher assistant and a fabulous artist.

Hailey Owen

STAPLES-MOTLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Mike Schmidt, principal

Over the past four years, Staples-Motley staff have witnessed Hailey strive for her own empowerment. While some would say she was shy, others would say she was simply patient. Hailey was just awaiting her time. She's become one of the officers of the local FFA Chapter, which has earned her state honors in forestry and natural resources competitions, along with her State FFA Degree. She was recognized by her peers for the Can-Do Award due to her consistency in helping with nearly every event over the years. She's accepted a place in the Central Lakes College Natural Resources Program for the upcoming fall.



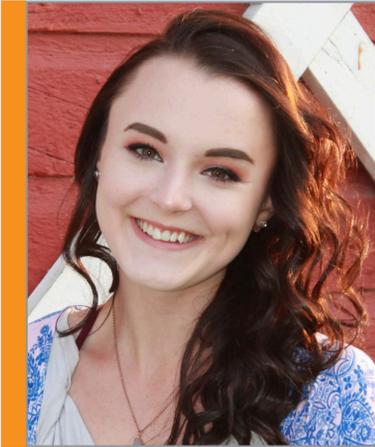
Bryce Weber

STAPLES-MOTLEY HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Mike Schmidt, principal

Through his time at Staples-Motley High School, Bryce has taken on – and overcome – obstacles with tremendous resiliency. He's done so by believing in the teachers and support staff who, from day one, recognized his smile, gentle demeanor, and kindness as characteristics worth reaching for and embracing. Bryce's trust in staff, as well as his growth, has truly empowered staff to believe more deeply in themselves. Referred to as a "Staples-Motley Miracle Student," Bryce is an example many should follow.





Alexis Hoffman

SWANVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Kerry Osberg, art teacher

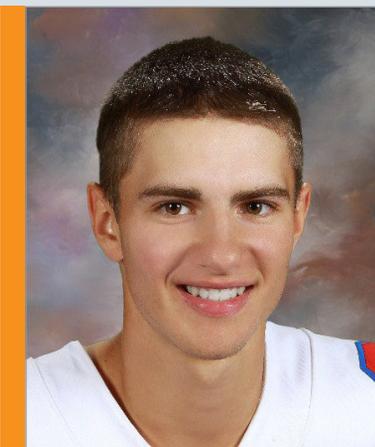
Alexis is a very creative and resourceful person. She has a big heart and is always willing to go above and beyond what is expected of her. As a student, Alexis strives to do her very best, and her intuitive personality makes her a valuable art student. Alexis often volunteers her spare time to work in the preschool room. Her kind and gentle nature makes her the perfect person to encourage the younger students. She plans to go into the health care field after graduating. Alexis has overcome both family and personal struggles; however, her positive attitude helps her move forward without looking back.

Jayna Johannes

SWANVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Liza Hasse, math teacher

Jayna has had to overcome challenges over the past couple of years. Throughout most of her school life, she battled headaches doctors could not explain. During these times, she worked hard to maintain her grades. She never let these headaches slow her down academically. During her junior year, doctors realized there was a malformation of her brainstem and she underwent brain surgery. The healing time from her surgery was a couple of months. During this time, she kept up with her academics, even though she was unable to attend school. Jayna now is headache-free and accomplishing great things.



Raymond Kokett

UPSALA HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Gretchen Schleper, agriculture teacher and FFA advisor

Ray has developed in personal and skill growth over the past few years. His growing maturity has made him a trusted asset in the Ag department at Upsala Schools. He is willing to tackle tasks that are new and difficult and has the ability to focus on the most important aspects of the job. Even though he works long hours on the home farm, he still shows up with determination to get the most out of the school day. His intelligence and character are valued in the Ag department, and his dedication will leave a lasting impression as he makes improvements to the school shop to make a better environment for everyone.

Students of Character



Dylan Van Wiene

UPSALA HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Gretchen Schleper, agriculture teacher and FFA advisor

Dylan has made big strides in his decision making the past couple of years. He has demonstrated a tremendous work ethic in woods classes, building project after project, gaining the admiration of his classmates. Even though he has responsibilities on the home farm and has had two shoulder surgeries, he puts forth his best effort. Dylan is often the quiet kid in class developing and sketching big plans for projects he completes in record time. His confidence, skills, and self-awareness have blossomed in the past year, and he is on track to become a very fine young man. His sense of humor is the icing on the cake!

Minette Bettis

VERDALE HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Samantha Schmitz, social studies teacher

Minnie is reliable, motivated, respectful, and deeply committed to her personal growth and education. She is clearly a responsible student who is not afraid to work hard. She manages to stay extremely organized and her studies never falter. After suffering major injuries in basketball, Minnie still came to practice to help out when she could. During games, she sat on the bench, encouraging her teammates. Her character stood out as she battled her injuries. She will flourish on any path she chooses.



Haylee Disselbrett

VERDALE HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Sheri Brewer, mathematics teacher

Haylee is a student who sits in class and doesn't make much noise. She gets her work done and never complains. But don't be fooled by her quiet, gentle manner. Occasionally, at just the right moment, she will pipe in, quietly of course, with a comment that is accurate, on point, and meant to help others see the humor in the situation. Haylee is always creating something useful, insightful, or humorous. Haylee is gifted in many subjects, including math, and will continue to be successful as she pursues her dream of becoming a mortuary scientist.



Jack Decker

WADENA-DEER CREEK HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Holly Becker, math teacher

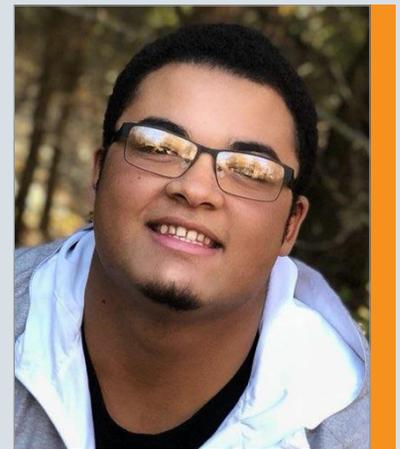
Jack has overcome great adversity to become a very successful student at Wadena-Deer Creek. He is passionate about his personal beliefs and uses his own struggles to connect with and help other students daily. Jack aspires to become a high school math teacher. His compassion, strong work ethic, and math talents will indubitably create the best math teacher, enhancing the lives of many students and making the world a better place.

Steven Thomas

WADENA-DEER CREEK HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Laura Kiser, social worker

Simply put, Steven is a great young man! He always has a smile on his face and is willing to help anyone in need. He has been an excellent role model for younger students. Steven is a two-sport athlete at Wadena-Deer Creek, serving as a captain on both the football and basketball teams. He has persevered and overcome difficult obstacles throughout his high school career. During ninth grade, he lost a close friend to suicide, and has been a caretaker for his grandparents during illnesses. Steven has been accepted to Valley City State and plans to major in business and play football next year. His goal is to be the first member of his family to obtain a college degree.



Sara Artley

WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Thomas McIver, Academic Dean of Students

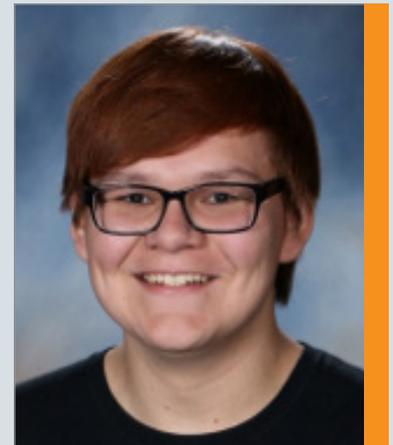
Staying focused on her education to earn her diploma hasn't been easy for Sara. Despite major medical issues for her mother and working many hours at her two jobs, she has persevered over the past four years and will graduate with honors in May 2019. As some of her senior classmates have sought to take an easy course schedule during their final year, Sara has done the opposite. She has taken classes in core content areas and has chosen to load up on business classes to better prepare her to pursue a business degree at Itasca Community College. There, Sara will have the opportunity to display her greatest strengths: the ability to be kind, caring, and compassionate to others.

Brody Butcher

WALKER-HACKENSACK-AKELEY HIGH SCHOOL

Nominated by: Thomas McIver, Academic Dean of Students

Brody has overcome significant obstacles to arrive at this evening's celebration. Life hasn't been easy for him, but his ability to look forward in life has served him well. He has consistently made good decisions, which have him on track to graduate with honors in May 2019. He is the proverbial pied piper. Young students look up to him with a great deal of respect and admiration. He works at the Walker Area Boys and Girls Club, where he serves as a positive influence with young children. He is a friendly, supportive, and helpful young man who demonstrates leadership and a willingness to lend a hand where needed.



Thank you

Sourcewell partners with local businesses, organizations, and individuals to hold this annual celebration. Thank you for your donation of prizes and scholarship money.

Platinum



Sunshine Fund (Employee Donations)

Senior Leadership Team

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About Sourcewell

Formerly National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA), Sourcewell is a self-supporting government organization, partnering with education, government, and nonprofits to boost student and community success. As one of Minnesota's nine service cooperatives, we offer training and shared services to our central-Minnesota members. Throughout North America, we offer a cooperative purchasing program with over 300 awarded vendors on contract. We are driven by service and the ability to strategically reinvest in member communities.