



Minnetonka Students Show Team Spirit By Giving Back



Minnetonka Public Schools

A Minnetonka eighth grade boys basketball team is paying it forward and showing us all what it means to “do the right thing” in our daily lives.

As part of a fundraiser for the traveling basketball program, the boys went through a series of drills and stations where they were assessed on their basketball skills at each one. Later, they were each given a number a tickets based on their performance and were able to enter each ticket in a raffle. Prizes for the raffles ranged from customizable Nike shoes, to Timberwolves tickets, to Beat headphones. In the end, though, it wasn't the flashy electronics or signed basketballs that drew in the tickets of the team; it was a shiny green trike, a trike that would later be gifted to the students from the special ed room at Excelsior Elementary.

“I am so impressed with the selflessness these boys showed by choosing to do something for kids they never met,” says Kelley Pederson, special education teacher at Excelsior and mother of one of the boys on the team. “They could have put their raffle tickets in boxes to win things for themselves but chose to try to win something for my group. This is a testament to their generous spirit and caring nature.”

Ms. Pederson, who was the first to notice the trike, pointed it out to her son, Samuel, talking about how much she thought her kids would love it. Samuel immediately decided to enter all of his tickets for the bike raffle, and the other boys, including some who weren't even on Samuel's team, were quick to follow.

In the end, it was Jacob McCalla who won the trike. Last Friday, he delivered it personally to Ms. Pederson's classroom, where he was able to meet some of the kids and see them test it out. Many of the students have physical and cognitive disabilities that make running very difficult for them. Getting to ride the bike was an exceptionally special experience, as is shown in the huge smiles on their faces. More than anything, though, the act of gifting the trike is a reminder for the students that they are loved and appreciated by the community.

“I believe our community can all learn something from these 8th graders,” says Ms. Pederson. “These boys thought their act of putting the raffle tickets into a box was a simple one, but the impact of that act was profound. The joy the bike brings now and will bring in the future is huge.”

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Deaf And Hard Of Hearing Students Find Fun and Acceptance Together

Edina Public Schools

Gathered in the North Gym at Edina High School, students circled up after enjoying a dance session with some of the high schoolers on the hip hop team. The district's deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) students gathered for a day of community bonding

and self-acceptance activities. Leading the day was the DDH team: Jennifer Duncan, Molly Krenz, and Hawley Mathieson.

“There used to be a large gathering that happened in St. Paul,” Duncan said. “For a variety of reasons, the event is no longer happening. But we thought to ourselves, why don't we host one for our own kids?”

This thought became a reality with a grant received from the Edina Education Fund. The funding supported the day's activities and they were able to purchase matching t-shirts for every student. “Without the grant, we really wouldn't have been able to afford to do this day,” Krenz acknowledged.

DHH Day was full of activities, from



hip hop dancing, a photo booth and gym games, to get-to-know-you bingo and a presentation from a speaker. During their time with the speaker, the students wrote some of their worries on balloons and with a

Days like this show students that they are not alone. The leaders encouraged the students to “be the boss of their hearing loss” and “make brave choices.” All day, students bravely tried new activities, shared specifics about their hearing loss, fought their worries, and found a community of fellow kids like them.

tennis racket in hand, smacked away the worry balloon and spoke against their worry. The speaker read one of the balloons. “I'm worried that people will get mad at me if I can't hear them.” She then encouraged them to brainstorm responses to that worry. “You just have to tell them,

I was born this way,” offered one of the students.

Another chimed in, “It's not weird

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Calling MN STEM High School Educators Attend Free Energy Workshops!

Minnesota High School Agriculture, Mathematics, Science, and Technology Education Teachers are encouraged to register for and attend one or more of the four free Energy Workshops this summer.

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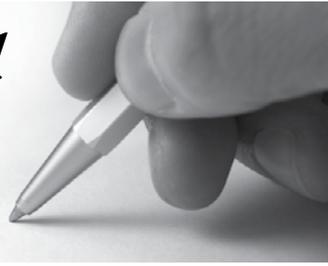


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ecoTech Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) is offering grants to support inquiry-based projects in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields that leverage technology or use nature-based designs to address environmental problems in local communities.

Grants up to \$2,500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted July 16 through January 15 and January 16 through July 15, annually.

Website: captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/ecotech

ecoSolution Grants

The Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) awards ecoSolution Grants to support solution-oriented, youth-led projects that result in real environmental outcomes. Projects must be solution-oriented, project-based, performed by youth, and have real environmental outcomes.

Awards range from \$500 to \$2,500

Deadline: Applications are accepted July 16 through January 15 and January 16 through July 15, annually.

Website: captainplanetfoundation.org/grants/ecosolution

Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education Fund

The Wild Ones environmental organization annually awards small grants through the Lorrie Otto Seeds for Education (SFE) Fund. Projects must focus on appreciation for nature through the use of and teaching about native plants. Projects must involve students and volunteers in planning and carrying out the project. Priority will be given to creativity in design.

Grants up to \$500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due October 15, annually.

Website: wildones.org

Conservation Education Grants

The SeaWorld and Busch Gardens Conservation Fund (SWBGCF) makes grants in four priority areas: conservation education, species research, habitat protection, and animal rescue and rehabilitation.

Awards range from \$10,000 to \$25,000.

Deadline: Applications are due April 30 and November 30, annually.

Website: swbg-conservationfund.org/grant-seekers

School Garden Grants

Safer Brand offers School Garden Grants to schools that want to create and start a school garden. Interested schools should explain their reasoning for a school garden and how they would use the grant.

Grants of \$500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted September 1 through December 1, annually.

Website: www.saferbrand.com/articles/how-to-start-a-school-garden

Environmental Advocacy Grants

The Cornell Douglas Foundation provides small grants to organizations that promote the foundation's vision: advocating for environmental health and justice, encouraging stewardship of the environment, and furthering respect for sustainability of resources.

The average grant awarded is \$10,000.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.cornelldouglas.org/apply

Environmental and Science Education Grants

Waste Management, Inc. supports environmental and science education programs, such as science fairs and Earth Day projects targeting middle and high school students. There is also interest in proposals to preserve and enhance natural resources.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.wm.com/about/community/charitable-giving.jsp

Project Produce: Fruit and Veggie Grants for Schools

The purpose of Project Produce is to create planned lunchroom activities to showcase and taste fresh vegetables and fruits. Proposed projects must be planned with the intention of offering activities to all students in the school building. Lunchtime-based projects are preferred because they offer access to all students.

Grants of \$2,500 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.chefannfoundation.org/programs-and-grants/project-produce

Emeril Lagasse Foundation Grants

The Emeril Lagasse Foundation works to inspire, mentor, and enable student success by integrating gardening and cooking concepts into school curriculums. The foundation makes Small Grants to support schools, and community organizations partnering with schools, that have an existing school garden or a culinary education program.

Grants up to \$10,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Concept Papers are accepted year-round.

Website: emeril.org/small-grants

Research Experiences for Teachers in Engineering and Computer Science Supplements and Sites

The Research Experiences for Teachers (RET) in Engineering and Computer Science professional development program supports authentic summer research experiences with university engineering and computer science faculty for kindergarten through grade 12 teachers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); in-service and pre-service teachers; and community college and university faculty. Goals are to strengthen the knowledge base of STEM teachers and community college faculty, enrich their capacity to teach engineering and computer science, and encourage students to more seek engineering or computer science careers.

New RET site grants up to \$600,000 are awarded. RET supplement grants up to \$10,000 per teacher or community college faculty are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due the third Wednesday in September, annually.

Website: www.nsf.gov/pubs/2017/nsf17575/nsf17575.htm

Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers

The Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers (ITEST) program promotes prekindergarten through grade 12 students interests and capacities to participate in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and information and communications technology (ICT) workforce of the future.

Exploratory grants of up to \$400,000 with durations of up to two years. Strategies grants up to \$1.2 million with durations up to three years are awarded. SPrEaD grants up to \$2 million with durations of three to five years are awarded.

Deadline: Full proposals are due the second Wednesday in August, annually.

Website: www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=5467

STEAM Educator Grants

The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS) offers STEAM Educator Grants that support science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) activities; innovation; and classroom excellence. Grants may be used for supplies, materials, field trips, and other resources that enhance STEAM teaching and learning.

Grants of \$1,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted September 1 through October 15, 2019.

Website: www.nshss.org/educators/grants

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DHH Students Find Fun and Acceptance Together

Continued from Page 1

— that's just the way it is." The speaker praised their courage and responses, and the students beamed as they smacked away the worry balloons. "That's just the way it is!"

Mathieson said these moments are stepping-stones for building self-confidence in DHH students. "Often times, students feel like they don't belong. Most are the only ones in their grades with hearing loss — a lot of times, they are the only one in their school."

Along with their own personal device, students typically bring an FM system to their classes to give to their teacher to use, so the teacher's voice goes directly into their devices and they can hear. "When

they feel different, it makes it hard for them to feel confident."

Days like this show students that they are not alone. The leaders encouraged the students to "be the boss of their hearing loss" and "make brave choices." All day, students bravely tried new activities, shared specifics about their hearing loss, fought their worries, and found a community of fellow kids like them.

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New Construction Trades Program Creates Opportunity for Eagan High School Students to Build Skills and Learn About Careers in Construction

Eagan High School, located in the southeast suburbs of Minneapolis-St. Paul is among a growing number of high schools throughout Minnesota that are creating that are creating opportunities for students to learn practical construction skills that can be used for a lifetime, while learning about potential careers in construction.

Launched last year, the new, year-long, two-hour-per-day Construction Trades course introduces Eagan High School students to a third career option, a career as a professionally trained skilled construction professional, in addition to traditional paths such as attending a four-year college or entering military service. The program was launched with the assistance of a grant to ISD 196 of \$31,368 from the Construction Careers Foundation.

“While many high schools focus mostly on college-bound students, at Eagan, we’re giving an equal level of attention to vocation-bound or non-college-bound students,” says Nick Johnson, who worked with Eagan High School instructors Ryan Hauenstein and Wayne Krantz to bring the new course to life.

According to Johnson, the construction courses build on other courses offered within the Industrial Arts program, which provide hands-on learning opportunities in the areas

of woods and metals, graphic design, drafting, small engines and transportation, and home repair.

“We offer courses that provide our students a lifetime of skills that they can use both professionally or recreationally,” says Johnson. “For example, with our courses, some students may envision themselves as a professional electrician or a cabinet maker. On the other hand, our courses can provide skills that allow a person to build things because they simply receive joy in making things or using their skills.”

For the new construction courses, Eagan high school students are building a “tiny” 8 foot x 20 foot home, which will be used as a cabin.

“The class provides students who like to put their knowledge and skills to task” says Hauenstein. “They get a chance to build a tiny house, from start to finish – from reading the plans and determining which materials they’ll need to actually framing the structure and finishing, including installing the plumbing and the electrical work.”

The class, which was launched in the first semester of the 2018–2019 school year, is geared towards juniors and seniors who have an interest in pursuing a career in con-



struction. Don Mullin, executive secretary of the Saint Paul Building and Construction Trades Council, was a huge influence in helping Eagan launch its construction trades classes, according to Johnson.

“It’s a relatively new class, but already we’re off to a really good start,” Krantz says. “Last year, we had a dozen students enroll in

the course. This year, we have eight students working on the tiny house, which is an ideal size given the small space we are building in.”

With a deadline of completing the tiny house by May 31st, the Construction Trades

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In Building Solar-Powered Ice Fishing Houses, Mounds View District High School Students Gain Real-Life Construction Experience



Across the United States, high schools have responded to the needs of high achieving high school students by offering numerous opportunities to earn college credits, from AP and IB courses to partnerships where students are taught entry-level college courses in the high school.

For the most part, college credit is geared to students who plan to attend a liberal arts college or university, with courses being offered in subjects such as biology, calculus, world history, or a language, such as Spanish, French or German.

Often overlooked are students who intend to take a different path with their lives following high school. Students who dream of working with both their minds — and their hands — in construction-related careers such as plumbing, pipefitting, welding or ironworking.

Fortunately, that gap in educational opportunities for some high school students is changing. And a good example of this is



the Construction and Solar Energy pathways program offered through Mounds View Public Schools (District 621). The program is available to both students of Irondale High School and Mounds View High School, the two public high schools within the 621 District.

“Several years ago, we realized we needed to offer opportunities for our students to learn more about high-demand, high-wage jobs in the construction-related trades,” says Michael Werner, Mounds View School District’s Coordinator of Post-Secondary Planning. “By partnering with the MnSCU system, we now not only offer opportunities to begin learning a trade, but a process that allows them to earn credit toward a two-year or four-year degree.”

“In other words, we’re creating more options for our students — they can either pursue a career in construction immediately out of high school, or they can enter a Minnesota state college or university, or both,” Werner says. “More options is a good thing for students who are trying to discern a future career path.”

One such opportunity being offered to students attending the district is the Construction and Solar Energy course. The two-hour, one semester course (September through January) taught by instructor Mark Ahlers, allows students to learn and work together to build a solar-powered ice fishing house that meets real-life building codes.

“Any student in grades 10 through 12 can take the course and learn skills such as basic plumbing, how to produce technical drawings, read building plans, build models/prototypes, and develop safe working practices,” says Werner. “While at the same time, earning credit that can be applied at a college.

As part of the *Multi-Craft Core Curriculum*, students learn from solar installation companies that send representatives to share information and insight about installing solar energy systems. In working with solar

installation companies, students gain knowledge about the basic components of a solar energy system, such as how energy works, how to prep for solar panel installation, and how to calculate the cost and the return on investment (ROI) for solar energy systems.

In addition, students participate in fieldtrips outside of class. In the future, the high school would like to invite more building trades professionals to come into the classroom and share their insights about careers in construction.

In January, the students completed their solar-powered ice-fishing house and will sell it to purchase materials needed for program’s next building project. The ice fishing house will likely be sold through an auction.

Building Pathways to the Future

The Construction and Solar Energy class is one of six courses that Mounds View Public Schools recommends as part of its Construction and Solar Energy pathway, a series of courses to prepare students for a future career in the construction industry. The Construction and Power pathway is one of five pathways offered by the school district developed to prepare students for future careers. Those pathways include: Automotive, Business, Engineering & Manufacturing, Construction and Solar Technology, and Liberal Arts.

The other courses within the Construction and Solar Technology pathway series include:

- Intro to Engineering Design I and II
- Computer Integrated Manufacturing
- Digital Electronics
- Engineering and Manufacturing I, II and III
- Welding

Students are encouraged to take a number of general education courses to complement what they’ll be learning in the Construction and Solar Energy pathways program. These courses include:

- ARCC Communications Studies
- ARCC College Writing or AP Lang/Comp or CIS Comp
- ARCC Physics
- ARCC Biology
- ARCC College Algebra
- Energy Concepts

By entering into the Construction and Solar Energy pathway, students start to understand the importance of other subjects such as math or communications to a career in construction.

“Like every other high school in America, we hear students lament, “Why am I studying algebra? How am I going to use it in the real world?” says Werner. “Then they

start to get into our Construction and Solar Energy program or our Welding program and begin realize how important math really is to the success of their project.”

“One of the aspects that I like about the program at Irondale is that students see the connection between a career in construction and classes such as math or writing,” adds Mullin. “Math is used by skilled trades professionals every day on the job. Communications is critical to ensuring that everyone on a project team is doing what they should be doing at the right time. The beauty is that in the Construction and Solar Energy class, the students get to see how math is applied in real life. That’s powerful.”

The Construction and Solar Energy program has articulation agreements for courses within the Solar Pathway program. Articulation agreements allow students to apply credits earned in specific courses in high school toward a college degree.

“It’s important that students not only pick up valuable skills and earn college credit, but that they recognize construction as a legitimate alternative to college or the military,” says Werner. “Our focus is on letting students experience these types of opportunities before they graduate.”

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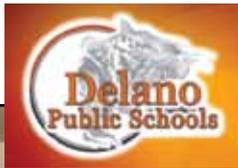
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Aiding Others Through Habitat



Paul Downer, Communications Coordinator
Superintendent/School Board Assistant
Delano Public Schools

Sometimes the most meaningful learning experiences come outside the classroom, a truth that a number of DHS Spanish students recently experienced when they spent a day volunteering with Habitat for Humanity.

Ten College in the Schools Spanish students led by Spanish teachers John Fitzer and Paige Entzi traveled to Minneapolis, where a number of them were assigned to work in Habitat's "ReStore" and a few others were dispatched to Bloomington to help with a home restoration project.

"It was very fun. I would definitely like to do it again," said senior Camden Tschudi, who spent his day installing laminate flooring in a



basement under the direction of two Habitat supervisors, who also oversaw the installation of tile upstairs and painting and restoration of a deck.

"It was just a really cool experience because you really felt like you were helping other people," said senior Riley Campion, who stayed at the ReStore during the day to help construct shelving. "We only did shelves, but to help the company that makes such a big difference in people's lives – that helps them get started or do things they didn't think they could because of the situation they are in – it was very cool."

Fitzer said the inspiration for the experience came from the CIS curriculum through the University of Minnesota, which has strongly encouraged service learning. While working through a human rights unit, students learned not only about various abuses, but also about positive developments and groups like Habitat for Humanity.

"We were talking about Habitat, why not go see it in action?" said Fitzer, who began exploring the possibility last spring and may seek to arrange similar experiences in the future.

Although the trip conflicted with the state basketball tournament, which resulted in a smaller group than originally planned, Fitzer said the feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive.

"I would do it again in a second. I heard that from almost every one of them," he said. "I wasn't expecting that, but I was really hoping they were going to feel this was something very positive. I was hoping they would see that you don't have to do much and you can help people in need. You're from a more well-to-do community and with very little effort you can go online and volunteer, go to a house site or go to their ReStore and volunteer. I'm hoping the kids will realize, 'I can do this. It doesn't take much and I can help someone else out who is less fortunate than I am.'"

The Work

At the house site Tschudi said the group of students made good progress, finishing the upstairs floor tile and deck work, and nearly completing the basement flooring. Tschudi explained that in addition to building new homes, Habitat will buy up existing houses, restore them and sell them at reduced rates to those who qualify.

He said the students who participated didn't hesitate when Fitzer asked if they would be interested in the service learning day.

"A lot of us jumped on board right away. We were like, 'Yeah, we'd love to,'" he said.

Meanwhile, at the ReStore Fitzer, Entzi and three students were tasked with building shelves.

"They just said, here, look at this shelf and you go from there. So we did it wrong like three times, which was kind of frustrating, but also funny," said Campion. "I think it took us an hour to build our first shelf, and then once we finally got the hang of it was about 15 minutes per shelf."

Campion said it was eye-opening to see the huge area filled with countless discounted items, from appliances and furniture to doors and windows.

"Everyone thinks of building homes with Habitat, but a lot of people already have a house and they just can't afford the good stuff to go inside of it. But this is someplace where they can get it," she said.

Holistic Education

Although there was a tie to the group's Spanish curriculum, Fitzer said the point of the trip was not necessarily to build Spanish skills but to seek experiential learning.

"After you've been a teacher a long time you realize that while my particular curriculum is important, the big picture is educating kids and getting them ready for real life," he said. "We educate the whole child here. Part of educating the whole child is giving them life experiences that are going to make a difference in the future. Twenty years down the road they might remember Mr. Fitzer taking them to Habitat. They will remember it was a good experience and it might cause them to look for things to do to help out in their own community."

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Construction Management AT MSU MOORHEAD

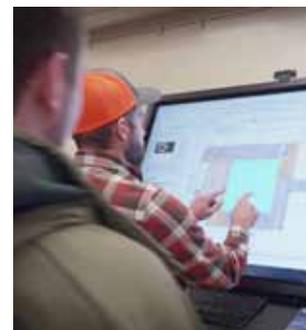
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Construction Laborers

Perform tasks involving physical labor at construction sites. May operate hand and power tools of all types: air hammers, earth tampers, cement mixers, small mechanical hoists, surveying and measuring equipment, and a variety of other equipment and instruments. May clean and prepare sites, dig trenches, set braces to support the sides of excavations, erect scaffolding, and clean up rubble, debris and other waste materials. May assist other craft workers.

Median wage (2016) \$16.07 hourly, \$33,430 annual

Construction Managers

Plan, direct, or coordinate, usually through subordinate supervisory personnel, activities concerned with the construction and maintenance of structures, facilities, and systems. Participate in the conceptual development of a construction project and oversee its organization, scheduling, budgeting, and implementation. Includes managers in specialized construction fields, such as carpentry or plumbing.

Median wage (2016) \$42.93 hourly, \$89,300 annual

Construction & Building Inspectors

Inspect structures using engineering skills to determine structural soundness and compli-

ance with specifications, building codes, and other regulations. Inspections may be general in nature or may be limited to a specific area, such as electrical systems or plumbing.

Median wage (2016) \$28.12 hourly, \$58,480 annual

Operating Engineers & Other Construction Equipment Operators

Operate one or several types of power construction equipment, such as motor graders, bulldozers, scrapers, compressors, pumps, derricks, shovels, tractors, or front-end loaders to excavate, move, and grade earth, erect structures, or pour concrete or other hard surface pavement. May repair and maintain equipment in addition to other duties.

Median wage (2016) \$22.06 hourly, \$45,890 annual

Civil Engineers

Perform engineering duties in planning, designing, and overseeing construction and maintenance of building structures, and facilities, such as roads, railroads, airports, bridges, harbors, channels, dams, irrigation projects, pipelines, power plants, and water and sewage systems.

Median wage (2016) \$40.16 hourly, \$83,540 annual

Construction Carpenters

Construct, erect, install, and repair structures and fixtures of wood, plywood, and wallboard, using carpenter's hand tools and power tools.

Median wage (2016) \$20.96 hourly, \$43,600 annual

Cost Estimators

Prepare cost estimates for product manufacturing, construction projects, or services to aid management in bidding on or determining price of product or service. May specialize according to particular service performed or type of product manufactured.

Median wage (2016) \$29.71 hourly, \$61,790 annual

Cement Masons & Concrete Finishers

Smooth and finish surfaces of poured concrete, such as floors, walks, sidewalks, roads, or curbs using a variety of hand and power tools. Align forms for sidewalks, curbs, or gutters; patch voids; and use saws to cut expansion joints.

Median wage (2016) \$18.84 hourly, \$39,180 annual

Electricians

Install, maintain, and repair electrical wiring, equipment, and fixtures. Ensure that

work is in accordance with relevant codes. May install or service street lights, intercom systems, or electrical control systems.

Median wage (2016) \$25.35 hourly, \$52,720 annual

Plumbers

Assemble, install, or repair pipes, fittings, or fixtures of heating, water, or drainage systems, according to specifications or plumbing codes.

Median wage (2016) \$24.74 hourly, \$51,450 annual

Architects

Plan and design structures, such as private residences, office buildings, theaters, factories, and other structural property.

Median wage (2016) \$36.99 hourly, \$76,930 annual

Heating and Air Conditioning Mechanics & Installers

Install, service, or repair heating and air conditioning systems in residences or commercial establishments.

Median wage (2016) \$22.07 hourly, \$45,910 annual

Source: O*NET

New Construction Trades Program at Eagan High School Continued from Page 5

course offers students a completely different experience to that of a regular classroom. For students who often wonder how their studies will be applicable to their lives, this is the perfect class.

“As our students build the house, they quickly realize how critical the skills of technical reading, writing and communication are. There isn't a day that passes without our kids actively putting to action math and science concepts,” Hauenstein says.

In addition to building their construction skills, the Construction Trades course at Eagan also exposes students to unique job possibilities in construction for after they leave high school.

“As the year goes on, we talk about options after high school,” Krantz says. “We discuss apprenticeship programs and provide valuable resources to help students find a path that's right for them. We like to expose them to as many options as possible.”

This is accomplished in a number of ways. Once a month, the students enrolled in the course will do a field trip to a construction site or to a union apprenticeship training center.

“We also like to bring in students who graduated from Eagan High School who have pursued a career in construction to come into our class and speak directly and frankly to our students,” Hauenstein says, “It's impor-

tant for our students to learn from former students, some of whom are not that much older themselves, about the steps they took to start a career in construction.”

Hauenstein and Krantz maintain a blog about these various experiences to help students who are curious about the Construction Trades course learn more about it.

Looking ahead, Johnson says that one of the primary goals of the new course is to increase the mix of students who enroll in the class.

“It's important that all students, including female students, have the opportunity to explore careers in construction,” Johnson says. “It's a great chance for them to apply intellectual skills in a hands-on way.”

It's that commitment to introducing more students to the construction trades that led to a recent story about the Construction Trades course by WCCO-TV.

Eagan High School is one of a growing number of schools throughout Minnesota that offer classes to prepare students for apprenticeship programs in construction. These schools are known as Construction Apprenticeship Preparation (CAP) schools and they supported by Construction Career Pathways (CPP), a collaborative effort between Minnesota's trade unions, construction companies, school districts, the State of Minnesota, and a number of nonprofits all



dedicated to introducing careers in construction as a viable career option to Minnesota's high school students.

Hauenstein and Krantz believe that the skills they teach in the Construction Trades class will not only help students in their careers but in their lives as well.

“What we're really trying to do is help students decide whether or not a career in construction is for them,” Hauenstein says. “We want to get to the heart of the matter and ask them: ‘What is it that you really want

to do?’ And then, whatever their goal is, we want to help them achieve it.”

Reprinted with permission from *Constructioncareers.org*

www.eaganhs.portal.rschoolday.com
(651) 683-6900



Home Building Class that Opens Door to Construction Education and Careers Moving to STEP



Anoka-Hennepin Schools

Each year for nearly 25 years, Blaine High School (BHS) students have built an entire house, from the ground up, with their own hands. We're talking walls and roofs, plumbing, electrical, sheetrock, heating and cooling, insulation and siding — everything.

And each year those homes have gone to auction when complete, and can be found all over the state, from cozy sanctuaries in cabin country near Ely to single-family homes right here in Anoka County — all built by BHS students.

The current house is the 24th house BHS students have built; each project beginning as the school year opens and each project ready for market by the time the school year ends.

"It's so awesome," said Tim Nestrud, the BHS technical education instructor who teaches the carpentry classes that build the house. "It's fun, I enjoy teaching this — but it's also a great experience for the students."

It's such a great experience, that for the first time, it'll soon be available to all high school students in the district. Starting next year, the carpentry class and program that builds the house is moving to Anoka-Hennepin's Secondary Technical Education Program (STEP), which is located on the campus of Anoka Technical College, and will be part of its construction careers pathway.

By moving the class and project to STEP, all district students interested in construction and carpentry will have access to the class, not just BHS students. "I think it's a good thing to open this up to other kids in the district," Nestrud said.

Jes Lipa, the director of STEP, said she's long understood the importance of Nestrud's carpentry class and more specifically, the home building project. It's her career and technical education budget that covers the costs of the materials and supplies to build the home.

"It's a fantastic project, but it's also a

critical opportunity to offer students," she said. "Construction is a high-need industry and our kids need to have this experience. That's our main focus."

That's also why she felt it important to move the class and project to STEP. "Previously, this has only been accessible to students at Blaine," she said. "Now next year it'll be accessible to students at all five high schools and our alternative sites as well."

Jaidelyn Nordlund, a BHS junior, said the class is among the best she's ever taken. "I like working with my hands, and the class is a lot of fun," she said. "Plus, I'm learning a lot."

She's learning so much, in fact, Nordlund said she's thinking about construction as a career. "We'll see, but I really like it."

Nestrud, who has been teaching in Anoka-Hennepin for 29 years, will follow the class to STEP so he can continue the home building project he launched. "I mean, I enjoy doing this," he said. "And the interaction I have with the kids — it's why you get into teaching."

Nestrud said he first approached Anoka-Hennepin leaders in the mid-1990s about building the house as part of class after spending his first five years trying to get his students practical hands-on experience.

"We'd go finish basements, or build decks, but our students were never getting the whole picture," he said. "So he pitched this idea, and they said, 'let's go for it' and the rest is history."

Lipa said there was a lot of interest from prospective students during STEP's open house recently, and the plan is to offer three daily sections next year, with 15 students per section.

"I'm really excited," she said. "This is such a cool opportunity — it's kind of like Anoka-Hennepin's hidden secret."

STEP bills itself as a high school in a college setting where students primarily in grades 11 and 12 can explore hands-on technical and manufacturing careers while earning both high school and college credit. Most who attend are part-time students, which means they take core classes at their regular high school, and then come to STEP at some point during the day for technical and manufacturing studies.

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A Legacy for Leech Lake

Carissa Hopkins-Hoel
Communications Coordinator
St. Cloud Area School District 742

What do you do with leftover construction materials? Build dog houses, of course!

Students in Sara Laudenbach's Project Lead the Way (PLTW) course at North Junior High School built sheds last spring for their service learning project. They built one shed for the school and will now sell additional sheds to help buy supplies for future projects.

"I try to incorporate some type of service learning with the yearlong class," says Laudenbach. "At least one of their projects is given to some-
body else."

However, there was a lot of scrap material left from last year's project, so Laudenbach tasked her students to come up with ideas to repurpose the remaining materials for this year's service project.

Two of Laudenbach's students, Ella Anderson and Haven Fahey, thought of the

idea to build dog houses.

"I'm in Girl Scouts," explains Fahey. "... I thought of a project a couple of years ago for my bronze award which was a donation box for the humane society."

So, the pair contacted Tri-County Humane Society to see if the organization would be able to use outdoor dog houses. Instead, Tri-County gave them the contact information to Leech Lake Legacy, a dog rescue organization on the Leech Lake Reservation.

Leech Lake Legacy was thrilled to accept dog houses made by students as a donation. Their only request was that the houses be built to

accommodate large or extra-large dogs.

"We're almost done. . . . We'll have three that will be donated," explains Laudenbach over the noise of saws, sanders and pounding hammers.

With piles and piles of half-cut wood, the students worked hard to ensure wood styles matched. They believed the houses needed to be high-quality because special dogs would be living in the houses.

"Tri-County will deliver the dog houses to Leech Lake Legacy on behalf of North Junior High with the hope that these students are leaving a legacy for future dog house occupants and their caregivers."



Some of the students had large dogs at home, so they took measurements of height, weight and length to determine the dimensions needed to house large and extra-large dogs.

The design is wide with a built-in wall (wind block) for the dogs to help escape from rain, snow or cold. Students kept in mind the best care for the dogs.

Now toward the end of the trimester, the project is wrapping up. Tri-County will deliver

the dog houses to Leech Lake Legacy on behalf of North Junior High with the hope that these students are leaving a legacy for future dog house occupants and their caregivers.

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R New Construction Class at Minneapolis Roosevelt High School Shows Students an Alternative to College



What if you're a student who needs something different? What if you're at your best when you're thinking through your hands?

Acceptance into a registered apprenticeship program to become a skilled tradesperson, such as an electrician, plumber or pipefitter, allows an ambitious young person to combine their learned knowledge with practical skills involving their hands. Unfortunately, careers in construction aren't on the radar of many high school students.

Luckily, Roosevelt High School in south Minneapolis is doing something to change that. Through its Auto and Construction Program, Roosevelt High School offers students the opportunity to learn about automotive repair, welding, and now, construction.

As the only high school in the Minneapolis school district to offer classes in construc-

tion, Roosevelt gives its students the opportunity to learn real-world skills, which can give them a leg up in pursuing a career in one of 30 construction trades, from a career as an electrician to brick-laying.

Catherine Ludowese, a teacher at Roosevelt High School leads the new construction program, which was launched in September 2018.

"Roosevelt's program offers three different pathways for our students," Ludowese says. "We have an automotive services pathway, an auto body repair pathway, and a now, a construction and welding pathway."

"The goal of the program is to prepare students for careers that may not involve college," says Ludowese, "such as an apprenticeship program in one of the skilled trades, or an immediate start in the workplace after they graduate from high school."

In this first year of the construction trades program, Ludowese offered five classes in Construction 1, where she taught the students about basic safety, measurements, and assembly, and gave them experience working with tools, such as power saws. This spring she teaching three classes in Construction 1 and offering two classes in Construction 2 for students continuing with the construction track. Next school year, she hopes to offer more advanced construction classes (Construction 3 and 4) for students who desire to continue pursuing their learning of construction.

"We know that we're filling a big need with these classes," says Ludowese. "In our first semester alone, 91 students enrolled in our five Construction 1 classes. We've been amazed with the level of interest that our students have

shown so far."

While Ludowese's class teaches skills that are applicable to a work environment, it also teaches skills that are applicable to student lives, and gets them excited about building and creating.

"Whether a student pursues a career in construction or not, they're gaining valuable experience," Ludowese adds. "For example, some of our students may never have lifted a hammer before. We show them how to do it right. And that's a skill they can use the rest of their lives."

In their first project for Construction 1, the students worked on making a giant jenga game, where they learned how to measure and

cut wood. For their second project, the students created a

cornhole game (bean bag toss), which allowed them to learn how to properly drill holes and yes, even sew the beanbags. For their last project, the students learned about electricity while learning how to wire an outlet.

"The program is designed to let the students have fun," Ludowese says, "by teaching them how to

make games and showing them how the skills they are learning apply to real life."

Although Ludowese's class is a lot of fun, she says: "There's no easy 'A' here. The class has high standards that push the students to go outside of their experience and learn new valuable and applicable skills."

As for the future, Ludowese says that she wants to get more funding so that she can take her students to visit active construction sites where they can talk to real construction workers. She also would like to expand the diversity in her classes, to attract more female students and students of color into the construction trades.

"There is a huge opportunity for women and for people of color in Minnesota's construction industry," Ludowese says. "We want to encourage and support these students to get involved, and help them explore careers in construction."

Maybe, for example, Ludowese notes, "that the girls in our school will feel more confident about signing up for these classes after



they see that they're being taught by a female instructor." Overall, Ludowese is on a mission to give those students who don't fit the typical expectations of a four year college a different opportunity.

"We want to encourage students to foster their skills," she says, "and show them how many opportunities come from the development of their expertise."

Roosevelt is one of a growing number of high schools throughout Minnesota offering construction classes for students preparing for apprenticeship programs in construction. These schools, known as Construction Apprenticeship Preparation (CAP) schools, are supported and encouraged by Minnesota's building trades, construction companies and others that have teamed up under the Construction Career Pathways (ConstructionCareers.org) umbrella to encourage high school students throughout the state to consider construction as a career choice.

At the end of the day, Ludowese sees the construction trades courses at Roosevelt as an opportunity to prepare her students to approach life head-on. Through her class, she wants her students to "use their hands, enjoy their learning, feel safe, feel that they belong, and most importantly, feel that they are a better person through their effort and valuable contributions to their developing work."

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Dakota County Camp
June 17–18

Duluth Camp
June 18–19

St. Cloud Camp*
June 17–19

Brainerd Camp*
July 13–14

High School Scrubs Camp

For students entering grades 9–12 in the Fall of 2019, who are interested in exploring healthcare careers. (*St. Cloud Camps is grades 10–12)

Bemidji Residential Camp
Bemidji State University: June 10–13

Anoka Technical College
Anoka Tech. College: June 17–19

Mankato Day Camp
MSU-Mankato: June 17–19

St. Cloud Day Camp*
SCSU: June 17–19

Cloquet Residential Camp
Fond du lac Tribal Com. College: June 19–21

Winona Residential Camp
Winona State University: June 23–28

Moorhead Residential Camp
MSU-Moorhead: June 23–28

Metro Day Camp
Augsburg University: July 8–12

Rochester Day Camp
RCTC: July 16–17

St. Paul College Camp
St. Paul College: July 22–25



For more information or to register: HealthForceMinnesota.org/students

"I really enjoyed learning about the specialized fields taught by people actively working in their field. The hands-on activities helped me learn more about their jobs." — **2018 Scrubs Camper**

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The Prairie Wetlands Learning Center, located in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, is a residential environmental education facility operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Friends of the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center was developed to enhance and promote the understanding and conservation of the prairie pothole region, primarily through support of the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center.



The Center offers a variety of environmental education programs to learners of all ages, as well as teacher workshops and training sessions for wildlife professionals year-round.

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Grants



Continued from Page 4

Toshiba America Grant Program for 6-12 Science and Mathematics Educators

The foundation seeks to support teachers by providing funds to support classroom projects. The foundation strongly encourages projects planned and led by individual teachers or teams of teachers for their own classrooms. Successful projects tap into the natural curiosity of students, enable students to frame their own scientific questions, and incorporate the expertise of community partners. Applications must be for project-based learning.

Deadline: Applications for requests less than \$5,000 are due March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1, 2019. Requests for grants of \$5,001 and greater are due May 1 and November 1, 2019.

Website: www.toshiba.com/taf/612.jsp

American Honda Foundation Education Grants

The American Honda Foundation supports education with a specific focus on the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); the environment; job training; and literacy. It engages in grant making that reflects the basic tenets, beliefs, and philosophies of Honda companies, which are characterized by the following qualities: imaginative, creative, youthful, scientific, humanistic, and innovative.

Awards range from \$20,000 to \$75,000 over a one-year period.

Deadline: For new applicants, applications are due February 1 and August 1, annually. For returning applicants, applications are due May 1, annually.

Website: www.honda.com/community/applying-for-a-grant

Saxena Family Foundation Grants

The Saxena Family Foundation has a particular focus on initiatives that promote US science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and the empowerment of girls, female children, and young women so that they have equal rights later in life. The foundation focuses on empowerment programs to include economic, educational, and political empowerment of women through literacy programs, jobs, and life-skills training.

Most awards range from \$5,000 to \$50,000.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: saxenafoundation.com/guidelines

Air Force Junior ROTC Grants

Applications are judged by the importance and the impact the selected aerospace activity will have on students. Funds may be used for any aerospace education related activity from purchasing textbooks or videotapes, to going on a field trip to an aerospace museum, Air Force base, or other aerospace facility.

Grants up to \$250 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due February 10 and October 10, annually.

Website: www.afa.org/education/air-force-junior-rotc-grants

Wireless, STEM, and Radio Technology Education Project Grants

The Alfred E. Friend, Jr., W4CF, Educational Activities Fund provides annual grants for educational programs and activities of amateur radio organizations, with special emphasis on projects involving youth and teacher development. Eligible projects include explorations and ongoing education related to wireless; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and radio technology.

Awards range from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

Deadline: Applications are due October 1, annually.

Website: www.arrl.org/arrl-foundation-special-funds

SCA Grants

Sony Corporation of American and its operating companies offer funding to programs that support education and creative, artistic, technical, and scientific skills that are necessary for tomorrow's workforce.

Deadline: Requests are accepted year-round.

Website: www.sony.com/en_us//SCA/social-responsibility/giving-guidelines.html

Calvin K. Kazanjian Economics Foundation Grants

The primary focus of the Kazanjian Foundation is to increase economic literacy. It gives special attention to proposals and projects with national impact, specifically programs that:

- Raise the public's participation in economic education or create a demand for greater economic literacy.
- Apply new strategies for teaching economics, including online and web-based instruction.
- Encourage measurement of economic

understanding.

- Help otherwise disenfranchised youth and young adults with children learn to participate in the economic system.

Grants up to \$150,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are due February 15 and September 15, annually.

Website: www.kazanjian.org/grants/apply

Japan Foundation Center Grants

The Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership offers Education Grants for projects designed to increase awareness and understanding of Japan in the United States by addressing the needs of students and teachers in kindergarten through grade 12. Funds support teacher training, curriculum development, and community outreach efforts.

Grants up to \$5,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.cgp.org/education_grants

Roads to Reading Literacy Initiative Grants

The Roads to Reading Literacy Initiative (RTRLI) provides grants of new children's books as educational resources to schools, child-care centers, and nonprofit organizations serving children in need from birth to age 16. Donated books must be used for on-site literacy programs that target underserved communities and are administered by the applicant organization.

Deadline: Applications are accepted from April 1 through June 1, annually.

Website: pwirt.org/register

Art Works: Arts Education

Projects are for prekindergarten through grade 12 students, the educators and artists who support them, and the schools and communities that serve them. Applicants should consider what role their proposed project plays within this system, and how their project impacts students. Funded projects utilize and test innovative strategies, or scale up proven methodologies, for increasing access to arts education for more students.

Awards range from \$10,000 to \$100,000.

Deadline: Applications are due February 14 and July 11, 2019.

Website: www.arts.gov/grants-organizations/art-works/arts-education

Arts in Education and Sapling Grants

The Laird Norton Family Foundation offers Arts in Education and Sapling Grants that focus on children, youth, and education. Funding aims to increase and improve prekindergarten through grade 12 arts learning in US public schools. Programs that enhance students' educational outcomes

and integrate the arts within content areas receive priority.

Deadline: Information forms are accepted year-round.

Website: www.lairdnorton.org

Music Education Grants

The Guitar Center offers grants that support music education projects and programs. The company believes that music inspires creativity and personal expression, builds self-esteem, and teaches cooperation and team building from playing music together.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.guitarcenter.com/pages/corporate-giving

Music Education Grants

The Mockingbird Foundation offers grants to public schools and nonprofit organizations to support projects in music education. The primary focus is students, ages 18 and younger, with particular interest in projects that target underserved children.

Awards range from \$100 to \$10,000.

Initial inquiries are due August 1, annually.

Website: mbird.org/grants

The Harry Chapin Foundation Education Grant

The Harry Chapin Foundation makes grants in the areas of education, arts, agriculture, and the environment. Priority is given to arts-in-education programs and community education. Previous grants were used to fund high school community outreach, and projects targeting at-risk youth.

Grants up to \$10,000 are awarded.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: harrychapinfoundation.org/apply

Accessible Golf Program Grants

The National Alliance for Accessible Golf (Alliance) and the United States Golf Association (USGA) have formed a grant-making partnership to promote opportunities for individuals with disabilities to make the game of golf more accessible.

Grants up to \$20,000 are awarded, with a matching grant requirement.

Deadline: Applications are accepted year-round.

Website: www.accessgolf.org/grants/alliance_grants.cfm

Two Receive WEM Outstanding Educator Awards for Ethics in Education



Maplewood Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence

Melissa Sonnek, a principal at Edgerton Elementary School, part of the Roseville Area Schools and located in Maplewood, was surprised April 15 with the news that she is a recipient of a 2019 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Ethics in Education, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

Sonnek is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. She is one of two recipients of the WEM Foundation's statewide Ethics in Education Award, which recognizes educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum.

Sonnek has been working in education for 20 years and currently serves as the principal at Edgerton Elementary School. She emphasizes that every student should have the tools they need to succeed. Working with staff, Sonnek helped to create "The Compass Room" – a place where students can go when they need to find their direction or need a break from the classroom. For example, some stu-

dents need energy output (a trampoline, swing, etc.) while others need a calming environment (sitting in the egg chair or the tent). It is also a place that can protect dignity and privacy for dysregulated students. The school's behavior coach is also available to help students return to the classroom.

"Melissa is an incredibly gifted equity leader at Edgerton Elementary," said Jenny Loeck, director of secondary education for the Roseville Area Schools. "She leads with love, and her focus on building positive relationships holds the key to improving achievement for all students."

In addition, Sonnek, in collaboration with the Maplewood Police Department, started a partnership program that formed a bridge between Edgerton and their local police officers. It includes positive interactions between students and police officers. Police officers are invited to play with students at recess, talk with students, give high fives as they wait for buses at the end of the day, join kindergarten play time, have lunch with students, participate in school assemblies and play games. The Maplewood police have since used this model



and expanded this partnership to other schools in Maplewood as well.

"Principal Sonnek has created many leadership teams so every diverse voice and perspective is heard," shared a colleague. "This encourages everyone to feel pride with our contributions and strengthens our sense of community. She is deeply concerned about students' and staff members' social and emotional development."

Courtesy of a Synergy & Leadership Exchange press release

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Continued on Page 19

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Outstanding Educator Awards for Ethics in Education Continued from Page 18



St. Paul Educator Named Recipient of \$15,000 Award for Excellence

Tim Quealy, a teacher at Avalon School, a project-based public charter school for students in grades 6–12 in St. Paul, was surprised March 25 with the news that he is a recipient of a 2019 WEM Outstanding Educator Award for Ethics in Education, an honor that is accompanied by a \$15,000 award.

Quealy is one of six educators being honored by the WEM Foundation and Synergy & Leadership Exchange for outstanding accomplishments and contributions to student learning. He is one of two recipients of the WEM Foundation's statewide Ethics in Education Award, which recognizes educators who embody ethical behavior and promote ethical development for students through classroom or school activities, policies or curriculum.

Quealy has been teaching for nine years and currently serves as a program coordinator and language arts teacher at Avalon School. Quealy helped to create an experience that is truly student-centered with the school's student-led conferences. He works with students to help them identify what they value as a person and to show how or where their work has supported those values. The students turn

those feelings into a narrative reflection paper to help lead and guide their student-led conference experience. Quealy believes the process gives students a framework through which they can view all of their decisions in their life. At the end of each conference, together with their family, students set meaningful short and long-term goals based around the values the student has identified as most important.

"With his leadership, Tim inspires colleagues to fully participate in our democratic governance model, integrate tech into their curriculum, and use authentic assessment," said a colleague. "He also consistently finds new opportunities to engage students in real-world tech learning opportunities."

In addition, Quealy also provides teachers with extensive technology and authentic assessment professional development as technology coordinator and district assessment coordinator. Part of his work as the technology coordinator includes creating a technology help desk that is managed and fully operated by students. Annually, he teaches a seminar that trains students in basic and more advanced tech support, so that they can successfully run

the Avalon Tech Help Desk. This program has improved Avalon's overall tech support while giving students real world training and important job skills.

"Mr. Quealy set our child on a path toward success," shared a parent. "He was a trustworthy guide for her development, providing a strong model for academic and emotional risk-taking while never pushing her further than she was ready to go."

In addition to the Ethics in Education Award, honorees are recognized with the Academic Challenge Coach Award (teachers who are exemplary coaches of student teams that participate and compete in academic challenges approved by the Minnesota Academic League Council), Teacher Achievement Award (exemplary teachers who support, inspire and assist students to attain greater learning as evidenced by student achievement) and Athletic Coach Award (teachers who are exemplary coaches of athletic teams).

Educators are first nominated for the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program by students, parents, colleagues or community members. Those who accept the nomination provide additional information for consideration by Synergy & Leadership Exchange and a blue ribbon selection panel, which reviews and ranks the nominees. In addition to the six statewide honorees, additional educators have been selected as regional honorees for 2019. These honorees will be announced in May.

Synergy & Leadership Exchange is a



non-profit organization dedicated to fostering collaboration to advance the development of ethical citizens, providing educational resources, and celebrating achievement and best practices in Minnesota schools, businesses and communities. For more information on the WEM Outstanding Educator Awards Program and Synergy & Leadership Exchange, visit www.synergyexchange.org.

Courtesy of a Synergy & Leadership Exchange press release

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John Fitzer is Delano Teacher of the Year

*Paul Downer, Communications Coordinator
Superintendent/School Board Assistant
Delano Public Schools*

For a second time, John Fitzer has been recognized as the Delano Teacher Association's Teacher of the Year.

The Spanish instructor is in his 30th year of teaching in Delano, but time has not eroded his enthusiasm for his subject or his students.

"I'm very passionate about what I do. I love what I do. I can't imagine doing anything else," said Fitzer. "I don't consider this a job. It's not work to me. I just love being with the kids and seeing their eyes open to new things."

His fellow teachers also named Fitzer the district's Teacher of the Year in 1996, but he said the honor is no less meaningful a second time around. Though representatives from each district are also evaluated at the state level as candidates to represent Minnesota, Fitzer said the local recognition was more than enough.

"I believe, and I think most people do around here, that we have a wonderful school," he said. "And to represent the district with all these other wonderful teachers, to me it could



stop here and I would be thrilled."

Life's Calling

Fitzer grew up in Crystal, aside from a three-year stint in California, and was a member of the last class to graduate from Fridley Grace High School before it became Totino Grace. From the beginning, a career in

Continued on Page 21

Nine Selected as Teacher of the Year Finalists

2019 Minnesota
TEACHER
of the YEAR
55th Anniversary

Nine teachers from across the state have been named finalists in the 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year program. An independent selection panel of 24 leaders in the areas of education, business, government and non-profits selected the finalists from a group of 40 semifinalists.

There were 168 Teacher of the Year candidates for this program year, the third most in the program's history.

The selection panel meets again May 4 to conduct individual interviews with each of the nine finalists and to cast votes for the 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year. For a look at how the selection process works, go to www.educationminnesota.org/news/awards/teacher-of-the-year.aspx.

The 2018 Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Kelly Holstine of Tokata Learning Center in Shakopee, will announce this year's honoree at a banquet at the Saint Paul RiverCentre May 5.

Education Minnesota, the 86,000-member statewide educators union, organizes and underwrites the Teacher of the Year program. Candidates include pre-kindergarten through 12th-grade teachers, ECFE and ABE teachers from public or private schools.

The 2019 Minnesota Teacher of the Year finalists (listed alphabetically, with school, district, subject and grade[s] taught) are:



Jessica Davis

South St. Paul Secondary, South St. Paul, math, grades 11–12



Eugenia Popa

Harding High School, Saint Paul, English as a second language, grades 9–12



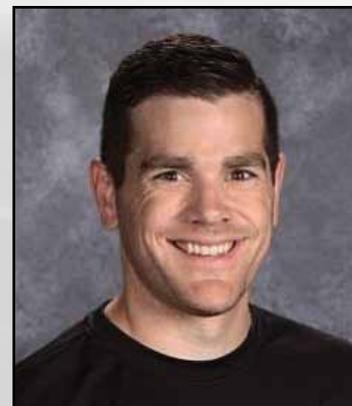
Cory Wade

Hillcrest Community School, Bloomington, elementary, grade 3



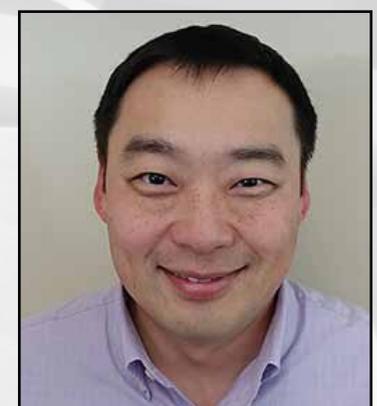
Bernetta Green

Eastern Heights Elementary, Saint Paul, elementary, grade 5



Timothy Riordan

Blaine High School, Anoka-Hennepin, biology and environmental sciences, grades 11–12



Wilbur Winkelman

Lakeview Elementary School, Robbinsdale, elementary, grade 5

Courtesy of an Education Minnesota press release



Jeffrey Davies

Roseville Area High School, Roseville, industrial technology — woods and trades, grades 9–12



Theresa Pearson

Winona Senior High School, Winona, English, grades 9, 11, 12



Steve Schmitz

St. Louis Park Senior High School, St. Louis Park, instrumental music, grades 9–12



University Avenue's Kate Watson Named Local Air Force Association Teacher of the Year

Anoka-Hennepin School District

University Avenue Aerospace, Children's Engineering and Science Elementary School (UAE ACES) in Blaine is home to a teacher of the year.

Kate Watson, curriculum integrator at UAE ACES, was named the E.W. Rawlings Chapter of the Air Force Association Teacher of the Year on April 5. The award recognizes top performers in U.S. Air Force and related aerospace programs, according to the Rawlings Chapter, which includes most of Minnesota.

"I'm terrible at compliments and attention like this," Watson joked. "But seriously, I'm both surprised and humbled that they have recognized the work that I've been fortunate enough to do in STEM and aerospace education while at (UAE ACES)," Watson said.

Watson said she's been most inspired by the reaction and support from her colleagues.

"The staff has been very congratulatory and supportive," she said. "And it's been really wonderful to be able to share the amazing things we're collectively doing at (UAE) with a broader audience. At the banquet — so many people wanted

to learn more about the innovative and community-based experiences that we bring to our students. It was great to showcase our amazing school and students."

Watson's job is unique, and one she loves, she said. As curriculum integrator at the school, she said she's able to facilitate teachers while also connecting our students, community, and families with STEM aerospace education in an inquiry-based and engaging way. "It's a fantastic job," Watson said.

Her journey to being named the organization's teacher of the year was about three years in the making, and a result of the work she does forging partnerships for UAE ACES.

Watson, a number of years ago, strongly supported a relationship with the National Civil Air Patrol to bring in aerospace education to the school. Then, in 2014, Watson was honored as the National Civil Air Patrol's Coordinator of the Year for her work.

"The Air Force Association partners with the Civil Air Patrol, so I was on their radar," she said. "Fast forward to this year, and the (Rawlings Chapter of the Air Force Association) reached out and asked if I'd speak to their board about STEM education

and how we use aerospace at our school. That's when I found out I was their Teacher of the Year, which was surprising. They had followed my work."

And the association was happy to name Watson their teacher of the year. "This is her moment to shine and our opportunity to honor (Watson's) contributions to an indomitable U.S. Air Force, and (the) strong STEM education in the Twin Cities," said Jeff Johnson, president of E.W. Rawlings Chapter of the Air Force Association.

UAE ACES Principal Diedre Bloemers said Watson is more than deserving for this kind of recognition.

"(Watson's) enthusiasm, her innovativeness, her genuine concern for showcasing and integrating STEM (programming) in education are exemplary," she said. "(Watson) creates opportunities for students, staff and school by developing STEM and aviation partnerships with airports, commissions, other schools and local STEM engineers and scientists."

From here, Watson will move on to the Air Force Association's national teacher of the year recognition, something she'll learn more about in the coming weeks.

The Air Force Association is a 72-year



old non-profit organization started by retired generals, senior enlisted and community leaders after World War II.

www.ahschools.us
(763) 506-1000

Fitzer is Delano Teacher of the Year Continued from Page 19

education beckoned.

"I've known I wanted to be a teacher since I was 12 years old," said Fitzer. "It just always felt really good when people succeeded at something and I was able to help with that."

Fitzer originally intended to become a math teacher but switched to Spanish after spending a semester in Spain during his sophomore year of college. After graduating in 1984, he worked at St. Anne's Grade School in Minneapolis for a year before heading north to Herman-Norcross Public Schools.

"I was shared with several smaller districts up there," said Fitzer. "None of them had a Spanish teacher, so I was on interactive TV, which was a really unique experience."

Fitzer came to Delano in 1989 to be closer to family in the cities, and found his professional home. Though he had completed his math degree the previous year, he never doubted that Spanish was the right subject for him.

"I've never looked back," he said. "Culture, traveling with students and doing my summer hosting program -- it would be much more challenging to focus on those things as a math teacher. But as a world language teacher it's very easy to incorporate culture, get kids culturally sensitive and show them that the world around them isn't just the bad they might see on the news. It's actually a wonderful place."

Experiential Learning

Over the years, about 175 Delano students have enjoyed transformative learning experiences on 10 trips Fitzer has organized abroad to locations in Mexico, Costa Rica and Spain. On most of those trips students split up and lived with host families for about a week's time.

"I tell my students that you can't learn a language in a classroom," Fitzer said after the most recent trip. "You can learn generally how to speak . . . but until you're in it 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and you're bombarded with it, you're not going to really learn it."

For the past 27 years Fitzer has also organized an annual summer program in which 12-15 Spanish students come to live with an American family for five weeks.

A focus on experiential learning has also been evident in Fitzer's involvement with Habitat for Humanity. His advanced students have volunteered with that organization while working through a curriculum unit on human rights. After one such work excursion last spring, Fitzer said the purpose transcends simple Spanish lessons.

"The big picture is educating kids and getting them ready for real life," he said. "We educate the whole child here. Part of educating the whole child is giving them life experiences that are going to make a difference in the future."

Philosophy of Teaching

Inside the classroom, Fitzer aims to actively engage his students for a full 90-minute block, rarely giving homework in exchange for their attentiveness. He said that approach has made students more motivated and productive, and has allowed him to eschew traditional rules in order to reduce stress and create a relaxed but respectful atmosphere.

"I believe that if students are engaged you do not have to worry about them being bored and distracted," he said in his essay for his state-level teacher of the year candidacy.

He also makes a point of connecting with each student individually in order to help them reach their full potential.

"As their teacher I am aware of each student's strengths and weaknesses, and their expectations are personalized so that they can find success," he said. "The fact of the matter is, I take it personal when a child fails my class."

Making a difference

In May of 2018 Fitzer suffered a near-fatal heart attack at home. He was back in the classroom a week later to finish out the school year. Why?

"There is just something about being here with the kids that is so uplifting," he said. "These kids are what give me my energy."

The experience has also caused him to

reflect on what makes for a fulfilling life and career, however, and confirmed to him the value of his vocation.

"If I had died, I feel like I would have done what I wanted to do in my life, at least with my job," he said. "I feel like I would have completed what I was here to do."

Fitzer explained that the Teacher of the Year recognition was deeply humbling, but the most important thing to him is knowing that he has had an impact in the lives and learning of his students.

"That's what is neat about this school: It's not like only a few teachers have that approach," he said. "There are so many good teachers here, and it seems like every teacher connects to different kids. I think if you ask any really good teacher what the best reward is for their work, they'll say it's those little things that happen: You get a note from a student saying you made their year, or that you made them smile and laugh."

"In the end you want to be able to look back and say, 'I was here, and I made a difference.'"

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Moorhead High Teacher of the Year Focuses on Relationships



Moorhead Area Public Schools

For Moorhead High School science teacher Eric Stenhjem, teaching is about building relationship with students to engage them in learning.

“I believe if I can get students to trust me, then I can teach them anything,” Stenhjem said. “There are many tools and strategies that we can learn to be better teachers. But if you can’t connect with kids, those tools aren’t as effective.”

A science teacher at Moorhead High School for the last 20 years, Stenhjem was named this year’s Moorhead High Teacher of the Year.

Although Stenhjem hadn’t seriously considered a teaching career when he was in high school, he earned a degree in biology education and holds a master’s in education.

In January 1999, Stenhjem began teaching grade 9 physical science, grade 10 biology, and grades 11–12 anatomy and

physiology at Shanley High School in Fargo. In the spring he coached track and field for the Deacons.

The following school year, Stenhjem took a position with Moorhead Area Public Schools. He began teaching grade 9 physical science and grade 10 biology at Moorhead High School. Since then he also has taught environmental science, basic biology, human anatomy and botany. Stenhjem started the Advanced Placement biology course and the zoology course and has been teaching those for the last 13 years.

From 2008–2012, Stenhjem also worked as the district’s STEM integration coach, helping Moorhead teachers in grades K–12 implement STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) into their classroom teaching. As the STEM coach, Stenhjem reorganized the STEM curriculum for grades 3–12 and implemented Project Lead The Way courses at Horizon Middle School and Moorhead High School.

Besides building relationships with students in the classroom, Stenhjem also connects with students as an assistant coach for varsity football. Previously he was an assistant coach for track for several years.

According to Dave Lawrence, principal at Moorhead High, Stenhjem is a well-respected teacher who cares about his students and uses his classroom activities to engage students.

“Eric has a great passion for teaching, but what sets him apart from others is the relationships he develops with his students,”

Lawrence said. “It is common for former students to come and visit Mr. Stenhjem years after they have graduated from Moorhead High School. He has impacted the lives of many students.”

“I believe if I can get students to trust me, then I can teach them anything. There are many tools and strategies that we can learn to be better teachers. But if you can’t connect with kids, those tools aren’t as effective.”

—Eric Stenhjem

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Making Her Mark in the Middle

Albany Area Eighth Grade Teacher Carrie Schmitz Named Minnesota Middle School Teacher of the Year



Steve Stromme, Communications Specialist/
Work-Based Learning Coordinator
Albany Area School District

In a ceremony at the recent 2018 Minnesota Middle School Association Annual Conference in Bloomington, Albany 8th grade Language Arts instructor Carrie Schmitz was honored as the 2018 Minne-

sota Middle Level Educator of the Year.

In this her eighth year of teaching at the secondary level, Mrs. Schmitz is currently an 8th grade English Language Arts instructor at the middle school. She earned a bachelor's degree in English in 2009, and recently earned a master's degree in literacy education.

Commenting on her performance in and out of the classroom, Albany Area Middle School principal Paul Conrad had this to say:

"In the classroom, Mrs. Schmitz has a way of working with all students that is something special.

Her class is a true learning community that is collaborative and inclusive, while personalizing the needs for each individual student. It is commonplace to see students

hanging out in her room before school, during passing time, and after school. Relationship building is a real strength with her. One only needs to see how students greet her, how students decorate her room, how students write her notes on the board, and how students work in her class to recognize how important she is in their lives."

Principal Conrad went on to say that Mrs. Schmitz's passion for education goes beyond the classroom. For example, her colleagues chose her to be a member of the

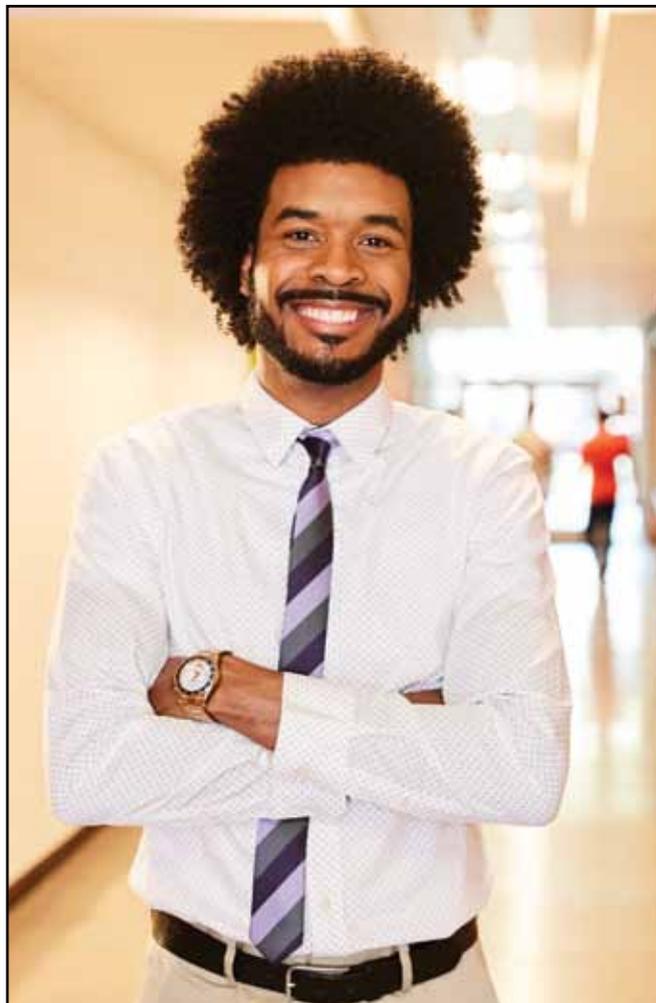
middle school building leadership team, and she took the initiative to start the AAMS Knowledge Bowl team as well as the school's Novelists of Today and Tomorrow Club because, as Conrad points out, "She understands that learning happens in many different arenas."

Asked to comment on her recent honor, Mrs. Schmitz simply stated, "While I'm still not sure that I am deserving of any sort of award, these kids that I work with make it

so easy to shine. My students know that I always say 8th grade is the best grade, and I am simply so honored and grateful to represent them."

"It is commonplace to see students hanging out in her room before school, during passing time, and after school. Relationship building is a real strength with her."

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