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Social Media's Impact on Mental Health Can't Be Ignored

By: Jadyn Light, Conestoga

#2 Newspaper Column Writing

Social media has become a constant presence in the lives of young people. It is the first thing many check in the morning and the last thing they see before falling asleep. While it has undeniably changed communication for the better in some ways, it has also created serious mental health challenges that can no longer be brushed aside. Social media platforms must take more responsibility for the well being of their users, especially in teens and young adults.

There are real positives that come from social media. It offers a sense of community and connection for people who might otherwise feel isolated. It allows users to express themselves creatively, share important experiences, and build networks across distances that would have been unimaginable just a few decades ago. For young people facing mental health struggles, finding others online who share their experiences can provide comfort and even save lives. Social media can be a tool for education, awareness, and encouragement.

However, the negatives are just as powerful as the positives, and often far more dangerous. Studies always link heavy social media use to increased rates of things such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, and low self esteem among teens and young adults. Much of this comes from the constant comparison to carefully handpicked images of other people's lives, leading users to believe they are falling short. Instead of feeling connected, many end up feeling left or insufficient.

I have experienced this effect firsthand. There was a period of time where I found myself constantly scrolling through instagram from the late at night into the early morning. At first, it seemed harmless, just a way to catch up with friends and trends. But, over time, it started to feel like everyone else was living a better, more exciting life than I was. Even though I knew those photos were either staged or filtered, or both, it didn't stop the feeling of self doubt. What started as a casual habit slowly chipped away at my confidence, which left me feeling anxious and incomplete after every scroll. It was a clear example of how easily social media can shift from a tool for connection and communication to a source of stress and unhappiness.

Beyond comparison, the addictive nature of social media also damages mental health. Apps are intentionally designed to be as engaging, and as hard to put down, as possible. Infinite scrolling, likes, shares, and notifications create a cycle that rewards staying online for hours. This leads to disrupted sleep, decreased concentrations, and heightened stress. Even worse, there's constant exposure to cyberbullying, hate speeches, and harmful content can cause lasting emotional scars, without the user even realizing it at first.

Social media companies are fully aware of these dangers. Yet, most continue to design their platforms in ways that put profits over people. Their goal is simple: keep users engaged for as long as possible, no matter the cost of mental health. Features meant to protect users, such as time warning or content filters, are usually hidden, optional, or overall ineffective.

There is no longer enough to hope that users will simply “be careful”. Real change needs to happen at the platform level. Companies must design algorithms that prioritize well being over engagement. They must provide real tools for users to monitor and manage their time online. Stronger action must be taken to eliminate cyberbullying, hate speech, and other toxic behaviors that are allowed to thrive in comment sections and private messages.

In addition to that, platforms should be required to partner with mental health organizations to offer immediate support to users who are struggling. This could include crisis helplines, mental health check ins, and links to therapy resources built directly into the apps themselves.

Social media isn't going away, and it shouldn't. It has the potential to be a powerful force for good, but if the companies that run these platforms continue to ignore the harm they are causing, the mental health crisis among young people will only get worse.

Protecting users should not be a marketing strategy or an afterthought. It must be a fundamental responsibility. Teens and young adults deserve better than platforms that view their struggles as collateral damage. It's time for social media companies to step up, accept responsibility, and finally put people before profits.



Connor Smith, Mount Michael Benedictine, #4 Editorial Writing

State Journalism Editorial

High school is a time when many people begin to get their first jobs, and with them, their first paychecks. However, this newfound income is not always spent in a responsible manner, more likely being wasted on fast food or flowers for a girl. This problem was recognized by the great rapper (and maybe also great philosopher) Notorious B.I.G., who wrote a song called “More Money, More Problems.” There is a surprising amount of wisdom in this, as many high school kids who develop irresponsible spending habits that continue to haunt them long after they graduate.

Because of this, the New Community Board of Education has added a graduation requirement: that of a financial literacy class. The policy states that this class aims to “prepare them (the students) for responsible financial decision-making in adulthood.” Most people agree that financial literacy is an important topic to learn about. However, when the word “requirement” is added to the mix, the consensus becomes much less clear. It is the opinion of the New Community Gazette that in an already packed curriculum, another required course is the last thing that is needed, no matter how well meaning it may be.

New Community Principal Sarah Colins states that the goal of the Board of Education is to “provide students with the tools to navigate their financial futures confidently.” While this is a noble goal, it is not one that is best fulfilled in the classroom. Financial comfort is something that is different for everyone, and telling kids that they need X amount of dollars to feel comfortable financially will not help them learn; it may serve to discourage them. The fact of the matter is, true financial literacy is not learned in the classroom, it is learned by participating in the economy; or, to put it simply, by spending. Once you spend money on something, you value how much you enjoyed it versus what you spent on it; this internal calculation is called Cost Benefit Analysis.

Cost Benefit Analysis is an important tool that we as humans use to figure out whether an action we take provided enough benefit to be worth the cost. This is something that teenagers are notoriously bad at and teaching them how to balance a budget will not prevent them from blowing their paycheck on ice cream and video games. Parents should instead teach their children how to handle their finances by being good examples themselves, and the rest will be best learned on their own. Nothing truly teaches someone to spend more responsibly than being broke. High school is a good time to learn this lesson while you are safely under the roof of your parents and have no true expenses.

Parent Rachel Thompson agrees, saying “it shouldn’t be mandatory. Some students might already have a solid understanding of finances and could use that time for other

subjects they're interested in." This brings up another reason why this class should not be required: the already packed curriculum the Board of Education requires for graduation. Over the years, the school has expanded its elective classes to include things that students are truly passionate about, allowing them to take art, music, and gym classes as they desire. With this addition of yet another required class, students will be prevented from taking these classes that reflect their unique interests and will make our school more like a factory, with an assembly line of required classes from freshman year to graduation.

The forced addition of financial literacy as a required class may have consequences other than preventing students from taking classes they truly desire to. The proverb "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink" springs to mind in this situation. Students who are angry that they were torn away from the electives that they truly wanted to pursue will not try their best in this financial literacy class. This sentiment was expressed by student James Parker, who grumbled, "Do we really need another class?" This will cause a situation where students miss both the benefits of their preferred elective classes and the financial literacy class.

The Board and Superintendent Stevens may rebuke this, saying that "After conducting surveys and consulting the community, we found a clear need for financial education." This is a drastic misinterpretation of the public's will; though we may want a financial literacy class to be offered, this does not mean we would like it to be required.

There are many reasons why a financial literacy class should not be required to graduate, but addition of the class itself does hold some merit. Though kids will still be kids and spend irresponsibly, there is a benefit to knowing how to budget and save so that they will become responsible adults. The addition of this class will benefit our school and placate parents like Linda Martin, who said, "My daughter has no idea how to budget or save, and it worries me. Learning these skills in school will set her up for success." It is the opinion of the New Community Gazette that although this requirement is wrong, a compromise will allow those who want to take the class to take it while not forcing those unwilling to give up their passions.

Four Tops - "I Can't Help Myself" Review

Sitting there watching your favorite song get played is the night's highlight. The music blasting in your ears and the loving lyrics you hear. The band, dancing along to the music. To think that you could be there, watching it for yourself, was such a phenomenon during that period. Imagining that afterwards, your mind will still think about the band. The memories you made are the reasons you love the band so much.

The song "I Can't Help Myself (Sugar Pie, Honey Bunch)" is a song to remember. This song encompasses the whole meaning of life. And the strange, mysterious thing we get when we truly love someone. The song was released in 1965 and was produced by Holland-Dozier-Holland. It lasted a blistering two minutes and 42 seconds. Which, for a song, was an average amount of time. If you loved Motown and Soul at that time. This song would be your go-to when on a late night from work. Or on a train, on a bus, in your car, anywhere and everywhere you would go, the song would always be on your mind at some point. Just the idea of it and the production. sticks in your brain and makes a memory.

The song was also relatable because everyone had that same feeling, that same compassion that you had in middle school. When everyone knew about your crush, when everyone knew that you were dating someone, and when everyone knew you broke up with them. The song encompasses all of those childhood memories you wish you could live back. After the concert, an interview with NPR, lead singer Levi Stubbs shared, "The song is about the joy and sorrow of love - how it can lift you and bring you down. It's a universal feeling that

everyone can relate to.”The other three are Lamont Dozier, Brian Holland, and Eddie Holland. These gentlemen complete the band.

Out of all the songs that you may have listened to from this band. “I Can’t Help Myself” is one of the most recognizable hits from the Four Tops. The group is a Motown group known for their great harmonies and insightful delivery. Because they just can’t help themselves. Thus, the song became an instant hit and was very popular around the world, especially during the time of rebuilding and sorrow. The joyful melody of this song and the sorrowful lyrics evoke the feeling that we once had, True love. It impacts our daily lives in every way. If you were a Four Tops fan, then you would have felt the emotions and the drive that this song fully encompasses. The song reminisces on things that were bitterly lost and things that we hope we can find.

Today, the song doesn’t have the same feeling it once had. Like how medieval songs and songs that came from the Romans don’t get that much traction. Because today we live in a society where we are all connected and thus making it easier to spread via email, social media, messaging, and calling. But back then, we weren’t so connected and so concerned about hackers.

If you asked a person from each century about what a hack is. They would first ask you, “What are you wearing?” Then they would answer with, “What are you talking about?” or “What are you on?”. Every song will die out, and newer songs will emerge. The quote of “Nothing lasts forever” is the idea that everything will die out, and newer stuff will replace it. For example, Notre Dame, after the fire that happened it was rebuilt with newer things that will help it from burning down again. In time, the song will slowly fade until nobody remembers it.

Hailey Caughron, Louisville, #6 Headline Writing

Article # - 1

Headline -

A Green Thumb in the Workplace

How neuroarchitecture and psychology are influencing more positive designs in day-to-day places

Bringing beauty back into the world through natural light, design, nature, and greenery

Article # - 2

Headline -

Buford the Barking Hero

“Man’s Best Friend” becomes reality when a local rancher dog in Arizona discovers missing 2-year-old boy and leads him to safety

Article # - 4

Headline -

Ready for Take Off in 2025?

Fear of flying is on the rise after news of multiple plane crashes since January, but statistics are here to calm the nerves of travelers

Harlee Boyd

#7 Newspaper Feature Writing

Gretna High School

The Key to Change

Silver Valley High Plans to Unlock New Outdoor Learning Garden

Connecting with nature has slowly become less common as the world has evolved. With the rise of the internet, social media and video games, the younger population tends to slowly step away from being outside and enjoying the beauty of the outdoors. However, in the depths of Nebraska's sandhills, Silver Valley High School holds the key to changing students' perspective about the importance of being in nature by unlocking its new outdoor classroom.

"The outdoor learning garden is a fantastic addition to our school," Principal Mark Johnson said. "It reflects our commitment to providing innovative educational experiences. We are excited for students to learn in this unique setting, and I believe it will foster a sense of community and teamwork."

The outdoor classroom will be opening on May 15, in hopes of promoting environmental awareness and hands-on learning to all 1,250 students who attend Silver Valley High.

As time has gone by, the world has descended into a place where the importance of the environment is not the number one priority. This has taken a toll on the health of the world, including the increase of pollution, climate change and the quality of the ocean. If the environment is not stable, nothing is, and Silver Valley High is aware of this.

Student Council President Lila Turner said that she thinks the outdoor classroom is a great project. She believes that it will be a good way for students to be involved in the

environment, as well as practice how to work together, which is a crucial skill for young adults to have as they advance in their lives and take on jobs where they may not like everyone they work with.

Silver Valley High plans to do more with the outdoor garden than just promote environmental wellness, it will also teach students tasks and lessons that they can not learn inside a building. Being in the outdoors gives a sense of reality to high schoolers that is not guaranteed in a classroom.

The outdoor learning garden can be used in not just science classes but every core class. In english class, students learn about transcendentalists, history is about the evolution of the world and in math, it can be used for probability and statistics and by stepping outside, the garden can help students relate what they are learning to the actual world.

“Our goal with this garden is to create a living classroom,” science teacher and garden coordinator Emily Rivera said. “It will not only enhance our science curriculum but also encourage students to appreciate and connect with nature. We want them to understand the importance of sustainability and where their food comes from.”

The science department plans to use the outdoor classroom to their advantage by using it as a demonstration of what they are learning in class. This can help the students better connect and understand the content. The garden will be filled with native plants, vegetable beds and spaces for outdoor classes.

“We’ve been advocating for a space like this for years,” environmental club member Ben Adams said. “It’s amazing to see it finally happening. The garden will help us promote eco-friendly practices and educate our peers about the environment. We hope to organize workshops and events to get everyone involved.”

The outdoor learning garden will be getting its use throughout the entire high school. By Silver Valley High advocating the importance of being outdoors and the benefits of it, the world may fall back to where it used to be when the health of the environment was number one on the to-do list.

Providing and Connecting, Rain or Shine

Norfolk Farmer's Market to Open This Saturday

This Saturday, on May 3, the Norfolk Farmer's Market invites residents and friends from Norfolk and nearby areas to make their way to Riverpointe Square to enjoy their community's staple of over 50 years by participating in classic shopping for produce, baked goods, flowers and other homemade products from nearly 40 vendors.

While around the same time last year, downtown Norfolk was still bustling place for vendors, residents and dogs, the market will serve an additional purpose designed by its new president and vice-president, Elissa Mathis and David DeCarolis, respectively: to showcase local community talents, as well as create opportunities for not only creativity, but the city's locals as a non-profit organization through connection and growth.

“(We are aiming to) connect farmers, producers and artisans with the public, and we had to expand and grow and had the great fortune to expand this year,” President Mathis said. “We’re also very proud of our community partnerships, and through our partnerships with them were able to bring in musicians and other artists.”

Since last summer, both President Mathis and vice-president DeCarolis have established several changes to the market, with several initiatives aiming to positively impact under-privileged groups within the community, as well as work for a cause.

“This year, we are accepting snap benefits, which we feel will get much needed produce to members in our community,” vice-president DeCarolis said. Additionally, the Norfolk's Farmer's market will be donating space downtown for the community Philanthropy Council,

where various charities will have a space to educate consumers and other residents about their benefits.

Another impactful change is the support that local artists and musicians will now experience. With vice-president DeCarolis being an artist and business owner himself, as he creates pottery for the community through his homemade brand “CottonWood Potter,” it was especially necessary for him to use his existing creative partnerships with artists in the community to rotate out creative works in designated booths each week.

“(My favorite part of being in leadership is) to watch all the businesses have the opportunity to take root and to grow,” vice-president DeCarolis said. “We are very much so tied to and proud to be part of the downtown district.”

Last season, the combined vendors of the market made over half a million dollars in revenue, with the activity also drumming up attention to other existing businesses in downtown-Norfolk. The market is expected to take an even larger role in the community this summer, with everything from the amount of vendors, consumers, revenue and physical size to grow.

“(The market) allows small businesses to flourish, we call it a small business incubator,” President Mathis said. “We had to grow our footprint in the downtown area; we’ll be closing down more streets to accommodate more vendors.”

To celebrate the market’s annual opening, the community can expect live entertainment and a scavenger hunt, as well as a collaboration with the Nebraska Passport Program. The program will give speeches and stamp passports for any residents needing one.

From May until the last Saturday of October, vendors, live entertainment and demonstrations will be provided to the public on Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m.

Additionally, the market will be open on Tuesdays from 4:30-6:30 p.m. June through September.

President Mathis explained during a question and answer session how proud the market's leadership is to give the public this immersive experience "rain or shine".

Reese Beery, Gretna East, #9 Newspaper Sports Feature Writing

Team Triumphs in the Face of Adversity

Building a program and pushing athletes to be the best they can be on and off the field can be difficult in the face of adversity. At Northeast Nebraska Community College, men's Head Soccer Coach Adam Potter makes it his personal goal to lead his team to victory, not only on the field but in life.

Entering his fourth season at Northeast, he's accomplished so much with his team in a short time. His journey starts at Casper College, where he got the opportunity to coach a brand-new soccer program. He spent two years there, leading his team to a regional title. After his second year at Casper, Potter wanted more of a challenge for his coaching career. This led him to Northeast, where he took a coaching position for men's soccer, which soon led him down a successful path.

"My first season here was in the fall of 2022; we had 21 wins," Potter said. "We won the regional, we won the district and we won our first national tournament game in school history."

Their program faced immediate success. The coaching staff was named coaching staff of the year in their region and labeled a top ten program in the country. But for this team to continue its triumph, the coaches decided changes needed to be made.

"I look for players that are selfless, willing to sacrifice everything for the team," Potter said. "There are thousands of players out there that are really good players, but are you going to find players that are willing to do whatever is passed to them?"

Putting teammates and the game first, before personal benefit, shows Potter everything he needs to know about an athlete. For his players, he believes it isn't just about talent, but being a good person, willing to do whatever it takes to be the best in the game and the locker room. The

little things that set athletes apart. This allows the team, as a whole, to grow and achieve their set goals.

“My biggest goal for my players is not just winning a national title, but seeing them reach their end goals and dreams of playing at the highest level possible,” Potter said.

The Hawks have shown great success in the past couple of years under the leadership of Potter. He led them to back-to-back Region 11 and Plains District Championships and was later named Region 11 Coach of the Year in both of their championing seasons. The coaching staff has been awarded the titles of United Soccer Coaches Plains Regions Staff of the Year twice and United Soccer Coaches National Coaching Staff of the Year. Although the team has been victorious for the past couple of years, these triumphs have come with difficulty.

“Our team was down by one or multiple goals throughout the whole tournament,” Potter said. “We were the first team in the national tournament to ever go down in every single game and end up winning a national title.”

Potter says the national title was a “testament to our players by being a unified group.” The team was able to reflect on their losses and adversity and claim the No. 1 national ranking, their first-ever national title and a historic NJCAA Final Four appearance. Potter takes pride in knowing that he’s guided young men to be the best version of themselves in their careers and throughout the rest of their lives.

“Winners win,” Potter said. “You win on the field, you win off the field, you win in life.”

Malina Odgaard, Lincoln Pius X, #10 Sports News Writing

The Northwood Wolves volleyball team won the Class A state championship at Pinnacle Bank Arena on Oct. 9, 2024.

Northwood played against the Southview Eagles for the championship title, eventually defeating them 3-2.

“This victory is a testament to the resilience of our team,” Northwood coach Linda Hartman said. “Each player stepped up when it mattered most. I’m incredibly proud of how far they’ve come this season.”

The game was an intense back and forth, with Northwood winning the first, third and final sets, and Southview winning the second and fourth.

The suspenseful game came to a close with a game-winning block from senior Northwood captain Mia Thompson, ending out the final set with a score of 15-12.

“It was a tough match, but we never lost faith in ourselves,” Thompson said. “We’ve worked so hard for this moment, and I’m proud of how we battled until the end.”

Thompson’s ending block was a true testament to her defensive strength, with 25 kills and three blocks throughout the game, as well as Northwood’s defensive strength as a whole.

While Southview held disappointment for the loss, going into a fifth set showed the determination and fight that the players had.

“Our team showed great heart and determination. I know the players are hurting now, but I’m proud of how we fought to the very end,” Southview coach Mike Sanders said. “We’ll come back stronger next season.”

Southview fought hard throughout the entire game, especially with the help of senior outside hitter McLain Martin, who helped lead the team by consecutively making three of Southview’s eight aces during the game.

In the end, Northwood finished the season with a record of 27-3, and Southview ended with 24-6.

Fans from both teams enjoyed the energy and dedication shown by each side and were still pleased with their respective team’s performance throughout the season.

“What an incredible game! The energy in the gym was electric. I’m so proud of our Wolves,” Northwood supporter Jessica Morgan said.

As she stepped on the stage, the lights and music blaring, senior Olivia Thompson felt free. A long three months of preparing and rehearsing led up to this moment right here. While singing her heart out, she looked into the crowd. She knew this was what she was meant to do.

With five sold-out shows this fall, the Theatre Department conducted its biggest production so far. *Les Misérables* was a telling of redemption and revolution. Theatre Director Megan Porter had 45 students, including a live orchestra, along with a dream to bring the show to life on stage.

"This was, without a doubt, the most ambitious production we've ever done," Porter said. "The students poured their hearts into it, and I'm so proud of what they accomplished."

The lead roles, Jean Valjean and Éponine were portrayed beautifully by seniors Andrew Reyes and Thompson. Encapsulating the crowd, the two acted in harmony together and brought out a multitude of emotions from both the audience and the cast.

"Playing Éponine was a dream role for me," Thompson said. "The emotions, the music---it was all so powerful."

But the lead stars weren't the only ones who worked so hard, there were tons of members behind the curtain who also poured their hearts into the show. From creating handmade costumes, to building intricate set pieces, the backstage crew spent hours on the production.

"Being part of the behind-the-scenes crew gave me a whole new appreciation for theatre," senior and stagehand Jake Hansen said. "The set design was one of the most detailed we've ever done, and it was cool to see how it all contributed to the overall atmosphere of the show."

Along with members who managed the stage, the department also needed someone to hold the team together. Junior Student Director Emily Carmichael was manager of the cast, making sure everyone and everything fell perfectly into place.

"Managing a cast and crew that large was challenging, but seeing everything come together in the end was so rewarding," Carmichael said.

With the help of the amazing cast and crew, the Drama Club put on an amazing show, leaving the audience in awe. Every member dedicated all their time and effort to make the performance unforgettable. With the praise of parents, students and teachers, the team is ready to create and put on another remarkable musical next year.

"It wasn't just about putting on a show---it was about telling a story that resonates, and they did that beautifully," Porter said.

Lunchtime Volleyball - Hailey Caughron, Louisville, #12 Yearbook Sports Feature Writing

Eight hours, nine classes, sports, homework, and relationships can be difficult for students to balance. Throughout the stressful school day, students often have a hard time finding time to hangout with friends and rest their minds. The half-hour period given to students for lunch is one of the few times students get to socialize with their friends. Sage River High School acknowledges that and decided to “ace” lunchtime by adding volleyball to the lunch period.

Sage River gives their students thirty-eight minutes for lunch each day, and what used to be a lunch spent around a table in a noisy cafeteria has now turned into a social gathering amongst volleyball nets. In 2014, PE teacher and boys Varsity Volleyball coach, David Savage was given the gym to use during the lunch period. Despite him only being a second-year teacher at SRHS, he got tired of seeing the same thing happen at lunch everyday, and decided he could do something to change it.

“It’s [volleyball] also pretty important because face it, you’re kind of just bored sitting around, doing nothing and kind of being unhealthy so it’s nice having something physical to do,” Savage stated.

Students were quick to catch onto the new trend, and it soon united the high school. Students on the volleyball team were able to sharpen their skills, while also teaching other students the basics of the sport. Lunchtime volleyball has given students the opportunity to dive into the world of the sport and discover possible talents or passions.

“I started going to lunch volleyball because I wanted to see if I liked playing the sport, but I didn’t want to jump right into the commitment of a team,” said junior Amanda Cru. “Now that I have been in the gym more at lunch, I have made a ton of new friends that share the same interest in volleyball as me.”

Holding a sporting event in the gym during lunchtime allows students to make connections with peers they may not otherwise have had the chance to. Implementing an activity like lunchtime volleyball would strongly benefit the growth of connections and relationships between students in large schools where cliques and small groups run rampant.

Playing volleyball during lunch not only allows students to make connections through playing the game, but also through spectating. If students do not wish to participate in the activity, they can still go into the gym and sit on the bleachers to hangout with friends and watch the games.

Freshman Bently Norton stated, “I first went into the gym with my friends when it was raining because we didn’t want to be stuck outside. We ended up really liking it there and we just kept on going.”

The teaching and administrative staff has also noticed a positive change in the behavior of the students. Lunchtime is notorious for students to make bad decisions and get sent to the office. Giving students an activity to occupy their boredom has limited them from getting in trouble over the lunch period.

David Savage, the “savage” volleyball player and coach has truly created a special tradition that will continue for years to come at Sage River High School. He has given students the chance to explore a new sport and expand their knowledge and technique of volleyball outside of a team setting. Savage has added bumping, setting, and spiking into the basic nutrition groups, and the students have eaten every last crumb of their lunchtime meal.

The Power of Now- Brynn Hart, Lincoln Pius X High School

#13 Yearbook Theme Copy Writing

Opening:

In this moment, you see the student section erupt with cheers as the volleyball team wins state. The players run onto the court as you see the crowd erupt with colors of Navy blue and Silver.

In this moment, you can feel the heat of the flame at the Sandhills Homecoming fire, you feel the warmth of laughter with your classmates surrounding you.

In this moment, you can hear the choir sing and the marching band play, as their hard work echos throughout the gym in the form of song.

In this moment, you stop to think about how you can make this school year the best one yet.

You start to realize that no matter what you plan for, or what you regret, you can only control *this* moment.

In this moment, you decide to embrace the Power of **Now**.

Student Life:

In this moment, you hear the animals from the livestock featured at the Annual Ag Day event. You can hear the sheep and the cows and how those sounds will always remind you of home.

In this moment, you see the accomplishments of your school's strong FFA and 4-H involvement. You stop for a second and feel proud to attend Sandhills Valley High School.

In this moment, you are brought up onstage to receive an award for your NHS commitment. Your hard work and dedication have finally paid off.

In this moment, you stop to think about yourself and your classmates around you.

Together, your experiences have shaped your life as a student.

Together, at Sandhills Valley High school, the students are embracing the Power of **Now**.

Closing:

In this moment, you stand with your classmates on your senior trip to the Black Hills. The breathtaking view, your friends beside you and an uncertain future ahead.

In this moment, you think about next year, what will become of your future?

In this moment, you reflect on your past years of school, why were they so great?

In this moment, you realize it does not matter.

The only thing that matters, in this moment, is the Power of Now.

Quinn VunCannon–Diabetes Infographic

I created my infographic entirely from scratch in Adobe InDesign. Using facts and information from our in depth over diabetes, I started with a rough sketch on paper to plan where all the separate boxes would go. In InDesign, I started making the rough shapes for the background boxes, as well as cutting and grouping shapes to make the small pictures of the insulin vial, the blood glucose meter, and the syringe. Since my classmate is diabetic, I looked at the real life objects for inspiration for the graphics. Next, I looked online for inspiration on how to display demographics and created the circle charts in InDesign. My final step was editing the colors to create interesting contrast and to match the overall layout my infographic was on. The whole process was done over multiple 40 minute class periods, totaling around 2 and half hours of combined work.

By Caleb Cameron

Diet is an essential aspect of a healthy lifestyle. The foods people eat affect energy levels, prevention of illnesses, mood, stress, and much more. It is important to eat a balanced diet of carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, but for diabetics, a balanced diet is even more vital.

Glucose is the body’s main source of energy. The body gains glucose from the food eaten through carbohydrates. As carbohydrates are consumed, the body breaks them down into sugars. The body reacts to the rise in blood sugar, and the pancreas, an organ in the upper abdomen, releases a hormone called insulin. Without insulin, the amount of sugars in the blood will rise and the sugars will not be able to enter the cells and be used as energy. With insulin, the sugars are absorbed by the body’s cells and converted into energy,

and the amount of sugar in the blood will fall back down to a normal level.

According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, diabetes is a chronic disease occurring when an individual’s blood glucose levels become too high or low. An individual’s blood sugar depends on the last time they ate, but a normal fasted blood sugar is between 70-100 mg/dl. A diabetic without insulin’s blood sugar will be consistently higher or lower than the normal range. There are multiple types of diabetes, Type 1 and Type 2 being the most common. Some common symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes are feeling extremely thirsty, continuously feeling hungry, losing weight, and impaired eyesight. Over 38 million Americans live with diabetes, Type 1 or 2. There are many similarities and differences between the types of diabetes.

According to Mayo Clinic, Type 1 Diabetes is an autoimmune condition where the pancreas makes little to no insulin. The disease is caused when the body’s immune system destroys cells in the pancreas that create insulin. The disease is nonpreventable with the only risk factor being a family history of diabetes. It is most commonly diagnosed during adolescence and young adulthood. About 1.5 million people in the United States have Type 1 Diabetes.

According to Mayo Clinic, Type 2 Diabetes is a hormonal condition where the body struggles to regulate and use sugars consumed through food. This leads to an excess amount of sugar in the blood. When an individual has Type 2 Diabetes, their pancreas still makes insulin but not enough for the cells to absorb the sugar consumed. Type 2 Diabetes has many risk factors including age, family histo-

ry, ethnicity, and obesity. The disease is most commonly diagnosed later in life. About 36 million Americans live with Type 2 Diabetes.

Diabetics are tasked with checking their blood sugar either with a continuous glucose monitor or manually with a blood sugar meter, taking insulin either through shots or through an insulin pump, adjusting their diet, and reacting to high and low blood sugars. If diabetics neglect making these changes, the disease will damage their organs, nerves, and blood vessels and can lead to increased chance of kidney failure, eye failure, and heart attacks.

Diabetes, like other incurable conditions is an adjustment to daily life, but it does not hold an individual back from anything. For diabetics, the adjustment to life is worth it to remain healthy and to be able to fully participate in life.

Type 1

An **autoimmune disorder** where the pancreas makes little to no insulin

1.5 million people in the US have Type 1 Diabetes.

Type 2

A **hormonal condition** where the body struggles regulating and using sugars consumed through food

36 million people in the US have Type 2 Diabetes.

105

Did you know?

Diabetics have to check their blood sugar with a continuous monitor or manually with a blood sugar meter.

90-95%

of people with diabetes have Type 2 Diabetes

30%

of Americans have prediabetes

30%

of adults 65 and older have diabetes

Diabetics have to either give themselves insulin shots or use automatic insulin pumps to manage blood sugar levels.

Scotus’ Diabetic Stories

Mara Hash

Eighth-grader Mara Hash was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes during Labor Day weekend in 2021. Her family noticed she had unusually lost a lot of weight, was always thirsty, and had to go to the bathroom all the time. When her mom asked other diabetic parents what symptoms their children had, it became clear that diabetes could be what was causing these symptoms. Mara was taken out of school to go to the doctor on Friday of Labor Day weekend where they tested her blood sugar and officially diagnosed her. From there, they took her to the emergency room in Columbus to put her on fluids and start treating her. After a few hours, she was transported to Children’s Hospital in Omaha where she stayed for the weekend to learn all about this new disease. On Sunday, she returned home. She went to school on Tuesday and has been living with diabetes ever since. September of 2025 will be her fourth year as a Type One Diabetic.

Brynn Homolka

Junior Brynn Homolka was diagnosed with diabetes on April Fools Day of her eighth-grade year. She was experiencing all the symptoms diabetics usually experience, including urinating often, always being thirsty, losing weight, and sleeping any chance she could get. However, unlike most diabetics, Brynn experienced these symptoms for close to three months before they figured out what was causing them. The symptoms progressed as time went on until eventually she couldn’t function like anyone else around her. They started in basketball season and continued through two weeks of junior high track. Her mom eventually took her to the doctor to see if she needed a therapist because they thought she could be having panic attacks. They didn’t know what else could be wrong, but after explaining how she was feeling, the doctor suggested she might be Type 1 Diabetic. They tested her blood sugar, which ended up being about ten times the normal amount (around 1020). After being diagnosed, she was transported straight to Children’s Hospital in Omaha where she spent the next three days getting treated and learning about the changes she would have to make to her lifestyle. April of 2025 will be her fourth year as a Type 1 Diabetic.



Eighth-grader Mara Hash, junior Brynn Homolka, and seniors Sofia Karges and Caleb Cameron pose next to diabetic supplies they carry with them every day. These supplies include alcohol wipes, lancet pokers, needles, insulin pumps and pens, meters, glycagon medication, and more.

What is something you wish other people knew about being diabetic?

“I wish other people knew I can have sugar and eat just like anyone else; I just have to give insulin for what I eat. Also, there are two different types of diabetes, and they are very different.”

Mara Hash

What is a misconception about diabetes?

“Some people say, ‘Oh, I wish I had diabetes, so I could sit out like you do.’ Actually, they don’t want diabetes. No one realizes how much work goes into simply staying alive.”

Brynn Homolka

What is one thing having diabetes has taught you?

“Being Type 1 Diabetic has taught me to be grateful for my life. Everyone has struggles they go through; some people’s trials are just greater than others’ at times. Having diabetes just happens to be the cross I carry, and other people have their own, too.”

Sofia Karges

What is something you have learned through the whole process?

“Living with diabetes has taught me to never take health for granted. I have realized the adjustments I have had to make to feel how I want are well worth the effect.”

Caleb Cameron

Sofia Karges

Senior Sofia Karges was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes in first grade, shortly after her seventh birthday. During the Christmas season, her parents noticed she was always tired, sluggish, thirsty, constantly had to go to the bathroom, and had lost weight. One day, after Sofia’s grandma mentioned she might have the symptoms of diabetes, her mom took her out of school to go to the doctor and see what was wrong. When she got there, they checked her urine and blood sugar. She had high ketones in her bloodstream, and her blood sugar was way higher than normal levels, which confirmed she had Type 1 Diabetes. After the doctor broke the news, she was taken to Children’s Hospital in Omaha where they immediately gave her insulin to bring her blood sugar down. She finally started feeling better. Her hospital experience consisted of playing games and eating lots of food, and she didn’t want to leave. After three days, however, she returned home. Sofia has adjusted to life since being diagnosed, and now, just like other diabetics, it is part of who she is. January of 2025 will be her eleventh year as a Type One Diabetic.

Caleb Cameron

Senior Caleb Cameron was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes a couple of days after he graduated from sixth grade at St. Isidore’s. In the weeks leading up to his diagnosis, he was always feeling too tired to complete simple tasks, would never have an appetite for food, experienced periods of blurry vision, and lost a lot of weight. At the time, his parents thought he was just going through a short illness. Eventually, his symptoms progressively worsened, so they knew it wasn’t temporary. One night, after going to bed, he woke up a few hours later and threw up. His dad, who has a background in the medical field and knew the symptoms of diabetes, took him to the Karges household where he checked his blood sugar with Sofia’s testing meter. (Sofia had been diabetic for five years at that point.) Caleb’s blood sugar levels were so high they wouldn’t register on the meter, and at that point, his dad knew he was diabetic. The Camerons went to Columbus Community Hospital for a few hours but were eventually transported to Children’s Hospital in Omaha. There, Caleb was treated like other newly diagnosed diabetics. After two days, he was released to go home. May of 2025 will be his sixth year as a Type 1 Diabetic.

CEASING THE STIGMA

EHS weighs the effectiveness and availability of mental health resources

By Macie Burson, Ronna Tu, and Izzy DeStefano

Her thoughts were spiraling, overwhelming her mind, spinning it to the brink. Her body shivered, and her ability to focus faded. “I feel so lonely, so alone. No one understands what I’m going through.”

These thoughts, which she believed she was alone in feeling, linked her to an ever growing segment of teenagers and the population in general.

Mental health has recently become a widely addressed topic in schools as students and staff deal with the fallout of 21st century life; the pandemic, school, sports, family, dating, life. As school communities attempt to help students navigate a messy and stressful world, many resources have become available for those struggling with stress and mental health concerns. But as needs arise, are the resources being utilized? Do students trust the systems aimed at guiding them through the darkness that depression brings? The answer is complicated.

At EHS, students struggling with anxiety or depression, those feeling overwhelmed or in need of someone to talk to about the pressures of being a teenager have more options than ever. Mental health awareness is supported by school counselors and the school psychologist, who are available during school hours; Safe2Help, a national program run by the state of Nebraska that provides a reporting system for students, staff, and parents to anonymously report concerning behavior that could impact the safety of students or schools across Nebraska; the Boys Town National Hotline and the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline are all tools students can access when they need help regulating their emotions. Last year EHS introduced a new tool for students, Hope Squad, a group of students selected and trusted by their peers to help other students and connect them to resources if needed. Even with the existence of these resources, there is concern that students do not feel comfortable enough to ask for help when they need it, and that

these resources are being underutilized or not utilized at all.

“Students aren’t always comfortable going to adults about those kinds of problems because they don’t think they’re going to understand, or adults in the past have let them down,” Hope Squad member Carson Deprez said.

There can be a huge stigma surrounding reaching out for help, especially in high schools, and staff can not

of juniors who participated in a mental health survey reported they untruthfully answered no to questions on the screener, and over 80% were scared they would be reported or pulled out of class to talk to their counselor if they answered truthfully.”

Furthermore, in a nationally representative survey from Springtide Research Institute, 45% of teens and young adults showed hesitation about seeing a therapist, stating it is because their parents may not take their concerns seriously. 53% explained they would not want their parents to have any knowledge of meeting with a school counselor or therapist. 51% displayed a fear of school staff treating them differently, or rescinding opportunities at school. Students may not trust the adults in their building with their personal struggles or feel the need to conceal their mental concerns from their peers. This stigma contributes to the continuously rising number of high school students who struggle with mental health and suicidal thoughts.

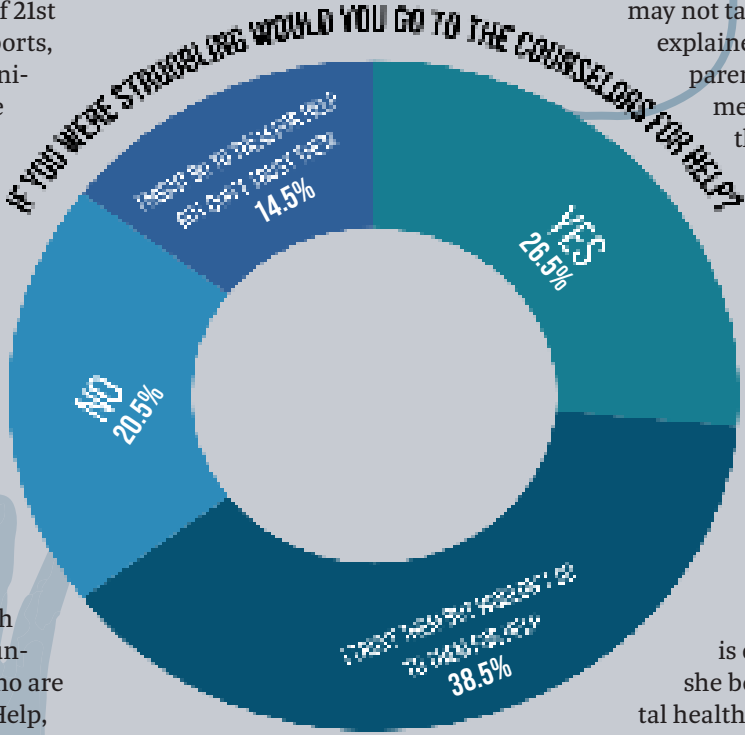
Sophomore Kayleigh Lown is one of those students. Lown said she began recognizing her own mental health issues when she was in third grade and has battled anxiety and depression since. She said her mental health can be overwhelming.

“I feel alone, like no one understands what I’m going through,” Lown said.

Lown is involved in multiple school activities which she said combined with school and family stresses can make her feel overwhelmed and inadequate, constantly comparing herself to others.

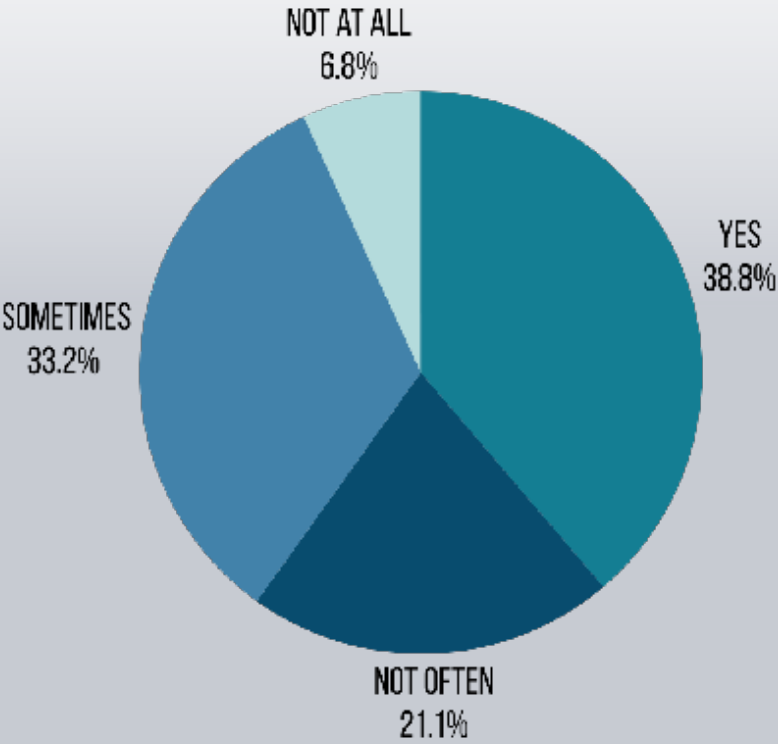
“I see others do well and I compare myself to them and am hard on myself if I don’t feel I’ve been as successful,” Lown said.

Lown said she has tried to put on a happy face, but that only added to her anxiety.



force students to want to or feel more comfortable talking to them despite their wanting to help. In an online poll conducted at EHS that 119 students responded to, 71.8% of responding students said they definitely or sometimes would feel comfortable reporting concerning behavior to counselors or teachers. While EHS students seem mostly comfortable seeking help, only 15% of EHS students responded to the survey, so those results may not provide a complete picture of EHS student views. The EHS survey results also differ from national polling. According to a study conducted by the Oracle, “nearly 40%

DO STUDENTS AT EHS FEEL COMFORTABLE REPORTING WHAT THEY SEE?



“I think people don’t report things because they are scared to wreck relationships. Knowing that a ‘secret’ someone asked you to keep regarding their mental health was to be spilled it is often deemed off putting and can ruin friendships and other relationships.”

- AN ANONYMOUS STUDENT AT EHS

“I was pretending to be happier than I was, but then I stressed that they could see through the face I was putting on,” Lown said.

Lown said her stress, anxiety, and depression led her to be hospitalized twice, once when she was in 8th grade and again as a freshman. Those experiences have helped her develop a really good support system that she continues to use in her on-going battle with depression.

When Lown began seeking help for her mental health, the program Hope Squad was not available in the Elkhorn public schools, so Lown initially reached out to the Boys Town hotline, which she said did not provide the help she needed. Today, she could have reached out to the Hope Squad. Hope Squad is a new addition to Elkhorn High School, but it has existed as a nationwide program since its founding in 2004 and aims to “foster human connection, community, and hope,” according to its website. Students in Hope Squad are trained to listen to their peers when they are feeling suicidal or struggling with mental health issues.

“I think that it’s important that there are students that they feel like they can talk to and are labeled as students that you can

trust to go to, even if you don’t really know them,” Deprez said. “I think that’s probably the biggest resource we have.”

The survey results showed that some students may feel like they are not able to talk to even their most trusted friends because there is such a stigma. With a program like Hope Squad, having students be the middleman can help give the student body an extra resource.

“I think people generally are unlikely to report stuff that is bad because teenagers don’t want to seem uncool. They don’t want to go against their peers and tell an adult,” Deprez said. “Teens feel more connected to teens than they do adults.”

It is unlikely a student would report something to an adult in their building if they do not feel that they have a strong connection with any of the staff which is common in students seen as struggling. These students are often struggling with personal issues, and rather than confiding in someone, they make poor choices as a self-destructive coping mechanism. These unhealthy coping mechanisms can include drinking, drug-use, smoking, self-harm, etc., and can lead to less than desirable school attendance and therefore lackluster relationships with staff in the building. The

good news is, that these students do not have to confide in an adult at first if they do not feel comfortable. Although approaching peers might seem like a positive outlet for students struggling with mental health, counselors and psychiatrists are also able to help struggling students. Survey results showed that some students might not see counselors, teachers or other adults as a good option. This disconnect, though, is not due to a lack of effort from counselors or staff in the building. Posters advertising all of Elkhorn High’s resources are stuck to walls throughout the entire building.

“You can walk past the poster 800 times before something happens to you and you realize, ‘Oh, I have to do something about this, and I don’t know what to do,’” counselor Theresa Crnkovich said. “I think it’s more about students helping students, which is another great thing about Hope Squad. We’re talking to this group of 28 students constantly about putting these resources out there to your peers because students are more likely to talk to their friends than an adult in the building.”

Counselors at Elkhorn High School play a vital role in a student’s journey through high school, and one of their specialties is being a listener to any student’s concern.

DISTRICT PLAN AND OTHER TEEN MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES:



STRATEGIC PLAN 2023

SAFETY AND SECURITY

**MENTAL HEALTH
AND OVERALL WELL-BEING
OF STUDENTS AND STAFF**

**PROVIDE HIGH LEVELS OF
LEARNING WHILE MEETING THE
NEEDS OF EACH STUDENT**

ATTRACT AND RETAIN HIGH-QUALITY EMPLOYEES

PLANNING FOR GROWTH

**KELTY MENTAL HEALTH
CENTRE**



THE JED FOUNDATION



THE TREVOR PROJECT



and getting the student body to eliminate the stigma around reaching out for help. Many students claim that they are scared of reactions from their peers if they report something, and this is an active concern for the staff.

"I do think that people have a bit of a fear that we'll think less of them or they don't want their parents to know," Crnkovich said, "But in the end, it's always best to be honest and open, and seek out support."

According to the survey of EHS students, 26.5% of students who responded said they have reported something to the counselors. Reports can vary from not being able to focus in class to reporting another student vaping or bullying. Some students voiced concern in the survey that after reporting some activities nothing was done for them. Counselors, though, have a limit to how they can respond.

After her most recent hospitalization, Lown said the counselors were instrumental in facilitating her return to class. Lown said she missed more than a week of school, and when she came back, the counselors were very supportive in helping her catch up.

“When I got back from the hospital, I took a half day at school, and I just spent the half day in the counselor’s office, and we went over what I needed to do to get caught up and also some strategies,” Lown said. “They were really helpful because they weren’t necessarily worried about my grades, but about how I was doing and how I was going to get back on schedule.”

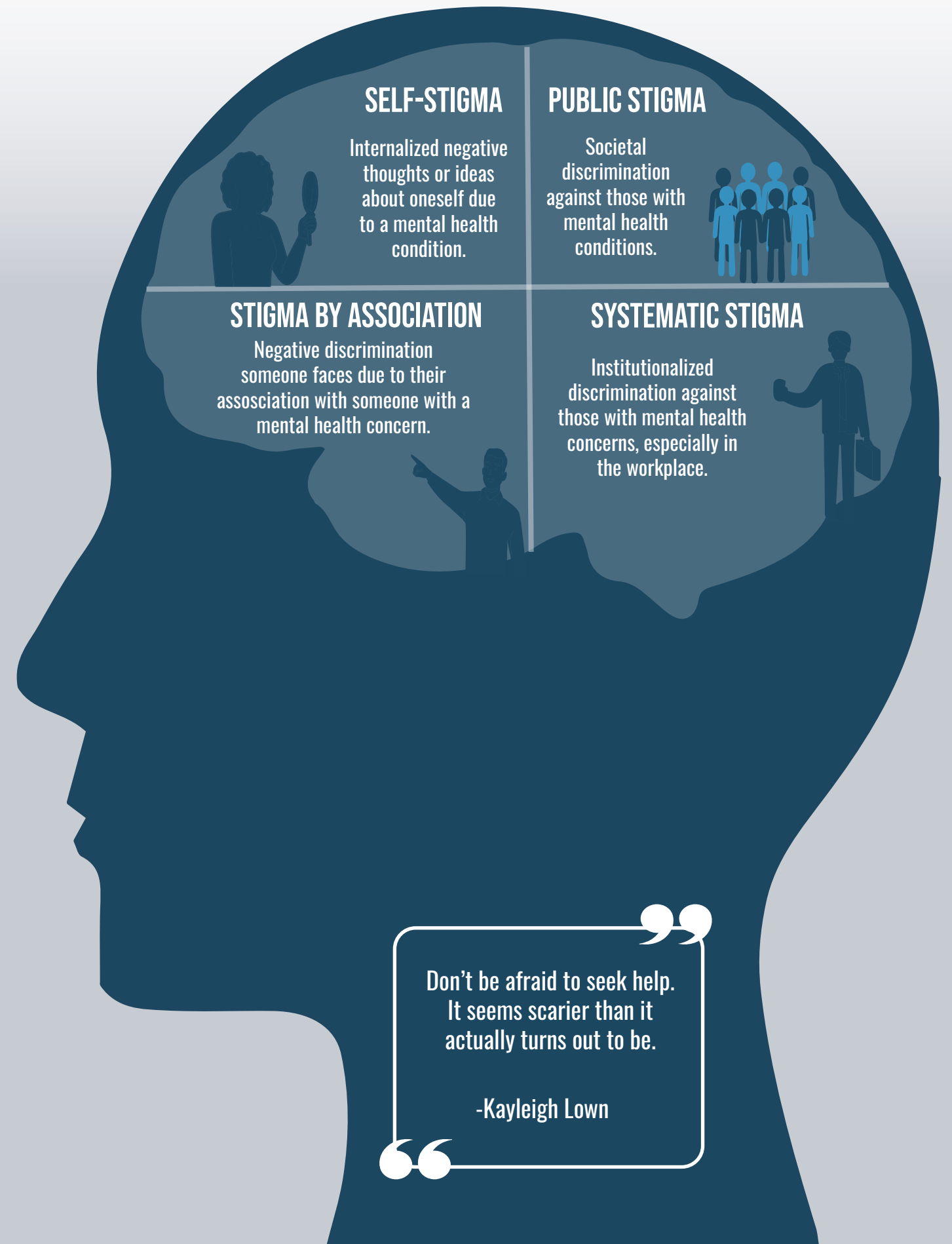
Students have the resources and support around them. The difficult part of the healing process is taking the leap and reaching out. Students need to do their part in ceasing the stigma around using these resources. No one should have to feel alone in a place where resources and friendly faces are so abundant.

“What people really need is a support system around them...” Crnkovich said. “So you don’t feel so alone or some kind of backlash.”

The journey through depression can be difficult and it can seem overwhelming, but EHS and the Elkhorn public schools are in a better position to help its students navigate a path than they ever have been. Lown said she is proud of herself for her continued work on her mental health and wants others to seek help if they need it.

“Don’t be afraid to seek help,” Lown said. It seems scarier than it actually turns out to be.”

WHAT ARE THE MENTAL HEALTH STIGMAS?



While counselors are eager to help, they are not trained therapists and sometimes aren't able to provide the immediate intervention the student might want. Crnkovich said there is legal protocol that impacts how counselors can approach students' issues.

“Everything they talk to us about is confidential unless they are hurting themselves, they plan to hurt someone else, or they are being hurt, like abuse,” Crnkovich said. “We have a duty to protect students and warn other people.”

Despite the benefits technology can provide, it can make resolving and combating student concerns extremely difficult. With social media platforms like Snapchat, posts have expirations and are only existent for limited amounts of time which restricts the time the staff has to seize any photos or messages that may have contributed to a report. They also have to ensure that all students are safe and that the intentions behind reports are pure and not for a defamatory purpose.

“There’s a lot to navigate, and there’s no way we could possibly know the whole

situation,” Crnkovich said. “Usually something is done, but sometimes we can’t tell you what.”

In an attempt to reduce social media's detriment on mental health, EPS held a panel on the "Effects of Social Media on Student Mental Health" in October of 2023. Including insight from mental health experts and district administration, the panel had a positive impact on the awareness of mental health within the district.

In November of 2023, EPS declared an official partnership with Project Harmony, an organization dedicated to online safety among youth, as information was presented regarding “Online Safety for Parents, Guardians, and the Community.”

According to the EPS district-wide initiative, the mental health and well-being of students is the second most important tier, just under school safety, and the counselors, psychologists, and staff are always working to ensure that these initiatives are being followed through.

A difficult part of fulfilling the district initiative is encouraging students to use the available mental health resources

Power of the Pixels

BY: GRACE BRAUDER

Adams Central's Art program, taught by Crystal Hassenstab, has taken a step into electronics this school year with their new Video Board Production Class.

"The Video Board Production class began in 2023. Before this, students in independent study for Graphic Art 2 and 3 handled all the video board content. However, with the addition of a second video board, it became necessary to formalize the process to ensure high-quality work," said Hassenstab.

The new additions of the football video board and the basketball boards have helped improve our sporting events immensely. The problem was graphic art students were spending their time doing video board work instead of other projects.

"It is also fun making all of the graphics, knowing each sport is important."

This is where the idea of a video board class came in "This class is essential not only because there are careers specifically focused on sports content production, but also because it gives students the chance to work in real-world scenarios," said Hassenstab.

The students that are in the class have to talk to businesses for opportunities for advertisement. After that they have to schedule times for photoshoots for the actual graphic while being on time for the deadline to show on the boards. This class gives students valuable skills and experiences they can use in many different areas after graduation. "If I am struggling, I can always ask my classmates for help on a graphic. It is also fun making all of the graphics, knowing each sport is important," said Junior Kayden Sipp.



Above: Gameday graphic by Kayden Sipp

BEHIND the LENS

BY: ADDI ACKLES

With the switch to the Hudl camera and Adams Central's move away from Striv, many students wondered what would become of the broadcast side of AC publications. Instead of having a live-streaming focus, Mrs. Anderson's publications class is now responsible for creating a bi-weekly news broadcast for underclassmen to watch during Patriot Period.

"I love seeing the finished product and how people react to it," said senior Hanna Kull. "I smile the whole time!"

Students can be seen during seventh period walking around the school to interview their peers and teachers about stories or for fun segments such as "Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader" or "What is your best pickup line?" "I like coming up with fun segments. They help to keep students engaged in between the more serious stories," said Senior Brianna Loya.

Alongside the broadcast, students continue to work on things such as The Toilet Times that are hung in the bathrooms around the school. The Toilet Times is a weekly update that includes a schedule of events, student birthdays, a riddle, and a joke.

"I love seeing the finished product and how people react to it."

"I love working on The Toilet Times," said junior Lexi St. John, "It's so rewarding to see them up in the bathrooms every week!"

Students also work on social media projects such as "Monday Matters" and "Throwback Thursday." Monday Matters shows off cool things going on around AC such as the

Jumpstart class going on a field trip. On "Throwback Thursday," students find old yearbook photos and post them to rediscover old memories.

Students have also learned many skills to help them in their future careers.

"Being in broadcast publications has taught me valuable time management skills that I will use for the rest of my life," said Kull.



Above: Senior Brianna Loya sets up her camera before beginning interviews for the AC bi-weekly broadcast. Photo by G. Fitzke



Jonathan Reiners, Adams Central High School

I created the photo illustration for a fellow classmate who was committing to a university for cross country and track and field. This was also posted online on our school sports website and social media. I started from a blank page and created all the text, the track lanes, and the shapes used. After making the track lanes, I used gradients so that they would fade out at the top and the bottom. The picture of the athlete was provided by the family to use. I used a technique where you only cut out parts of the background to create some depth in the middle of the page. I faded out the bottom of the image and put all of the information requested at the bottom. All background textures were found on free, commercial use websites. I used the camera raw filter to add texture to the entire design. This project took around 4 weeks to complete as I edited and changed various aspects to make it more appealing based on feedback given.

#18 Feature Photography

Maggie Mullin, Norris







#19 Feature Photography

Macie Burson, Elkhorn







Setback More Like Comeback

The football team responds to injuries

Injuries constantly impact the lives of athletes. What's different about Elkhorn North football, is the way they respond to these unlucky events.

Being a starter on varsity, **Alex Uchtman 11** wasn't the only one affected by his torn UCL (Tommy John). The team had to adjust to his injury and it could've been fatal to their success.

"This team is unlike any team I've been a part of. We're honestly just one big family, and them being there and always supporting me has gotten me through all of it," Uchtman said.

"The first, like six weeks of summer, I couldn't really do a whole lot until I got my brace and everything," Uchtman said. "It (his injury) gave me perspective. It was the first time I wasn't able to compete all year."

Going through the hardships of two nine month injuries, **Jackson Crom 12** started to understand how his injuries impacted his mental game.

"I feel like I better understand what others go through when they're injured, too. Now I'm more empathetic with people that are going through injuries similar to mine," Crom said.

The uplifting energy of teammates and coaches encouraged Crom and others to persevere through their hardships.

"They (the team) like believed in me so that I would get back to where I was before (the injury). It helped me learn to not take things for granted," Crom said.

Story By: Mia Turner
Content By: Mia Turner, Reagan Gurzick & Sophia Stone



Practice Hard, Win Easy

Many other players may try to take the "easy route" to success, but not our team. Underclassman like **Colin Acker 10** focuses on the play to get his job done. "We make plays everyday at practice so it's just the result from the work we put in which feels amazing," Acker said.



Photo By: Mia Turner

End Zone Calling

From fun celebrations to our roaring student section, **Kendall Gragert 12** loves the feeling of scoring. "Scoring is a great feeling, especially at a home game when everyone is cheering," Gragert said.

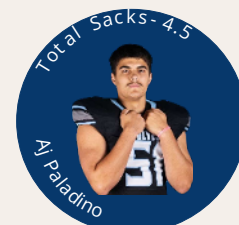


Photo By: Mia Turner

Students With Spirit

After scoring one of his many touchdowns, **Jett Tinglehoff 12** admires the students for their presence at the game. "My favorite part about the games has to be the student sections and the energy they bring to every game," Tinglehoff said.

Stat leaders



Playoff Results

Elkhorn North #5

vs. #12 Elkhorn **35-14**
@ #4 Scottsbluff **30-6**
@ #1 Bennington **7-16**

Senior Spotlight



Photo by: Zen Weisselman

Leave It All On The Field

As a senior, impressions are very important. **AJ Paladino 12** definitely left a lasting effect on the team with his strong determination and perseverance. "I think that I left a major impact by showing people that working hard can pay off," Paladino said.

Strive For Greatness

During every person's high school season they go through many ups and downs, but **Ben Madrigal 12** has bounced back every time, hungrier to try again. "Freshman year, I wasn't the greatest but I worked hard to get to where I am today," Madrigal said.



Photo by: Zen Weisselman

Varsity

7-2

vs. Pius X 24-21

vs. York 34-0

@ Ralston 49-7

@ Gretna 42-7

vs. Blair 21-7

@ Elkhorn 14-17

vs. Skutt 28-21

@ Gretna East 31-27

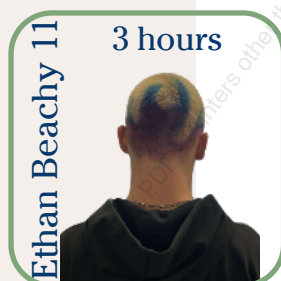
@ Bennington 6-20

JV 5-2

Fr 4-3

It's Been Bleached

Players reflect on how long the hair process took



Ethan Beachy 11

3 hours



Mason Murphy 12

30 minutes



Brayden Butler 10

2 hours

Photo by: Mia Turner

Photos By: Reagan Gurzick

What's Toner?

Players dye their hair for playoffs

Horror stories of the bleach and the buzz have swept the internet. For playoffs this year, the football team has put their own spin on the trend.

"It took about two and a half hours. Most of us chose our designs off of the internet, but Sam Steffens really started the trend," **Max Silverman 12** said.

Originating from senior **Sam Steffens 12** the crazy color combos and patterns have spread across the football team like a pandemic. It may just look like a new hair style, but there is a deeper meaning to the matching cuts.

"I think it shows how people are dedicated to the team, and they really care about what our end goal is, It's more of a brotherhood when everybody joins in on the same thing," Steffens said.

Experimenting with new styles and designs often led to chaos. Some ended up with bald spots and others with an orange undertone.

"We did a second round of bleach and wash it again, and then toned it, but the toning did not really work, and it's still orange," **Charlie Riesselman 10** said.

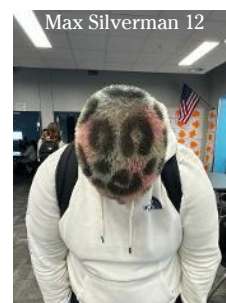
Story by: Mia Turner



Sam Steffens 12



Charlie Riesselman 10



Max Silverman 12

Photos by: Reagan Gurzick

Reagan Gurzick, Sophia Stone, Mia Turner

THIS ONE time...

ELKHORN NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

Imprint 2024



Vol.
4

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402.289.2579
www.elkhornweb.org/enhs/
997 students

fall
3

winter
42

*wolf
pack*
76

people
102

ads
198

this one time...

High school is all about the **MOMENTS**.

Everyone has defining moments in their high school career.

Competing for a state title, competing in DECA, taking home the first Robotics trophy, scoring a 100% on a midterm, going to Vala's on a SADD field trip.

We're exchanging **EXPERIENCES** all the time,

before class, at lunch, chilling on the senior balcony, hanging out in your favorite teacher's pod, posting stories on Instagram.

We connect with people through our shared experiences.

Every year students go through similar course work and those in higher grades will always remember certain activities, for better or for worse.

Constructing wedding gowns out of toilet paper, working late the night before on the APUSH Roaring 20's project, dissecting pigs in biology with the chemical smell stinging our noses. Clearing out the gym during club photos because of the fire alarm.

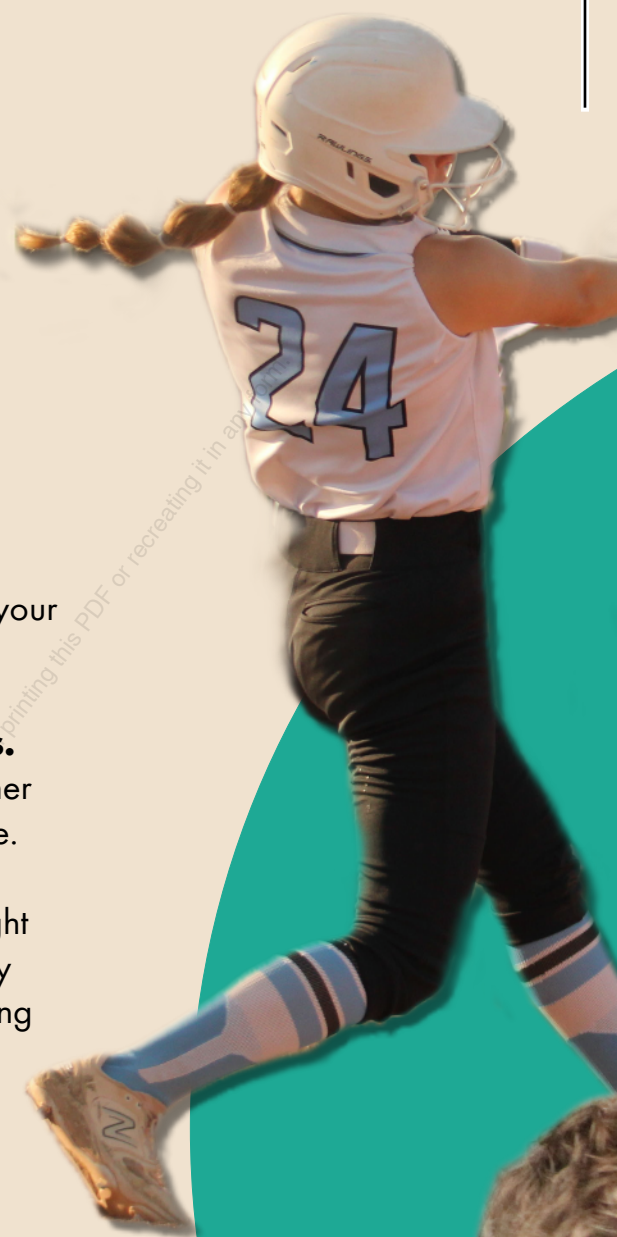
Students share **STORIES** and offer valuable expertise to their peers.

NHS members in the counseling office tutoring Spanish and Chem, newspaper editors proofreading stories, captains pushing teammates through a tough practice.

And we have unique opportunities outside of the classroom to share our passions and explore. Showing animals at 4H, visiting Spain for the summer to experience a new culture, getting an internship at the Women's Methodist Hospital.

This is our time to show who we are and what **DEFINES** us as a school.

Sitting in the bleachers for the first time as a freshman, trying out for the musical as a sophomore, taking ACTs as a junior, feeling that senioritis kick in. We know that once May comes, all of these single moments connected us into shared stories that we'll talk about wherever we go next.





THIS ONE
time...

4th time's the charm

Four consecutive State Champion titles makes history for ENHS

The student section is roaring, the bench is on the edges of their seats, and with 5 seconds left in the fourth quarter of the State Championship game, Skutt misses their last scoring attempt.

The girls basketball team has officially collected four Class B State Championship titles with only a total of four seasons played.

The pressure on the players to win continuously increased as the season progressed, but for *Sydney Stodden 12*, she viewed it as a positive thing. "It got to us, but in the best times possible, this year we lost to Waverly because we just had a bad game. Every year we've had a loss where we have had to dial in. The winning hurt us in those games, but helped us in the long run," Stodden explained.

For other players like *Britt Prince 12*, she was able to curb the overwhelming pressure of winning games over time. "I think I'm better at handling it now, just going through everything and getting older.

Having that experience of

being in situations with a lot of pressure [before] helped a lot," Prince said.

Winning the state tournament did not come easy for the players, as they faced many challenges including lots of injuries. "We had eight different people that started at different points throughout the season," Prince said. In the face of adversity, the team had to stick together through their motto for this season, "4 Each Other".

"Our main goal was to just play every game and do everything for each other. We're just playing because we love each other and we want to do good for each other," Prince said.

All of the practices and time this team has put into the game of basketball payed off and the memories are priceless. "It's got to be cutting down the nets at the state basketball game and everyone rushing out onto the court especially because [the game] was so close it was just really cool to experience," Stodden said.

Story by: Mallorie Black

Content by: Mallorie Black, Tessa Brickell, Quinn Carney

Photo by: Mallorie Black



Reaching goals

Attempting a three pointer, *Britt Prince 12* reflects on the team chemistry this season. "We're just playing because we want to do good for each other," Prince said. This mindset helped lead the team to another state championship win.

What's your pregame routine?



Photo by: Hailey Schinning

"I usually have my hair in a braided slick back pony tail and I listen to hype music. When it gets closer to the game I like more calming music," *-Sydney Kruse 9*



Photo by: Tessa Brickell

"I usually just put my hair in a braid for every single game. I show up early so I can form shoot," *-Addy Bratt 9*



Photo by: Rilee Blank

"I listen to 'I Will Go to War' from the Rocky sound track. I also always take pre-workout because it gives me energy. I write GOE, God over everything, on my wrist," *-Reagan Palmer 11*



Photo by: Mallorie Black

"I always make sure to eat something filling and do some ball handling," *-Erica Zhang 10*



Photo by: Rilee Blank

For Each Other

Halle Pribnow 12 shares how the team has stuck together for the past 4 years. "If we know we can do it as a team, it will always turn out better than if we are alone," Pribnow said. Working as a team helped the girls reach their end goal.



Photo by: Mallorie Black



Photo by: Mallorie Black

Stepping up

Dribbling down the court, *Kaylee Lake 9* steps into a big role this season. She helped the team reach their goals throughout games and practices. "The whole state tournament was a lot of pressure, but it was more fun than anything," Lake said.



Photo by: Quinn Carney



Photo by: Mallorie Black

Taking the shot

Shooting a free throw, *Reese Booth 12* shares her routine before taking the shot. "I take a couple dribbles and spin the ball and then take a deep breath before I shoot it," Booth said. Preparing for the pressure doesn't come easy, but visualization helps Booth in these situations.

Team Success

Preparing to pass the ball to her teammates, *McKenna Murphy 12* explains her mindset throughout the season. "Knowing that we're doing it for the sole reason of each other and each other's success is really important," Murphy said.

Winning Big

Kara Kudlacz 11 reaches to guard to opposing team from scoring. She reflected on the teams successes from the season. "I was really satisfied with this season, the way it ended, and the way the seniors got to end with a big win," Kudlacz said.

Team Records

Varsity: 25-1
JV: 14-2
Reserve: 12-2
Freshmen: 6-2
State Championship W vs. Skutt 49-47
District Championship W vs. Blair 73-45

W vs. Bellevue West 67-52
W vs. Millard North 66-63
W vs. Beatrice 59-49

Long Time Teammate

Having that one teammate that you've played with for many years makes the sport more memorable.

McKenna Murphy 12 and *Britt Prince 12's* chemistry on and off the court is something not many can relate to. Playing together for 9 years has strengthened these players' bonds with one another.

Murphy shares her experience playing with Prince. "My favorite part about playing together for so long is all of the basketball memories we have together," Murphy said.

For playing this long with each other they've gotten the opportunity to watch each other grow as both a player and person. "We've played in so many games together and gone to so many places so just having that experience is a really cool thing to remember," Murphy said.

Having that experience with each other has helped the players become better in every aspect. With all their successes, they've got to accomplish so many things together, especially in these past 4 years.



Story by: Tessa Brickell

Girls Basketball

065

"I can't believe we had
three fire alarms today!"





"Do you think we're going
to have school tomorrow?"



"Finally finished all of my
foundation scholarships!"

The Power of Music

Drum Major *Lacy Mehaffey 12* prepares to perform at halftime of the football game versus Elkhorn. This was Mehaffey's third year of being drum major and she felt that the band did the best it has done in school history. "When the whole band turned around to play the theme of Ecstasy of Gold, that was really cool," Mehaffey said. "To conduct it just felt very, very powerful."

Photo by: Quinn Carney



Marching band pushes through difficulties leading up to state

"The Nebraska Bandmasters Association is proud to present in competition, the Elkhorn North Sound of the Wolfpack Marching Band!" Marching band's show this year, entitled *Lluvia* and featuring four movements, took 12th place at state and left the entire band feeling extremely proud of all of their hard work.

"It starts out with the drought, which told the story of a desert, and then it goes to rain, which is like a storm coming through raining. And then the third movement is called flood, which is about how the water is destroying everything and is super chaotic. And then finally bloom, which is how everything's growing from the desert because of the rain,"

Mason Miller 11 said. The rain was shown through t-poles with blue fabric and the bloom was shown through changes in their props.

"We had tree props that had leaves behind them that open [and] front props which were originally

a desert, got flipped over and there was flowers within the picture." *Dylan Asmus 12* said. The main story of the show was told through the music, however, the band faced many challenges working on the music.

"We had a lot of trouble getting our sound to sound the way it wanted. To sound the way Mr. Rom wanted it to," Miller said. The band had to look beyond themselves and start thinking as a whole in order to have a strong sound. The band also faced some issues with weather, specifically an hour weather delay at Millard West.

"At almost every competition it either rained or sprinkled," Asmus said. When it came to state, they had an amazing performance. "Our sound was definitely way better by the last time we performed than at the beginning of the year in band camp, we have a lot more sound, and I felt really proud of it," Miller said.

Story by: Selah Halweg

Content by: Selah Halweg

AND THE BAND played on



Playing Solo

Aidan Kloster 12 performs his solo during movement one of the show. He was nervous but he liked being able to play something that others could enjoy. "There is challenge in having that much pressure, but I do think that being able to have the opportunity to inspire other people is really nice," Kloster said.



Photo by: Jennifer Mehaffey

Placements

Wildcat Classic

Prelims: 11th Place Overall

Titan Marching Invitational

Prelims: Class 3A 2nd Place

Finals: 8th Overall

Capitol City Championships

Prelims: Class 3A 3rd Place

Sounds of Excellence

Exhibition

Omaha Marching Invitational

Prelims: Class 3A 1st Place

Finals: 6th Overall

NSBA State Contest

12th Overall, 10th Colorguard, 5th Drumline

Marching Band **031**

One More Once

At the last football game, *Amanda Hoffman 12* celebrates the end of the season. Hoffman was colorguard captain and enjoyed getting help others improve throughout the year. "[My] favorite part [of the show] was probably where the river comes through and I just think it was really cool and different that everyone came in one place," Hoffman said.

CONFESIONS

Students anonymously share their secrets

"I ate SpaghettiOs in class one time."
-Anonymous

"I **stole** the biggest and most beautiful **button** from my teacher in kindergarten and then **lost** it immediately."
-Anonymous

"I **never** did my first **five** last year."
-Anonymous

"In elementary school, there was a system of points you could get to earn prizes. Each "Bear Paw" was a point. I used to steal some Bear Paws from the teacher's desk when no one was looking so I could enter them in for prizes."
-Anonymous

"I have **never** read a **single** English book and haven't read a full chapter from **any** of them. I **always** used Sparknotes or Coursehero to understand what was going on just so I could get my points." -Anonymous

"I borrowed a sharpie from my art teacher's classroom last year, and still haven't given it back. It's still in my pencil case."
-Anonymous

"I **stole** everyone's pink markers in **1st** grade."
-Anonymous

"I put Dr. Pepper in my cups."
-Anonymous

"In elementary school, I used to fake being extremely nice to people in front of the teacher so I could clip up on the clip chart."
-Anonymous

"When I was in elementary school I lied to my friends and said that I was British royalty. Also in elementary school, my school banned bey blades and I smuggled in a bunch and sold them. I never got caught."
-Anonymous

"My **friends** and I think a lot of the boys here are **cute** but their personalities **ruin** it."
-Anonymous

"I played fortnite on my school chromebook in class." -Anonymous

"I **never** got my **multiplication** license."
-Anonymous

Content by: Anonymous

this one time...

"I got my beard shaved in the bathroom." -Anonymous

"I have skipped a leg day before, it was a one time thing." -Anonymous

"I **only** read the Sparknotes for my summer reading." -Anonymous

"I broke 3 thermometers in 4th grade and the teacher never knew it was me." -Anonymous

"Last year after finals me and a bunch of my friends went into the auditorium, shut off the lights, and played hide and go seek for 2 hours!" -Anonymous

"I go to bed **knowing** that I have **10+** missing assignments." -Anonymous

"I **never** did any of my practice for middle school band. I just **wrote** that I did 60 minutes of practicing every week on the practice log and never had a parent **signature**." -Anonymous

"I've accidentally stolen like **5 books from reading assignments and they are sitting in a drawer.**" -Anonymous

"In 6th grade, I let my teacher call me the wrong name for the entire year." -Anonymous

"In **1st grade** it was popular at recess to play "wedding" and get **married** using wood chips and everyone was either a bridesmaid or a groomsman. I had my own wedding but the next day I got proposed to again and I didn't realize you **couldn't** be married to more than one **person** at a time so this continued everyday until I was probably married to **15** people at a time before anyone noticed." -Anonymous

"I used to take **AR tests** for people to get them enough points, we would **switch** chromebooks and I'd help them out." -Anonymous

"In 8th grade I didn't read the book for my genre project so I read sparknotes and made the poster and still got a 100." -Anonymous

"I hid energy drinks all throughout my study hall classroom for a whole semester." -Anonymous

"I had a **video** game tournament during the band **final**." -Anonymous



Photo by: Gabby Kenny

Adrenaline Rush

As *Olivia Smith 9* prepares to hit a serve in her singles match she thinks about ball placement. She heavily thought about strategy as she competed. "[My favorite part] is the stress of it because it kind of gives me a rush and it's fun when it's over," Smith said.



Photo by: Gabby Kenny

Good Times

Ava Uchtman 10 hits a serve in a match against Westside. Uchtman played for the top reserve team this season, and she enjoyed the environment that came with being on the team. "I like that I don't have to serve the whole time, and I just made good friends," Uchtman said.



Photo by: Selah Halweg

The Mental Game

About to hit a backhand, *Elizbeth Hess 11* plays in her singles match against Brownell Talbot/Concordia. Hess finds playing singles as mentally beneficial. "It helps me be dependent on myself," Hess said.

serving up SUCCESS

JV finishes runner-up at the Norfolk Invite

For the first girls JV tournament in school history, the Wolves found early success. From the tournament style to cooperating with their teammates, the team had a lot of fun.

"I like to play many different teams, and it's just fun to hang out with Natalie all day," Hess said. An important factor that contributed to the team's finish was their cooperation.

"[Natalie and I] get along really well, and we can encourage each other very well," Hess said.

This tournament was a new experience for a lot of players, allowing them to learn and grow. This was the case for the sophomore pair of *Bella Smith 10* and *Maddie Mensch 10*.

"Maddie and I recently played in our first doubles tournament together," Smith said. Despite it being their first tournament, the JV team has a lot to be proud of.

Story by: Sophia Jones

Power Shot

Always putting in full effort and power into her serve, *Camryn Jacobsmeier 12* prepares to start off the point. Jacobsmeier's serve helped her and her doubles partner Haylee Wolf 12 win their match versus Lincoln Northwest. "My serve is one of my biggest weapons, and I make sure to use it to my full advantage to finish points efficiently," Jacobsmeier said.

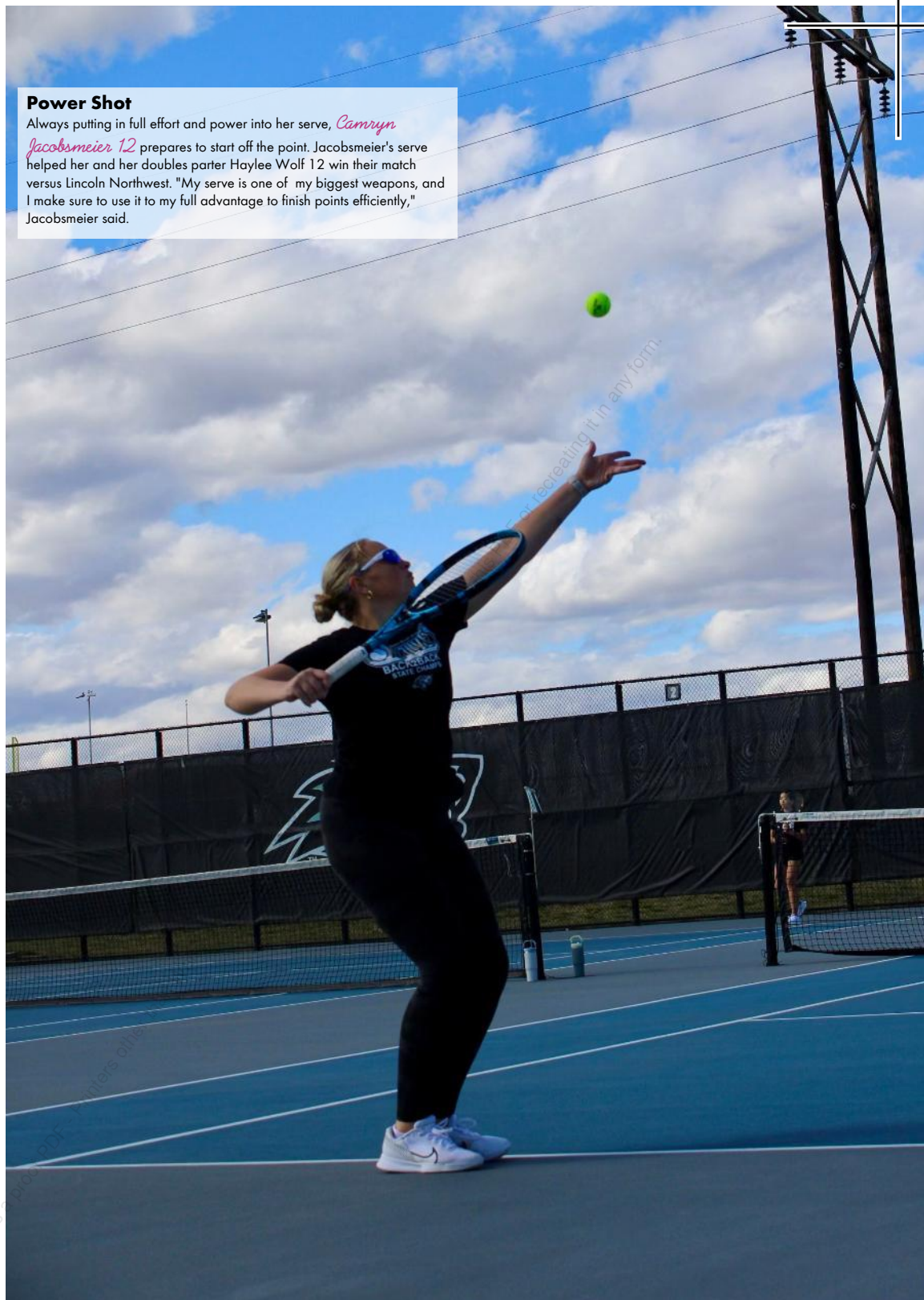


Photo by: Selah Halweg

In Between Games

When *Graisyn Coleman 11* is playing doubles, her favorite shot to hit is a volley. Coleman found it helpful that she can strategize in between games. "My favorite part of doubles is not being alone on the court," Coleman said.

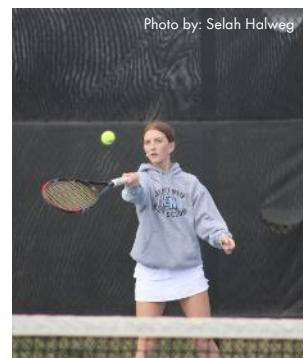


Photo by: Selah Halweg

Getting Reps In

Hayden Booth 10 enjoys playing singles because it helps her grow as a player. She prepared to hit a forehand while standing near the baseline. "I like playing singles because you always like hitting the ball, and you get more reps during it," Booth said.

ESTABLISHING the program

Seniors leave a strong legacy for girls tennis

The five seniors this year have made an incredible impact on the foundation of the girls tennis program. Their success would not have been possible without the support of their teammates and coaches.

"My teammates encourage me to always play my best and work my hardest," *Grace Jesske 12* said.

Because tennis is more of an individual sport, encouragement from the team is vital.

"My teammates, like Grace, are constantly playing tennis with me outside of school practice, and my doubles partner Haylee is always encouraging me during our matches," *Camryn Jacobsmeier 12* said.

With it being their last season, the seniors are more experienced, yet the pressure is high.

"People have high expectations for us coming back as two-time state champions," Jacobsmeier said.

By being the first class to graduate from playing since their freshman year, the seniors wish to leave a positive impact on the program.

"I wish to impact others by providing an example that hard work will help you exceed, and if you truly love the game, you can be successful," Jesske said.

Similarly, Jacobsmeier hopes to demonstrate the reward that comes from a strong work-ethic.

"When I graduate, I hope to leave my mark on the tennis program and show the impact hard work has on a team and the success it leads to," Jacobsmeier said.

Story by: Sophia Jones
Content by: Sophia Jones and
Rilee Blankenship

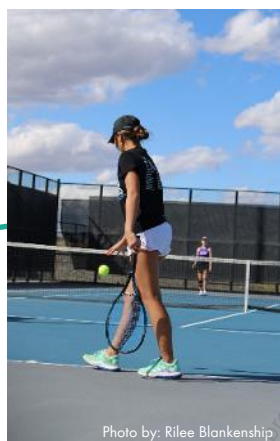


Photo by: Rilee Blankenship

Start Off Right

Ruby Phonephakdy 10 is about to start the point with her serve. She picked a target in the service box and went for it. "I'm about to hit a first serve, and I want to hit it down the line to her backhand," Phonephakdy said.



Photo by: Maddy Brettmann

At the Net

Getting in position to swing,

Macy Falconer 12 gets ready to hit a shot at the net. In order to be successful on the court, she hits a variety of shots. "I was lining up a good overhead to finish up a competitive point," Falconer said.

BEST of TIMES

Haylee Wolf



"My favorite tennis memories are from sophomore and junior year at the state tournament. I love the energy and competitiveness that comes with state. Also, they team medal ceremonies, and the team getting ice cream to celebrate on the way home from Lincoln."

Macy Falconer



"My favorite tennis memory is from freshman year when we played our first dual against Skutt. I played #2 singles and happened to be down 2-6. Somehow, I managed to make a great comeback and ended up winning the match 9-7."

Grace Jesske



"My favorite tennis memory was junior year state. After walking off the court after the state championship match and knowing we finished undefeated was a huge goal to accomplish. Getting a hug from teammates, friends, and family was one of the best parts."

Camryn Jacobsmeier



"My favorite memory is when we won state sophomore year. It was more unexpected and the environment and energy at the state tournament was awesome. Everyone was very supportive and it was an awesome experience being able to earn the title of state champions."

Courtney Hagestad



"My favorite tennis memory was state my junior year. I got to cheer on my teammates and see all of their hard work pay off."



Photo courtesy of: Nancy Mensch

Doubles Domination

Bella Smith 10 and Maddie Mensch 10 achieved second place at #2 doubles at the Norfolk Invite. By placing the ball accurately and controlling the pace of the game, they found success. "I was incredibly nervous, but we managed to turn things around in the second set," Smith said.



Photo courtesy of: Nancy Mensch

Dynamic Duo

At the Norfolk Invite, *Elizabeth Hess 11 and Natalie Brand 11* smile after finishing runner-up at #1 doubles. The pair worked well together in their first tournament. "It's just fun to hang out with Natalie all day," Hess said.



Rachel Newbauer
Teacher Assistant



Jamie Nicolarsen
Special Education



Kenda Olson
Admin Coordinator



Philip Onwiler
Social Studies



Nona Payne
Teacher Assistant



Chris Peters
Mathematics



Emma Petersen
Teacher Assistant



Melissa Peterson
Social Studies



Spencer Peterson
Mathematics



Kaylee Prenosil
Mathematics

THIS one TIME...



I was a new teacher and lied about being sick on a school day to go mountain biking with my boyfriend. I was attempting to endo (lift the rear wheel) and it didn't go as planned. My front wheel hit a rock and I flew over the handlebars and landed on both of my hands, bending them all the way back. I came to school the next day with both hands in braces. I went into the principal's office to confess and apologize. I vowed to not lie about being sick ever again.

-Sincerely Mrs. Armbrust



"That time I broke both of my arms at the same time."

-Sincerely Mrs. Deines



The first year after I got married and changed my name to "Mrs. Hong" my husband and I thought it would be funny to dress as "Hans and Franz" from an old SNL sketch. The TV characters had these giant fake muscles, so we took oversized grey sweat suits and stuffed them with old towels. We roamed his law school Halloween party in our obviously perfect character imitations, saying "we're here to pump" clap "you up!"

-Sincerely Mrs. Hong



"When I turned 16 I drove down to Omaha and lived out of my car for a week and went to a Godsmack concert and crowd surfed for the first time. While crowd surfing, I lost my shoes and spent a week with no shoes."

-Sincerely Mrs. Anderson



The first time my mom ever left me and my brothers alone at home, there were 4 of us born within 38 months (so we were 5th, 4th, 3rd and 2nd grade) while she was judging a science fair at the high school. We rode down our laundry shoot and took turns riding in the dryer. My brother Steve put me in first and put the dryer on fluff so it wasn't hot and wouldn't let me out. The neighbor kid who was there blackmailed us for years and threatened to tell our mom everytime he got mad at us.

-Sincerely Mrs. Vann



Gena Story
Samuel Suarez-Guzman
Grant Sutko



William Swagler
Andersen Taylor
Bentlee Teel



Shadhell Tengue
Mel Mitch Tesado
Isabella Teschner



Biak Thang
Mal Thich
Muoch Thich



Christopher Thomas
Joseph Tian
Jaden Tingelhoff



Connor Tjepkes
Kalia Tran
Mia Turner



Adyson Tuttle
Andrew Urbano
Aleksei Ustalov

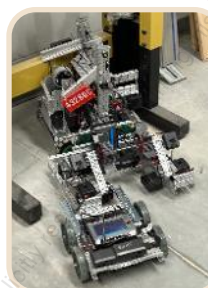
Freshmen describe activities they enjoy in their free time

Emily McCallum 9



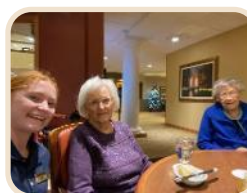
"I'm doing an [iceskating] solo. It's a holiday show. It's a song from Victorious called 'It's Not A Christmas Without You'."

Mason Petersen 9



"[I'm on] a little team and we have some VEX Robotics parts and some scrap metal, and we just get to put it together and make a robot."

Kyler Hilts 9



"I hear a lot about people's lives and their experiences at the retirement home. This specific table I like, they're a bunch of older women that love gossiping."

Maxwell Yager 9



"[I] warm up, lift weights, drink water, and every night I drink protein shakes with creatine."

Allie Vigitz 9



"My babysitter introduced [crocheting] to me. I have been practicing since. I have tried clothes before like a scarf and sweaters."

SOMETIMES INSTEAD OF STUDYING...



**Jay
Price**



**Britt
Prince**



**Fiona
Quigley**



**Ava
Raridon**



**Eva
Reinoehl**



**Tiernan
Ridder**



**Mallory
Ringenberg**



**Nathan
Rodenbough**

CAPTURE *the* MOMENT

For the past four years Brandon Urbano has created professional level hypevideos and sports photos for our school. Urbano is someone who is often there to capture the special moments of our school with his camera. He makes an effort to attend as many sporting events and school activities as possible, taking time out of his own busy schedule. His journey began with family portraits, but he later transitioned to sports photography with the cross country team.

"I had some friends on the cross country team, so I'm like, I'll take my camera and go take some pictures...from there I just started following teams," Urbano said. Urbano's skills opened the door for college sport opportunities. He was given an internship for Creighton's media team, which led to him taking photos at the Division One Volleyball Championships. Later, he earned a spot on the



creative team for the Men's College World Series. These opportunities are a testament of his dedication to his work.

"I'll probably spend like two to three hours on just one game of photos...this year's intro for the girls basketball team took me seven and a half hours to edit," Urbano said.

Brandon Urbano shares his talent for photography with his peers

The student body benefits from having someone like Urbano to document major moments. Staff also recognize Brandon's invaluable contributions to the school.

"He is the most selfless individual...when I think about people that I interact with and run into in life, the ones that freely give themselves to help others are the ones that have the biggest impact on you. That's who he is, that's all he does," Ford said.

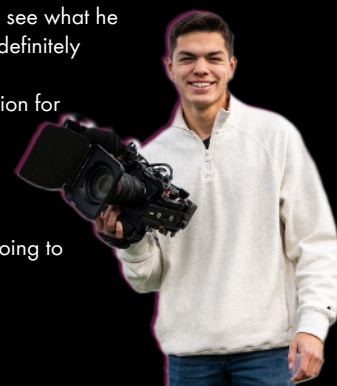
Newspaper adviser Chloe Healy has watched Brandon's growth over the past four years.

"For Brandon, it is such a labor of love that he does for his own enjoyment," Healy said. "I'm really excited to see what he does and wherever he goes next, but there's definitely going to be a Brandon-sized hole."

Urbano is grateful to use his skills and passion for his own school.

"I'm thankful for being able to work with different teams and create bonds with those teams," Urbano said. "It's been a privilege to provide these teams with memories that are going to last forever."

Story and Content by:
Tessa Brickell and Quinn Carney



INDEX

A

Abdalla, Abdallah - 129
 Abraham, Aashna - 91, 111, 118
Academic Decathlon - 78
 Acker, Colin - 86, 111, SS16
 Adams-Baum, Caitlyn - 29, 84, 96, 129, SS18
Adrenaline - 52, 53, 89
 Agbekponou, Craidon - 111, SS21
 Agbekponou, Keira - 19, 136, 161
 Aitchison, Trent - 91, 128, 129
 Ajai, Evan - 111
 Akol, Marvella - 129
 Akula, Marsha - 7, 17, 79, 80, 88, 89, 119, 120
 Al Quraishi, Yasir - 136
 Alhemayyed, Abdullah - 85, 136
 Aliano, Alexander - 86, 94, 101, 120, SS8, SS17
 Allen, Austin - 19, 30, 40, 41, 51, 83, 86, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 109, 128, 135, 136, 159, SS3
 Allen, Casey - 7, 39, 50, 51, 61, 199
 Allen, Harrison - 44, 89, 90, 91, 120, 121
 Alonok, Mohammad Adnan - 129
Alpha Pack - 78
AlphaTones - 54, 90
 Alvarez, Jayla - 82, 86, 136, 159, 161
Ambassador Club - 78
 Andersen, Maggie - 90, 93, 136, 161
 Anderson, Ashley - 83, 104, 105, 199
 Anderson, Emma - 129
 Anderson, Ian - 85, 91, 111
 Anderson, Krista - 105
 Anderson, Laura - 81, 105
 Anderson, Makayla - 89, 92, 111
 Anderson, Mariko - 88, 105
 Anderson, Sophia - 136, 149, 161
 Anderson, Zackary - 88, 89, 90, 91, 110, 111, 135
 Anicio de Magalhes, Anne - 94, 129
 Araveti, Sai Smaran - 60, 80, 84, 85, 87, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 119, 120
 Archer, Aidan - 88, 129
 Archibeque, Missy - 104, 105, 199
 Armbrust, Brody - 32, 33, 94, 119, 120
 Armbrust, Reyne - 83, 86, 87, 94, 105
 Arnold, Lynette - 104, 105, 199
Art Club - 79
 Artola, Emily - 60, 120
 Asmus, Dylan - 16, 31, 33, 84, 89, 90, 91, 94, 136, 161, SS16
 Asmus, Ethan - 95, 120, SS16
 Asuncion, Eleanor - 89, 91, 110, 136
 Aubabaker, Moosa Bin - 118
 Aurich, Kahlen - 44, 45, 70, 71, 95, 113, 119, 120, 205, SS3
 Aurich, Kiley - 45, 136, 162, 163

B

Bae, Brayden - 81, 84, 87, 88, 95, 129
 Bailey, Benjamin - 129
 Bailey, Elena - 89, 92, 94, 119, 120
 Baker, Mikayla - 136, 162
 Ballard, Cameron - 54, 90, 91, 110, 136
 Ballou-Barton, Brittany - 39, 80, 105
 Banfield, Logan - 129
 Bannister, Aubrey - 86, 99, 120, 121, 205
 Banuelos, Bailey - 92, 120
Barbershop - 93
 Barrineau, Benjamin - 129, 133 Barth, Mollie - 120 Bartholomew-Peterson, Brant - 120
Baseball, Boys - SS4, SS5, SS16, SS17
Basketball, Boys - 97, 98
Basketball, Girls - 99
 Bauer, Mya - 19, 137, SS18
 Beachy, Ethan - 48, 60, 62, 95, 98, 120, 128
 Beardslee, Addison - 137, 159 Beaty, Lauren - 44, 86, 99, 120, SS11, SS18
 Bebermeyer, Donovan - 88, 91, 94, 129
 Bebermeyer, Peyton - 89, 91, 92, 110, 111
 Beresh, Camden - 62, 97, 111, SS17, SS19
 Bergstrom, Jasmyn - 19, 137
 Berthiaume, Lane - 129
 Bertucci, Pierce - 129
 Bevins, Gabriel - 129
 Bhakta, Liam - 120
 Bianchette, Gianni - 111
 Biegert, Zachary - 62, 98, 129, SS17
Big Band Wolves - 54, 90
 Bik, Van - 129, SS17
 Binte Sharil, Yasmin - 79, 82, 83, 137
 Bird, Hayden - 86, 95, 120, SS17
 Bird, Logan - 95, 137, 141, 163 Bird, Sarah - 105
 Bischof, Ava - 82, 83, 84, 89, 90, 92, 93, 128, 129
 Bitcon, Morgan - 95, 119, 120, SS20
 Bittner, Evan - 92, 129
 Black, Mallorie - 36, 37, 54, 109, 137, 159, 205, SS11
 Blair, Carter - 111
 Blankenship, Rilee - 129, 205
 Bobba, Ryan - 137
 Boehler, Aspen - 101, 111
 Boehler, Elle - 4, 21, 28, 72, 73, 129, 205
 Bojanski, Blake - 135, 137
 Bonin, Derek - 105
 Bonoan, Cole - 86, 88, 137
 Bonoan, Emily - 34, 86, 97, 120 *Book Club* - 79
 Booth, Hayden - 34, 86, 87, 97, 119, 120, SS12, SS18
 Booth, Reese - 21, 34, 65, 84, 87, 97, 99, 135, 137, 163
 Bork, Charlie - 10, 14, 19, 85, 91, 135, 137, 163

Bossert, Madison - 111, SS18
 Bott, Audrey - 120
 Bott, Delaney - 94, 135, 137
 Bowen, Anthony - 138
Bowling, Boys - 101
Bowling, Girls - 100
Bowling, Unified - 67, 88
 Brabec, Audra - 7, 52, 53, 68, 69, 87, 89, 92, 94, 119, 120
 Brabec, Gabriel - 101, 129
 Brabec, Haley - 5, 138, 149
 Brand, Natalie - 37, 83, 84, 86, 96, 128, 129, SS13, SS18
 Brandt, Cohen - 94, 129
 Bratt, Addison - 64, 96, 99, 111, SS18
 Brettmann, Gracie - 39, 138, 164, 165
 Brettmann, Madeline - 79, 82, 86, 120, 205
 Brickell, Tessa - 69, 86, 138, 153, 164, 165, 205, SS10, SS18
 Briganti, Delaney - 18, 34, 35, 60, 82, 83, 86, 97, 135, 138, 166, 167
 Brouck, Christopher - 111
 Broshar, Riley - 79, 88, 95, 111, 115
 Brown, Dominic - 95, 129
 Brown, Parker - 97, 111
 Brown, Penelope - 92, 119, 120
 Bruggeman, Ryan - 138
 Brummels, Payton - 24, 48, 49, 83, 84, 85, 86, 95, 128, 129, SS18
 Bruner, Olivia - 120
 Bryant, Tanner - 15, 120

SENIOR assassin

Seniors decided to organize a game of senior assassin: a game where you must find and eliminate your target using a water gun. Seniors worked in teams of two and used the app "Splashin" to track their target's location. Except on purge days, wearing goggles over their eyes protected them from being eliminated.



Buck, Jacob - 89, 92, 94, 111
 Buenrostro, Jacob - 105, 199 Burgland, Noah - 129, SS17
 Burke, Madilyn - 15, 138, 164, 165
 Burke, Raymond - 120
 Burnham, Parker - 88, 90, 91, 120, Busby, Levi - 111
 Butler, Brayden - 101, 111, SS2, SS17
 Butler, Luke - 32, 33, 84, 94, 135, 138, 164, 165
 Buurman, Dana - 105



Cameron, Naomi - 96, 120 Cameron, Reid - 32, 88, 94, 120 Caniglia, Ashlyn - 96, 138, 166, 167
 Cannon, Chloe - 49, 85, 120 Cannon, Ellie - 57, 78, 84, 135, 138
 Caparida-Manion, Sheldon - 120
 Carbajal, Gabriella - 129, 205, SS18
 Carbullido, Carter - 97, 111, SS17, SS19
 Carbullido, Joaquin - 97, 111, SS17, SS19

Carcasses Navarro, Alain - 111
 Carl, Piper - 111
 Carlos, Zeth Anthony - 11, 101, 120, SS21
 Carlson, Aidan - 84, 90, 91, 128, 129
 Carlson, Michael - 60, 85, 120 Carney, Jace - 86, 87, 94, 97, 111, SS7, SS17
 Carney, Quinn - 52, 84, 86, 87, 95, 138, 153, 166, 167, 205, SS18
 Carrico, Whitney - 16, 129
 Carse, Jocelyn - 91, 100, 120
 Carter, Alivia - 96, 120
 Carter, Emma - 69, 94, 128, 129, SS2
 Case, Laila - 138
 Cash, Emily - 44, 45, 139, 145, 166, 167
 Cassidy, Xavier - 91, 111 Cavanaugh, Izayah - 111
 Cebrenas, Carson - 101, 111 Celis, Evan - 47, 88, 129
 Celis, Nolan - 111
 Cemer, Olivia - 19, 96, 98, 99, 111
 Cera, Aiden - 85, 90, 91, 110, 111, SS17
 Cerone III, Michael - 94, 100, 101, 129
 Cervania, Benjamin - 10, 14, 55, 78, 85, 87, 88, 91, 93, 94, 129
 Chadwick, Annie - 94, 95, 105, SS21
 Chalise, Abinash - 85, 111, SS17
 Chaudhary, Karoon - 129 Chaudhary, Ujjwal - 85, 109, 139
 Chaudhary, Vanya - 21, 60, 78, 79, 84, 91, 129
 Chavez, Belarmino - 61, 105
 Chavez, Lukas - 120
 Chavez, Valentina - 111
Cheer - 11, 94
 Chen, Lawrence - 120
 Chien, Allison - 84, 87, 88, 91, 120
Choir, Concert - 51, 90
Choir, Freshmen - 51, 92
Choir, Mixed - 92
 Christensen, Emily - 104, 105, 199
 Christensen, Luke - 88, 111, SS17, SS19
 Christiansen, Maverick - 4, 95, 120, SS4, SS16
 Christiansen, Nicholas - 129
 Christo, Asher - 95, 120
 Christo, Courtney - 18, 35, 60, 86, 97, 139, SS3
 Christo, Ian - 62, 97, 111, SS16
 Christoffels, Paityn - 7, 24, 25, 48, 49, 85, 86, 95, 121, SS20, SS26
 Christoffels, Parker - 38, 86, 87, 95, 121, SS8, SS17
 Clarys, Aidan - 40, 41, 51, 74, 75, 89, 90, 92, 93, 101, 135, 139, 166, 167, SS3
 Cleaver, Zachary - 121
 Clem, Jace - 111
 Clements, Gabrielle - 129
 Clements, Kenley - 87, 89, 92, 96, 110, 111
 Clements, Ronan - 41, 89, 90, 121
 Clinkinbeard, Katherine - 98, 99, 111, 128, SS11, SS18
 Clinkinbeard, Sophia - 129, SS3
 Coe, Caleb - 93, 139, SS19
 Coe, Hailey - 111, SS18
 Coe, Meghan - 121, SS11, SS18
 Cohen, Henry - 111

We've spent hours at school, building giant paper flowers for our enchanted garden-themed prom, hitting 7 am weights, rehearsing with a barbershop group, drastically overthinking a basic essay, trying to nap on the bus late at night riding back from Norris.

Every **day**,
Showing up to school at 8:09, checking our countdown to the end of the
school year, talking with our friends during passing periods.

Every **minute**,
Learning in a classroom, enjoying ice cream treats for Honor Roll,
sneaking in some Wordle after a vocab quiz.

Every **second**,
Filling in C down the last column of an ACT section, hitting that last buzzer beater shot, leaning in for that photo finish, sending one last snap as the bell rings, holding the final note together with singers from all three high schools.

Throughout **2024**, some of us started our chapter at Elkhorn North while some of us finished it. We spent time (172 days to be exact) learning, working, dreaming. All the moments, all the memories, will be the things we talk about for years to come.

Class B

#22 Broadcast News Story

Sarah Volkmer, Inara McArthur, Lincoln Pius X

<https://youtu.be/Pr55KFKH-9Q>

#23 Broadcast Sports Story

Blaize Brockmann, Hunter Swanson, West Point-Beemer

<https://youtu.be/tPaCnX7qGQ4?si=CRxvkaxwmnfkedjK>

#24 Broadcast Feature Story

Brody Heidemann, Colton Knott, Gretna East

<https://youtu.be/5Df7rfhKy34>

#25 Broadcast Public Service Announcement

Hunter Swanson, Zachary Johnson, West Point-Beemer

<https://youtu.be/S39b3ZIEZUw?si=9Ja3RAGfAe7x9K7h>