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Morgan Long Yutan, #1 Advertising

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When walking through the halls of any highschool, shopping at the local mall, or hanging out with friends, it is evident that you will find any teenager's eyes glued to a screen. In our current era, our phones have taken over—overwhelmingly among the Gen-Z population—and have negatively affected our daily lives. It's not just the phones but more importantly the one thing every teenager is sure to have on their home screen: social media. Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok have been a factor of severe negative mental health. These platforms and many more have continued to raise their platform to be specifically targeted to the general teenage audience. Because of this, they unintentionally provide dangerous spaces for growing adolescents which can be very harmful to one's mental health.

Growing up along with the rising rates of social media have impacted me in many ways more than I can imagine. All of my friends were getting phones along with social media way before I was. And of course at that time, I thought my life was over—like a usual hormone-filled teenage girl. At the age of thirteen, however, I received my first phone. When my parents first allowed this to happen, they laid one major ground rule: no social media. Again, at that time in my life I had zero clue why they would do such an “awful” thing to me. But now that I am 17 years old and mature enough to safely use social media, I couldn't be more thankful that they protected me from it at a very young age.

Back when all of my friends were handed their first phones in elementary school, all they talked about was the newest Snapchat couple or the best drama someone posted on their story. Where did all of this stem from? Social media. All it led to was bullying and negative thoughts that surrounded peers included in those situations. To this day, the same thing still happens. Social media has caused nothing but a steady inclination of bullying and negative impact on one's mental health.

Not only is it the rude comments or things teens see online, but also the addiction and spells the apps have seem to cast on our younger generation. Apps like Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok are designed to keep you “doom scrolling” on their program. When young adults are

constantly invested in their phones, their attitudes and mindsets seem to flip, almost like the immediate flip of a light switch.

In my personal experience, I know that this applies to me too. I have become a victim of “the doom scroll” or constant use of social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram. At times when I should have been listening in class or involved in a conversation, I continue to catch myself on a social app. The addiction has almost become an instant reflex—only resulting in bad habits.

This has not only affected me in personal situations but I’ve also seen an increase in negative thoughts due to the videos or pictures I see. I scroll through pictures to see people posing and looking like models with bodies I wish I had. This has severely affected how I view my self image in a negative way. And I know I am not the only one. Teenage girls are more likely to see the harmful mental effects of social media because of how much we care about other people’s opinions. We are told through social norms how we should look or what trending diet to go on. This has only caused damaging effects among the youth population.

We can’t stop these multi-million dollar companies from growing, but what we can do is halt the increase as much as possible. Some ways we could fight negative mental health due to social media could be screen time restrictions or parental accounts. My phone only allows 15 minutes of Tiktok, Instagram, Pinterest and Youtube per day which results in lower social media screen time. As a 17 year old girl, no, it’s not fun to have your mom restrict your app usage, but looking at the bigger picture, she is saving me from becoming a victim to the negative effects of social media. When social media was first downloaded on my phone, my mom set up a joint account where she could view my page and my activity. This way she could monitor how I contributed to the app and how others reacted towards my page.

Social media companies should also take action against negative mental health and take more responsibility for what is shown through their app. Doing this and adding reasonable



restrictions could play a positive role in decreasing the amount of teens affected by the side effects of negative social media use.

Social media is becoming more and more popular by the day. We can't fight it so we have to face it straight on. Gaining restrictions, parental control, limiting screen time or just having simple self control are all ways to help stop the negative impact of social media. If we do this together as a society, I believe that we could boost positive mental health and be a happier world. So take action. Be the first one of your friends to limit your screen time. Be the one who makes it the newest trend. Be the one who puts a stop to the negative effects of social media.



Haley Gimpel, Harvard, #4 Editorial Writing  
Financial skills offer more than knowledge

People hike along the road, watching cars full of stable, intelligent adults fly by. Trudging along, they wonder how they ended up in this position. They have minimal food, money, and no place to stay. Every passer-by is a reminder that their dreams melted away like popsicles on a hot day. What could have possibly led to their failure? Not being taught financial skills.

Financial skills are vital in today's society. Students graduate from high school and have a slim understanding of the complex economic environment. Acquiring skills of budgeting, investing, saving, and understanding credit earlier on in life will lead to more success. People end up broke from wasting money in college on fast food, clothes, relationships, and much more. On top of that, paying for books, semester classes, and necessities is not cheap. The last resort is to drop out, scramble to find a job, and try to learn about finance through just experience. This is how many end up homeless with nothing left in the world.

Student debt continues to rise because of the challenges of managing finances. A solid rock to stand on could improve these statistics. Introducing a financial literacy course in high school could represent this solid rock. In high school, parents are still there to help their kids. Parents are usually responsible for paying the house, electricity, and water bills, as well as taxes. Students focus on school, extracurriculars, or a part-time job. This is why the best option for financial literacy is to take it in high school. Students would have the opportunity to learn about numerous economic areas before dealing with them.

New Community High School in Maplewood, Nebraska, has introduced a policy that requires all students to complete a financial literacy course by the end of their junior year. "After conducting surveys and consulting with community members, we found a clear need for financial education. Many students graduate without any understanding of how to manage their finances..." Superintendent, Dr. Mark Stevens said. Communities recognize that students are



never truly taught financial skills. A parent of a student enrolled in New Community High School also sees the need for this requirement. "I believe this requirement is essential. 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."

Many people support and approve of this. But some oppose the idea. Critics claim that students already face a rigorous workload and do not need more added to it. Students could also learn through real-life experiences or parental guidance instead of through more school subjects. Which is a valid argument, because not all students learn their best in a classroom. Another issue is that one course might not be too effective. Students just take the course because they have to, and do not try to retain any knowledge. Teachers may encounter time limits that result in only briefly touching on subjects.

The opposing opinions are well-grounded, but there are solutions. Will this course add more workload? Yes. But this helps the students even more. Adults balance relationships, work, families, chores, activities, and finances. Students also manage these areas, except for finances. They don't have to pay bills or do taxes yet. So, having a little more homework for financial class will give teens a taste of the real world. As for students learning from real-world experiences, they still will. Not everything will be taught in the financial classes, but it will provide a good base for their knowledge as they grow and experience life. This also covers the issue of one course not being enough or teachers experiencing time restraints. It isn't meant for them to become professionals at saving, budgeting, and investing, but for them to obtain a basic knowledge.

Financial skills are crucial to success. Without being taught, students can not make confident and informed decisions about finance. Students advancing to college can avoid common mistakes by using skills they learned in high school. Gaining the ability to be frugal could solve countless problems. The college student-debt numbers will decrease, and the

confidence of young adults will increase. The world will seem a little less intimidating and a little more familiar. College students will transform into stable, intelligent adults, flying by in their cars.



Love is a double-edged sword, and “I Can’t Help Myself” by the Four Tops does an outstanding job of encapsulating that expression. The Four Tops were at the peak of their popularity in the early 1960s, creating many hit songs such as “I Can’t Help Myself.” The beat composed by Lamont Dozier, Brian Holland, and Eddie Holland is exciting and has a lot of musical instruments that add to the complexity of the song. Motown songs were already very complex songs at this time, but the Four Tops took it a step up.

Singing songs about love was not uncommon in this era, but noticing that love can build you up and also tear you down, and then making a song that is so upbeat and memorable was something that had never been done before. The Four Tops and Lamont Dozier, Brian Holland, and Eddie Holland took a major gamble on making this song, and it was an instant hit worldwide. This would end up making them go to Paris and perform live in front of a huge crowd.

I believe that this song inspired many African Americans who were in the soul genre. If I were to compare this song to a song that is popular now, it would be the album “The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill.” This album and “I Can’t Help Myself” share many artistic features. “I Can’t Help Myself” includes many instruments, and I have a deep affection for complex sounds. The drums and all of the brass instruments blend so well together, in my opinion.

The message that the song conveys is hard to pick up if you are just a casual listener, but when I analyzed the lyrics, there is a message that love is good and also bad at times. Also, I highly suggest that you watch the live performance in France when you are listening to the song. The video shows the passion that the Four Tops have for singing that song. They are also dancing and using hand gestures to relay their message to the audience. This is why the message of how love can be bad is hard to pick up on.

I think if this song were produced now, it would win Grammys because of the message that it brings and also the complex way that it presents said message. I love the song, and I think that if this song had never been written, we would not have great soul icons such as Lauryn Hill and Frank Ocean. This song is fading out of relevance because of the simplicity of the song, and many think that for a song to be good, it has to be very complex, but I think that the simple nature of this song makes it an all-time classic.

Taylon Bennett - Doniphan-Trumbull, #6 Headline Writing

1. Write at least one 2 line headline which may include a headline with a subheadline
2. Write at least one 3 line headline which may include a headline with a subheadline
3. Any length or line count

A1

***Home is Where the Mind is***

*Canadian architect explains how adding natural resources, open concepts, and comfortable aesthetics to rooms may maximize mental productivity.*

Article 2

***Over the River and Through the Woods***

*Arizona dog leads two-year old boy through wilderness and dangerous terrain to ultimate safety.*

Article 5

***Family Reunion***

*Nebraska man upkeeps families 150-year old cemetery; resting site to over twenty deceased relatives.*

## **Andrea Pavlish, Dorchester, #7 Newspaper Feature Writing**

Having a green thumb is no longer a foreign fantasy for sand-surrounded students with the new outdoor learning garden. To be unveiled on May 15, one will find all sorts of different opportunities to encourage students to engage with nature and learn about sustainability. “Our goal with this garden is to create a living classroom.” Emiliy Rivera said, the Silver Valley High School Science Teacher and Garden Coordinator. “We want [students] to understand the importance of sustainability and where their food comes from.”

The goal of the “living classroom” is to promote environmental awareness and hands-on learning experiences for students. “The garden will help us promote eco-friendly practices and educate our peers about the environment.” Ben Adams said, an Environmental Club Member. “We hope to organize workshops and events to get everyone involved.”

To bring in people beyond the Environmental Club, people like Adams hope to expand its benefits to the entire student body. “We are excited for students to learn in this unique setting,” Principal Mark Johnson said. “I believe it will foster a sense of community and teamwork.”

The learning garden is beyond just a greenhouse, featuring spaces for outdoor classes among the native plants. “I can’t wait to see everyone working together to plant and maintain it,” Student Council President Lila Turner said. “Plus, it will be fun to have outdoor classes!”

This initiative has been in the works for a while, with students and faculty alike eager for it to open. “We’ve been advocating for a space like this for years,” Adams said. “It’s amazing to see it finally happening!”

Students will not only be benefited with an outdoor classroom and hands-on opportunities, but will experience dirt on their hands to grow their own food, something an

indoor classroom could never offer “[The learning garden] will not only enhance our science curriculum,” said Rivera, “but also encourage students to appreciate and connect with nature.”

By Isaac Couch, Mead, #8 Newspaper News Writing  
The Norfolk Farmer's Market: a Long-Standing Tradition

Two Norfolk volunteers hold key positions in the responsibility of running and managing a historic business in the downtown part of the city. It serves not only as a place for the community to gather and share time together, but also as a market where local producers and small businesses can sell their products.

President Elissa Mathis and Vice President David DeCarolis are in charge of the Norfolk Farmer's Market. With newfound growth occurring rapidly in the last year, they are also in charge of tackling some new challenges.

The farmer's market has been around for 50 years , starting out with only three vendors. Growth was slow and gradual over time. However, this year the market increased a tremendous amount in size.

DeCarolis said, "We have expanded up to 50% over the last year."

Many new changes may be responsible for this growth. This year, the Norfolk Farmer's Market became a non-profit. Also, the market now helps give local artists a platform to display their work through a partnership with the River Point Creative District.

"We are very proud of our local partnerships," DeCarolis said, "we are able to bring artists and musicians to the farmer's market."

Excited about the addition of the musicians, Mathis said, "It just adds a wonderful atmosphere to the farmer's market."

Some Saturdays feature live painting demonstrations, which further adds to the market's cultural experience.



The market also serves a community hub for more than just culture and commerce. The market holds their “Big Kickoff” on May 3rd. This event will feature speeches, scavenger hunts sponsored by local businesses, and story time with the Norfolk Library.

Mathis said, “The goal of the farmer’s market is to connect with the public.”

Behind the curtains, Mathis and DeCarolis have faced some difficult challenges. DeCarolis stated that the main challenges were with the space due to vendors and trouble with regulations

He said, “We were able to navigate these problems mostly because of our partner in Visit Norfolk and the city.”

“We have never been formally organized,” Mathis said, “We have also struggled with advertising.”

Despite these challenges, the Norfolk Farmer’s Market has been extremely successful and is a staple in the community. It also serves as a tourist attraction.

DeCarolis said, “We are very proud to know that the farmer’s market produces over half a million dollars in sales.”

What began as a small start-up in Norfolk over 50 years ago has blossomed into a key part of the community. The market now holds over 25 vendors and features locally made agriculture, artisan, and pottery products.

While Mathis and DeCarolis may be the one’s in the driver’s seat, the community of Norfolk is the engine that continues to drive the market year after year.

## The Heralded Hawk

By. Alexander Dane Madsen, Falls City Sacred Heart, #9 Newspaper Sports Feature Writing

The fresh morning dew presiding over the grassy field is soon overrun by young men, wearing crimson Hawk icons proudly displayed upon their chest, running up and down the striped soccer field. Adam Potter, the young man in his mid-thirty's, brushes back his jet-black hair and blows the whistle signifying the end to the seemingly eternal purgatory of conditioning. The players catch their hurried breaths and prepare for a long practice. Coach Potter reminds the Northeast Nebraska Soccer team of what they are fighting for. The end result is the same as last year, a national championship.

It's certainly unbelievable that the small Northeast Nebraska Community College on the outskirts of Norfolk, Nebraska, features one of the rising stars in the soccer coaching world. Coach Potter had hailed from the soccer Mecca of the Midwest, Chicago Illinois, and even played Division One for the powerhouse Northwest. It has also become certainly evident that his playing talents and coaching talents go hand in hand.

After finishing up a star-strutted career at Northwestern, Adam Potter became Coach Potter when he accepted a job at a small college in the bustling town of Phoenix, Arizona. He was experiencing moderate success when he decided to transfer to the small NJCAA college of Casper. This happened to be the inaugural season of Casper Soccer, but that didn't phase Coach Potter one bit.

"I love adversity," Coach Adam Potter exclaimed. "Starting at Casper was a challenge, but I knew that's what I wanted".

Nobody really had Casper on the radar. Few even knew of the existence of the soccer program. This would soon all change when Potter led Casper to being ranked in the top 10 nationally.

"I knew I had something special." Potter remembers. "But I wanted another challenge."

After dominating at Casper for a few years, Adam was on the move once again. Many established programs wished to enlist him as the commander of the soccer program, but Adam had a different idea. Most up-and-comers would have opted for a more star-strutted, established and prestigious program. However, Coach Potter decided to take on an immense challenge at the small Nebraskan college.

Potter recalls visiting Norfolk, Nebraska. He avidly describes running across the endless cement trails along Norfolk. As the gentle thumping of his running shoes and the cement sang a melody with his long gasps of air, his mind was racing as he contemplated taking the job. Suddenly he spots an older gentleman walking along the road. The man had recognized Adam as one of the candidates for the head coaching position for Northeast's soccer program.

Then man embraced Potter, who excitedly proclaimed his support and love of his beloved Hawks. The gentleman made it very clear that he was not isolated in his passion. The whole city of Norfolk was whole heartedly in a love affair with the small college's athletic programs. Coach Potter was taken back by this man's kind and embrace gesture. He finished up his five-mile jog along and

showered. If he wasn't yet convinced about taking the helms of the program, he was now certainly infatuated with the possibility.

The athletic director knew he had a very clear opportunity to build the program. The program was inaugurated eleven years ago and had only experienced a maximum of six wins within the timeframe. It was near unheard of for an established young coach to just land at the doorstep at this rural college. The director knew he had to sell Potter with the otherworldly support of the loyal Hawk fans.

"He showed me a picture of the packed gymnasium for both men's and women's home basketball games. I was so blown away by this cities support," Coach Potter remembers. "The clear support and passion of the whole community was to see us succeed. That's what I look for in a program."

Adam Potter accepted the role of head men's soccer coach for the Northeast Nebraska Hawks in January 2021. He immediately took advantage of the new world of the transfer portal within college sports, and subsequently overhauled the roster with men he knew he could count on. Thanks to Potter's roster changes and even more his excellent program development, the program reached 21 wins and won the district championship. Even more excitingly, for the first time ever, the Hawks had reached a National Tournament game. Adam and his coaching staff had even received the prestigious award for Coaching Staff of the Year within there district.

The following season, the Hawks were on everybody's radar (A far cry from the six-win, eleven-year slump). Coach Potter prepared the Hawks for greatness, as they started off the 2023 season being ranked within the top 10 nationwide. They would peak at first before reaching the national tournament after unsurprisingly dominated their district. The team did fair in the tournament before ultimately falling to the number one team in the country (who they had previously beat) in the semifinals.

After being that close to holstering the golden trophy that every other program infatuated over, Adam Potter was ready to win it all in 2024. They started the season red hot and dominated throughout the season. Once again, to the dread of their opponents, Coach Potter and the Hawks dominated the district and advanced to the national championship game.

The Hawk's would be ranked fifth, which meant back-to-back games within two days, not allowing for crucial rest needed for ample performance. However, if you know Adam by now, you know that his love for adversity rivals everything else. The team would dominate both games and soon find themselves in the National Championship game. It's no surprise what happened next.

"I remember the final horn sounding, and immediately all eleven of our players dropped to their knees in joy. We were behind every playoff game but roared back to win all of them." Coach Potter exclaims. "The feeling of accomplishment was unmatched."

Adam Potter and his staff would be named 'United Soccer Coaches National Coaching Staff of the Year' in 2024 as well. Adam is far from finished though.

“I look for selfless players. The type who are willing to sacrifice everything for the team,” Coach Potter exclaims. “I don’t just look for talent, I look for how they communicate to the team, the body language and the mentality of each player.”

Adam Potter had been instrumental in the newfound success the reason the Northeast Nebraska Hawks are now talked about nationwide. This doesn’t bloat Adam’s ego though. He remains ever so hungry, ready to capitalize off the amazing season in order to hang another banner so the community of Norfolk can be at ease with the choice they had made.

Northwood Wolves Celebrate Class-A State Volleyball Championship Win

Going into the last and final game of their hard-fought season, the Northwood Wolves and the Southview Eagles were ready to face off in the Class A state volleyball championship match. Coming off a winning 27-3 record and earning the top seed in Class A, the Wolves felt they had earned their place in the state championship game. They'd been here before- the intensity of the atmosphere was nothing new to them. Though they were sitting comfortably in the top seed, the Eagles weren't too far behind them; their 24-6 record proved they belonged in the match just as much as their opponent did. As expected from these two teams, the match started out intensely. Some aggressive team-wide defense from the Wolves and a few hard hits from senior captain Mia Thompson allowed the Wolves to take the first set, ending it 25-22. After experiencing defeat in the first set, the Eagles had to decide whether or not they were going to let it affect their gameplay. Their answer became clear immediately, and they came back in the second set with more power. The Eagles' consecutive aces by senior outside hitter McLain Martin helped the team gain a win in the second set- 23-25. Now that it was an even game, the playing field felt equal again, and both teams came back ready to battle. The third set was a matter of who wanted it more, and it was the Wolves who turned out successful. The team owed this set's win to their junior setter Emily Chen, who acted as the playmaker for the third set, ending it 25-20. After gaining momentum and making it a 2-1 game, the Wolves had the chance to end the game in this next set, so both teams knew how important it was. It was especially important to Martin and junior libero Sarah Williams, who led the team in what could have been the game's last set. Because of Martin's smart offense and Williams' quick defense, the Wolves were not allowed the chance to end this championship match in four sets. Starting the fifth and final set of the game, both teams knew that only one side of the net would make it out on top.



The gym was now filled with anticipation, energy from both sides of the court running high. With some tough gameplay from both the Eagles and the Wolves, the score reached 14-12 in the Wolves' favor. A swing from the Eagles made its way to the Wolves' side of the court, but Thompson anticipated the hit and decided she wasn't going to let it happen. With a game-winning block, she found her feet back on the floor and knew what she had just done for her team. Thompson says, "It was a tough match, but we never lost faith in ourselves. We've worked so hard for this moment, and I'm proud of how we battled until the end." Speaking alongside Thompson, her head coach Linda Hartman comments, "This victory is a testament to the resilience of our team. Each player stepped up when it mattered most. I'm incredibly proud of how far they've come this season." The Wolves took the fifth set, right along with the Class A State Volleyball Championship trophy.

Gabriella Tederman, Yutan, #11 Yearbook Feature Writing

In life, one of the most rewarding moments is seeing every ounce of hard work and dedication put into something pay off. For the Theatre Department at Eastview High School, this was especially true for their production of *Les Miserables*.

Theatre Department Director Megan Porter knew from the beginning that putting on this play was going to be no small feat.

“This was, without a doubt, the most ambitious production we’ve ever done,” Porter said.

Although they faced the risk of a new level of quality and grandeur in their production, each member tackled this challenge head on, knowing that their big dreams could not be achieved without putting in the work. Through rehearsal nights and individual practices, trusting the process and letting the play come to life was reassuring.

“Managing a cast and crew that large was challenging,” student director Emily Carmichael said. “Watching the actors grow into their roles and the set transform with each rehearsal—it was an incredible experience.”

Then, forty-five students making up the cast and crew and three months filled with hours of practice later, it was show time. Using high quality, authentic elements like handmade costumes and a live orchestra, every minute detail helped contribute to the emotional plot.

“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,” stagehand Jake Hansen said.

The Theatre Department put on five shows—and every single one sold out. However, the numbers of tickets sold does not mean much alone; the real reward was how this production made the audience feel.

“The emotions, the music—it was all so powerful. We worked so hard to get every detail right, and seeing the audience respond the way they did made it all worth it,” lead actress Olivia Thompson said.

The goal of this art to invoke emotions did not have an impact on just the audience, however. This process shed a new light on theater for those involved, creating a new perspective that resulted in pride and fulfillment.

“Being part of the behind-the-scenes crew gave me a whole new appreciation for theater,” Hansen said. “It really felt like we were building something special.”

The awe-inspiring result and passion of the cast and crew did not go unnoticed.

“The students poured their hearts into it, and I’m so proud of what they accomplished,” Porter said. “It wasn’t just about putting on a show—it was about telling a story that resonates, and they did that beautifully.”

This taste of success made everyone hungry for more. The audience and performers are already anticipating the big dreams and accomplishments in years to come and are preparing to put in hard work that will inevitably pay off.

Lunchtime Volleyball Feature by Jade Grasiani, Mead  
#12 Yearbook Sports Feature Writing

“Hey, who hit this ball into my lunch?!” exclaims a student at Sage River High. A new and sporty addition has been added to the school’s athletic and appetizing atmosphere.

Lunchtime volleyball – a time for students to let out their energy, learn new things, and make friends along the way.

David Savage, Sage River’s PE teacher, came up with the idea of students practicing their volleyball skills post to eating their school lunch. But, out of all the different sports, why volleyball?

“Volleyball is one of those sports that’s kind of underrated because a lot of people have never played it,” Savage said. “So to give them the opportunity to play it and try something new is really fun and enjoyable.”

Not only is this lunchtime volleyball giving students a chance to try out a new sport and practice their skills, but according to freshman Bently Norton, it’s a good way to make new friends as well.

“It’s been a great experience,” Norton said. “I’ve been able to connect with some new people.”

On top of new friendships beginning through lunchtime volleyball, it has also given some students a chance to learn new things, which could potentially result in volleyball becoming their new big interest.

Junior Amanda Cru wanted to try out volleyball during lunch before officially joining a real team. This option gave her some background to the sport before jumping into the real competitive environment. Luckily, some veteran volleyball players who can assist her with her skill also participate.

“A lot of the players that are a part of lunch volleyball are really good,” Cru said. “Sometimes they give me tips that help me improve too.”

It’s clear that the PE teacher and participating students are very fond of the lunchtime volleyball addition, but how does the head of the school feel about it?

Principal Monica Powers has also noticed that this lunchtime activity has added huge benefits to the students at school. It also may be helping students who have a harder time focusing than others.

“We used to have school issues that would happen over lunch because students would be bored and getting into trouble,” Powers said. “Since we started lunch volleyball, we’ve seen a trend of better behavior from our students.”

As well as the lunchtime ball making students happier and acting better, it is also a very good time for Savage to recognize how awesome the student body really can be.

“My favorite part about hosting lunch volleyball would be the students,” Savage said. “Being able to see them every day, playing with them occasionally, and watching them be joyful everyday and be healthy is just a really laid back, fun thing to do at lunch.”

As you can see, the combination of improved behaviors, healthy activity, making new friends, and being in a happy environment has truly impacted Sage River High for the better. Hopefully lunchtime volleyball will continue for many years to come.

“It’s also pretty important because face it, you’re kind of just bored just sitting around, doing nothing, and kind of being unhealthy,” Savage said. “So its nice to have something physical to do.”

Theme: Rooted in Tradition

Opening:

Oftentimes, as humans, we have an internal struggle between the old and the new. We find it challenging to remain in what we know as well as expand into what we do not. However, heading into the school year at Sandhills Valley High School, we prepared to embrace both where we came from and the possibilities of where we are going by utilizing our past experiences to create more growth. As we prepare for each challenge the new school year may bring, we stand united in our shared roots in the Sandhills of Nebraska we call home. Through community traditions like the Sandhills Homecoming Parade and Bonfire, we intertwined our roots to bond with our community of Coyotes. We have the same old rival, the High Prairie Thunderhawks, but new strategies to tackle the challenge of taking them down. Everyone anticipates the school year, curious to see what new growth will come from this year but confident in knowing where we remain—rooted in tradition.

Closing:

As the 2024-2025 school year comes to an end, some parts of us wish to look back, while others are still striving forward to the future. Knowing we can do both, we stand strong in our identity as a Coyote forever but embrace each new leaf that has grown from every unique experience. However, although we hold every memory close, each of us is on a new path. The senior class of 2025 takes steps into their future, but the navy blue and silver will be forever engraved into their hearts, making last memories on the senior trip to the Black Hills to close off this chapter of their lives. The rest of the school says goodbye to them but not the legacy and traditions they left behind. As the year ends, we find that we are all rooted in tradition because

we were born into this family that stands so strong. As our roots grew deeper this year, it allowed us to become more sure of ourselves, giving us the confidence in our identities to grow up and expand who we are. Although another school year may be over, the family that has grown through both the old and the new continues to flourish, rooted in tradition.

#### Student Life:

As each new generation comes along, traditions are passed down, but through the individuality of each class, new ones are created as well. As usual, the strong agricultural program helped put together our Annual Ag Day, in which we exhibited our farming and livestock skills. However, the Coyotes expanded their reach to the fine arts and sports teams, producing an award-winning marching band and choir program as well as a state championship volleyball and wrestling team. Aside from these extracurricular accomplishments, we had our yearly Community Cleanup Drive, bringing our town together again for a common cause. Using our strong community drive, we took our old ideas and expanded them to meet the needs of our community now. This year, taking bold steps onto a new path of growth, our students worked to uplift others, holding their own, student-led Mental Health Awareness Week. On the academic side, Sandhills Valley High School grew to accommodate everybody's needs and challenge the students, now offering several advanced placement courses and dual credit classes, setting the student body up for future success. Combining the new with the old, the students grew to new heights by remaining rooted in tradition.



## WHY ANIMALS?

In the rural community of Yutan, students have many chances to interact with different types of animals. As the journalism staff, we realized just how many students are involved with animals in a variety of ways, so we decided to focus our newest in-depth on animals. Animals play such an important role in our lives. They are able to provide us with companionship, teach us responsibilities and even propel us towards future careers. Not only pets but also farm animals are so important to the students and staff at Yutan High School. Through reading this edition, we hope to show off the various connections that our students have with animals and the positive roles that they are able to play in each other's lives.

-Written by Loganne Barta  
on behalf of the staff

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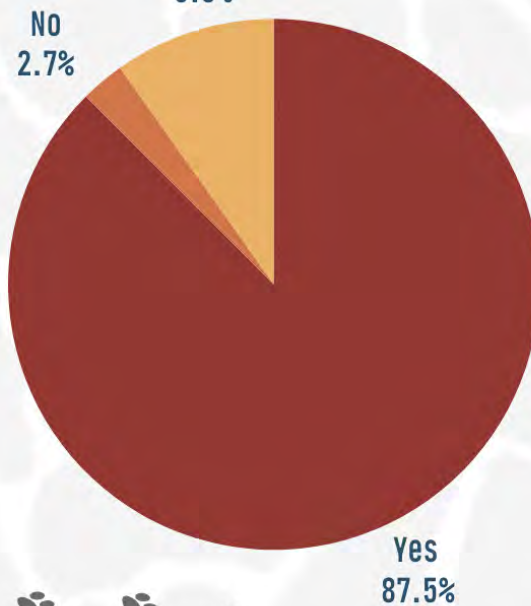
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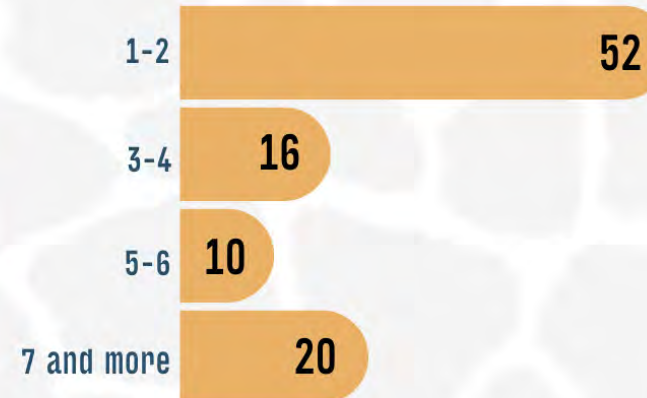
# CHIEFTAINS AND THEIR *Animals*

## Do you have any animals/pets?

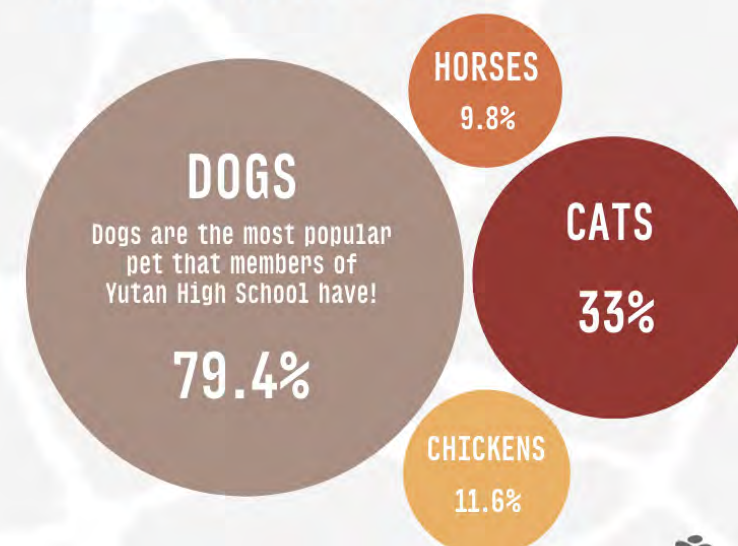
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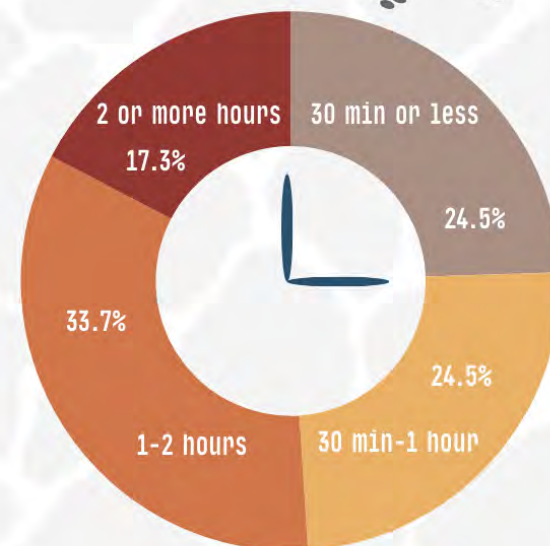
## Top 4 most popular animals/pets to own



## Other animals/pets include...

FISH  
LIZARDS  
RABBITS  
DUCKS  
DONKEYS  
GOATS

## How much time do you spend with your animals/pets each day?



INFORMATION WAS COLLECTED FROM A SURVEY SENT TO YUTAN STUDENTS AND STAFF ON JAN. 16, 2025, WITH A TOTAL OF 122 RESPONSES RECORDED. INFOGRAPHICS CREATED BY KYLIE KRAJICEK.

## What role do you take in caring for your animals/pets?



# Infographic - Kylie Krajicek

## Artist’s Statement

To start this infographic for an in-depth about Chieftain students and their animals, I sent out a survey on Google forms and gathered the included information from 112 students and staff recorded on Jan. 16, 2025. Then I created a 13.063 x 11.125 inch document on Canva. Next, I used the element tool on Canva and looked for an animal texture. I settled on a giraffe print and turned the transparency down to be a subtle detail. To follow, I created a textbox with the “Chieftain” in the font Intro Rust. Then using the same font, I typed the words “and their” and placed it below and to the left of “Chieftain.” Below and to the right, I typed “Animals” in the font White Star. After finishing the title, I moved on to inputting information from the survey into different types of graphs along with subtitles in the font Varp Basic. Since the wording on the graphs was too light to read, I recreated the labels in a bolder font and a darker color. For my color palette, I wanted to take inspiration from nature. So to find my perfect palette, I looked up complementary nature color palettes on Google and found the perfect neutral nature colors. In between the graphics on the top and bottom half, I used the element tool on Canva and searched for paw prints to add my last animal element.



In-Depth Newspaper Coverage: What a Zoo!

Halle Arlt

Loganne Barta

Ansley DeGroff

Aubrie Pehrson

Anna Peterson

Emmy Tederman

Volume 26, Issue 4.2, February 2025



# Chieftain Times

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**WHAT A ZOO!**  
AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE  
CHIEFTAINS AND THEIR ANIMALS



Cover graphic by Tyler Witt



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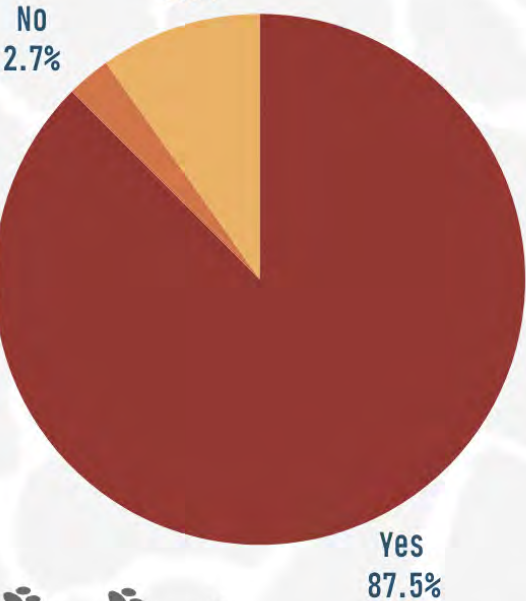
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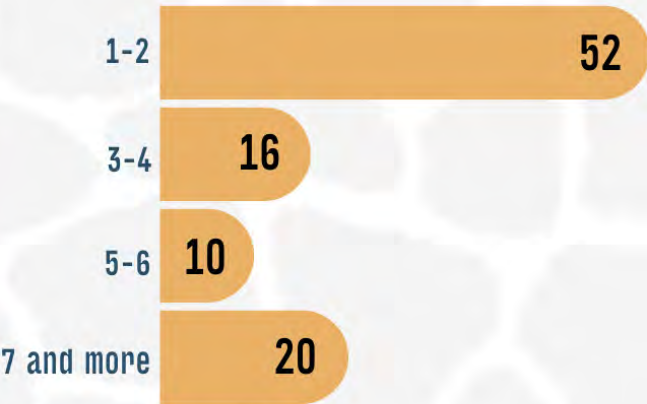
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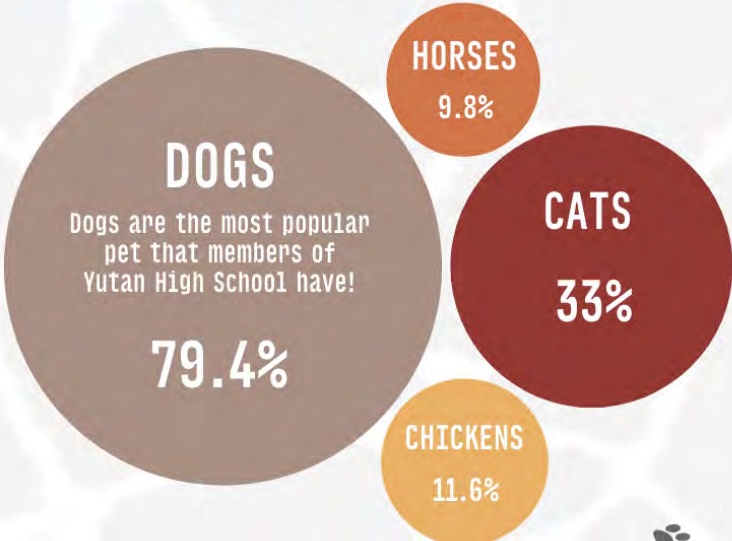
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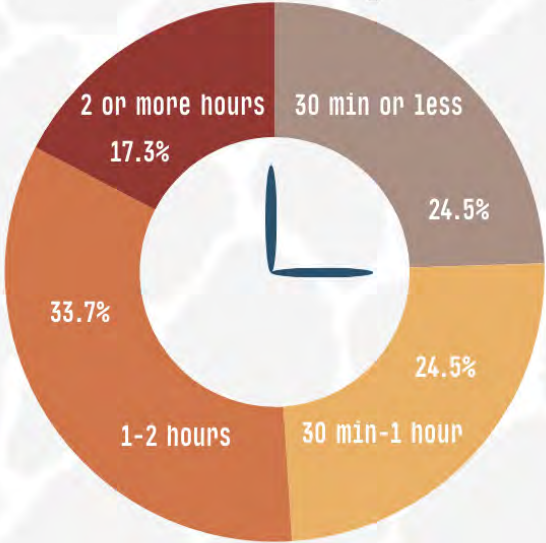


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## What role do you take in caring for your animals/pets?





# Caring for many *creatures*

By Halle Arlt

*Schmidt attends to assortment of animals daily*

Many families may have animals, and these pets can range from cats and dogs to horses and cattle. One Yutan student in particular has experience with a very wide variety of animals.

Sophomore Avery Schmidt lives with an assortment of animals including goats, dogs, chickens, turkeys, cats and ducks. With all these different species adding up, Schmidt has around 56 animals in total that she has to take care of.

"I do most of the work for my animals. I feed and water [the animals] every night. I make sure that they're all inside at night so they don't get eaten," Schmidt said. "My goats get hay when they need it. They also need copper, so we fill that up like every week."

Schmidt has had most of her dogs for her whole life, while the rest of her animals came anywhere from five to six years ago.

"We kind of slowly just kept getting more animals. Like it started out with chickens then we got ducks, goats and turkeys," said Schmidt.

Since there are so many animals

to take care of, some new and some old, each one has its own necessities besides food and water.

"My chickens, they sort of know about going inside before it gets dark, so I don't really have to coax them inside. My cats come in every morning and night, and they meow when they want food," Schmidt said.

While some of Schmidt's pets may be easy to take care of every day, but others are more needy.

"My goats are really annoying because all they do is eat. As soon as I get home, they want food, so I have to go feed them," Schmidt said. "One [turkey] is a female, and we have two males, so they always fight over her. And she's actually nesting three turkey eggs right now."

Caring for these animals means keeping them healthy and safe; however, sometimes this job can be difficult and even a little dangerous.

"My turkey, Blue, likes to attack me, and that makes my job very difficult because I have to lock him up in a different area when I'm cleaning the coop and giving them water and feed inside," Schmidt said.

Although it can be hard sometimes, Schmidt can incorporate some fun into these daily tasks, such as training an animal to do a trick.

"They're all cute, and I like to hold or pet them," Schmidt said. "I trained my dog Thor to sit, shake, lay down and beg. And then my other dog Armani knows how to sit in Spanish."

Dogs are a usual animal to train, but Schmidt went up a step to train another one of her animals.

"I love Samuel, my mini rooster, because when I call him, he'll fly up onto my shoulder. I trained him to do that," Schmidt said.

In all, it takes Schmidt around thirty minutes each day to care for all her animals. Although it takes time out of her day, she still enjoys the learning experience from caring for all these animals.

"I'm really grateful and happy to have all my animals because I've learned how to be responsible for them, and they're fun to take care of," Schmidt said. "It's also fun to show off Samuel and Thor's tricks to my friends."

# Embracing the *exotic*

By Ansley DeGroff

*White family adopts, rescues animals of all kinds*

Most people have to visit a zoo to see an exotic animal, but that's not the case for freshman Brilynn White.

"I have around 40 animals that consist of horses, ducks, goats, pigs, cows, donkeys, z-donkeys, zebras, tortoises, a sloth, armadillo, parrot, bunny and the normal cats and dogs," White said.

Many of the Whites' animals were rescued, such as some donkeys, z-donkeys, goats, and some of her horses, but the rest of the animals were bought from an online auction for the simple fact that her mom loves animals.

"My family enjoyed the part of getting to rescue animals, and knowing that the fact that they could save a life by bringing it home to rescue was pretty cool," White said.

Having this many animals around their house requires a lot of time, care and attention per day, however.

"Every day we clean out their stalls and or cages. We put 12 hours a day into working with them. For me, I have to clean stalls, empty litter boxes and fix what they break," White said.

The hardest animal for the family to take care of is her sloth due to the time-consuming needs and challenges.

"My dogs and sloth take up a lot of time, and I can't hold my sloth due to the fact that if it were to bite me I would have to go to the hospital due to the bacteria that they carry," White said.

While the chores are hard, White does not mind taking the time to give her animals what they need.

"I enjoy doing the chores and having these animals around. It is definitely unique but also doing the chores makes me realize that they all are different in their own ways," White said.

Out of all the animals White has, she feels that she is the closest to her barrel-racing and pole-bending horse Jasper.

"My horse Jasper, my barrel and pole horse, [and I] have a special bond that most people don't have with an animal. The reason me and Jasper have such a special bond is because he was the first horse that I gained trust with," White said.

This bond allows her to see his unique personality, which sometimes causes issues.

"There was this one time where I was cleaning my horse's stall and he

yanked on my hair and then I fell and got up and accidentally let him out. Then I left the gate open and let the other two horses out, causing a very chaotic scene," White said.

Even though the current animals that White has at home are time-consuming, her family still plans on getting more animals.

"Here soon we plan on getting two capybaras and then giraffes and get back into buying more animals and the rescuing side of it," White said.

The rescuing part is what White's family feels is most rewarding and what they find the most joy in doing.

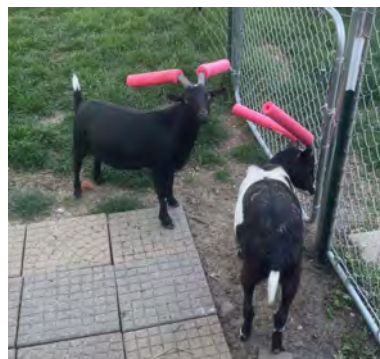
"My family enjoyed rescuing animals and the feeling of knowing that the pets that had gone through so much are at a great home and enjoy life way more now that they are happier," White said.

Regardless of the number of pets that the White family has, they still enjoy having each and every one of them at their house.

"Even though we have many pets that take up a lot of time, me and my family still enjoy having them around and just how cool of an opportunity it is to have them," White said.



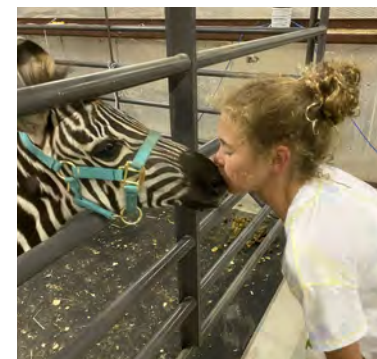
Sophomore Avery Schmidt poses with her rooster Samuel, who she trained to fly up onto her shoulder. Schmidt has even had Samuel fly up onto her head before. (Courtesy Photo)



Schmidt's goats, Barney and Clyde, wait to be let out of the yard. Both of the goats occasionally wear these pool noodles to stop them from head butting. (Courtesy Photo)



Schmidt cuddles up with two of her baby chicks. Every year Schmidt hatches a few different eggs ranging from chickens to turkeys to ducks. (Courtesy Photo)



Freshman Brilynn White feeds her baby zebra. White's family rescued this zebra named Marley from an online auction. (Courtesy Photo)



White rides her horse through a pasture. This horse is White's main barrel racing and pole bending horse. (Courtesy Photo)



White feeds her two alpacas. Their names are Curly and Belvedere and were bought from an online auction. (Courtesy Photo)



# Wingin' it

## Mattheis cares for eight birds despite challenges

By Anna Peterson

When hearing the word pet, most people think of a dog, cat or maybe even a fish. However, freshman Taylor Mattheis has her own version of the word pet. Mattheis has birds as pets—and she has not just one but eight birds.



Freshman Taylor Mattheis poses with her bird Sunny. Sunny is Mattheis's 4th bird and only cockatiel. (Courtesy Photo)

"Well, there's Sunny, and I picked that name [because] he has a bright yellow head. And then there's Blue, which kind of gives it away. He's Blue. And then there's Mango. I got him from someone else, so I didn't choose his name. And then there was a Blueberry, but I changed it to Sky because I don't like the name Blueberry. And then there's Kiki. I don't know where I got that from. I came up with it, I think, or I saw it somewhere. And then there's Clue because I had no clue what was going on with him. And then the other two, I let my friends pick, and

it was Peep and Burb," Mattheis said.

Mattheis got into birds when she got the first one for her eighth birthday from her aunt, and over the years her flock has grown. Among these birds, Mattheis has two different breeds: parakeets and cockatiels.

"A cockatiel is much bigger than a parakeet, so that's mostly how I tell them apart. Plus, they have like these little mohawks so that also helps," Mattheis said.

Other than parakeets and cockatiels, Mattheis has had a parrot and a scarlet macaw.

"We adopted a scarlet macaw, and then we had to get rid of him because he was aggressive towards males, and he tried to bite me in the face. I was pretty sad about that, so then I got my first parakeet for my birthday that year," Mattheis said.

Each of her birds, no matter the breed, comes with their own challenges.

"Well, making sure all eight birds get fed is hard because if they are like flying around and stuff, they are really hard to get back in their cages once you let them out because they don't really wanna go back in," Mattheis said.

This is not the only set of challenges Mattheis faces when taking care of these unique pets.

"I mean, all animals are messy, but birds are particular because they are constantly shedding feathers and they flank seeds everywhere. Plus, they're really small and hard to catch when they misbehave or when you want them to stop doing something,"

Mattheis said.

Mattheis doesn't see herself increasing her flock anytime soon, but she still doesn't rule it out.

"They're just really messy and loud, but if I did get another bird it would probably be another parakeet or maybe a quaker parrot. I've always wanted one and they're really cute," Mattheis said.

Even though there are a lot of ups and downs to taking care of these fun pets, for Mattheis it's worth it to have a built-in best friend in the end.



Mattheis's bird Blue sits in a blanket making himself warm. Mattheis got Blue for her 8th birthday, and he was her first bird. (Courtesy Photo)

"Even though my birds are sometimes difficult to take care of, I love them and wouldn't ask for any other pet," Mattheis said. "They're the perfect pets for me because they're fun, energetic and entertaining."



Design by Morgan Long





## Steer-ing toward success

Students grow in leadership, work ethic through cattle show ring



By Loganne Barta

Growing up in a small town, students are presented many opportunities to get involved both inside and outside of school. For a few students at Yutan High School, this means getting involved in showing cattle through 4-H.

These students—sophomore Tucker Barta, eighth-grader Cohen Ulrich and seventh-grader Jackson Drews—all started showing cattle due to having a family history of raising livestock. At the prime age that 4-H starts, around eight years old, all of these students made their first debut at the Saunders County Fair, getting more involved ever since.

“I probably started showing around eight years old,” Barta said. “I got into it from my family. We raised cattle and my sister started showing, so I also started showing.”

At first, all of these students only showed at their local county fair, but as they have gotten older, they have gotten more involved with showing year round. Some of these students now travel to up to ten shows a year.

“It depends on which ones we can hit and which ones we can’t, so I’d say we go to about six or seven shows



Eighth-grader Cohen Ulrich poses for a picture after showing his Angus steer in a market class. Ulrich’s steer got a blue ribbon in his class during the county fair. (Courtesy Photo)

“We go all across Nebraska, like to Kearney, Grand Island and Columbus,” said Ulrich, who also travels to Wahoo frequently for local shows.

Preparing for these shows takes hours of work at home, which all of the exhibitors take part in. Some of this work includes washing the calves, halter-breaking the calves, feeding the calves, clipping the calves and practicing showmanship with the calves.

“I’d say it takes at least an hour with the cattle each day. Sometimes it takes longer if we are clipping or doing other things,” Barta said. “We work the cattle almost every day but more in the summer since it’s hotter.”

After getting to a show, these students present their animal to a judge and hope to get placed first in their class, whether that is in a market, breeding or showmanship class, which are all judged slightly differently.

“Market is showing fat steers that the judges judge on their body type, the same with heifers too, but they are used for breeding. Showmanship isn’t really judged on the cow, it’s how you cooperate with the animal,” Ulrich said.

To these students, some of their favorite memories are when they have excelled in the show ring in any of these divisions. At shows, a variety of prizes are offered, either being a banner, belt buckle, trophy or cash prize.

“Getting pulled back for showmanship finals at the Saunders County Fair was my favorite memory because that’s one of the best times I’ve ever done in showmanship, so that was very fun,” Ulrich said.

Even if they didn’t get the results they expected, these students reflect that showing is a huge learning experience all the while.

“It’s not all about winning, it’s about how much fun you have and the experience,” Drews said. “I like showing because it’s something that not many other kids do.”

Some skills that these students can learn are strong social skills and a good work effort, which is easy to learn from hours in the barn.

“We work a lot in the barn with the cattle, like feeding, washing and cleaning pens. There’s a lot that goes into it,” Barta said.

Another reason these students enjoy showing cattle is that they get to meet new people that they wouldn’t have been able to meet otherwise.

“I have learned how to take care of animals and meet new people,” said Barta. “I’ve met people from all across the state that I wouldn’t have been able to if I didn’t show cattle.”

All in all, as these students grow older, they hope to continue developing their own skills and even help the next generation of cattle showmen.

“I want to keep showing, and I can eventually teach more people how to show as well,” said Drews.



During the Saunders County fair, sophomore Tucker Barta shows his steer, Bandit, to the judge. Barta got to show his steer at three different shows last year. (Courtesy Photo)



## From cows to crowns

Barta earns title of Nebraska Angus Queen, represents industry at events nationwide



By Gabi Tederman

Everyone wants to see their hard work and dedication to something they love pay off. For senior Loganne Barta, this hard work paid off in a state—and even nationally—recognized way.

Each year, the Nebraska Angus Queen Association holds a competition that searches for someone involved in the Nebraska Angus Association who would be a fitting role model and spokesperson within the Angus industry, and Barta was crowned this year’s queen.

“I’ve always really shown just purely Angus cattle, so I’ve heard about the Nebraska Angus Queen for the past couple of years, and I decided that I wanted to run for it my senior year,” Barta said. “Getting this title was such an honor to me.”

The process included an application that candidates filled out in the fall, followed by an event in December where the queen would be chosen. Each candidate gave an introduction and was interviewed by two judges, and the competition ended with an eight-minute speech by each candidate. The judges were looking

for why each candidate wanted to be queen and what they hoped to accomplish.

“I kind of explained how I’ve been in the Angus industry for so long and how it impacts me. I think I got more personal than the other candidates did, and I think that really helped me,” Barta said.

When Barta learned she was chosen at the ceremony, the news had a big impact not just on her but on her family as well.

“I am so very proud of Loganne; it takes a lot of work and determination to be so involved in agriculture,” Loganne’s mom, Kristan Barta, said. “It’s not always easy to break away from the norm and do something so different than her peers, but she does it full speed ahead and with a lot of passion.”

As queen, Barta will have opportunities to be involved in the Angus industry all over the country.

“Each queen gets a year term to go around the country and help out with shows, sales and speak to the community,” Barta said. “Being able to go to all these big shows and sales and all that stuff, where I’m getting invited by people to go to their events, is also really cool.”

Throughout these events, Barta said her role is “a face of the Angus industry.”

“Then at the end of my term... we do an Angus tour, so we take a bus for three days across the state of Nebraska and tour the really big operations, so I get to help be a spokesperson for that as well,” Barta said.

For one of the first events of her term, Barta went to Denver, Col., for the Angus Junior Show at the National Western Stock Show. There, she was able to meet with other state queens and the national queen to hand out the awards.

“I was very excited to meet the national queen for the first time and be around the other states’ queens. We had a lot in common, as we both have been part of the Angus breed our whole lives,” Barta said.



Loganne Barta poses with her sash and crown alongside Nebraska Angus Princess Zoey Malander. Nebraska is one of the few states with both an Angus Queen and Princess. (Courtesy Photo)

Barta not only has chances to help with shows through the Nebraska Angus Association, but she is also able to become a role model for the next generation of kids in the Angus industry.

“I think that it does mean a lot, especially that a whole bunch of younger girls that also are in the Angus Association look up to me now too,” Barta said.

This was one of the main reasons Barta was inspired to apply for this honor.

“Ever since I was little and in the Angus Association, I always looked up to the queens,” Barta said. “They were really nice to me, and that kind of is what influenced me to want to be queen when I was older.”

As she starts her year-long term, this inspiration makes Barta ready to take on the responsibilities and opportunities she has as the Nebraska Angus Queen.

“I’m so excited to make an impact on both the organization and my state during this term,” Barta said.



Senior Loganne Barta shows her Angus cattle at the AGR Winter Preview Show. The Angus breed is the biggest breed association in the United States. (Courtesy Photo)





# Lassoing in a unique hobby

DeGroff siblings gain memories, awards through high school rodeo



By Addi Jones

Living in a small town, there are fewer opportunities for unique extracurricular activities. Two students from Yutan High School—siblings Holden and Ansley DeGroff—don't let this stop them, though, and are still able to compete in high school rodeo.

“Rodeo is a sport with multiple events where you can do all sorts of things like bull riding, bronc riding, multiple roping events and there are also some sorts of wrestling events,” sophomore Holden DeGroff said.

Holden competes in team roping, which includes a header, a healer, rope and a steer.

“The steer is lined up in a shoot and once you nod for the steer, the steer runs out. The header ropes the

horns and the healer ropes the feet. You try to rope the steer as fast as you can,” Holden said.

Holden's sister, freshman Ansley DeGroff, competes in barrels, poles and breakaway barrels.

“Barrels has three barrels you ride around, and poles has six poles that you weave through twice,” Ansley said. “During barrel breakaway, you get into a fenced in area, back up and once you nod your head, the calf leaves the shoot and you try to rope the calf.”

From training to packing for the trip, the rodeo preparation can be a long process.

“To prepare for the rodeo, I ride my horse every day and go over the basics most of the time,” Ansley said. “Usually a day before, I get everything ready and packed for the trailer. And then the day of, you just have to be ready to drive far.”

While training is year-round, the actual rodeos are concentrated during two times of the year.

“High school rodeo is in the fall, and then there's a spring season, and they both last about two months each,” Holden said.

During those two-month spans, the Degroffs try to go to as many

competitions as possible.

Freshman Ansley DeGroff and her horse compete in a barrel racing competition in Mason City, Neb. DeGroff has been competing in barrel racing for 4 years. (Courtesy Photo)

“We go to about somewhere around 20 to 30 rodeos, but in the off-season, there's jackpots that we can compete in,” Holden said.

The high number of competitions can present some challenges for the siblings.

“Injuries for the horses and keeping them in shape is a big challenge,” Ansley said. “With school and sports, it's hard to be able to practice and ride every day.”

Holden and Ansley have each received many awards for their rodeo performances, including buckles, bridles, breast collars and horse tack.

“When I win awards, it feels great. It pays off for when all the practice you have put in wins you something,” Holden said.

Because they practice and compete so often, both DeGroffs have learned many lessons that can help them get better.

“Some of the biggest lessons I've learned has to be [that] you can't get mad at yourself. It's not always yourself, it's the animal, and you always got to be very kind and easygoing with your animal, otherwise it can make everything else a lot harder for yourself,” Holden said.

Ansley agreed, saying, “You can't get down about one run, and if you mess up once, go home, practice it and go back stronger.”

Although there are challenges, neither Holden nor Ansley plans to stop doing rodeo anytime soon. “It's like a passion to me, like somebody who plays a school sport that they enjoy,” Holden said. “When you work hard enough for it, you want to keep doing it.”



**Top:** Sophomore Holden DeGroff ropes the horns of a steer during a team roping competition. DeGroff placed first at this competition in Erickson, Neb. (Courtesy Photo)



**Right:** Freshman Ansley DeGroff and her horse compete in a barrel racing competition in Mason City, Neb. DeGroff has been competing in barrel racing for 4 years. (Courtesy Photo)



# Saddle up

Luebbe, Albers share their love for English riding



By Jada Reed

You may have seen English riding on TV—where riders wearing pants, hats, tall boots and a formal dress coat guide their horses as they jump over fences, getting judged on which rider has the best control over their horse and which horse is the most agile. But you may not realize that some students at Yutan High School compete in this sport. Sophomore Cheyenne Luebbe and seventh-grader Corryn Albers have both been riding for many years.

“English riding includes show jumping, dressage, polo, cross-country, eventing, English pleasure and saddle seat,” Albers said.

Luebbe participates in show jumping, while Albers participates in flat classes and show jumping.

“I like show jumping the best because you have to finish the course by jumping over fences and being fast without knocking them down,” Luebbe said.

Even though they compete in some of the same events, these students got started in different ways. Luebbe has been riding since she was seven years old and has been encouraged by her friends and family.

“My aunt and uncle signed me up for a pony camp when I was younger, and it inspired me to start riding,” Luebbe said.

Albers' love for horses was also started from a young age, but hers was sparked from a family vacation.

“The first experience I had with horses was a trail ride through the mountains in Colorado, and I had just instantly fallen in love with them,” Albers said.

While there many different ways she could have taken her love for horses, Albers was inspired by her mom to choose English riding.

“I chose [English] riding because my mom used to

ride horses when she was my age until she had an injury and couldn't ride horses anymore,” Albers said.

Once Albers and Luebbe got started, they worked to develop the skills needed to succeed in English riding.

“[The skills] you need for English riding are lower body strength and lots of patience. It has taken me 4 years to get to where I am now. You need the ability to stay confident and be ready to be pushed,” Albers said.

Advancing these skills require a time commitment both during the show season and the off-season.

“The show season is from March through November, but I practice every Wednesday the whole year,” Albers said.

Competing at shows has given Albers and Luebbe great memories to look back on.

“My favorite experience while riding was going to my first [competitive] show with my horse. It wasn't the best show, but it was fun getting to go to one,” Luebbe said.

Even though the competition didn't go how Luebbe had planned, she still enjoyed it because it was another way to bond and build trust with her horse, Maiko.

“I knew the first time I met Mak we were going to form a special bond and partnership because

of Mak's playful personality,” Luebbe said.

Albers has also experienced the range of different personalities that horses can have.

“My favorite memory while riding is when I tried to jump the biggest jump I had ever done and Peaches, my trainer's horse, got all excited and cantered a lap around the jump,” Albers said.

These bonds with their horses are one of the reasons both students find English riding rewarding.

“I chose to do horseback riding because the bond and connection you can build with a horse is a once-in-a-lifetime experience,” Luebbe said. “I know all the hard work and time I put into this sport will pay off in the future.”

Even if other students don't go down the English riding path, Luebbe and Albers still encourage them to think about horses in general.

“I would recommend English riding to people because you create strong bonds with your horse and you meet a lot of friends along the way,” Luebbe said.



**Top:** Sophomore Cheyenne Luebbe and her horse, Maiko, are jumping over a fence. Luebbe and Maiko train four days a week. (Courtesy Photo)



**Left:** Seventh-grader Corryn Albers poses with her trainer's horse, Peaches. Albers and Peaches competed at the Hampton Show and won awards in flat classes. (Courtesy Photo)



# Dog Dominance

Tederman explains why this pet is the top dawg

By Emmy Tederman

One of the most common debates about pets is this question: Are dogs or cats better? Each has its pros and cons, but depending on the type of person you are, you will probably prefer one more than the other. I have both dogs and cats at home, and based on those experiences, dogs have definitely been better. I've had animals my whole life and I know what I'm talking about—dogs are better than cats for multiple reasons.

First of all, dogs listen to you. With just a little training, you can have them sit and stay whenever you want. You can also teach them fun tricks to show off. My dog, Maggie, can sit, stay, bring her paw up and lay down. We have chickens, so we taught Maggie to stay and not follow us to the coop. Cats, on the other hand, can't do that. They do nothing all day except two things: lie there and eat food. You could easily call your dog and they will be right over. Cats just look at you like you're dumb. And I'm not the only one who has experienced this.

"My dogs are more obedient and listen to me, unlike my cat who just runs away from me," freshman Jersey Daniels said.

Second, depending on the type of dog you have, they are great for protecting you from other animals or unwanted visitors. My dog barks at any car that comes in our driveway, so it helps to know

if anybody shows up. If my cat saw an intruder, she would look at them like they are a harmless human.

Dogs' protection skills can also be useful in other ways as well.

"My dog is good at protecting strangers and animals. But when it comes to cattle, my dog does a great job herding the cows," freshman Ansley DeGroff said.



Sophomore Emmy Tederman poses with her German Shepherd, Maggie. Tederman has had Maggie for eight years. (Courtesy Photo)

Third, dogs are known to be a man's best friend, so they are loving and you can play with them and pet them. When I get home from school every day or just get home from something in general, Maggie greets me with a big smile. Compared to dogs, cats are kind of indifferent to

your existence. Plus, cats have way too many moods to be your best friend. Not to mention their claws! If you have never had a cat, then you can count yourself lucky that you have never experienced the excruciating pain of being scratched with their claws. And other students who have had this experience agree that dogs are better.

"Dogs are way better because they don't scratch your expensive furniture, or even worse, you," senior Libby Winn said.

Another great benefit for having a dog is that if you go on a run or a walk, they can come with you. We have a pool, so sometimes we take Maggie for a swim. In the winter, we drive a four-wheeler around in our yard and Maggie chases us. It makes me so happy to see her active and having fun playing around. Sometimes she gets the "zoomies," where she just runs in a big circle, and that always makes everybody smile.

Overall, it's clear that dogs are better than cats for a couple of reasons: Dogs listen to you, they are great for protecting you and they are your best friend. I am just

glad I have a best friend that is so loving and actually cares about me. Who wants to be ignored? Or who would rather have a best friend that will always be there for you? I don't know about you, but I want a best friend. Plus, who doesn't love a cute little puppy licking your face with cute little

## Other Chieftains who love their dogs

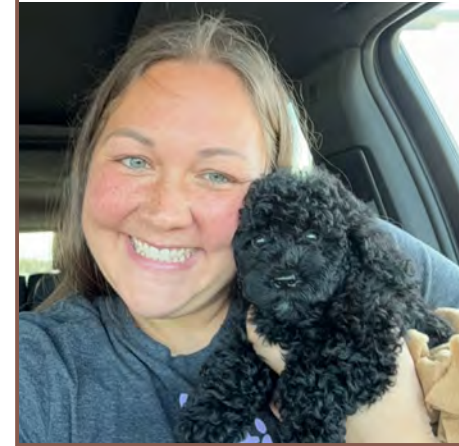


"Dogs make sure that you are never alone and always have someone there with you."

-Ian Dunn

"They are your best friend, so excited to see you and listen to commands!"

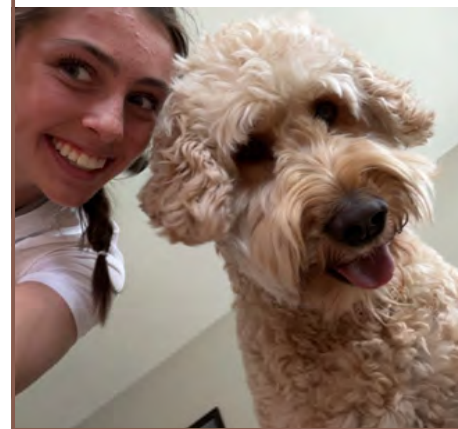
-Tahler Novotny



66 percent of Chieftains prefer dogs over cats

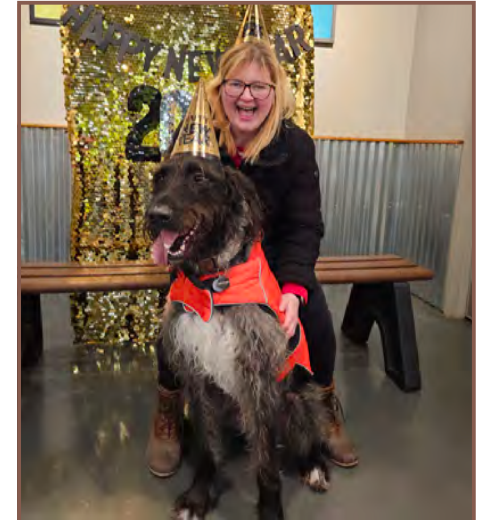
"My dog always wants to play with me, and he always greets me and other people when they go to my house, which makes me and other people feel special. He also likes to cuddle, and he is super chill and never barks or jumps on people."

-Addi Jones



"I love how my dog is always full of energy. It causes me to get more energized and happy."

-Nicole Wacker

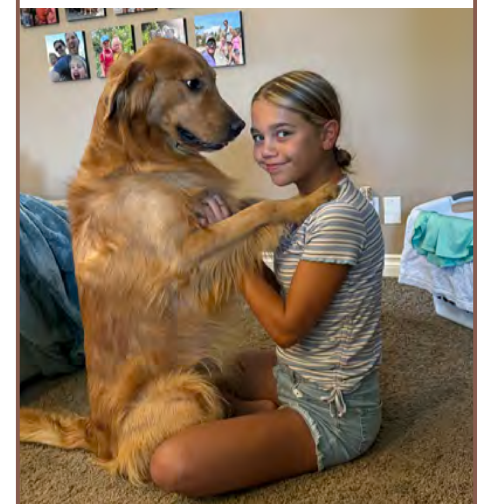


"I like how much personality they have. I really enjoy all the activities you can do with dogs, too. I love how much they snuggle and rely on you. They become one of my best friends. I'm also not allergic to them."

-Megan Enarnacion

"I like dogs because they are larger and you can lay against/on them. You can't do that with a cat because they are too small."

-Ella Eikmeier





# ≡ Pet “Purr”fection ≡

## Pehrson argues cats are the superior companion

By Aubrie Pehrson

Would you rather hang out with someone who is obnoxious, sloppy and high maintenance or someone who is laid back, independent and clean? If I were to guess, most people would probably choose the second option unless they are crazy. These descriptions also happen to perfectly describe two of the most common pets in the world: dogs and cats. So, if the majority of people wouldn't willingly spend time with a person that is rowdy and messy, why would they choose to own a dog who also possesses these characteristics? The answer to this question is beyond me, and I will never understand how the same people can hate cats—animals that are respectful and clean yet loyal. Although I may be in the minority, I firmly believe that cats are far better than dogs.

The first reason cats are better than dogs is their cleanliness. First off, cats don't need to be bathed because they can groom themselves, and they do it very often. They rarely partake in dirty habits; in fact, they are widely considered one of the cleanest animals. Dogs, on the other hand, can go outside for two minutes and be covered in mud and grime, and trust me, wet dog is not a pleasant smell. The big deal breaker for me, however, is the amount of slobber that dogs produce. It literally grosses me out and makes me gag! What's even worse is that some people willingly let their dogs slobber all over them and think how “adorable” they are.

I've seen these atrocities first hand—like watching my younger brother share an ice cream cone with our almost 10-year-old chihuahua named Pablo, who literally has rotting teeth and a missing eye. Meanwhile, I'm just standing there not only judging but also trying to keep myself from vomiting. I'm pretty picky about the people I share my

food with, let alone a literal dog. My other dog, Bailey, feels the need to slurp up all the water in her water bowl in one sitting, but she manages to get the water everywhere as it continues to pour out of her patulous jowls. The next thing you know, there's a huge puddle of water on the



Senior Aubrie Pehrson holds her cat Luna on the first day of school. Pehrson also has two other cats, Molly and Meow Meow. (Courtesy Photo)

floor for me to wipe up. My cat Luna, on the other hand, spends most of her days snoozing in different parts of the house, playing with my other cat or lounging around—all activities that don't bother anyone, where she can do her thing and I can do mine. I simply don't understand how some people can look at a drooling, smelly dog and think that they are better than cats—creatures that keep themselves clean and smelling fresh and wouldn't dare to drink from the toilet or eat poo.

And I am not alone in my thoughts. Junior Lexi Bisaillon, who owns both dogs and cats, agrees that cats are much cleaner animals than

dogs.

“I like cats because they're quiet, nice and clean. For example, my cat is an indoor and outdoor cat who stays away from dirt at all costs,” Bisaillon said. “When he does get dirty, he just cleans himself. He only drinks clean water and isn't all slobbery.”

Along with cleanliness, another reason cats are better is because they are quieter. Sometimes, I don't even realize that one of my cats is in the same room as me because they don't make much noise at all, besides the occasional jingle from their collars. They mind their own business and don't cause a ton of ruckus. I can't say the same thing about either of my dogs, though. About every morning, between the hours of 3 a.m. and 5 a.m., I'm awakened by the unsettling yet harmonizing squeals and howls of my two dogs. Meanwhile, my sweet, precious cat who was sound asleep on my bed is also abruptly awoken.

My sister, senior Alexis Pehrson, can also attest to this daily annoyance.

“I'll wake up in the middle of the night sometimes to my dog whining because they need let out to go to the bathroom, which is fine but it kinda takes away from my sleep, where a cat can just use the litter box,” Pehrson said.

Both quietness and cleanliness are major reasons cats are better than dogs, but I'd like to think that the most groundbreaking reason is that cats are way lower maintenance compared to dogs. When thinking about getting a dog, there are many responsibilities one must keep in mind. The list is endless: potty training, bringing them on walks, locking them in their kennel every night, training them, playing fetch, giving them all this attention,

and on and on. As someone who is a student-athlete, I don't have time for that, so I can't imagine how an average working person would. On top of all these duties, a dog owner would have to hire a pet sitter if they go out of town.

However, you can't say the same thing with cats, who can go for extended periods of time by themselves. Really, the only thing you have to worry about when owning a cat is giving them food and water as well as cleaning their litter box every once in a while. Cats also don't require nearly as much attention as dogs do. If anything, cats typically keep to themselves but also enjoy cuddling and showing affection. After a long, grueling day at school and practice, the last thing I want to do is play with my rowdy dog. Cuddling up with my cat on the other hand? That's a definite yes for me.

Another student who can relate to this is junior Maddie Fenn, who is also a cat and dog owner.

“I like my cats better because they aren't relying on my attention all the time. I can do my homework and my cat will be sitting on my bed. My dog, on the other hand, usually barks and scratches at my door,” Fenn said.

As any sensible person can see, cats make way better pets than dogs. If these three reasons aren't enough to convince people, I'm not sure what will. So if people still somehow think that dogs are better than cats, I hope they have fun being slobbered on, cleaning up poop and dealing with the countless responsibilities that come with owning one. In the meantime, I will sit back and relax with my fluffy, clean and quiet cat while laughing at you.

# ≡ “Paw”some Chieftain cats ≡



Eighth-grader Ksenia Bradford poses for a picture with her beautiful cat named Kiego. “Cats don't require as much work to take care of as dogs do! I also love how each of their personalities are VASTLY different from each other, from stuck up and prickly, to the goofiest little critter imaginable,” Bradford said. (Courtesy Photo)

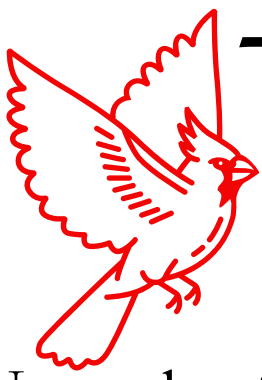
Industrial arts teacher Brian Fitzgerald and his wife Mary Jean Fitzgerald hold their cute cat named Princess. “[Cats are] easier to take care of and have minds of their own! Cats Rule!!!!!!” Fitzgerald said. (Courtesy Photo)



Seventh-grader Clara Tasich poses next to her adorable cat named Rosie. “I chose a cat because they are weird. For me my cats are lazy when they are inside but when they are outside they are totally different and hunt stuff,” Tasich said. (Courtesy Photo)







# The CHIRP

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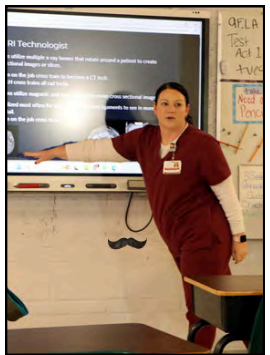
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## What's Inside



3rd-Grade Project



College/Career Fair



Junior High Sports

## Youth experience adult decision; high turnout impacts outcome

*New voters make difference in 2024 election results*

By Haley Gimpel

Youth voters' participation in the election can change every election year, depending on who the candidates are and what motives prompt their voting.

According to the Harvard Kennedy Institute of Politics, different factors motivated young voters to vote in this election. Housing, grocery expenses, and economic problems are some major issues on which young voters have focused. A few Harvard seniors could vote in this election for the first time and each had their own motives.

"I decided to vote because even one vote can make a difference," Logan Brunkhorst (12) said.

Brunkhorst overall felt good about his first experience voting and did research before the election.

"I mostly researched Nebraska politicians, looking at pros and cons," Brunkhorst said. "I asked for advice from people I'm around most often and developed my own conclusion."

Eduardo Perez (12) did not vote in this election because he could not register in time.

"I wish I could have voted because that is something that all citizens should do. As long as people have the right details, I think everyone should vote," Perez said.

Although Perez did not vote, he talked with his peers and others about the election.

"I went to Blake Bunner about the election. I think we had a good conversation," Perez said.

According to the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), about 42% of voters ages 18-29 participated in the 2024 election. This was a decrease from the 2020 election when over 50% of young people voted. In Maine, Indiana, and Wisconsin Kamala Harris saw a gain in support from young voters. Donald Trump won youth votes in Missouri, Louisiana, Florida, Ohio, Texas, Iowa, South Carolina, and Nebraska (CIRCLE).

Industrial Technology teacher Blake Barwick also had opinions about this election and the youth voting.

"I believe voting is a duty. If you don't vote, then you can't complain about what is happening in the country," Barwick said.

Barwick also believed that social media played a big role in the election.

"It can be a detriment to the election. Anonymous people can say whatever they want without explaining," Barwick said. "Also, it can lead to more uncivilized conversations. Being able to talk to each other respectfully is a sign of a healthy society."

Among voters 18-24 years old, 54% voted Democrat, 42% voted Republican

# 2024

Poll Results

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-elections/exit-polls>

In male voters, 18-29, 47% voted Democrat while 49% voted Republican

In female voters, 18-29, 61% voted Democrat while 37% voted Republican

Grace Tobias

Artist Statement:

To create this piece, I used Adobe Photoshop. I began with a blank canvas and used a stock image of white texture and maroon gradient to create the background. I took the two images used on the graphic and cut them out using the magic wand tool. Using the magic wand tool and “cloud for detailed results” provides for a more precise result than the regular “remove background” tool. Color grading and artistic editing were used to give the focal, headshot image a more emotional feeling. The logos came from the folder I was given of the Nebraska High School logos. This piece took around two hours to create with the hardest part being the creation and manipulation of the shadow.



BRUNING-DAVENPORT-SHICKLEY

# GAME DAY

SHICKLEY, NE | 3:00PM





#18 Feature Photography

Elizabeth Brennan, Mead











#19 Feature Photography

Olivia Minary, Southwest











# MOMENTS that caused a COMMOTION



"In overtime against Bergan, I had to put trust in the team to get enough time to kick it and trust in my ability, which made it a pretty intense and hype moment."

-Tyler Witt (12)



"My first touchdown of the year was very exciting and cool because it was a 60-yard touchdown run, which made it a very memorable moment."

-Owen Sutter (11)



"My favorite moment was when I caught a touchdown pass against Aquinas to make it a one-score game and give us a chance to make a stop on defense."

-Drew Krajicek (12)



**NOT TODAY:** While gaining yardage, **Max Egr (12)** successfully stiff arms a Conestoga defender. Egr averaged 75.1 rushing yards total per game. "Gaining yardage for the team was my goal to contribute as much as possible," Egr said.

Football team finishes with winning record

# STEPPING UP AND OVERCOMING

Experience. That is one thing the Yutan football team both struggled with and overcame this season. With only a few returning starters, the team was able to persevere and end with a record of 5-4.

"This year, we had a bunch of guys stepping up a lot and filling positions because we lost so many starters from last year," senior Bennett Ell said. "They stepped up big time for us and made a difference by handling the pressure and responsibilities with those positions."

Since so many younger players had to step up, the upperclassmen promoted bonding outside of practice.

"We hung out as a team like all the time, every weekend pretty much. We all got along really well," senior Tannen Honke said. "My main goal was to be a good influence to the younger kids and have something positive for them to remember."

Even though the team had great bonds, the season started out shaky due to their tough schedule, causing them to work harder after each game.

"We started off with three top-five teams, and we didn't end up winning those games, but we improved as a team off of those games," senior AJ Arensberg said.

In order to overcome those first losses, the team focused on

maintaining a high intensity level during practices and games.

"I feel like we were one of the most physical teams out there. We wouldn't really take anything from anybody," senior Max Egr said.

This intensity combined with their strong bond helped the team to win games later on in the season. One of these games was the homecoming game, which the Chieftains won 54-0.

"Our best game was Tekamah Herman because we had the spirit from homecoming and we played well as a team," Egr said.

In the end, the team narrowly missed the playoffs, but while they were disappointed to end the season early, there were still plenty of positives to look back on.

"Even though we might have lost some of those tougher games, there were a bunch of highlights of us playing really well," head coach Dan Krajicek said.

This season also gave the underclassmen practice adjusting to change, and they are already looking forward to applying the lessons they learned this year to next season.

"We had a lot of people step up this year to overcome our setbacks, and we need to keep the mentality that we had this year for the future," junior Tyler Keiser said.



**GO LONG:** **Nathan Daniell (10)** scrambles to avoid the Conestoga defender and get a pass to one of his teammates. Daniell had six touchdown passes for the season. "Playing quarterback as a sophomore was a cool opportunity to have after not playing much last year," Daniell said.



**DODGE 'EM:** While trying to get a first down, **Maddox Wentworth (11)** dodges his opponent. Wentworth gained an average of eight yards per game. "I tried to work as hard as I could in practice every day and make as many plays as I possibly could," Wentworth said.



**DOUBLE TROUBLE:** **Tannen Honke (12)** and **Owen Egr (12)** work together to bring down an Aquinas running back. Honke led the team with an average of five tackles per game. "All that mattered is if you wanted to tackle the ball carrier more, they would keep on running and give us more chances to make a defensive play," Honke said.



**TOUCHDOWN!** While taking on a player from Arlington, **AJ Arensberg (12)** catches a pass in the end zone. Arensberg led the team with three receiving touchdowns. "That pass was the last play of the half and Nathan Daniell threw a Hail Mary, and it was super hype when I caught it," Arensberg said.



Jason Neukirch (12)

## SCOREBOARD

- Oakland Craig 14-34
- Bishop Neumann 0-40
- Malcolm 7-28
- Conestoga 39-7**
- Archbishop Bergan 7-6
- Tekamah-Herman 54-0
- Arlington 34-24
- David City Aquinas 7-12
- North Bend Central 57-0**

**Junior Varsity Record 5-1**





Lawrence-Nelson Public Schools

2023-2024



Lawrence-Nelson Public Schools

# BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE

2023-2024

Walsworth



# Lawrence-Nelson Public Schools BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE

**Left:** Rocky Miller (12) is breaking out the hype dance moves to liven up the dance floor at this year's prom.



**Lawrence- Nelson Public Schools**  
850 South Nevada Street  
Nelson, NE 68961  
(402) 225-3371  
<http://www.southcentralunified.org>



**Above:** Brody Buescher (8) is racing to the finish line on his pedal tractor for the first official FFA Olympics during FFA Week.

## Building for Our Future: An Introduction

As we embark on the journey through this yearbook, we reflect on a theme that resonates deeply with the essence of our school community: "Building for Our Future." This year Lawrence-Nelson Public Schools is beginning the process of dissolving their consolidation with South Central Unified School District #5 for the 2024-2025 school year, making them their own entity. This theme is more than a motto for Lawrence-Nelson; it encapsulates the collective spirit, ambition, and dedication of everyone who walks our halls. We are building for a future that is purely us- the Lawrence-Nelson Raiders- with no ties or affiliations with any other schools. This theme is not only about preparing for the future of our school; but also a narrative constructed from the aspirations and efforts of students, teachers, staff, and the entire school community, all striving together toward a better and brighter tomorrow.

### Laying the Foundation

At the core of Lawrence-Nelson's mission is the belief that education is the cornerstone of a promising future. Our administrators, led by Principal Dan Kennedy and Superintendent Stephen Grizzle, have envisioned an environment where every student is given the tools and opportunities to succeed. Their strategic planning and unwavering commitment provide a solid foundation upon which our educational journey is built.

### Drafting the Future: Our Students

Each student in our school is a builder of their own future. From the first day of kindergarten to the final moments of senior year, students engage in experiences that shape their knowledge, skills, and character. They are the dreamers and doers, whether excelling in academics, sports, arts, or extracurricular activities. Their achievements, both big and small, are the building blocks of their futures.

From our NCAPS mentoring experiences, our clubs and athletics that cater to our students' interests and passions, and the life adventures and trips that are made available, students find something they enjoy and continue to pursue throughout their time at Lawrence-Nelson. All of these authentic experiences combined, help students prepare and strive for success in their

own futures. The ambition and innovation of our students are the bricks and mortar of our collective future.

### Guiding Hands: Our Teachers

Our teachers are the master builders, tirelessly working to construct an engaging and supportive learning environment. They challenge us to think critically, inspire us to explore new ideas, and nurture our potential. Whether it's through hands-on experiments in the science lab, thoughtful discussions in literature classes, or creative projects in the arts, our teachers guide us in discovering our passions, honing our talents, and fostering perseverance.

### Support Structures: Our Staff and Community

Behind every successful student and teacher is a dedicated support network. The efforts of our administrative staff, custodians, cafeteria workers, and volunteers ensure that our school operates smoothly and efficiently. Their commitment to creating a safe, clean, and welcoming environment allows us to focus on our educational and personal growth.

Moreover, the involvement of our parents and the surrounding community enriches our school experience. From participating in school events to providing resources and support, their contributions are invaluable. Community partnerships with local businesses and organizations open doors to real-world experiences and opportunities that help us prepare for the future.

### Looking Ahead

As we flip through the pages of this yearbook, we are reminded that every moment, every lesson, and every challenge is a step toward building our future. This year has been a testament to our resilience, creativity, and collective effort. It's a celebration of how far we've come and a glimpse into the unlimited possibilities that lie ahead.

Together, we are architects of our destiny, constructing a future filled with hope, innovation, and endless potential. Let this yearbook serve as a chronicle of our journey and a source of inspiration for the years to come. Here's to building a future we can all be proud of as Lawrence-Nelson Raiders.



**Left:** Colt Svoboda (K) is having a good time decorating his yummy cookie during the Elementary's Christmas Party.

**Right:** Mrs. Alayna Ham struggles for the water flowing for the teacher team in the Siphon Tube Race during the FFA Olympics.

**Right:** Tiffany Gonzalez-Gamez (9) and Riley Haba (9) work to finish their mural at the First Light Child Advocacy Center in Grand Island.



Principal: Mr. Dan Kennedy  
Superintendent: Mr. Stephen Grizzle  
Cover Design by Mrs. Kylee Haba, Journalism Sponsor





# P The Support Structures PORTRAITS

**Right:** Hadley Ostdiek (9) and Sydney Biltoft (12) show some love to their chicken before the chicken races during the FFA Olympics.



As we turn the pages of the 2023-2024 Lawrence-Nelson school year, we can see more than just memories and moments throughout the year. We can see just through pictures how close we are as a school and a community that is willing to help build our future for the better.

This year's theme, "Building For Our Future," is more than just a yearbook slogan. It shows how the school changes and how the people shown in it are willing to make changes as a community and as individuals. School is a place to learn, grow, and inspire. The students and staff of Lawrence-Nelson do just that.

The leaders and administrators of our school are the reason we can grow and keep going each year. They all keep working hard and doing their best for our school and community. They understand and prioritize the importance of building our school and our future.

The teachers at Lawrence-Nelson are the ones who teach us and keep us inspired. They are motivators and spirit lifters. They also build us up as individuals and as a community. They help inspire us and build our future in education and life. The new science teacher, Mrs. Katrina Hansen, has been a great inspiration. "Her passion for science is passed on to the students in her classroom, and we are lucky that we had the opportunity for her to join us here at Lawrence-Nelson," commented Principal Dan Kennedy.

If it weren't for the supportive staff, our school would be a little bit more chaotic. The staff, such as the janitors, keep our school clean and in order, so that the students and teachers can learn and work in a conducive learning environment. Our janitors have worked very hard this school year to be sure our school is clean and prepared for events. They also do their best to fix anything broken and lend a helping hand in other areas of the school. We also cannot forget our cooks and paraprofessionals. With our never-ending salad bars and trays full of yummy food, we can make it through the day with full tummies. And with the support of our paras, students can succeed at any level of learning. We are very grateful for them and all of the work they do for us and our community.

Every one of our students have a unique story. No matter how much a teacher or administrator helps a student, only they can be the most significant builder of their future. Each student is a piece of our school that makes it complete. Freshman Tiffany Gonzalez-Gamez commented, "I try to apply everything I learn to my everyday life." No matter how much the students do or do not like a class, they put forth all their effort to learn and build for their future.

Our community members are the building blocks for our school. The community helps support our school by making donations, volunteering, helping with organizations, and inspiring the students to be all they can be. Parents help students plan for their future during their school career and after they complete high school. The community and our school share a bond that keeps us going and prepared for every day of learning.

As we look back on this school year and many of the past, we can see how much we have changed and how we are still changing for the better. Every time a lesson is taught, a brick is added to the foundation and spirit of the school. A new dream is constructed by inspiration from students and teachers, while the staff is the glue that holds this school together. These foundations will lead our school for many generations to come. So we want to thank the people who have helped shape and build our school into what it is and can be in the future. Together, we continue to build our future for the better.



**Above:** Fifth graders Chizmb Bilbrey, Brysen Grams, Axle Davidson, Konnor Ostdiek, and Mason Menke show off all the skills they have learned in band this year at the Elementary Spring Concert.



**Above:** Several of the Lawrence-Nelson students gather to cheer on the senior class during the Annual Student vs. Staff Basketball Game in hopes of seeing them win for yet another year. Unfortunately for them, the staff finally took down the senior class, winning by only one point!!

**Right:** Charley Kathman (6) and Danyelle Church (12) enjoy being outdoors and playing games together before viewing the partial solar eclipse up at the fairgrounds.





**Left:** Mrs. Katrina Hansen shares a unique way to view the solar eclipse without official viewing glasses to Onja Myers (11) and others. By using a kitchen colander and a white piece of paper, you can view the moon's partial shadow through the holes of the colander on the paper. It does not create a whole circle, but a small crescent shape instead.



**Left:** Augustus Harrison (9) holds a goose for Brantley Buescher (1) to pet as he helps FFA during the Elementary Fun Day's Petting Zoo.



**Above:** Sisters Allison Harrison (6) and Brynnly Harrison (8) make great progress on their crocheted pieces during Crochet Club after school.

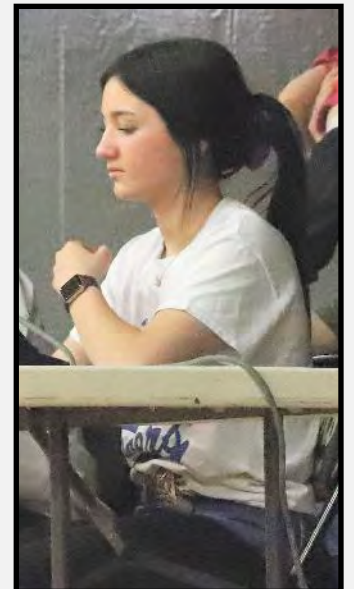


**Left:** A group of elementary students stop by the Lawrence Fire and Rescue vehicles to talk to the firemen during their Elementary Fun Day rotations.



**"The people of Lawrence-Nelson are all very respectful and kind, which is what our school is known for. That gives us a good reputation, and having a healthy community creates a good foundation for our school and our students' lives in general."**

**- Addison McCloskey, 11 -**







**"We help students build for the future by helping them use their problem-solving skills to better understand how to solve problems on their own."  
- Mrs. Marcia Drudik -**

# CLASSIFIED STAFF



**Janie Corman**  
Head Cook



**Marcia Drudik**  
MS/HS SPED Para



**Montella Faimon**  
Custodian



**Amanda Gras**  
Life Skills Para



**Marissa Griess**  
Preschool Para



**Daniel Herbek**  
Bus Driver



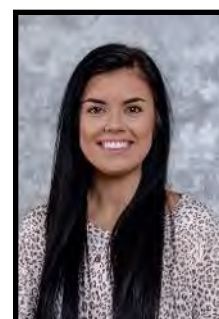
**Linda Himmelberg**  
Preschool Para/ Bus Driver



**Wayne Hoelting**  
Custodian



**Peggy Kotinek**  
Preschool Para/ Bus Driver



**Alex Kucera**  
Elem. Secretary

**Right:** Bus drivers Daniel Herbek and Larry Mazour are talking shop while waiting to transport students back from the Solar Eclipse Party.

**Below:** Mrs. Marcia Drudik tells the journalism photographer to "behave with that camera" and shoot the game instead of her.



**Right:** Oaklyn Haba (1) and Nurse Jaycee Schroer are posing for a picture during homecoming week.

The theme for this day was to dress up like what you want to be when you grow up.

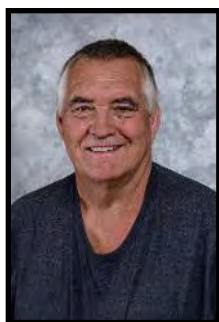


**Above:** Mrs. Carlie Pohlmeier works to pass the ball around her defender, Danyelle Church (12), in the Student vs. Staff Basketball Game.

**Left:** Staff member Mrs. Karen Washington- Oglesby is having a good time interacting with students and teachers at the solar eclipse party!







**Larry Mazour**  
Custodian/ Bus Driver/  
Transportation Director



**Robyn Menke**  
Cook



**Russell Menke**  
Bus Driver



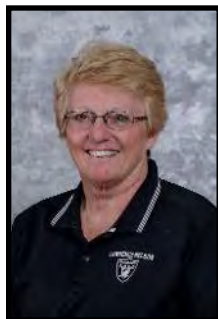
**Linda Ostdiek**  
Bus Driver



**Carlie Pohlmeier**  
MS/HS Secretary



**Pamela Safago**  
MS/HS SPED Para



**Jean Schendt**  
Cook



**Amy Schroer**  
L/N Business Manager



**Jaycee Schroer**  
Nurse



**Sara Skinner**  
Elem. SPED Para



**Lindsey Spray**  
Dist. Business Manager



**Karen Washington-Oglesby**  
MS/HS SPED Para



**Kelly Whitney**  
Cook/Custodian



**Katie Williams**  
Preschool Para



**Holly Wilt**  
Elem. SPED Para



**Above:** Mrs. Amanda Gras helps Kip Musgrave (1) with his hand motions for their song "This Old Man" during the Elementary Spring Concert.

**Right:** Paraeducator Holly Wilt lets the fifth graders turn her into a snowman during their final Christmas party festivity. The class with the best snowman won.



**Left:** Mrs. Amy Schroer makes a fast break down the court during the Student vs. Staff Basketball Game.

**Below:** Montella Faimon takes a break from her janitorial duties to help students guess how many items were in the jars during the Elementary Christmas Party.







**" I think our class grew the most  
throughout the year by being more  
pro-active and trying harder in class."  
- Gage Haba -**

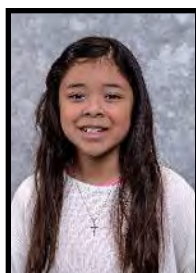
# CLASS OF 2030

## SIXTH GRADE

**Below:** Gage Haba takes a break from  
all of the student activities while  
attending the Solar Eclipse Party.



Mercy Avila Alonso  
Hoyt Cassell  
Levi Corman  
Rayla DeLong  
Maria Gonzalez-Gamez  
Gage Haba



Allison Harrison  
Charley Kathman  
Dillon Laughlin  
Ariel Leyva Sigala  
Tripp Ostdiek  
Devin Pofahl



**Below:** Dillon Laughlin and Tripp Ostdiek  
take time to check out all the memorabilia  
that was brought in by the senior class as  
a part of their Veteran's Day Program.



Zoie Smidt  
Caleb Stokes  
Kyler Thompson  
Charlie Zikmund



**Above:** Allison Harrison is  
caught by the journalism  
camera goofing off in  
between volleyball games.

**Right:** Charley Kathman won  
third place in the Eileen's  
Halloween Cookie  
Decorating Contest.



**Above:** Mercy Avila Alonso and Rayla  
DeLong play Jumbo Jenga together while  
waiting for the Solar Eclipse to begin.



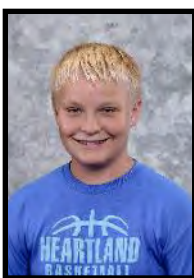


**"Our class may not have grown very much in responsibility but we definitely made up for it with our growth in height!"**  
**- Avery Ostdiek -**

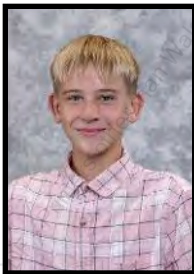
# CLASS OF 2029

## SEVENTH GRADE

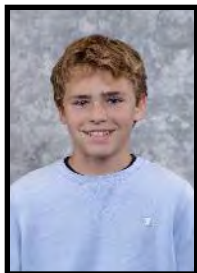
**Below:** Ashtyn Mueller and Avery Ostdiek sit back and relax on the grass while waiting for the solar eclipse to start.



Anthony Beale  
 Kayden Forbis  
 Pedro Gonzalez-Gamez  
 Joel Hoelting  
 Adrianna Mazour  
 Brooklyn Mazour



Ashtyn Mueller  
 Avery Ostdiek  
 Kade Peters  
 Jaxen Vaughn  
 Camden Wehrman  
 Stella Williams



Ian Zikmund

**Right:** Joel Hoelting and Ian Zikmund try to hold back their laughter during the middle school play, *A Christmas Carol*. Ian can't help but laugh at himself and the way he looks in his costume!



**Left:** Jaxen Vaughn greets and throws candy to the crowd while riding the junior high and high school cross country float during the homecoming parade.



**Above:** Anthony Beale has fun being pushed by a classmate while riding on a mini pedal tractor during this year's first annual FFA Olymics during FFA eek.

**Left:** Brooklyn Mazour plays Darlene Worthington in *At the Band Stand* during the middle school musical. In her poodle skirt and cat-eye glasses, she was able to play a character full of sass and has her cat for a best friend.

**Right:** The seventh grade class came together during the middle school awards ceremony to acknowledge each student's well-earned accomplishments throughout this year.







## The Building Blocks ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

As we look back on a year of remarkable activities and events, it's clear that "Building for Our Future" has been more than just a theme... it's been a driving force behind every initiative, celebration, and gathering. Each event has been a brick in the foundation of our shared future, bringing us together, fostering growth, and setting the stage for the years to come.

Homecoming week was the cornerstone event that set the tone for the year. Academic competitions were a vital part of our journey towards building a brighter future. Our art's festivities provided a canvas for finding our identities, creativity, and self-expression. The clubs of Lawrence-Nelson provide students with vital life skills and valuable experiences needed to be successful in the future. Lawrence-Nelson's community service initiatives were at the heart of our mission to build a future rooted in compassion and social responsibility. We celebrated the rich diversity of our school community, highlighting the importance of inclusivity and creating a future where everyone belongs. Graduation is a stepping stone for seniors to finally use what they have learned and put it to use in the next stage of building their futures.

As we close this chapter and look forward to the future, we do so with a sense of pride and accomplishment. The activities and events of this year have not only enriched our school experience but also laid the groundwork for a future filled with promise. Each event was a building block, contributing to the strong, vibrant community we are proud to be a part of.

Here's to the memories we've created, the lessons we've learned, and the future we're building together. May the spirit of innovation, teamwork, and compassion continue to guide us as we construct a future we can all be proud of.

**Right:** Bailey Ceder (12) speaks about one of the values of National Honor Society during the induction of the new NHS members.

**Below:** Ms. Besty Eckstrom (student teacher for art), Riley Haba (9), Tiffany Gonzalez-Gamez (9), and Mrs. Kylee Haba stand in front of the massive mural they created for the child advocacy center in Grand Island. This was a competition that Riley and Tiffany won!



**Above:** Brooklyn Mazour (7) has a fun time in crochet club learning to make chains and link them together. The small group had a lot of fun learning a new skill.



**Above:** Brooklyn Combs-Glebe (11) does Epiphanae Lowery's (9) make up for the TVC One-Act conference meet. It was nice to have a lot of help behind the scenes!



**"The clubs, activities, and events sponsored by our school helped me build on important communication and social skills. They have helped shape me into the person I wanted to become, while also showing me the things I need to continue working on."**

**- Cassidy Huston, 11 -**





**Left:** Eighth grade FBLA members including Kaliahna Cassell, Maya Fanning, Bayleigh Bohlen, Ella Skinner, Keygan Myers, Preslea Adams, and Codi Cannaday help sort through all of the food collected during the school's food drive. By collecting more than their set goal, all Lawrence-Nelson students earned an afternoon of fun games and movies.



**Left:** Some of the choir consisting of Danyelle Church (12), Madalyn Kennedy (11), Tiffany Gonzalez-Gamez (9), Paige Huston (9), Valentina Koehler (11), and Riley Haba (9), help to put on an enjoyable Christmas concert.



**Above:** Madelyn Laughlin (8), Ella Skinner (8), Kara Peters (8), Victoria Koehler (8), and Stella Williams (6) are relaxing and enjoying their afternoon at the fairgrounds while watching the partial solar eclipse.



**Left:** Homecoming Royalty Candidates Sydney Biltoft (12) and Bayln Barga (12) ride in their golf carts and throw candy to crowd during the annual homecoming parade.



**Right:** Claire Himmelberg (12) fared well during the annual art show held during Lawrence-Nelson's Award Banquet. She won the Overall Best of Show Award for her horse drawing completed in pencil, as well as taking home many other ribbons for her artwork.





**Right:** Members of the high school choir, including Epiphane Lowery (9), Paige Huston (9), Valentina Koehler (11), Natalie Jacobitz (10), and Danyelle Church (12), perform "How Does a Moment Last Forever" from the live-action version of Beauty and the Beast during graduation.



# G RADUATION

As soon as the year begins, it ends, and graduation has come upon us. Every year since preschool, the staff of Lawrence-Nelson has been preparing the seniors for this day. Teaching them the skills to ask questions, be attentive, and problem-solve. While also instilling foundational qualities that the Raiders are known for, such as respectfulness, responsibility, dedication, and determination. By the end of a student's time here at LN, the staff hopes they have built a strong enough foundation for the students to continue building their futures upon.

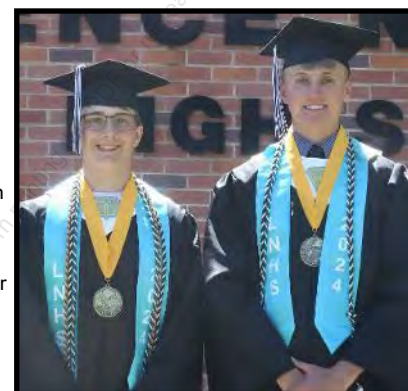
Graduation is a milestone where students can show and prove what they have learned and take on to their next chapter. This year's graduation ceremony was held on Saturday, May 4th, 2024. Graduating seniors walked into the gym for the final time as Raiders to the traditional "Pomp and Circumstance." Next, welcome speeches were given by Mr. Stephen Grizzle, superintendent, and senior class president Sydney Biloft, who shared unforgettable stories of the senior class. Principal Mr. Dan Kennedy then announced the top two students of the Class of 2024. Connor Janda received the salutatorian honors, and Clay Williams earned the valedictorian honors. Each of these students also addressed the crowd, offering inspirational advice and best wishes to their classmates in the future.

Things turned emotional when it was time for the seniors to hand out their flowers to loved ones and watch their senior class video. As "My Wish" by Rascal Flatts played, there was hardly a dry eye in the house as seniors handed flowers out to their parents and loved ones, thanking them for all they have done to support them up to this point. Seniors searched high and low for their friends and special people in the audience, making sure not to miss anyone. Once they have had a chance to give out their thank yous, they sit down and watch how they have grown as individuals and as a class over the years. The pictures and videos shared show the class's personality and sense of humor, which was apparent by the amount of laughs and giggles heard during the video. Following this, members of the high school choir sang "How Does a Moment Last Forever," from the live-action movie Beauty and the Beast, for everyone to enjoy.

It was finally time for the seniors to finish the blueprints of their high school careers and move on to constructing their futures. Mr. Kennedy certified that each student present has completed the necessary requirements to move on to the next stage. As each student's name was announced, they walked across the stage to shake hands and receive their diplomas from the school board president, Mr. Lance Williams. Finally, they get to do one last thing as a class together... turn their tassels and become official graduates of LN.

The ceremony ended with some closing words of inspiration from Mr. Grizzle for the senior class and thank yous to the parents, grandparents, and LN staff. As "Unwritten" by Natasha Bedingfield begins to play, the graduated seniors walk out of the gym as Raiders for the final time. But before they could officially leave the gym, they had to say goodbye to all the staff members who helped get them to this point. The LN staff lined up, giving hugs and congratulations to each senior before they left.

Now, all they had left to do was make it through their graduation parties and a few end-of-the-year activities, and they were free. They have proven that they can do anything they set their minds to, and now they can finally move on to the next stage of constructing their futures. We just hope that they remember that blueprints and plans can change as long as the initial foundation is sturdy and well-designed.



**Above:** The top two students of the Class of 2024 were Connor Janda, who received Salutatorian, and Clay Williams, who received Valedictorian.



**Above:** Riley Funk (12) and Riley Cannaday (11) do their top secret handshake to say goodbye.



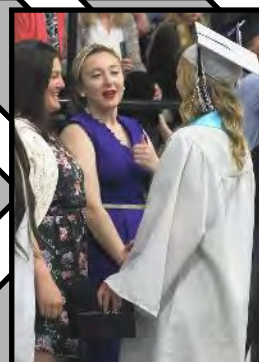
**Left:** On behalf of the senior class, Claire Himmelberg gifts guidance counselor, Mrs. Amber Epley, flowers and thanks her for all she has done to help them through this final year of high school.



**Left:** Superintendent Mr. Stephen Grizzle gives a warm welcome to those attending this year's graduation ceremony.



**Junior Honor Guards:**  
Valentina Koehler (Right)  
Josie Hajny (Not Pictured)  
**Junior Ushers:**  
Kara Menke (Left)  
Madalyn Kennedy (Not Pictured)



**Right:** While waiting in the staff recessional line, Mrs. Alayna Ham and Ms. Kylie Kinley congratulate senior Emily Watts on completing her final chapter as a Raider.





**Class of 2024 Members:**

**Back Row (L to R):** Connor Janda, Roy Davidson, Andrew Koehler, Jacob Kathman, Clay Williams, Nolan Ostdiek, Rocky Miller, Nathan Elledge, and Bayln Bargaen.  
**Front Row (L to R):** Emily Watts, Jessica Sole, Sydney Bilotto, Danyelle Church, Maddison Bissell Elwess, Riley Funk, Bailey Ceder, and Claire Himmelberg.



**Above:** Jessica Sole shows off her signed diploma to her family following the graduation ceremony.

**Below:** Class president Sydney Bilotto welcomes guests to the graduation ceremony and offers up a few funny stories about her classmates over the years.

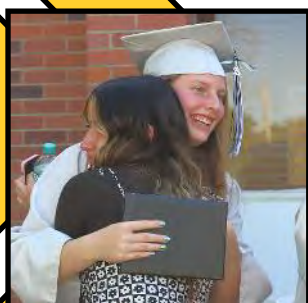


**Above:** Bailey Ceder and Maddison Bissell Elwess walk together toward the stage during the processional.

**Below:** It gets emotional when senior Bayln Bargaen gives his mom a flower and hug, thanking her for all she has done to help get him to this point in life.



**Left:** School Board President Lance Williams helps with the graduation ceremony by handing out a diploma to Jacob Kathman.



**Left:** Valentina Koehler (11) says goodbye to fellow choir member and teammate, Danyelle Church, following the graduation ceremony. They will sure miss each other!

**Class Motto:**

**"Don't take life too seriously, you'll never get out of it alive." - Elbert Hubbard -**

**Class Flower:**

**White Carnation with Teal & Lilac Ribbon**

**Class Colors:**

**Teal & Lilac**

**Class Song:**

**Unwritten by Natasha Bedingfield**





# NATIONAL ART HONOR SOCIETY

**Below:** Addison McCloskey (11) paints the face Olivia Stokes (Kindergarten) before the start of the homecoming football game.



## National Art Honor Society Members:

**Back Row (L to R):** Epiphanae Lowery (9), Valentina Koehler (11), Bayln Bargen (12), and Madalyn Kennedy (11).

**Front Row (L to R):** Claire Himmelberg (12), Jessica Sole (12), Emily Jacobitz (11), and Addison McCloskey (11).

**Not Pictured:** Natalia Wehrman (9)

**Right:** NAHS members celebrate the last day of school with face painting at the Elementary End-of-the-Year Carnival.



The Lawrence-Nelson chapter of the National Art Honor Society had another strong year of membership and plenty of opportunities for the members to use their creativity. This year, NAHS members planned and put together several activities within the community and school. They helped with Dr. Seuss Day at the elementary, creating a "Horton Hears a Who" using the elementary students' hand prints. They did several face painting events, including the homecoming football game and the elementary End-of-the-Year Carnival. For Community Service Day, the NAHS members painted a window downtown to help beautify the community. Once the weather starts to cooperate, members will start working on a large-scale mural for the Nelson Community Club.

Although they could not fit in their annual art day, they made sure to put their creativity to good use. They had several students participate in the Hastings College Mural Day, creating a new slogan for Nebraska and creating something they were proud of. They also helped set up and take down the Awards Banquet Art Show, which allows other students and parents see what all of the art students have been up to throughout the entire year. "Each year we build our skills to improve for the next. We help introduce art to the community and school, and promote creativity in everything we do," commented Mrs. Kylee Haba. For next year, the group's goals are to plan more activities and complete their largest project ever... the Nelson mural. They are excited to see what they come up with next.

**Below:** Kara Menke (11) and Stella Williams (7) won NAHS's newly sponsored prize, the Most Spirited Award, during homecoming.



**Above:** Jessica Sole (12) helps Korbyn Daleness (1) trace his hand for the Dr. Seuss Day art project.

**Below:** Cassidy Huston (11) enjoys her last day of school painting faces at the elementary. Brylee Hofstetter (Kindergarten) was one of her many canvases.



**Below:** Onja Myers (11) helps Piper Muir (Kindergarten) cut out her hand prints for the Dr. Seuss Day craft.



**Above:** Valentina Koehler (11) helps Oaklyn Haba (1) draw the face on her Horton Hears a Who craft during Dr. Seuss Day.





# NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY

Hard work, dedication, and countless hours of studying and volunteering; are the common denominators when selecting members to be a part of the National Honor Society. This year, six juniors were included in the Lawrence-Nelson Chapter of NHS, joining the seven previously inducted seniors. To be considered for induction into NHS, students must first be either a junior or senior with a minimum GPA of 3.7. Leadership, involvement, and community service are also factors taken into consideration. Students must be involved in at least two school activities per year and have documentation of at least ten hours of community service.

This year's inductees amassed over 368 hours of community service, and they participated in no less than four school activities, including sports, fine arts, and career and technical student organizations. This year's seniors also have exceptional statistics, including 330 hours of community service and being involved in an average of six extra-curricular activities. The group as a whole, has earned 295 hours of college credits and are prime examples of what L-N expects out of their NHS members. Raiders are held to high standards, and the expectations set are undoubtedly attainable with a strong foundation, sturdy framework, and the determination achieve success.

**Right:** Claire Himmelberg (12) speaks about how leadership is a wholesome influence to the school and that the price of leadership has its sacrifices.



## National Honor Society Members:

**Back Row (L to R):** Nolan Ostdiek (12), Nathan Elledge (12), Claire Himmelberg (12), Bailey Ceder (12), Jessica Sole (12), Connor Janda (12), and Jacob Kathman (12).

**Front Row (L to R):** Sawyer Cox (11), Kara Menke (11), Valentina Koehler (11), Madalyn Kennedy (11), Josie Hajny (11), and Cody Brockman (11).

**Not Pictured:** Bayln Bargen (12) and Clay Williams (12)

**Right:** Jessica Sole (12) enjoys a piece of yummy cake after the conclusion of the NHS induction ceremony.



**Below:** Bailey Ceder (12) lights the white candle which stands for truth and knowledge.



**Below:** Valentina Koehler (11) receives her certificate and a handshake from Mr. Kennedy, principal, and Mr. Grizzle, superintendent.



**Right:** Jacob Kathman (12) lights the red candle which represents the students' service to others.



**Below:** Nathan Elledge (12) speaks about how the emblem of NHS is the Keystone and the Flaming Torch.

**Above:** The six new inductees to NHS included juniors Sawyer Cox, Kara Menke, Cody Brockman, Valentina Koehler, Madalyn Kennedy, and Josie Hanjy.

**Left:** The new NHS inductees get called one-by-one to stand and be recognized for their achievements.







# The Foundation of Teamwork ATHLETICS

As we reflect on a year of outstanding athletic achievements, we see more than just games won or records set. We see a community of athletes, coaches, and supporters who have come together to build a future filled with promise, resilience, and teamwork. The theme "Building for Our Future" resonates deeply within our athletics program, where each practice, game, and competition has been a step toward creating a foundation of excellence and camaraderie.

The fall season kicked off with our football team laying the groundwork for an exciting year. Under the leadership of Coach Blevins and Assistant Coach Hild, the team embraced the values of discipline and unity. Their rigorous training sessions and strategic plays on the field led them to a remarkable season, culminating in a run for a playoff game. The offensive line built a protective shield for their quarterback, demonstrating that a strong foundation is key to success.

Volleyball also had a successful season, showcasing incredible skill and determination in the face of adversity. Under the guidance of Coach Bolte and Assistant Coach Hoelting, the team reached beyond their expectations, playing a longer season than they thought they would. Their journey was marked by memorable moments, and the girls showed that perseverance pays off.

Winter sports brought a new set of challenges and triumphs, further solidifying our commitment to building a future of athletic excellence. The basketball teams, both boys and girls, had standout seasons. The boys' team, led by Coach Brown, focused on building strong fundamentals and endurance, which proved to be their cornerstone in winning many games.

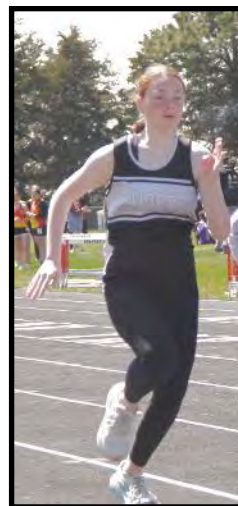
The girls' basketball team, not to be outdone, had a successful season of their own. Under Coach Kennedy's mentoring, they adopted a fast-paced, aggressive style of play that left their opponents scrambling. Their dedication and hard work exemplified the spirit of building for the future. Wrestling also made significant strides, by building a larger team and finally being its own entity... Raiders Wrestling. The team's success was built on a foundation of rigorous training and mental toughness, emphasized by Coach Theer. They look forward to building their team's legacy.

As the weather warmed, spring sports brought new opportunities for growth and achievement. The track and field team, under the experienced eye of Coach Hild and Coach McCartney, set numerous personal records and brought home several team awards. Two track members qualified and competed at the state level, demonstrating the importance of strong foundational skills, determination, and dedication to the sport.

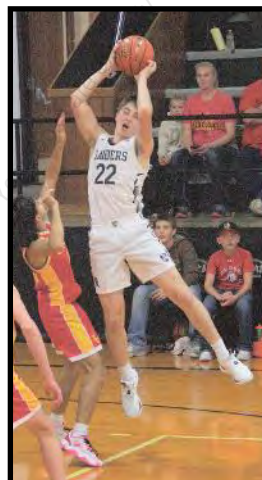
As we close this chapter on a remarkable year in school athletics, we look forward with anticipation and excitement. The lessons learned, the bonds formed, and the milestones achieved are all part of the foundation we are building for our future. Our athletes have shown that with hard work, dedication, and a strong support system, anything is possible.

Here's to the victories, the challenges, and the unwavering spirit that have defined our athletic programs this year. As we continue to build for our future, we carry forward the legacy of this year's achievements, ready to reach new heights and inspire the next generation of athletes.

**Right:** Avery Ostdiek (7) picks up the speed to outrun the opponent in the lane next to her.



**Below:** Nolan Ostdiek (12) takes a jump shot over his opponent in an attempt to score two more points for the Raiders.



**Right:** Cooper Heikkinen (8) gets ready to hike the ball to his quarterback, Camden Wehrman (7).

**Below:** Jace Hoelting (9) jumps through his second phase of triple jump with the determination of getting a new personal record.



**Below:** Carson Vaughn (11) takes a good swing at the ball, hoping that his chip shot makes it to the green.



**Right:** Madelyn Laughlin (8) sets the ball high into the air so her middle hitter can get a good spike off of it.





**Below:** Kara Menke (11) towers over her opponent during the jump, allowing her to pass the ball behind her to a teammate and get the Lady Raiders off to a good start.



**Above:** Jacob Kathman (12) gets ready to snap the ball back to quarterback Connor Janda (12) when he gives the signal.



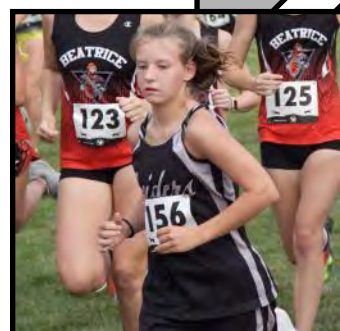
**Above:** Leslie Corman (9) is good at getting great hand control against his opponent. Leslie learned a lot this season.



**Left:** The volleyball girls start off the Pink Out game in a huddle. This game is played every year for all those affected by cancer.



**Left:** Victoria Koehler (8) is getting ready to make a strategic pass to an open teammate down-court from her.



**Left:** Kynnedi Beale (9) sticks with the pack at the start of her cross country race. Kynnedi stuck out the entire season and continued to improve with every meet.

**"The advice that I would give to the underclassmen is... if you want to achieve greatness you have to bust your butt everyday to get better. You have to practice like you play, and give your 100% every time you step onto the court. Also, do not listen to the negative attitudes.**

**-Danyelle Church, 12-**







# B HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL

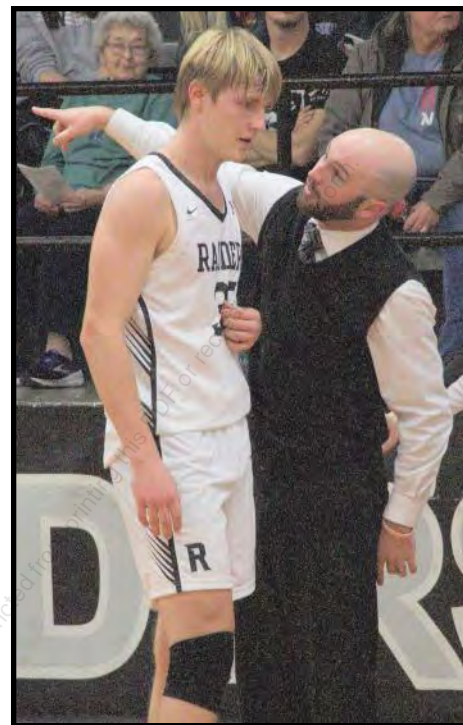
This year's boys basketball team went all out while playing on the court. Through ups and downs, the team played their best. Coach Decker Brown commented, "I appreciated the senior class. They came in whether their mood was poor or great and went to work. They avoided drama and played hard. Everyone made progress." The Raiders showed passion and a strong mindset, whether on the court or during practice.

The team's main goals were to get back to playing basketball and to promote positivity. They worked to create a culture that did not focus only on the wins and losses. "We wanted to build something that helped the players identify their purpose, not just in basketball, but in life," commented Coach Brown. Many players applied this to themselves and their lives, allowing them to find the path they wanted to travel down.

There were multiple ups and downs, but the boys supported one another and, for the most part, were great teammates. The senior class set the example. "Sure... they would bicker and argue, but they fought for one another. I hope the classes to follow will do the same," said Coach Brown. Wins and losses are important, but building a culture and playing hard is even more important.

The Raiders' goals for next year are to continue building upon the culture they have created and to get in the gym in the off-season to sculpt their craft. They have already committed themselves to summer leagues and camps, as well as committing to attend summer weights. The Raiders Basketball Team hopes to continue working towards a winning record season after season.

**Right:** Coach Decker Brown has a very calm and collected conversation with Sawyer Cox (11) during one of their more difficult games.



**Right:** Caleb Griffis (9) gets ready to shoot his free throw after being fouled. He is focused and determined to score this point for his team during a close game.



**Below:** Clay Williams (12) goes up against a pack of Warriors while his teammates are there, just in case, to help him rebound the ball.



**Above:** Connor Janda (12) plays close defense against his Red Cloud opponent. This season the Raiders held off the Warriors, and won all three games they played against them.



**Above:** Aidan Zikmund (11) uses his quick footwork to play tough defense against his Shelton Bulldog opponent.

**Right:** Nolan Ostdiek (12), Aidan Zikmund (11), Caden Culbertson (10), Cody Funk (10), Jackson Williams (9), and Carson Vaughn (11) all watch in anticipation as a win in a close game comes down to the final seconds.







#### High School Boys Basketball Roster:

**Back Row (L to R):** Head Coach Mr. Decker Brown, Connor Janda (12), Nolan Ostdiek (12), Clay Williams (12), Bayln Barga (12), and Assistant Coach Mr. Preston Hild.

**Middle Row (L to R):** Carson Vaughn (11), Carter Griffis (11), Sawyer Cox (11), Riley Cannaday (11), Hayden Mazour (11), and Assistant Coach Mr. Nolan Kawata.

**Front Row (L to R):** Jace Hoelting (9), Cody Funk (10), Jackson Williams (9), Aidan Zikmund (11), Caden Culbertson (10), and Caleb Griffis (9).



**Right:** Hayden Mazour (11) protects the ball as he dribbles around his opponent, working the ball to the inside for a couple more Raider points.

**Left:** Jackson Williams (9) gets an opening to go in for the easy layup against Shelton.



**Left:** Bayln Barga (12) goes up for a shot against two tall Red Cloud players under the hoop. Luckily, Bayln has enough ups to get the ball where it needs to go.



**Left:** Caden Culbertson (10) keeps an eye on his man, ready to move when he does. Playing effective defense was the main goal of the Raiders Basketball Team this year, and with 14 wins you can tell it worked.

**Right:** The Raiders Basketball Team gathers for a timeout to slow down the opponent's momentum and strategize their next plan of attack. No matter the challenge the Raiders found a way to overcome it.



## SCOREBOARD:

OPPONENT:	RESULTS:
Red Cloud	Won 53-44
Arapahoe	Won 39-38
Franklin	Won 34-27
BDS	Won 37-24
Exteter-Milligan-Friend	Lost 66-36
Shelton	Lost 57-38
Hampton	Won 30-22
Gothenburg	Lost 59-34
Hershey	Lost 54-37
McCool Junction	Lost 58-42
Giltner	Won 43-32
Rock Hills	Won 47-23
Blue Hill	Won 45-35
Silver Lake	Lost 55-27
Giltner	Won 33-31
Red Cloud	Won 40-28
Shelton	Lost 71-36
Axtell	Lost 48-33
Harvard	Won 57-38
Kenesaw	Lost 47-37
Superior	Won 42-32
Deshler	Lost 39-38
Harvard	Won 49-15
Red Cloud	Won 27-25
Sumner-Eddyville-Miller	Lost 46-40

**Season: 14-11      District: 2-1**

#### Team Accomplishments:

TVC Tournament Runner-Up  
D2-2 Sub-District Champions

#### Individual Accomplishments:

**Academic All State:** Clay Williams (12)  
and Connor Janda (12)

**Second Team All-TVC:** Clay Williams (12)  
and Nolan Ostdiek (12)

#### Honorable Mention All-Tribland:

Clay Williams (12) and Nolan Ostdiek (12)

#### TVC All-Star Game Participants:

Clay Williams (12) and Nolan Ostdiek (12)





# Lawrence-Nelson Public Schools BUILDING FOR OUR FUTURE

**Right:** The Crochet Club, sponsored by Mrs. Pam Safago, met once a week to learn a new trade and create crocheted IV covers for the local hospital. The club consisted of Brooklyn Mazour (7), Allison Harrison (6), Charley Kathman (6), Brynnly Harrison (8), Mercy Avila Alonso (6), Tiffany Gonzalez-Gamez (9), Riley Haba (9), Maria Gonzalez-Gamez (6), and Ariel Leyva Sigala (6).



**Left:** Brooklyn Combs-Glebe (11) plays Leap Frog with Sydney Bilttoft (12) and several other seniors while waiting to witness the partial solar eclipse at the organized event held at the Nelson Fairgrounds.



## Building for Our Future: A Closing Reflection

As we reach the final pages of this yearbook, we take a moment to reflect on a year defined by the theme "Building for Our Future." This year has been a journey of growth, learning, and unwavering dedication, with each of us playing a crucial role in constructing the foundation for the years ahead.

### The Legacy of Our Efforts

Every moment captured within these pages tells the story of our collective effort. From the first day of school to the last bell ringing in the summer, we have been architects of our own experiences. We have faced challenges with resilience, celebrated achievements with joy, and supported each other with kindness and compassion. These experiences are the bricks and mortar of our future, each one contributing to the legacy we leave behind.

### Celebrating Our Builders

Our students, the future leaders, thinkers, and innovators, have shown incredible spirit and determination. They have excelled in academics, athletics, arts, and community service, proving that they are ready to take on the world. Our successes in the classroom, our improvements in athletics, and our dedication to supporting our community help build our school into an established and supported structure with a well-constructed and sturdy foundation.

Our teachers, the mentors and guides, have tirelessly worked to create an environment that fosters growth and curiosity. Their dedication goes beyond the classroom, as they have inspired us to dream big and work hard in any of our commitments. Whether through giving up their personal time with their families to offer help or their inspiring words of encouragement, their impact on our lives is immeasurable.

## The Unsung Heroes

Let us not forget the staff and community members who have supported us every step of the way. From the custodians who ensure our learning environment is pristine to the cafeteria workers who keep us nourished, their contributions are the unsung yet vital parts of our success. The parents and community partners have also played a pivotal role, providing resources, support, and encouragement, proving that it truly takes a village to build a prosperous future.

### A Vision for Tomorrow

As we close this chapter, we look forward to the future with hope and anticipation. The skills we've acquired, the relationships we've built, and the challenges we've overcome have prepared us for the next steps in our journey. The foundation we've built here is strong, and it will support us as we reach for new heights and explore the new horizons of finally being solely Lawrence-Nelson.

Our school is not just a place where we learn; it is a place where we build the future. Each of us carries a piece of this place in our hearts, and as we move forward, we do so with the knowledge that we are part of something greater. We are builders of dreams and architects of our destiny, and together, we are constructing a future filled with endless possibilities.

### Looking Ahead

As we step out into the world, let us carry forward the lessons learned, the friendships forged, and the spirit of collaboration and innovation. Let this yearbook be a reminder of what we have achieved and an inspiration for what is yet to come for the Lawrence-Nelson Raiders. The future is in our hands, and with the foundation we've built, there is nothing we cannot achieve. Here's to the journey ahead, to the endless possibilities, and to the future we are building together.



**Left:** Claire Himmelberg (12), Sydney Bilttoft (12), Jessica Sole (12), and Addison McCloskey (11) work on their mural during the Hastings College Mural Competition. This year's theme was to conceptualize a new Nebraska state slogan.

**Right:** Jace Hoelting (9), Kole Thompson (10), and Nathan Pofahl (10) spent some time working at the Superior Food Pantry for FBLA after making a large donation that students K-12 collected.



## **Class C**

### **#22 Broadcast News Story**

Madison Fenn, Addison Smith, Yutan

[https://youtu.be/c\\_HkO69F4RM?si=Dlg\\_y2m3xl-Vg8XC](https://youtu.be/c_HkO69F4RM?si=Dlg_y2m3xl-Vg8XC)

### **#23 Broadcast Sports Story**

Drew Feeken, Kaleb Kaslon, St. Paul

<https://youtu.be/9J6JUOPAEQU?si=VkRmGnT9v-4rnW-Y>

### **#24 Broadcast Feature Story**

Elizabeth Brennan, Mead

[https://youtu.be/K9rFhlvmAKQ?si=UMCKmyhthr5qGC\\_O](https://youtu.be/K9rFhlvmAKQ?si=UMCKmyhthr5qGC_O)

### **#25 Broadcast Public Service Announcement**

Grant Hinze, Torian Ibarra, Centennial

<https://youtu.be/6o-IBOpj9O8?si=pyZyKdEwo952Ludj>