

# a celebration of excellence

**Helena Education Foundation**
honors the 2023 Class of
Distinguished Scholars,
Distinguished Achievers, and
the Distinguished Educators
who inspired them



# a celebration of excellence

Helena Education Foundation

Welcome to

# a celebration of excellence

A Celebration of Excellence honors outstanding graduating seniors at the culmination of their careers as Helena Public School students. The Helena Education Foundation then empowers these students to honor educators who have had a positive impact on them during the course of their education. Public recognition of students and educators is at the core of the Foundation's mission because it

- Highlights the community's support for hard-working public school students and educators;
- Demonstrates the critical partnership among schools, home, businesses, and the community;
- Offers younger students positive role models and a goal for which they can strive;
- Fosters confidence and appreciation among public schools, parents and guardians, businesses, and the community.

## STUDENTS

The *Celebration of Excellence* showcases the extraordinary efforts of students in the classroom, the school, and in the wider community. Seniors earn the Distinguished Scholar distinction by meeting a set of rigorous criteria developed by high school students, teachers, and administrators; these criteria include grade point average, number of honors and advanced placement and other higher level courses, and total credit hours. Educators nominate students as Distinguished Achievers based on their excellence in specific curricular areas, leadership, service, or for overcoming obstacles to achievement. HEF and the School District administrators regularly review and update criteria to remain compatible with current course offerings.

## EDUCATORS

The *Celebration of Excellence* gives Distinguished Students the opportunity to each thank an educator who has had a significant, positive impact during their time in the Helena Public Schools. The Helena Education Foundation brings the community together to applaud these educators for sharing their skills, experience, and passion with Helena's young people. They make a difference in our schools and community, one student and one class at a time.

HELENA
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

### OUR MISSION

The mission of the Helena Education Foundation is to enrich education in the Helena Public Schools through consistent community investment of time, talent, funding and other resources, providing students, staff, and the community with unparalleled educational opportunities and experiences.

## THANK YOU TO OUR CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE SPONSORS

Valley Bank OF HELENA
Division of Glacier Bank

Lifetouch

KTVH

Timothy C. Ballweber

Reach Higher Montana

AMERICAN chemet CORPORATION

SULLIVAN FINANCIAL GROUP

Allegiance A Cigna Company

sodexo

THE Cordingley FOUNDATION

Scott Pargot and Katy Wright

montana book co.

Keith and Katie Meyer

BlueCross BlueShield of Montana

S:MA architecture + design

Independent Record

ALLEGRA MARKETING • PRINT • MAIL

## THANK YOU TO THE 2023 CELEBRATION OF EXCELLENCE TABLE SPONSORS

Ed and Mary Barrett
Sandra and Merwin Barrows
Ron and Connie Bergum
Jim and Laura Brown
Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry and Hoven, Inc.
Mike and Pat Cotter
Crowley Fleck, PLLP
Corey and Darci Crum
Mike and Diane Evans
Keith and Susan Foster
Jeff and Libby Goldes
Rick and Jane Hays
Helena Education Association
Helena Exchange Club
Helena Orthodontics
Rick Johnson
Jason Loble
Missouri River Contractors LLC
Montana Eyecare
Jeff and Jeannie Morrison
Robert Peccia & Associates
Bob and Toni Person
Bill and Barb Ridgway
Dave and Joyce Roberts
St. Peter's Health
Tempest Technologies LLC
Silver Star Steak Co
Justin and Courtnay Smith
Smitty's Fireplace Shop
Sweeney Educational Consulting
Dale Tig Vernon
Ron and Ann Waterman

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Reflecting on our belief that investing in public schools benefits the entire community, HEF has highlighted, through ads and social media posts, the many ways Helena Public Schools alumni serve Helena. Businesses and organizations around town have helped us highlight employees who are HPS alumni. We've been astounded by the results—from construction workers, to nurses and doctors, to teachers, to police officers, to engineers, to volunteers, to the 19 of 31 employees at the Park Avenue Bakery—these products of the Helena Public Schools are integral to the fabric of our community.



HPS alumni don't have to stay in Helena to have a positive impact on this community. A case in point are the alumni from the Helena High class of 1962 who, for their 50th and 60th reunions, coordinated donations to support Helena Education Foundation grants for Helena High. The alumnus who has rallied his classmates for donations hasn't lived in Helena since he graduated in 1962, but he believes his success is grounded in his education at Helena High School.

Those who have moved to Helena from other communities may not be immediately invested in the Bengal/Bruin rivalry or neighborhood school buildings, but we still look to the schools to nurture our own children, to prepare our future employees, and to keep our community vibrant.

For the Celebration of Excellence's MC, we've invited Mary Sheehy Moe, whose statement "public schools don't just educate a community; they create one!" inspired us this year. It's true. The business owners and community members here tonight as supporters of the Helena Public Schools consistently give their time, talent, and resources to ensure Helena kids receive a top-notch education. The parents and guardians at each table are heroic partners with the schools, transporting kids, assisting them with homework, and instilling them with their core values. These Distinguished Educators have dedicated themselves to our young people, and the students have recognized the myriad roles they fill: mentors, entertainers, role-models, confidants, advocates, and catalysts. Finally, the efforts of the 2023 Distinguished Students demonstrate an implicit appreciation for the community's gift of education. Impressively, they already have an incredible record of giving back. A quick read through these students' activities shows they have enriched themselves and made time to share with others—volunteering with groups like National Honor Society, Niceness is Priceless, and Key Club and for organizations like the Florence Crittenton Home, various animal shelters/rescues and many others. They empower their classmates and younger students through groups like Girls Thrive, Special Olympics, Peer Mentoring and Link Crew. They coach and teach everything from bow hunting, to dance, to robotics, and basketball, and work to solve global problems through groups like Green Club. They serve in church groups, on student councils, and as student representatives on local boards. One of the students here tonight even founded her own organization—Helping Helena—a name that sums up the impact these young people have had on our town.

Everyone gathered for the Celebration of Excellence is representative of a community that thrives because we learn and grow together, and because we see and show generosity. We can take pride in the accomplishments of the graduates here today, and we hope that the support they've received in the Helena Public Schools and the larger Helena community will buoy them as they venture forward and inspire them to continue investing in their communities.

Thank you for joining us and believing in the power of quality public schools.



—Kyle Spencer, *President,*
*Helena Education Foundation Board of Directors*

# ABOUT THE HELENA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

## CONNECTIONS

The Helena Education Foundation (HEF) is a leader among Montana's public school foundations. Supporting students and educators, the Foundation enriches our schools, helping to make our Helena community a healthy, happy, and prosperous place to live, work, and raise a family.

## PROGRAMS

HEF's programs benefit students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the community. No doubt, you or someone you know has been impacted by our work.

- **Carnival Classic** kicks off each school year with a community-wide celebration of public education.
- **Fabulous Firsts** gives incoming first graders copies of age-appropriate, hard-cover books of their own and gives full sets to school libraries.
- **Great Conversations** provides a night of thought-provoking conversation about relevant topics to promote life-long learning.
- **Let's Talk About Great Teachers** acknowledges, at the *Great Conversations* event, educators who make a significant difference in the lives of our children every day.
- **Trading Places** fosters understanding and collaboration by linking community and school leaders.
- **Great Ideas Grants** award more than $40,000 annually to teachers for innovative classroom projects and experiences.
- **Spark Grants** offer educators frequent and accessible funding for enrichment opportunities for students. HEF awards $12,000 plus in Spark Grants each year.
- **Celebration of Excellence** honors distinguished graduating scholars, achievers, and their educators—celebrating excellence, drive, and leadership.
- **Issues Institutes** provide unique learning opportunities on current and emerging topics affecting youth and families as well as topics that elevate our community and enhance the desirability of Helena as a place to live. Past Issues Institutes have addressed opioid addiction (*Chasing the Dragon*), teen suicide (*Cracked Not Broken*), and space exploration (*A Celebration of Earth Day with a Trip to Mars*).
- **Harrison Writing Awards** focus on the importance of writing skills and recognize outstanding young writers with cash awards.
- ***Pen & Ink*** magazine features the creative work of student writers and artists.

HELENA
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

## STRUCTURE

The Helena Education Foundation

- Is a 501(c)3 tax exempt charity and philanthropic organization of local citizens independent of the Helena Public School District but one that is complementary to and collaborative with it.
- Works to increase private support for public education above and beyond that which is constitutionally mandated and provided.
- Serves as a catalyst and funding source for new and innovative ideas, programs and education methods.
- Relies on donations to fund ongoing work and to provide new programs to meet the emerging needs of our students and community.
- Strives for excellence in organizational practices through a community representative board of directors, systems that adhere to governance best practices and procedures for thoughtful, responsible and efficient stewardship of the generous contributions we receive from our community.
- Is recognized as a leader and mentor among education foundations throughout the state of Montana.

### HELENA EDUCATION FOUNDATION STAFF

Lisa Cordingley
*Executive Director*

Becca Leaphart
*Deputy Director*

### HELENA EDUCATION FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kyle Spencer
*President*

Tim Meldrum
*President-Elect*

Ellen Feaver
*Treasurer*

Merwin Barrows
*Secretary*

Morin Blaise
*Helena High Student Representative*

Chris Christensen

John Doran

Brandy Garber

Jana Garza

Cadence Hatten
*Capital High Student Representative*

Jason Loble

Graden Marcelle

Sue Sweeney

Rex Weltz
*Superintendent of Schools –ex officio*

### HELENA PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Rex Weltz

### ADMINISTRATION

Matthew Carey
*Principal, Project for Alternative Learning*

Steve Thennis
*Principal, Helena High School*

Brett Zanto
*Principal, Capital High School*

### HELENA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2022-2023

Siobhan Hathhorn
*Chair*

Jennifer McKee
*Vice Chair*

Janet Armstrong

Terry Beaver

Lois Fitzpatrick

Luke Muszkiewicz

Kay Satre

Jennifer Walsh

Keiran Boyle
*Capital High Student Representative*

Loreley Drees
*Helena High Student Representative*

# 2022-2023 FUND DRIVE PARTNERS

We are deeply grateful for these generous individuals and businesses who support the Helena Education Foundation and public education in our community.

*This list reflects gifts received from April 2022 through April 10, 2023*

**The greatest care was taken to ensure the accuracy of this donor roll; if an error has occurred, please contact us at 406.443.2545 so we may correct it.**

** Denotes a Helena Public School District employee ★ ** Denotes a current HEF Board member ★ *** Denotes both*

## DIAMOND PARTNER

Allegiance Benefit Plan Management
Tim Ballweber, D.D. S.
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana
The Boeing Company
Lisa and Tom Cordingley
Scott Pargot and Katy Wright*
Jim and Suzi Stanger
Valley Bank
William and Judy Walter

## RUBY PARTNER

Allegra Marketing, Print, Mail
Independent Record
KTVH
Montana Book Company
Morrison-Maierle, Inc.
Alan and Nancy Nicholson
Susan Nimick
Rotary Club of Helena Sunrise
Douglas and Katherine Skor
Sodexo School Services
Sullivan Financial Group, Inc.,
Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation
Ron and Ann Waterman

## EMERALD PARTNER

Edward and Mary Barrett
Rich and Sue Buswell
Jack and Penny Copps
Corey and Darci Crum
Dick Anderson Construction, Inc.
Luke Duran, Element L. Design
Ellen Feaver**
Jerry Foley
Chelsey George
Best Western Premier Helena Great Northern Hotel
Jane and Rick Hays
Mosaic Architecture, PC
Pacific Source
PayneWest Insurance
Tempest Technologies LLC
Reach Higher Montana
Barb* and Bill Ridgway
SMA Architecuture + Design
Peter Sullivan and Barbara Harris
Dale Tig Vernon

## SILVER PARTNER

Mike and Ginger Agee
Marcia Allen
American Chemet
Ron and Connie Bergum
Bob's Valley Market
Jim and Laura Brown
Chris Christensen**
Christensen & Prezeau, PLLP
Mike and Pat Cotter
Crowley Fleck, PLLP
Donna Davis
Dowl
Mark and Lynn Etchart
Keith and Susan Foster
Jeff and Libby Goldes
Helena Abstract and Title
Helena Kiwanis Foundation
Helena Orthodontics
Philip A. Hohenlohe and Andrea Rankin
Chuck Johnson and Patricia Hunt
Chris and Carol Hunter
Howard Johnson
Rick Johnson
Renèe and John Kowalski
Kenneth Larson and Linda Adams
LifeTouch
Jason Loble**
Bob McCullough
Ballweber and Ostby Orthodontics
Chris Peccia and Didi Augustine Peccia
Alicia Pichette
Randal Rake and Sarah Fenton
Robert Peccia & Associates
Dave and Joyce Roberts
Bill and Audra Shropshire
Tim Speyer
Jack Stults and Daphne Crosbie
Robert and Cheryl Summerer
Sue Sweeney**
Brock and Kristin Tessman
Norma Tirrell
Rock Hand Hardware
Duane and Sue Wright

## SAPPHIRE PARTNER

Sandra and Merwin** Barrows
Ross and Joseph Duncan
Chris and Susan Ames
David and Sandi Ashley
Terry and Patty Beaver
John and Jennifer Bloomquist
Browning, Kaleczyc, Berry & Hoven, Inc.
Buchanan Capital
Steve and Lisa Bullock
Donna Burgess
Capital Sports and Western
Tom and Cathy Cherry
Ed Clinch / Edward Jones Investments
Nancy Granger Cormier
Lucy Dayton and Mark O'Keefe
Joslyn Davidson*
Ray Flaherty and Lisa Larsen
Eliza Frazer and Barry Hood
Friends of Mark Sweeney
Jana** and Manny* Garza
George's Distributing
Guardian Dermatology
Harrington Pepsi Helena
Helena Education Association
Helena Exchange Club
Helena Home Team
Helena Sand and Gravel
Ralph and Billie Higgins
Marilyn Hudson
Kiely Keane and Michael Green
Trisha Klock*
Jennifer Loomis*
Bill and Babs Leaphart
Mike and Renèe McMahon
Missouri River Contractors LLC
Julie and Doug Mitchell
Montana Broom and Brush
Montana Eyecare
Jeff and Jeannie Morrison
Mike Munck and Betsy Pennington
Amy Omang
Park Avenue Bakery
Bob and Toni Person
Richard and Neva Porte
Dennis Quinn and Joseph Sanchez
Quinn Erwin Dental

Bill Roberts
Tricia Salerno
Skye Hatten Photography
Justin and Courtnay Smith
Silver Star Steak Co.
Smitty's Fireplace Shop, Inc.
The Base Camp
Tom and Scottie Trebon
Eric and Sarah Urban*
Sri Vellanki and Andrew Pida
Patrick and Joni Walton
Mary Williams
Margaret Woo

## AMETHYST PARTNER

Loren and Susan Blossom
John and Victoria Cech
TJ and Ashley Coggins
Matthew Cohn and Mary Ellen Holverson
Coonen Dental
Chris Darragh
Mike Dennison and Sue O'Connell
John and Letha Ebelt
First Interstate Bank
Fred and Judy Flanders
Moffie Funk
Brandy** and Richard Garber
Beverly Gibson
Bill and Rita Gowen
Loren and Cynthia Gustafson
Dr. Peter and Maria Hanson
Shana Harrington
Mike and Sky Hatten
Kaci Hauptman*
Elizabeth Heiser*
Garry and Karen Hicks
Dr. Deb Jacobsen
Greg and Connie Johnson
Stan and Holly Kaleczyc
Rob and Melanie LaClair
Julie* and Chuck Ladd
Jerome Loendorf
Doug Matthies
Keith and Katie Meyer
John Moore and Ann Waickman
John McEwen and Mary Musil
Luke Muszkiewicz
Dale and Dawn Newell
Cindy Parry and Peter Strauss
Rick Pyfer
Nick Radley*
Karen and Patrick Rillahan
Rotary Club of Helena
Jane Ryan
Sandra Sept
Lee and Pamela Shubert
Luanne and John Smith
Dana Toole
Dr. Laura J. Vosejpka
Karen Willis
John Ilgenfritz and Sheena Wilson
Cory Wood
Robert and Kimberly Worthy
Steve and Beth Yeakel
Hugh and Karen Zackheim
Brett Zanto*

## BRONZE PARTNER

406 Recycling LLC
Andy and Marika Adamek
Bob and Carolyn Adams
Charlie and Marianne Adams
Justine* and Michael* Alberts
Gene and Bev Allen
Anna and Corey Baker
Kareen and Arthur Bangert
Batey's Moving and Delivery LLC
John and Nina Baucus
Diane and Michael Bayuk
Sara Berg
Big Sky Cyclery
Judith Binkley
Judy Birch
Anne Blotkamp
Kathleen Boutilier
Chuck Bozdog
Stan and Glenda Bradshaw
Jan Brown
Carol Bruderer
Clay and Alesa Burkett
Richard and Ellen Bush
The Cat Rental Store
John Chart and Teresa Geremia Chart
Cobblestone Clothing Co
Copper Plumbing
Maggi and Tom Corbett
Margaret Corcoran and Jim Madden
Kaetlyn Cordingley
Phyllis Cottle
Creative Arts Center
Margaret Crennen
Kahlee Marina Dalton*
Bruce and Catherine Day
Denny and Nikki DesRosier
Jim and Elly Driggers
Jane Lee Ehlang
Anonymous
Karen Fairbrother
Dan and Mary Ann Fiehrer
John and Kelly Galt
Judy George
Ghost Art Gallery
Jonathan Hager
Harrington Physical Therapy
Ann Harris
Siobhan Hathhorn
C.S. and Lynda Hatveldt
Phil and Karry Hauck
Scott and Gretchen Hibbard
Paul and Celinda Hicks
Debra Horton
Lanny and Bergetta Hubbard
Andy Hunthausen and Pam Ponich
Ed and Bobbi Jasmin
Deb Johnson
Mary I. Johnson
Patrick Judge
Dick and Barb Kain
Janet R Kelly
Tom Kerr, Edward Jones
Tom Kimmell and Eve Franklin
L.W. Davis, Inc., Loren Davis
Becca Leaphart and Ben Brouwer
Melinda and Ed Leas
Ronald Lee
Jim Lewis
Tom and Janet Lipp
John and Katherine Lynch
Tim and Piper Lynch
Lorretta Lynde
Donna Sue Lyon
Steve and Sunny Ray Mandeville
Graden Marcelle**
Mary Ann Marshall
Patty Mazurek
Marjorie McGinley
Josh* and Jenny McKay
Carol McKerrow and Don Harriott
Rebecca McLaughlin
Judy Meadows

# To Make A Donation

Helena Education Foundation, governed by a community representative Board of Directors, is a thoughtful, responsible, and efficient steward of donations received, and values transparency and trust. The Foundation is a legally incorporated, non-profit charitable and educational corporation in the State of Montana. Its status as a 501(c)(3) foundation allows it to receive and distribute funds, property and gifts of any kind for HEF programs and for the benefit of public schools located in Helena. It also maintains a qualified endowment. Planned gifts are eligible for the Montana State Tax Credit.

For more information about making a donation, contact Lisa Cordingley, Executive Director, at **406.443.2545** or at **hef@mt.net**. Donations can be made online at **www.hefmt.org**.

Don and Mary Meek
Mike and JoAnn Meredith
Joan Miles and Tony Jewett
Max Milton and Joan Bird
Bob Moon
Louise Moore and Hal Aasen
Clinton and Kimberly Morrison
Jim Mullins and Lynn Hinch
Dana Nehring
Dianne Nickman
Brenda Nordlund
Bill and Sandra Olsen
Parriman Construction Co., Inc.
Peak Physical Therapy & Sports Rehab
Perschon Contractors, Inc.
Dr. Lawrence K. Pettit
Christopher and Julie Petre
Chris Phelps and Peggy Hollow-Phelps
Pierce and Associates Builders, LLC
Sarah Piper
Kalene Pool
Sanna Porte and Dave Carr
Bill Pratt
Gene and Kathy Prendergast
Bob Putsch
Madalyn Quinlan and Brian Garrity
Tara Rice
Jim and Sherry Rickman
Kay and Joe Robertson
Randi Rognlie
Joan Rolling
Elvira Roncalli and John Ries
Judy and Darrell Rud
Rhonda Safford
Kay Satre
Emelia Satre
Berma Saxton
Gil and Jodi Schellenger
Marty and Lisa Schuma
Douglas and Cathy Shenkle
Spencer Shropshire and Susan Epstein
Don and Tedra Skaar
Rosana and Dewey Skelton
Amy H. Smiedala
Vicki Smith
Sandi Smith and Kenneth Ronish
Miranda and Michael Spaulding
Dominick and Ellen Speranza
Beth Steele
Mark Stiffler
Patrick Sullivan and Mary Gilchrist
Abigail Sullivan
Richard and Penny Swanson
Janet Tatz and Dave Morey
Steve* and Anna* Thennis
Marion and Lou Thompson
Tara Thompson*
Bob Throssell and Carolyn Clemens
Stephenie and John Tubbs
Jeanne Underhill and Peter Funk
Leo and Julie Ward
Michael and Cori* Wellenstein
Rex Weltz*
Niki Whearty and James Reynolds
Bruce Whittenberg
Michael and Tina Wong
Randy and Patty Woo

## FRIENDS OF THE FOUNDATION

John Adams
Jeff and Pam Aldrich
Chad and Genevieve* Anderson
Mary J. Arnold
Kajetan Bauer
Karyl Beattie
Mike Billings and Pat Haffey
David Boggs
Bonnie Bowler
Mary Jane Bradbury
Ann Brodsky
Jan Brow
Shawn and Lynn* Bubb
Kelley Bundt*
Erin Lee Buyske
Allen and Kathy Chambers
Thomas and Jill Cook
George Cornelius
Carol Dagenais
Ed Darfler
Renèe Driessen* and Randy Fuhrmann
Ralph Esposito
Suzy Fabian
Carol Fergerson
Jessica Frazier*
Fortnightly Club of Helena
Bill and Jeanne Fullerton
Robert Funk and Julie Bohem
Joe and Anna Furshong
Jennifer Gursky and Christopher Abbott
Ivelone Hodges
Jim Hunt and Barb Howe
Sandra Jankowski
David and Natalie Jordan
Patricia Kemp and Christine Kaufmann
Jeff and Carrie Key
Randall LeCocq and Sheri Sprigg
Nancy Lee
Jim and Joanna Lund
Dennis and Janel McCall
Jerry McCarthy
Ann McCauley
Mark Meloy
Jonathan and Lorna Milne Motl
John and Gwynn Mundinger
Milton and Rita Munson
Bruce and Sue Newell
Virginia and Albert Niccolucci
Karen Ogden* and Daniel Hollow
Tom and Teri Palmer
Tom Pederson and Rebecca Fletcher
Sheila Plant
Ted Polette
Kally and Phil Porrini
Kathleen Prody*
Hal and Julie Robbins
Jill Roberts and Mike Cloeren
William and Mary Jo Seel
James Shope
Orpha Smigaj
Bill and Danette Sprinkle
Joe and Susan Steffens
Ward and Mary Stiles
Bob Swartout, Jr.
Cynthia Thornquist
Donna and Gary Turcott
Linda Vaughey
Gregg and Wendy Wheeler
Rich and Kass Wirak
Meghan Wirth

## MONTANA STATE AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES GIVING CAMPAIGN

HEF would like to recognize and thank the following state and federal employees who gave through the State and Federal Employees Giving Campaign, as well as employees who contributed through SECGC, but elected not to be acknowledged by name.

Chris Darragh
Anonymous
Jon Ebelt
Shana Harrington
Kalene Pool
Anonymous
Mark Stiffler









# Tributes

## HONORING OTHERS

*In honor of our new National Board Certified Educators*
Lisa and Tom Cordingley

*In honor of Mike Sampson*
Valley Bank

*In honor of Andrea Rankin and Phil Hohenloe*
Marcia Allen

*In honor of Ryan and Meghan Schulte*
Erin Lee Buyske

## MEMORIALS

*In memory of William Bausch*
Chad and Cindy Galbavy
Douglas and Cathy Shenkle

*In memory of Max Bullock*
Jack and Penny Copps

*In memory of Terry Dagenais*
Keith and Katie Meyer

*In memory of Lynn Darfler*
John and Jennifer Bloomquist

*In memory of Emilee "Em" DeKam*
Douglas and Cathy Shenkle

*In memory of Eric Feaver*
Allen and Kathy Chambers
Steve and Sunny Ray Mandeville
Deb Jacobsen
Douglas and Cathy Shenkle

*In memory of Jim Gross*
Dick and Barb Kain
Douglas and Cathy Shenkle

*In memory of Steve Harper*
Keith and Katie Meyer

*In memory of Peter Horton*
Debra Horton

*In memory of Jewell Hurley*
Keith and Katie Meyer

*In memory of Joanne Mack*
Keith and Katie Meyer

*In memory of Virginia Markell*
Keith and Katie Meyer

*In memory of Claudia Jean O'Connell*
Kareen and Arthur Bangert

*In memory of Sue O'Leary*
Keith and Katie Meyer

*In memory of Jackie Holmes Peccia*
Chris Peccia and
Didi Augustine Peccia

*In memory of Alan Quist*
Douglas and Cathy Shenkle

*In memory of the children and teachers who died in Uvalde, Texas, May 2022*
Deb Jacobsen

*In Memory of Lloyd Skor*
Douglas and Katherine Skor

*In memory of Sheila M. Sullivan*
Peter Sullivan and Barbara Harris

*In memory of Mark Sweeney*
Helena Educators (Friends of Mark Sweeney in HSD#1)
Joslyn Davidson
Deb Jacobsen
Lisa and Tom Cordingley
Keith and Katie Meyer
Bill and Barb Ridgway
Teresa Geremia-Chart

*In memory of Guy James Uithof*
Kareen and Arthur Bangert

*In memory of Dolores Van Gerpen*
Keith and Katie Meyer

*In memory of Dorathy Von Vohl Kendall*
Douglas and Cathy Shenkle

*In memory of Helen Whitney*
Douglas and Cathy Shenkle

*In memory of Rita Ann Williams*
Keith and Katie Meyer

*In memory of Sandy Zeiler*
Douglas and Cathy Shenkle
Sandi Smith and Kenneth Ronish
















HE
EDUCA
FOUNDA

# Presenting the 2023 Distinguished Scholars, Achievers, and Educators




# Distinguished Scholars

**Students earn the distinction of Distinguished Scholar by meeting a rigorous set of criteria developed by high school students, teachers, and administrators. These criteria include grade point average, number of honors, advanced placement, and other higher level courses, and total credit hours.**

| DISTINGUISHED SCHOLAR | DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR |
|---|---|
| Keiran Boyle<br>*Capital High School* | Carol Morgan<br>*Four Georgians Elementary School (ret.)* |
| Connor Bushnell<br>*Capital High School* | Duane Zehr<br>*Capital High School* |
| Halsey de Montigny<br>*Helena High School* | Sheila Orzechowski<br>*Helena High School* |
| Maren Elliott<br>*Capital High School* | Susie Stone<br>*Capital High School* |
| Charles Fox<br>*Helena High School* | Kelly Elder<br>*CR Anderson Middle School* |
| Selah Frederickson<br>*Capital High School* | Chelsea Mazurek-Pierce<br>*Capital High School* |
| John Goodwin<br>*Capital High School* | Adam Clinch<br>*Capital High School* |
| Ashley Heinrich<br>*Capital High School* | Laura Brayko<br>*Capital High School* |
| Zach Heller<br>*Capital High School* | Jeremy Slead<br>*PEAK, Ray Bjork Learning Center* |
| Melaina Autumn Kloberdanz<br>*Helena High School* | Andrew Roberts<br>*Helena Middle School* |
| Brendan Miller<br>*Capital High School* | Dana Swingley<br>*Rossiter Elementary School* |
| Gabriella Radley<br>*Helena High School* | Ryan Schulte<br>*Helena High School* |
| Lynsey Read<br>*Capital High School* | Jodi Delaney<br>*Broadwater Elementary School* |
| Katherine L. Rencher<br>*Capital High School* | Helen Bosch<br>*Capital High School* |
| Miranda Sheafor<br>*Capital High School* | Becca Leaphart<br>*HEF (formerly CHS)* |
| Ashton Shipley<br>*Capital High School* | Kelley Bundt<br>*Four Georgians Elementary School* |
| Foster Smith<br>*Helena High School* | Buffy Smith<br>*Helena High School* |
| Karson Stefaniak<br>*Helena High School* | Hilary Potuzak<br>*Helena High School* |
| Robert Stimpson<br>*Helena High School* | Melanie Williams<br>*Montana City School (ret.)* |
| McKenzie Tordale<br>*Capital High School* | Allyson Crum<br>*Rossiter Elementary School* |




# Distinguished Achievers

**District educators nominated Distinguished Achievers based on excellence in a specific curricular area, leadership, service, or for overcoming obstacles to achievement.**

| DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVER | DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR |
|---|---|
| Autumn Afton<br>*Helena High School* | Victor Daniel<br>*Helena High School* |
| Selin Ece Birgul<br>*Capital High School* | Sarah Urban<br>*Capital High School* |
| Morin Blaise<br>*Helena High School* | Bob Poelking<br>*Helena High School* |
| Emma Compton<br>*Capital High School* | Anne Bartsch<br>*Hawthorne Elementary School (ret.)* |
| Hailey Anne Cox<br>*Capital High School* | Genevieve Anderson<br>*Capital High School* |
| Hailey Dawn Cox<br>*Capital High School* | Marilyn Barta<br>*Broadwater Elementary School (ret.)* |
| Loreley Drees<br>*Helena High School* | Jamie O'Malley<br>*Helena High School* |
| Jack Drynan<br>*Capital High School* | Michael Burk<br>*Capital High School* |
| Lexi Erdahl<br>*Helena High School* | Jonna Schwartz<br>*Capital High School (HHS Coach)* |
| CJ Flugge<br>*Helena High School* | Jen Mooney<br>*Helena Middle School* |
| Abi Grotbo<br>*Capital High School* | Terri Norman<br>*Capital High School* |
| Cadence Hatten<br>*Capital High School* | Ed Darfler<br>*Capital High School Coach* |
| Ethen Higgins<br>*Project for Alternative Learning* | Ryan Cooney<br>*Project for Alternative Learning* |
| Lauren Hoxie<br>*Capital High School* | Nancy Peterson<br>*CR Anderson Middle School* |
| Collin Hurlburt<br>*Helena High School* | Kacey Askin<br>*Helena High School* |
| Logan Johnson<br>*Capital High School* | Erin Cleveland<br>*Capital High School* |
| Isabella Kosena<br>*Helena High School* | Dawn Ruf *(deceased)*<br>*Clancy Elementary* |
| Tyler Kovick<br>*Capital High School* | Hollee Goody<br>*Capital High School* |
| Aidia Lehman<br>*Capital High School* | Jamie Toivonen<br>*Capital High School* |
| Ethan Martin<br>*Capital High School* | Levi Dawes<br>*Capital High School* |
| Sydney Meyer<br>*Project for Alternative Learning* | Renée Driessen<br>*Project for Alternative Learning* |
| Cael Murgel<br>*Helena High School* | Brandon Day<br>*Helena High School* |
| Eren Olson<br>*Helena High School* | Justine Alberts<br>*Hawthorne Elementary School (formerly Kessler)* |
| Brian Prenatt<br>*Capital High School* | Scott Herzig<br>*Central Elementary School* |
| Katrina Richmond<br>*Capital High School* | Leslie Hagengruber<br>*CR Anderson Middle School* |
| Hailey Scott<br>*Helena High School* | Kerry Cicero<br>*Central Elementary School (formerly Warren)* |
| Lou Sechrist<br>*Capital High School* | Tricia Rummel<br>*Capital High School* |
| John Settle<br>*Capital High School* | Tom Caffrey<br>*Capital High School* |
| Henley Sexton<br>*Capital High School* | J.D. Solomon<br>*Capital High School* |
| Riley Walsh<br>*Helena High School* | Shannin Preshinger<br>*Helena High School* |
| Olivia Wigton<br>*Capital High School* | Kevin Ward<br>*Capital High School* |

## AUTUMN AFTON

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Catherine LeCours

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Prickly Pear 4-H Club

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend College




**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Autumn Afton**

*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Victor Daniel**

*Helena High School*

Mr. Daniel is a teacher who cares about so much more than grades. If I was having a tough day or struggling, I could count on Mr. Daniel to take notice and help me through the challenge. His sense of humor was frequently on display and could always bring a smile to my face. In both Art 3 and Photography, Mr. Daniel created lessons and projects that were super engaging, fun to complete, and helped grow my artistic skills. Creativity has been an important force in my life, and I feel so grateful to have had Mr. Daniel as a supportive mentor.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Sarah Urban**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Selin Birgul**

*Capital High School*

Mrs. Urban is the teacher who has made me like biology. Her enthusiasm and passion for biology was evident from the first day of school. She puts a lot of effort into her classes. Coming from Turkey, I wasn't familiar with using our lab equipment, but Mrs. Urban guided me through each step and made me feel included with the rest of the class. Above all, Mrs. Urban takes the time to bond with her students and makes our days better with her contagious, never-ending energy.

## SELIN BIRGUL

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Recep Birgul
Gulseren Birgul

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Computer Science
Research Science Club
Science Olympiad
Niceness is Priceless Club
National Honor Society

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Carroll College for one year and then attend Georgia Tech

## MORIN BLAISE

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Lisa Blaise
Michael Blaise

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Volleyball
Tennis
Student Council
Orchestra
HEF Board of Directors, HHS Student Representative
National Honor Society

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Arizona State University to study forensic psychology



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Bob Poelking**
*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Morin Blaise**
*Helena High School*

Mr. Poelking has been my volleyball coach for three years; I know him well. He puts up with twenty teenage girls every day for three hours and stays sane. He knows every one of our gum preferences for games (having them at the ready in his famous fanny pack) and always picks up after me, retrieving the things I forget at practice. Poelking is one of the smartest people I know. You could probably ask him any question having to do with politics or history and he would have the answer. Not only this, but he also knows exactly when someone is upset and is the first person to make sure they're ok. Poelking deserves this recognition one hundred percent; anyone who has him—as a coach or as a teacher—is lucky.



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Keiran Boyle**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Carol Morgan**

*Four Georgians (retired)*

When I walked into Carol Morgan's fifth grade class, I knew it was the place for me. Her energy forced us to engage with all subjects, especially history. Whether listening to her fantastic reading of Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*, signing our class constitution, or reenacting the Boston Massacre with crumpled paper, we always had a hands-on activity to keep us interested in some heavy topics. Additionally, Ms. Morgan treated us all like the educated young people we were, and our class wasn't limited strictly to daily lesson plans. Carol Morgan was everything a young student wants in an educator.

## KEIRAN BOYLE

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Maureen Boyle
Cal Boyle

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

HOSA
Student Council
National Honor Society
Helping Helena
Key Club
Math Club
HSD School Board, CHS Student Representative
Club Leaders
Track
Cross Country
Violin
*Pen & Ink* Magazine

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Gonzaga University to study environmental science and pre-law

## CONNOR BUSHNELL

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Kathy Bushnell
Paul Bushnell

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross Country, Captain
Student Council, Student Body VP
Math Club
Science Club, President
Key Club
Ski Club
World Travel Club
Chem Club
Helping Helena Club
Montana Youth Action
Ski Club
National Honor Society, President
Helena Hooligans Rugby

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend MIT to study physics



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Duane Zehr**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Connor Bushnell**
*Capital High School*

Mr. Zehr has influenced me the most out of any teacher I have had. Between showing us his hobbies during COVID, sharing ways to be professional on Pro Days, and, most importantly, teaching us how to tie a bow tie (pictured above) on bow tie Tuesdays, I have learned much more than music in his band room. I know that when I graduate I will miss his expertise, wisdom, help, and multitude of life stories and analogies as I continue to explore my passion for music.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Anne Bartsch**

*Hawthorne (retired)*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Emma Compton**

*Capital High School*

I transferred to Hawthorne at the beginning of first grade and was welcomed with open arms by Mrs. Bartsch. Each morning, she would greet every student with the option of a hug or a high five; I always went for a hug because Mrs. Bartsch gives the best hugs. Mrs. Bartsch instilled a deep passion for learning that will be with me throughout my life, and her positivity helped me grow from an apprehensive student to someone who was invigorated by learning and looked forward to attending school each day.

## EMMA COMPTON

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Annette Compton
Doug Compton

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross Country
Swimming
Track and Field
Green Club
Envirothon
National Honor Society
Science Olympiad
U.S. Forest Service Volunteer
Heat Meet

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University to study nursing

## HAILEY DAWN COX

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Vickie Cox

Don Cox

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Grandstreet Theatre School, student and classroom assistant

Grandstreet Student Advisory Board

Grandstreet Conservatory Class

Performer in 24 Grandstreet Shows

Grandstreet Volunteer

Junior Theater Festival, Sacramento

New Works Showcase Performer, JTF Sacramento

CHS Theater/Drama Club

Thespian Troupe 1378

Spanish Club

*Pen and Ink* Magazine, copy-editor and contributor

National Honor Society

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the University of Wyoming to study musical theatre and English/ creative writing



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Hailey Dawn Cox**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Marilyn Barta**

*Broadwater (retired)*

I was a very timid child when I was in elementary school. Mrs. Barta's class, however, helped to bring me out of my shell. She was so kind and patient, and her class was a fun and inclusive place. Class activities were educational but also made learning as fun and engaging as possible. I didn't struggle to comprehend the work in Mrs. Barta's class because every day was like a game for me. It was enjoyable to do class work, and I was excited to go to school every day.



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Hailey Anne Cox**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Genevieve Anderson**

*Capital High School*

I moved to Helena from Hawaii in August, and starting a new school as a senior was a challenge, but Ms. Anderson took me under her wing. We have continued to bond through our love for photography and travel which has led to many great opportunities including our spring break trip to France and a trip to Yellowstone National Park. Ms. Anderson has also showcased my work in many different venues. I am incredibly grateful to have met such a kind and compassionate teacher who helps me grow as a person and a photographer. This support means the world to me.

## HAILEY ANNE COX

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Roger Cox

Julie Cox

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Soccer

Helena Swim Team

Frisco Animal Shelter in Frisco, CO, volunteer

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Return to Hawaii to pursue my interests in photography and travel, and attend culinary school

## HALSEY DE MONTIGNY

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Bobbi de Montigny
Halleck de Montigny

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Internship at dental office

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend MSU Billings to study communication



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Halsey de Montigny**
*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Sheila Orzechowski**
*Helena High School*

I picked Sheila Orzechowski because she was a friendly face I got to interact with everyday when I was having a difficult time. I felt quite lonely in my junior year, but I often looked forward to going to my U.S. History class just because of her. Now, in my senior year, I look forward to our little talks that we have each morning. She cares very much about what she does, and I have a lot of respect for that. Not only is she a wonderful teacher, but I'd also consider her one of my wonderful friends.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Jamie O'Malley**

*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Loreley Drees**

*Helena High School*

I had the pleasure of having Mrs. O'Malley for AP Chemistry. Even before I set foot in her class, she helped me learn by lending me textbooks to study over the summer. She made my hardest class the most fun. She cares deeply about all her students and puts in so much extra time and effort to make each lesson engaging and fun. I admire how she treats her students as equals and is more than willing to teach you extra things–like how to make stock solutions–in her free time. Mrs. O'Malley is truly a gem of a teacher.

## LORELEY DREES

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Kristin Drees
Friedrich Drees

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Speech and Debate
Mock Trial
Science Olympiad
Key Club
Girls Thrive
Grandstreet Theatre

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the University of Washington's Honors College, UC San Diego, UCLA, or Stanford.

## JACK DRYNAN

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Pat Drynan
Erin Drynan

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Football
Basketball
Track
Business Professionals of America
National Honor Society
Florence Crittenton Home Volunteer
RE classes at Our Lady of the Valley Church

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University to study business




**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Jack Drynan**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Michael Burk**
*Capital High School*

Mr. Burk—he changed everything for me. He's like any other PE teacher. But! There's something special about him. You don't see it from the outside, but he has a huge heart. Taking Unified PE was the best decision of my life, and I can confidently say it's made me who I am. It really is a task to take on a class where people with different needs are all meant to participate inclusively, but Mr. Burk comes to class every day with a smile, ready to get class started.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Susie Stone**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Maren Elliott**

*Helena High School*

Mrs. Stone is an encouraging teacher and an effervescent person. Her love for literature is infectious, and learning feels effortless in her class. Her continual optimism brightens my day. She genuinely cares about her students and is invested not only in their academic success, but their happiness in their personal lives. Mrs. Stone's caring is apparent in the way that she hangs up newspaper clippings whenever she finds an article about one of her students and attends students' concerts and activities outside of school. I am grateful to have had Mrs. Stone as a teacher.

## MAREN ELLIOTT

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Josh Elliott

Allison Elliott

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Violin for 13 years

Capital High School Orchestra

All State and All Northwest Honor Orchestras

Helping Helena Club, founder and president

Church youth group

Music at my church

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend college to study business administration with a minor in music and Spanish.

## LEXI ERDAHL

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Jen Erdahl
Mike Erdahl

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross country
Track
Wrestling manager
Church nursery worker

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University




**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Lexi Erdahl**
*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Jonna Schwartz**
*Capital & Helena High School*

I first met Jonna as a freshman at the beginning of my first cross country season at Helena High. It was her first year coaching, so we were both new to the program. Over the years we became closer each season, as I am the only one on the team who has stayed throughout all of her seasons as a coach. We've bonded through many long runs, lots of personal conversations, and talks of running future marathons. I thank Jonna for all the encouragement and wisdom that she's provided me.




**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Jen Mooney**

*Helena Middle School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**CJ Flugge**

*Helena High School*

Jen Mooney was my math teacher in 6th grade. She helped me when I was having a hard time with math and encouraged me to prove to myself that I could do the math. She motivated me to do well through 6th grade, and she continues to motivate me today. There always was a competitive spirit between us because she likes the Red Sox and I like the Dodgers, and it just made the class more enjoyable to have that tension. Jen Mooney is a great teacher and she continues to motivate her students and to help when people need it.

## CJ FLUGGE

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Korrie Flugge
David Flugge

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Soccer
AWS Club
Salvation Army basketball
Starlighters Choir
Bowling
Link Crew leader

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Work or apprenticeship

## CHARLES FOX

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Holly Fox
Pat Fox

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Football
Wrestling
Track
Student Council
Montana Association of Student Councils
Montana Board of Public Education Student Representative
Work 2 Be Well, National Student Advisory Committee
Key Club
Outdoors Club
Starlighters Choir

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the United States Air Force Academy to study aeronautical engineering




**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Charles Fox**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Kelly Elder**
*C.R Anderson Middle School*

Mr. Elder is more than just a teacher; he is my role model and mentor. I met Mr. Elder in 6th grade when I started participating in student council, and his dedication to my learning and success helped me achieve my potential as a student and leader. Mr. Elder went above and beyond to guide and encourage me. His work for the Montana Association of Student Councils, Helena Schools, and the Board of Public Education has made a world of difference in my life, and all who are involved in education in Montana.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Chelsea Mazurek-Pierce**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Selah Frederickson**

*Capital High School*

Throughout high school, Ms. Pierce has fueled my passion for learning and been a friend in all circumstances. When COVID-19 closed in-person school, she took the time to personally write comments for my assignments, even in that time of depression and avolition. After reading my writing for one assignment, she sent me an email saying she enjoyed my writing immensely and inquiring as to whether I had ever considered writing as a career, which opened the door to that possibility for me in a way that no one had before.

## SELAH FREDERICKSON

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Clint Frederickson

Starsha Frederickson

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Dance (ballet, jazz, modern, musical theater)

Band (Marching, Pep, and Concert)

Bass guitar player and singer on the volunteer worship team at church

PEAK Gifted and Talented Program

National Honor Society

Academic World Quest

Student Council

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Davidson Honors College, University of Montana or University of Washington to study sociology

## JOHN GOODWIN

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Annie Goodwin

Ted Goodwin

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Green Club

Fly Fishing Club

Future Fisheries of Montana Board, High School Representative

Student Council Senior Class Secretary

Pat Barnes Trout Unlimited High School Representative

FWP Hunters Education instructor

FWP Bowhunters Education instructor

Catholic religious education teacher

National Honor Society

Royal Conservatory of Music piano performance

Montana House of Representatives Page

Salvation Army Basketball

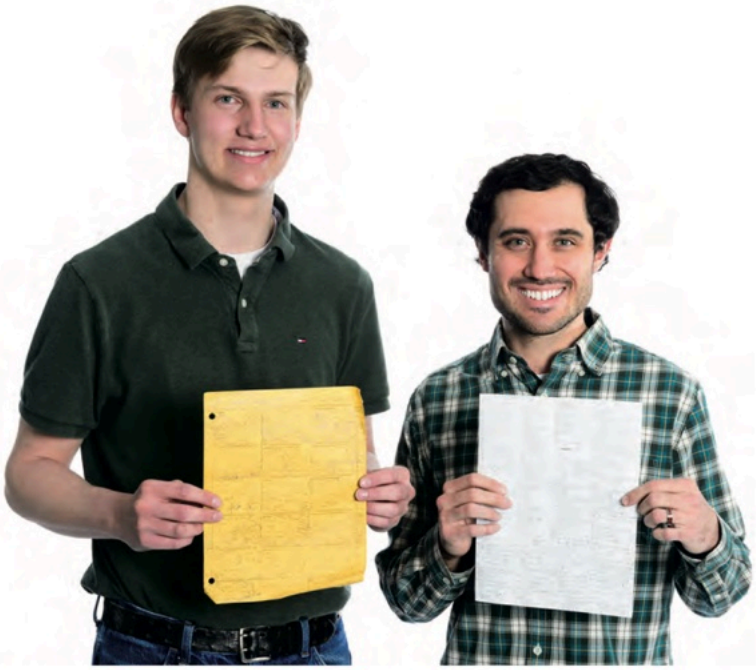
Envirothon

Pep Band

District Music Festival

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Carroll College to study history and environmental science



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**John Goodwin**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Adam Clinch**

*Capital High School*

Since middle school, I've struggled in math. But when I asked Mr. Clinch for help, he committed to help me. Mr. Clinch uses resources like videos of him doing the practice test and filmed lessons to help students understand material. He encouraged me to take AP Calculus my senior year. This year I've studied more than any other. In the hardest class I've ever taken, I finally did well in math—getting the highest grade I've ever had in the subject. Mr. Clinch says it's because of my studying, but it's all because he ensures his students understand and enjoy math.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Terri Norman**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Abi Grotbo**

*Capital High School*

I met Mrs. Norman my sophomore year of high school when I decided to take her computer class. Little did I know that she would have a major influence on my high school career. She influenced me to take accounting my junior year, where she also influenced me to join BPA. She helped me find what I'm passionate about and what it truly means to push yourself to your true potential. To say "I don't know what I would've done without her these past 3 years" would be an understatement.

## ABI GROTBO

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Janae Grotbo

Donald Grotbo

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Tennis

Cheer

Business Professionals of America

National Honor Society

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University to study accounting

## CADENCE HATTEN

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Mike Hatten
Skye Hatten

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross country
Track
Green Club
National Honor Society
Grandstreet Theatre School
Church youth group and worship team
Ceramics class
Unified PE
Mountainside Montessori School aide
Helena Education Foundation Board of Directors, CHS Student Representative

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the Davidson Honors College, University of Montana to study communication science and disorders



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Cadence Hatten**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Ed Darfler**

*Capital High School*

A pat on the back that I will never forget, followed by a "just run." Ed Darfler and I have spent four years together through both cross country and track, and he has helped me grow as a runner and a person. He pushes me to challenge myself and is always there to encourage me after I race. To quote the man himself, "I am like a mushroom, they put me in a dark room and don't tell me anything." Eddy, I will miss you and our banter.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Laura Brayko**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Ashley Heinrich**

*Capital High School*

Laura Brayko has been a mentor and a friend. Every day, I look forward to her classes and our talks, and she continues to amaze me with her creativity and devotion to the arts. Working as her stage manager has been tremendously exciting, and I can only wish to be as half as great as she is. Thank you, Ms. Brayko, for helping me find myself and become the mature young woman I am today. Without you, I wouldn't be in the shoes I am now. You have given me my passion for the arts, something I will never take for granted.

## ASHLEY HEINRICH,

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Brian Heinrich

Annette Heinrich

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

CHS Drama, Stage Manager, Costume head and Student Director

Drama Club, Historian, Secretary, and Vice President

Teacher Assistant, Introductory Theater 1

Montana State Thespian Board, Education Liaison and Vice President

Capital Chemistry Society

National Honor Society

Helena Avenue Theater, Assistant Stage Manager

ExplorationWorks Science Museum summer camp volunteer

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the University of Providence, Great Falls to study forensic science sand criminology

## ZACH HELLER

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Julie Heller
Luke Heller

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Student Council
Math Club
Key Club
Chemistry Club
Science Club
Boy Scouts
Robotics
ExplorationWorks

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Colorado School of Mines to study mechanical engineering



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Jeremy Slead**

*PEAK Gifted & Talented program*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Zach Heller**

*Capital High School*

Mr. Slead was my PEAK teacher for 4th and 5th grades. Mr. Slead inspired me to work my hardest to achieve a successful end product, and he also taught me how to push through when projects don't come together as planned. While in Mr. Slead's class, I learned life skills which didn't seem all that important at the time, but now I realize those teachings put me on a track for success. Thank you, Mr. Slead.




**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Ryan Cooney**

*Project for Alternative Learning*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Ethen Higgins**

*Project for Alternative Learning*

When I started at PAL, I didn't feel like I belonged. Ryan Cooney made me feel welcome. He is always willing to listen and have a conversation. He never judged or made me feel like my opinion didn't matter. Without his support, I wouldn't be where I am today. He pushed me to be a better me. My favorite story about Ryan is when he skied the terrain park with us at Great Divide.....even if he did crash! Ryan is simply awesome, and I hope to continue our relationship as I start my journey of adult life.

## ETHEN HIGGINS,

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Michael Higgins
Kemery Smith

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Great Divide, Junior ski coach
Helena School District summer employee

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Work this summer and then attend school to be either a diesel mechanic or a game warden.

## LAUREN HOXIE

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Kim Hoxie
Mike Hoxie

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Soccer
Green Club
HOSA
Spanish Club
Ceramics
Helping Helena
National Honor Society

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend college to study kinesiology



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Nancy Peterson**
*CR Anderson Middle School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Lauren Hoxie**
*Capital High School*

Eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, taking naps, helping out with the library duties and discussing trivial 8th grade problems were all common occurrences as a library aide. Mrs. P is a prime example of a teacher caring for students in and out of the classroom. From helping me with 8th grade math homework, to offering me college advice as a senior, Mrs. P has always been willing to help. Her kindness and compassion will never be forgotten. Thank you for everything, Mrs. Peterson!



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Collin Hurlburt**

*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Kacey Askin**

*Helena High School*

I chose Askin because he pushed me to be better, and when I had a rough day he made me feel better. I liked having Mr. Askin as a teacher because he's nice to everyone. He's one of those teachers who helps you no matter where you're at. He helps you get your assignments done even when they're late, and he'll still give you points. Mr. Askin is an easy going kind of guy. He always helps you when you need it. Mr. Askin can brighten your mood just by walking into the room.

## COLLIN HURLBURT

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Cheryl Faria

Mark Sanders

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Chess Club

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend trade school

## LOGAN JOHNSON

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Lee Johnson
Joseph Wojto

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Basketball
Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks volunteer
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Toys for Tots
Salvation Army Feed the Need
Lewis & Clark Humane Society volunteer

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the University of Alaska Southeast



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Erin Cleveland**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Logan Johnson**
*Capital High School*

The educator I selected to honor and brag about is Mrs. Erin Cleveland. I chose Erin because she has helped me see the world through a different lens. Erin makes learning so fun and engaging. I have the privilege to have her for three hours a day, but time seems to speed up during that time. Whenever I'm having a bad day, Erin somehow always knows how to cheer me up. I could never do enough bragging about how amazing she is as a teacher and friend.



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Melaina Kloberdanz**

*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Andrew Roberts**

*Helena Middle School*

While I have had countless amazing educators, my 7th grade math teacher, Mr. Roberts, made an immeasurable difference in my education. I have always struggled with math. I was always confused and felt helpless. But in seventh grade, every time I was lost, Mr. Roberts would patiently re-explain each concept to me. When I couldn't grasp something, he would come up with a new approach to the problem. Mr. Roberts was able to teach me in a way I understood. I don't know where I would be without his help.

## MELAINA KLOBERDANZ

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Deidra Kloberdanz
Cameron Kloberdanz

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Mock Trial
DECA
Student Council
National Honor Society
Travel Club
Last Chance Lacrosse Club
Science Club (Science Olympiad)
Science Bowl
Hannaford Street Bible Church Volunteer
Wild Roses 4H
Thespians
Starbucks Barista
American Legion Oratory

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Double major in international relations and global sociology with a minor in political science

## ISABELLA KOSENA

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Melissa Kosena

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Helena Science Club

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Helena College



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Isabella Kosena**

*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Dawn Ruf** *(deceased)*

*Clancy School*

Ms. Ruf was always someone who pushed you to become the greatest person you could be. She made sure everyone got what they needed to achieve their goals and that her students were always loved and appreciated. One of my favorite memories is how she would sprinkle glitter and confetti over our heads on our birthdays. She also would open the windows when the sun came out and listen to hear the birds chirping. She appreciated the little things in life, and I try to follow that example.




**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Hollee Goody**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Tyler Kovick**

*Capital High School*

Mrs. Goody is an engaging and passionate teacher. Every single day, she teaches—excitedly—until the bell rings. She's never at her desk. She makes sure we are out of our desks, too, sending us to the board to solve problems and explain our thinking. Goody gets as excited about her students as she does about math. Whether it's writing me a letter of recommendation with one day's notice or bringing me KT tape and showing me how to put it on my injured ankle, I know that I can count on her. I definitely got lucky in the teacher department.

## TYLER KOVICK

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Nikki Kovick

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Football captain
Basketball captain
Track and Field
Bruin Football Camp Coach
Bruin Basketball Camp Coach
Small Fry Football Coach
Westside Flag Football Coach

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana Tech University to study engineering and play football for the Orediggers

## AIDIA LEHMAN

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Valerie Floccare
Eric Lehman

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Spanish Club
Green Club
Helping Helena Club
National Honor Society
Volunteer camp counselor
Yearbook editor 2022-23, photographer 2021-22

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the University of Montana




**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Aidia Lehman**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Jamie Toivonen**
*Capital High School*

I chose to honor Mrs. Toivonen, an incredible teacher and mentor. She works harder than anyone I know and helps her students lead and contribute with the same passion and strong work ethic. I've had Mrs. Toivonen for three years in a row and have yet to get tired of her. I had her for video broadcasting and she convinced me to join the yearbook which was the best decision I've ever made. She deserves so much recognition for being such an honorable teacher and person. Mrs. Toivonen truly is a distinguished educator.




**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Levi Dawes**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Ethan Martin**

*Capital High School*

I picked Levi Dawes because a kid said the R word and Mr. Dawes stood up for me and other kids with disabilities. Over my four years at CHS he has taught me how to stand up for myself and other kids with disabilities. He has helped me gain more confidence in myself and what I can do in the future.

## ETHAN MARTIN,

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Novelene Martin

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Special Olympics basketball
Special Olympics bowling
Special Olympics track
4 years as the manager for CHS Bruins Boys Basketball

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Undecided

## SYDNEY MEYER

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Elyse Demaray
Derek Meyer

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Worked at Great Divide
PAL Running Club

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the University of Montana to study psychology



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Sydney Meyer**
*Project for Alternative Learning*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Renée Driessen**
*Project for Alternative Learning*

I chose to honor Renée Driessen because she is such a positive and uplifting woman and an amazing role model. She is always so quick to call and check in on you if you are not at school; she shows genuine interest in how you are doing, and she makes sure to treat us kids like human beings in a classroom. She also loves her dog Atticus as if he were her child, which is exactly how I feel about my dog. Thank you for always showing up for me and so many other kids, Renée! You're amazing!



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Dana Swingley**

*Rossiter Elementary School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Brendan Miller**

*Capital High School*

Some may question the impact a first-grade teacher can have on their students. Mrs. Swingley is the reason that I'm here today. As a child, I struggled with dyslexia, and it caused many challenges in my academics. I struggled reading, and my penmanship was atrocious. Mrs. Swingley made learning fun and took interest in every student's success even those who struggled. Without Mrs. Swingley, I may not have gone through vision therapy and improved my reading and writing skills. I wouldn't have enjoyed school like I have for the last eleven years, and I wouldn't have been an academic success.

## BRENDAN MILLER

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Nick Miller

Brenda Miller

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

BPA

Capital Chemistry Club

Science Club

National Honor Society

Helena Babe Ruth Baseball Association

Helena American Legion Baseball

Fusion First Lego League Robotics

500+ hours volunteer work

Capital High Cheer Team

Starbase 2.0

Fusion Future Lego League Robotics

Capital High Concessions

Montana Federation of Public Employees Guide

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University to study accounting

## CAEL MURGEL

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Jason Murgel
Chrissy Murgel

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Basketball
Track
Golf
National Honor Society
Principal's Leadership Group
Saints Cyril and Methodius Youth Group

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend college



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Brandon Day**
*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Cael Murgel**
*Helena High School*

I selected Mr. Day to be my Distinguished Educator because he has been a very influential person in my life as a teacher and coach. I am thankful for having him as a part of my journey throughout high school. He has taught me the importance of being confident in myself and to trust the abilities that I have worked hard for. Thank you, Mr. Day.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Justine Alberts**

*Hawthorne Elementary (formerly Kessler)*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Eren Olson**

*Helena High School*

Justine Alberts was my 4th grade teacher. She was also my brother's teacher the year before she had me. During my wonderful year with her, my brother was sent to a residential home. Mrs. Alberts made sure that I had a getaway from the loneliness and sadness I was feeling at the time. She always made me smile and pushed me to be the best person I could be. She will always be one of my favorite teachers and has been a big influence on me.

## EREN OLSON

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Debbie Olson
David Olson
Nicole Christensen

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cheerleading
Orchestra

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University to study nursing

## BRIAN PRENATT

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

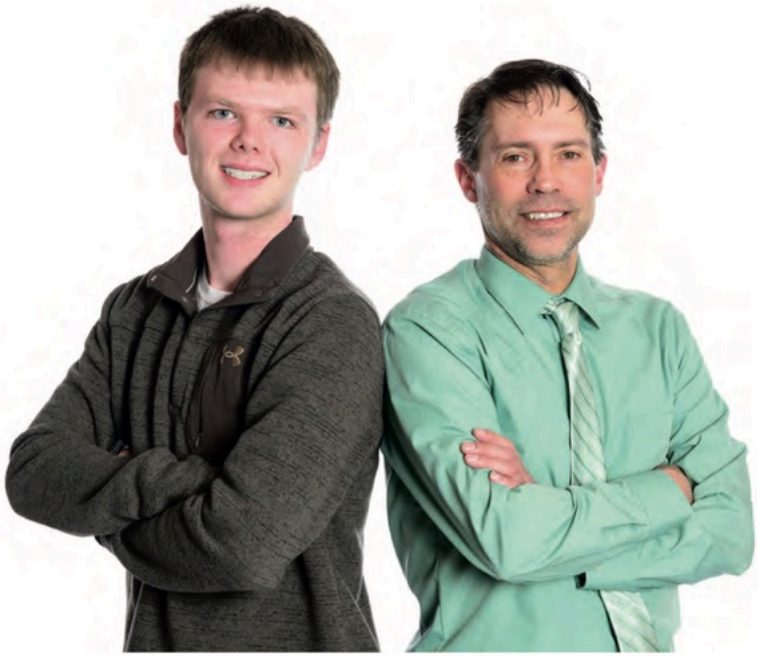
Patrick Paradis

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross country
Track and field
Science Club
Math Club
Travel Club
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Bruin Bunch
Niceness is Priceless Club volunteer
United Way volunteer
French Club volunteer

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Helena College



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Brian Prenatt**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Scott Herzig**
*Central Elementary School*

I chose Mr. Herzig because he was one of my favorite teachers at Central Elementary school! I remember him always being funny and humorous. For example, one time, I said "pacific" in class, meaning specific, and he kept correcting me. I'd keep repeating "pacific." Finally I said "in particular," and he busted up laughing. I also remember the "White Rabbit" game. On the first of each month, the whole class would try to "white rabbit" the other teachers by saying white rabbit to them. If you said it, then they couldn't say it back. Mr. Herzig made school worth going to.



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Gabriella Radley**

*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Ryan Schulte**

*Helena High School*

I can vividly remember my legs shaking under the table in AP Euro my sophomore year. Sitting in that classroom, I felt like an imposter—like I was not smart enough to be there. However, Mr. Schulte helped to pull me out of my shell. His high expectations and the space for failure he built into the class helped me to grow into an attentive and more thoughtful student. He taught me that you cannot grow in comfortability, a lesson I now try to take into every aspect of my life.

## GABRIELLA RADLEY

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Nick Radley
Daylinda Radley

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross country
Swimming
Track and field
Speech and Debate
Key Club
Spanish Club
National Honor Society
Swim instructor
Social skills camp instructor
Speech camp instructor

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University to study human development and family science

## LYNSEY READ

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Scott Read
Rikki Read

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Science Club

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Lynsey Read**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Jodi Delaney**
*Capital High School*

I learned so much from Mrs. D. I remember being very impressed that Julia Butterfly Hill spent TWO YEARS living in a tree to prevent it from being demolished. I remember learning about the British practice of impressment and how that fueled tensions between Britain and the colonists. I can't count how many times I've pulled out some history knowledge from fifth grade on a high school test. Mrs. D is also an incredibly talented artist! She's a true Renaissance woman, and I'm incredibly lucky to have had her.




**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Helena Bosch**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Katherine Rencher**

*Capital High School*

Mrs. Bosch always made the classroom a safe place where your views and who you are mattered. As long as an idea didn't hinder our learning, she accepted it. In Medical Interventions class, she allowed us to organize a waffle party. Mrs. Bosch made time to get to know us and tell us about anything that happened as she rode her bike to school. Passing by Mrs. Bosch in the hall always guaranteed you a "Hello". Once she encouraged me to join her in a wall sit. Being a teacher is more  for her than just a job.

## KATHERINE RENCHER

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Marianne Rencher
Kevin Rencher

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross Country
Envirothon
Green Club
National Honor Society
Leadership roles in Youth Group and Church
Volunteer at an animal rescue center

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend a university to study biology

## KATRINA RICHMOND

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Christine Richmond
James Richmond

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Choir
Drama Club

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University to study human development and family science



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Leslie Hagengruber**
*CR Anderson Middle School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Katrina Richmond**
*Capital High School*

When I walked into Mrs. Hagengruber's life science class, I just knew I was going to love it. We did so many cool dissections, and I would always send my mom pictures of them. I had always loved science, but Mrs. Hagengruber encouraged me and helped my love for science grow.



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Hailey Scott**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Kerry Cicero**

*Central Elementary School (formerly Warren)*

Mr. Cicero was my fourth grade teacher at Warren Elementary School, and having him as a teacher was unforgettable! As a kid, I would talk to him non-stop about dinosaurs and the Titanic, and he'd always listen. It meant a lot to me to have someone show interest in my hobbies. Mr. Cicero's class was fun and engaging, and he was understanding and down-to-earth. It's easy to say that he's the best teacher I've ever had, and I made a lot of valuable memories in his class.

## HAILEY SCOTT

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Catherine Scott
Steve Scott

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross country
Green Group
National Honor Society
Track

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Western Washington University to study marine biology

## LOU SECHRIST

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Laurie Sechrist
Adam Sechrist

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Drama Club, Vice-president
Performed in productions such as *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* and *Annie*
Co-writer of *Opportunity (No Strings Attached)*
"Best Student-Written Performance"-StateThespian Festival
National Honor Society

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Work with a team of professionals to produce the play I have co-written and pursue my passion for writing as I further my education



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Tricia Rummel**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Lou Sechrist**
*Capital High School*

I moved to Helena during the summer between my freshman and sophomore years. I went into my first day of Capital High School knowing nothing and no one. Thank goodness for my English teacher. Ms. Rummel has a wonderful heart. Her spirit is contagious and her teaching is impactful. Because of her, I rediscovered joy in reading and writing. It was her confidence in me that inspired my confidence in myself. As I leave school with plans to pursue a future in storytelling, I owe thanks to Ms. Rummel.




**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Tom Caffrey**

*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**John Settle**

*Capital High School*

Mr. Caffery has been one of the best teachers I have ever had! I had him for AP Environmental Science, a very challenging class, but Mr. Caffery made a fun and interactive learning environment. One of my favorite projects was when we made our own sustainable farms. Every day there was something new and exciting happening in Caffery's class! That is why I picked him as my distinguished educator.

## JOHN SETTLE

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Kevin Settle
Michelle St. Germain
Samantha Settle (sister)

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

DECA- two time international qualifier
Basketball
Tennis
Peer mentoring
Link Crew

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Join the United States Air Force

## HENLEY SEXTON

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Alyssa Johnson
Jason Sexton

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross Country
Prickly Pear 4-H Club and county 4-H
Spanish Club
French Club
ASL Club
National Honor Society
HOSA

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Helena College to study nursing



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Henley Sexton**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**J.D. Solomon**
*Capital High School*

Mr. Solomon was my teacher for World History and U.S. History. During my time in his classes, he taught me about hard-work, determination, and ethics. He gave me advice on how to succeed, not only as a student, but as an adult in the professional world. I saw him as a person to look up to and admire, someone I never wanted to disappoint, and I will admit, I did cry whenever I thought I did something that would cause him to be disappointed in me. He taught me how to be an adult, and for that, I thank him.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Becca Leaphart**

*Helena Education Foundation (formerly Capital High School)*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Miranda Sheafor**

*Capital High School*

Ms. Leaphart had me twice a day during my Junior year, and whether it was literature or creative writing, she always had an impact on me. She encouraged my creativity and passions, especially in those crucial times when I put pieces of myself out on display in writing workshops. I found the courage to expand my writing and express different parts of myself because of her support. She taught us to be understanding of each other and the world around us, and that will always stay with me.

## MIRANDA SHEAFOR

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Beth Sheafor
Brandon Sheafor

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Fusion Robotics
Tennis
*Pen & Ink* Magazine
Academic World Quest
Horseback riding

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend college on the West Coast to study engineering or computer science

## ASHTON SHIPLEY

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Janet Shipley
Rob Shipley

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Tennis
National Honor Society
Science Bowl and Olympiad
Robotics

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Purdue University to study aerospace engineering



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Ashton Shipley**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Kelley Bundt**
*Four Georgians Elementary School*

Mrs. Bundt believed in me. Beforehand I had never really liked school and preferred to stay home. With her, I felt listened to and cared about. I honestly doubt I would have pursued school as much as I have without Mrs. Bundt. One of my fondest memories was when I had to get my appendix removed and while I was recovering from surgery, I found out she and my classmates had sent me letters telling me to feel better, all of which I still have. Sometimes the little things are what matter most.



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Buffy Smith**

*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Foster Smith**

*Helena High School*

Ms. Smith is an exceptional computer science teacher, and she has been instrumental in my current success in the subject. She has encouraged me to explore different branches of computer science and has been a great mentor to me. Mrs. Smith also introduced me to the Helena High Business Professionals of America, where I have won multiple awards and now serve as president. Mrs. Smith is a truly outstanding teacher and mentor and more than deserves this spot as a Distinguished Educator.

## FOSTER SMITH

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Justin Smith

Courtnay Crowell

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Cross-country

Key Club

Science Club

Business Professionals of America

Big Sky Unitarian Universalist

Monthly God's Love Meal Organizer

National Honor Society

Pep Band

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

Piano and Saxophone Lessons

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend college to study computer science or mathematics

## KARSON STEFANIAK

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Carina Wilmot
Aleksandr Stefaniak

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Tennis
National Honor Society
BPA
Pep Band

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend college to study finance



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Karson Stefaniak**
*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Hilary Potuzak**
*Helena High School*

I have been very lucky to have Mrs. Potuzak as my calculus teacher for two years. Whenever her students enter class feeling unmotivated, she gets us engaged and learning. Mrs. Potuzak always expects success from her students and does a great job making sure we achieve mastery of everything we learn; we don't just do busy work. Most importantly, I am easily sidetracked, so I greatly appreciate Mrs. Potuzak's ability to keep me productive while still letting me have fun and mess around with my classmates.



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Robert Stimpson**

*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Melanie Williams**

*Montana City School (retired)*

A large part of my educational journey has been inextricably tied to my Type 1 Diabetes journey, and Mrs. Williams was instrumental in my becoming confident in and capable of caring for myself. Her faith in me and ability to put me at ease when I was feeling self-conscious or stressed helped me more than I can say. I have had many incredible educators during my Montana City and Helena schools experience, but none have been so much a part of my becoming who I am as Mrs. Williams.

## ROBERT STIMPSON

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Lyn Stimpson
Jessica Bailey

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Grandstreet Theatre
Science Club
Mock Trial
Big Sky UU Fellowship

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend college

## MCKENZIE TORDALE

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Michele Tordale
Colin Tordale

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Academic World Quest
4-H
National Honor Society

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the University of Montana to study international business



**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Allyson Crum**
*Rossiter Elementary School*

**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**McKenzie Tordale**
*Capital High School*

Mrs. Crum was my Kindergarten teacher. She has followed me and stayed in touch throughout my school career, always encouraging me with everything I've done. She is one of the kindest and most caring people I've had the honor of learning from. From my crying on the first days of school to now being a senior, her constant support has helped me in countless ways. I'm honored to have been her student and am incredibly happy to recognize her with this award.



**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**

**Riley Walsh**

*Helena High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**

**Shannin Preshinger**

*Helena High School*

I selected Mrs. Preshinger because she's been a light in my life that I really needed. In my freshman English class, amidst the COVID lockdown, she hosted Zoom meetings. I went every day for an hour, whether or not she enjoyed it, because it meant a lot having someone to talk to. Currently she still offers that light, especially during some really rough times. She has not only helped me be a better writer but a better person. I cannot thank her enough.

## RILEY WALSH

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Beth Walsh
Jeff Walsh

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Soccer
Key Club
GSA
Outdoors Club
Mock Trial

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend Montana State University to study earth science

## OLIVIA WIGTON

**PARENT(S) / GUARDIAN(S)**

Lori Giuffré
Robert Wigton

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ACTIVITIES**

Varsity Soccer and Track
National Honor Society
Bruin Pure Performance
Fish Ecology Club
Big Dipper Ice Cream employee

**PLANS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

Attend the University of Idaho, Moscow




**DISTINGUISHED STUDENT**
**Olivia Wigton**
*Capital High School*

**DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR**
**Kevin Ward**
*Capital High School*

First period on the first day of high school, the new kid from Maryland met her future Distinguished Educator, Mr. Ward. Here I made multiple best friends, chatting (instead of working) on the old couch in the back of the classroom. Fast forward to my miserable Junior year. I, once again, found myself in Mr. Ward's first period for AP Language. His empathy and patience for my consistent tardiness and late assignments are admirable. He never failed to humble me with a sarcastic comment, but deep down he holds a kindness that is unforgettable for students like me.



congratulations!

PERSISTENCE
COMPASSION
CHARACTER

# a celebration of excellence

HELENA
EDUCATION FOUNDATION

PO BOX 792 • HELENA, MT 59624
406.443.2545 • HEF@MT.NET
HEFMT.ORG

GRAPHIC DESIGN AND LAYOUT BY LUKE DURAN, ELEMENT L DESIGN