



2025  
**EXCELLENCE**  
IN EDUCATION  
*Marquette and Alger Counties*

32nd Annual  
Academic Achievement & Professional Development Awards



Grow & Lead  
Community and Youth Development

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# Congratulations

Congratulations, award recipients!

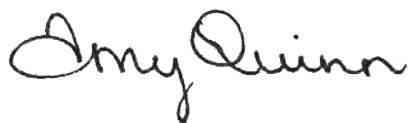
Tonight, we are honoring three sets of recipients:

- The top 49 graduating seniors in Marquette and Alger Counties. They have achieved great success and have bright futures ahead of them.
- Teachers who have been selected by students because of the influential role they played in their academic success.
- Outstanding educators that have been selected by their school districts to receive awards for additional education or special projects in their classrooms.

Our vision at Grow & Lead is for all Upper Peninsula youth to thrive. We work with schools, nonprofits and communities to create a culture that builds on the strengths of young people.

Excellence in Education Week was established in 1994 as one way to bring the community together to honor our young people and recognize the adults that support them.

Thank you, families and friends for supporting the efforts of these outstanding students and educators.



CEO, Grow & Lead: Community and Youth Development

# Agenda

Monday, April 28, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.  
Northern Center  
Northern Michigan University, Marquette

**Opening Comments & Welcome**

Amy Quinn, CEO  
Grow & Lead: Community and Youth Development  
Abby Hinze, 2025 Westwood High School Scholarship Recipient

**Masters of Ceremony**

Robert Luke, Sales Manager  
Blue Cross Blue Shield Upper Peninsula  
Meagen Morrison, Social Performance Supervisor  
Eagle Mine

**Recognition of Donors and Sponsors**

**National Anthem and Music Presentation**

Munising High School Jazz Band  
Michelle Gaunt, Jazz Band Director

**Educator Reflections**

Erling Langness, Former Influential Award Recipient  
Ishpeming High School

**Keynote Speaker**

Katelyn Wetton  
2015 Negaunee High School Scholarship Recipient.

**Presentation of Student and Educator Awards**

Principals and Superintendents  
Sponsor photo while students, teachers line up

**Adjournment**

# About Grow & Lead

Grow & Lead equips nonprofit organizations with expertise, training and resources so that all can thrive in the Upper Peninsula.

## About Us

Grow & Lead: Community and Youth Development is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to helping all people and organizations in Michigan's Upper Peninsula to create thriving communities.

Working remotely to meet organizations where they are, Grow & Lead uses research, consultation and innovative program development to help organizations identify opportunities to create healthier and more sustainable communities.

## What We Do

Grow & Lead provides a wide variety of consulting services and facilitates networking and engagement opportunities for nonprofit and public service organizations in the Upper Peninsula.

- Board of Directors Development
- Strategic Planning
- Financial Management
- Volunteer Engagement
- Fund Development
- Youth Engagement
- And More!



## PRESENTING SPONSORS



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# Keynote

## KATELYN WETTON



Dr. Katelyn Wetton is a graduate of Negaunee High School Class of 2015. She went on to complete a bachelor of science degree in both Biomolecular Science and Spanish at the University of Michigan in 2018. In 2023 she graduated from the University of Michigan School of Dentistry, realizing her dream of becoming a general dentist. She moved back to the Upper Peninsula and has worked the last couple of years as a dentist in our local community. Katelyn is married to Cody Wetton, an MSHS English teacher, and they have one beloved fur baby named Charlie Moo. In her spare time, Katelyn enjoys baking, spending time outdoors, reading, swimming and cycling.

# Former Professional Development Award Recipient

## ERLING LANGNESS



Erl Langness has had the privilege of teaching history and German at Ishpeming High School for the past 39 years. In addition to teaching, he has coached girls' tennis for 38 years, boys' tennis for 40 years, and drivers ed for 25 years. Along with teaching German, he was also able to lead 10 trips to Germany with students. Erl says he has enjoyed getting to know the students over the years and his years of teaching have been very rewarding to him!

He and his wife have raised 8 children of their own, hosted 8 exchange students and cared for foster children for 20 years. They enjoy traveling and spending time with their children and their 18 grandchildren. They are also very involved in serving in their church.



# STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT & INFLUENTIAL EDUCATOR SPONSORS



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# 2025 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

## BURT TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS



**Gabe Lawrence**, child of Devin Lawrence and Janet Zentner, is awarded the Scholarship in Honor of Frank and Ruth Mead and recognizes Jennifer Irvine, high school English teacher, as most influential educator because she makes learning fun and is a good teacher overall. Gabe plans to attend school to become an electrical line technician.



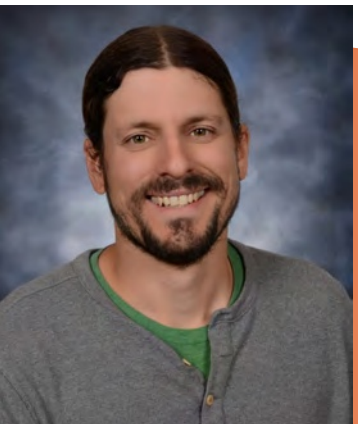
**Zackery Ward-Harbaum**, child of Rob Harbaum and Lea Ward-Harbaum, is presented with the Munising Memorial Hospital Scholarship and selects Jordan Dobberstein, middle and high school math teacher, as most influential educator. Zackery says he has never had a bad day in his class and Mr. Dobberstein is always smiling. Zackery plans to begin a career in welding with a welding apprenticeship.



## GWINN AREA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



**Andrew Hill**, child of John Hill and Danielle and Robert Cleary, receives the Catherine A. Kroll and Michael Prokopowicz Scholarship. Andrew names Mike Nicosia, middle and high school industrial and vocational tech instructor, as his influential educator, sharing, "He always makes his class fun, even if the work isn't." Andrew plans to attend Michigan Technological University to pursue mechanical engineering.







**Thomas Jenkins**, child of Colin and Heather Jenkins, is presented with the William Olson Family Scholarship. Thomas selects Kyle Hantz, high school band teacher and drama club advisor, as most influential educator, sharing, "He is the teacher that has supported me the most . . . He is also a great person." Thomas plans to pursue a degree in anthropology with a focus in archaeology, ultimately hoping to study early humans in the Middle East.



**Mikayla Johnson**, child of Mike and Brandy Johnson, receives the Peninsula Medical Scholarship. Mikayla chooses Mike Nicosia, high school industrial tech and building trades instructor, as most influential educator, saying, "He's always pushed me to be my best." Mikayla plans to continue working and attend Northern Michigan University.



**Charles Lininger**, child of Mark and Amanda Lininger, is awarded the Snyder Drug Scholarship. Charles names Benjamin Platt, high school biology and chemistry teacher, as most influential educator, sharing, "He inspired me to become a career researcher through his classes and his support." Charles will attend the University of Michigan and dreams of winning the Nobel Prize.



## ISHPEMING PUBLIC SCHOOLS



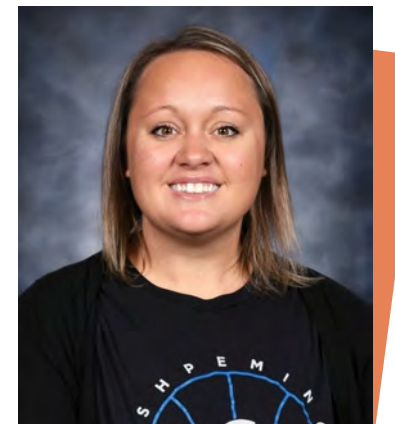
**Mason Bancroft**, child of Briana and Scott Bancroft, is awarded the Jack and Teresa Bertucci Family Scholarship. Mason selects Andrew Henseler, high school wood shop and advanced construction teacher, as most influential educator, saying, "He makes learning the trade fun and is very supportive when you are unsure of how to do something." Mason plans to attend college and pursue sports broadcasting.



**Angelica Barry**, child of Patty Barry and the late Manny Barry, is presented the Joseph Paul Bertucci Memorial Scholarship and honors Alex Trotter, high school art teacher, as most influential educator. Angelica states, "I can be myself around her and she's encouraged me to think outside the box." Angelica plans to attend Northern Michigan University to complete the middle college program.



**Ethan Corp**, child of Derrick and Jessica Corp, is awarded the Francis and Genevieve Tousignant Memorial Scholarship. Ethan recognizes Kaitlin Rich, middle school science teacher and high school peer-to-peer advisor, as most influential educator, stating, "Mrs. Rich should be labeled far higher than just a teacher. I see her as a coach, mentor and a super supporter. No one has ever supported me as much as her." Ethan plans to join the IBEW Local 906 electrician union.







**Joseph Giroux**, child of Anne and Jeff Giroux, is presented with the Scholarship in Honor of Dorothy and William “Bee” Sivula. Joseph honors Craig Goff, third grade elementary teacher, as most influential educator, saying, “His way of teaching how to think outside the box gave me the creative thinking skills I needed.” Joseph plans to study mechanical and electrical engineering while attending Michigan Technological University.



**Laynie Korpi**, child of Jill and Shay Korpi, receives the Ishpeming Kiwanis Club scholarship and honors Katie Gray, high school anatomy and HOSA instructor, as most influential educator. Laynie shares, “She has prepared me for my future and introduced me to many healthcare careers.” Laynie plans to attend Northern Michigan University’s School of Nursing.



## MARQUETTE AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Ian Harvey**, child of Andrea and Richard Harvey, receives the John and Ruth Marietti Scholarship and names Jane Stewart, high school directed studies teacher, as most influential educator. Ian says, “She has shown me many things beyond school. She listened to me . . . and guided my decision-making skills.” Ian plans to attend Bay College and pursue botany and communications.



**James Barch**, child of Jon and Maggie Barch, receives the Joe and Pat Blake Family Scholarship. James recognizes Diana Reeves, high school calculus teacher, as most influential educator, sharing “I chose Mrs. Reeves for her exciting teaching style, curriculum organization and her passion for understanding and exploring high level math.” James plans to pursue a degree in aerospace engineering.



**Jenna Herman**, child of Jackie and Christy Spencer-Pizziola, is awarded the Susan Chinn Memorial Scholarship. Jenna recognizes Caitlin Palomaki, high school choir teacher, as most influential educator, sharing, “She is very dedicated and works very hard at everything she does. She is someone I can talk to whenever I need something.” Jenna plans to study radiology and pursue a career in the medical field.



**Trista Beerman**, child of Katie and Dan Beerman, is awarded The Mining Journal Scholarship and names Stephen Atwood, high school global science teacher and environmental club advisor, as most influential educator. Trista says, “Mr. Atwood always provides a welcoming environment, both in and outside of class, for students to be creative and turn their ideas into action.” Trista plans to pursue a business administration degree at the University of Michigan.



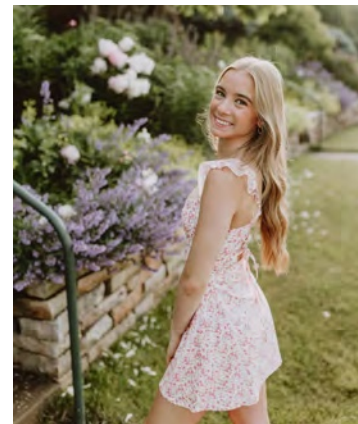




**Kaleb Chipelewski**, child of Jill and Jamie Chipelewski, is presented with the Range Bank Scholarship and honors Ben Smith, high school AP statistics teacher, as most influential educator because he has been an influential mentor both in and out of school. Kaleb plans to continue his education and hopes to leave a positive impact on the world.



**Ian Galbreath**, child of Kim Fryzel and Kurt Galbreath, receives the Marquette Community Federal Credit Union Scholarship. Ian honors Dr. Matt Ludwig, high school band teacher, as most influential educator, sharing, “Dr. Ludwig taught more than just music; he taught us professionalism, a skill we will carry for the rest of our lives.” Ian plans to continue his education and find a career where he can advance interdisciplinary solutions to societal problems.



**Kendall Chipelewski**, child of Jill and Jamie Chipelewski, is presented with the Nicolet National Bank Scholarship and chooses Julie Nemaceck, high school CTE teacher, as most influential educator. Kendall says, “Mrs. Nemaceck has supported and inspired my passion for health care and genuinely shows she cares.” Kendall plans to attend university on the pre-med track with hopes of becoming an oncologist.



**Roenak Ghiardi**, child of Sheetal and Greg Ghiardi, is awarded the Thomas Baldini Scholarship and selects Matt Hoffman, high school English and AP literature teacher, as most influential educator. Roenak says Mr. Hoffman’s charisma and intelligence makes learning fun. Roenak plans to pursue business at Duke University.



**Samuel Dehlin**, child of Christopher and Jennifer Dehlin, is awarded the Lincoln and Anne Frazier Memorial Scholarship. Samuel selects Derek Sandstrom, high school English teacher, as most influential educator because he makes students feel like teachers care and want the best for them. Samuel plans to attend the University of Michigan Ross School of Business and pursue a career in finance.



**Siena Goodney**, child of Jeff and Carrie Goodney, receives the Rotary Club of Marquette Exemplary Rotarian Burt Sparhawk Scholarship. Siena honors Blythe Raikko, high school AP government and AP U.S. history teacher and student council advisor, as most influential educator, calling her an incredible influence, mentor and supporter. Siena plans to earn a degree in biomedical engineering at Michigan Technological University and pursue a career in anesthesiology.







**Naomi Griffin**, child of Andrew and Erica Griffin, is presented the William and Carol LaVallie Scholarship and selects Mandy Dye, AP language and composition teacher, as most influential educator, crediting Ms. Dye with showing her what a true love for English looks like. Naomi plans to attend Albion College in the Honors College, pursuing degrees in music and philosophy.



**Jack Parent**, child of Andrea and Jay Parent, is presented the Scholarship in Honor of Reverend Monsignor Jed Patrick. Jack chooses Katelynn Jensen, high school Spanish teacher, as most influential educator, crediting her with inspiring him to continue learning Spanish and to be a kinder person. Jack plans to study chemical engineering at the University of Michigan and pursue a career in pharmaceutical design and manufacturing.



**Elisa Malherbe**, child of Stéphane and Gala Malherbe, receives the Melanie J. Rohr, J.D., and Dr. Steven L. Pence, Jr. Scholarship. Elisa chooses Natalie Messano, high school chemistry teacher and track coach, as most influential educator because Mrs. Messano is always supportive and understanding but still pushes people to achieve their best. Elisa hopes to work in reproductive care after attending the University of Michigan on the pre-med track.



**Elijah Schneider**, child of Timothy and Amanda Schneider, is awarded the John M. Longyear Scholarship. Elijah honors Kim Carr, high school digital communications, computer science, and advanced web design teacher, as most influential educator because she has created an environment that fosters learning and has helped him navigate many aspects of his education. Elijah plans to attend Kettering University to study robotics engineering with a focus on control systems.



**Cambry Marquardson**, child of Marissa and Jim Marquardson, is awarded the Gadzinski Family Scholarship and honors Natalie Messano, high school AP chemistry teacher as most influential educator. Cambry says Mrs. Messano has a great teaching style, gives attention to every student and instilled in her a love of chemistry. Cambry plans to continue her education, playing the viola and painting.



**Allison Simon**, child of Andy Simon and Julie & Adam Nordberg, is presented with the Scholarship in Memory of Reverend Monsignor Louis G. Cappel. Allison names Mandy Dye, high school English teacher, as most influential educator because she is always supportive and encourages thinking outside the box. Allison plans to attend Northern Michigan University to complete the middle college program, with future hopes of becoming a veterinarian.







**James Uchtyl**, child of Christopher Uchtyl and Amy Hamilton, is awarded the Wells Fargo Scholarship and honors Eric Marta, K-12 music and orchestra teacher, as most influential educator. James says, "Mr. Marta is not only my most influential teacher but one of the most influential of my life. He has been a mentor and a role model for the past 13 years." James plans to study biochemistry and music in pursuit of a career in sports medicine or pathology.



**Elizabeth Wing**, child of Robert and Tracy Wing, receives the Hiawatha Communications Inc. Scholarship. Elizabeth selects Tracy Wing, second grade teacher, as most influential educator because of her huge impact in the school community and setting the building blocks for a passion for learning. Elizabeth plans to pursue a biology degree on the pre-med track with future goals of becoming an obstetrician.



## MUNISING PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Daniel Goss**, child of John and Svitlana Goss, receives the Richard and Mary Bowerman Scholarship. Daniel chooses Jim Cotey, high school algebra and chemistry teacher, as most influential educator because he is very helpful, nice and "great to talk to about absolutely anything." Daniel plans to pursue an engineering degree.



**Aubrey Johnson**, child of Aaron and Shelly Johnson, is awarded the Honor Credit Union Scholarship and selects Kyle Saari, fifth grade teacher and varsity tennis coach, as most influential educator. Aubrey shares, "Coach Saari has stood as a person I continuously look up to in my life. He taught me how to approach adversity, overcome challenges and become a well-rounded individual." Aubrey plans to pursue a degree in the medical field and continue competing in basketball while attending college.



**Savannah Lassila**, child of TJ and Amy Lassila, is awarded the Neenah Incorporated Scholarship. Savannah selects Mandy Frantti, middle school STEM and high school physics and pre-calculus teacher, as most influential educator, saying, "I have not had a more genuine teacher who was willing to support me as strongly, both in and out of the classroom. Ms. Frantti has been a blessing." Savannah has enlisted in the United States Space Force and will serve for at least six years.



**Samantha Nelson**, child of Beth and Kraig Nelson, is presented with the Robert & Rena Koskey Scholarship. Samantha names Krista Squiers, eighth grade teacher and varsity volleyball coach, as most influential educator "due to her dedication and hard work she puts in all day, every day, as well as her positive influence she has on everybody she meets." Samantha plans to study biomedical engineering at Michigan Technological University in pursuit of a career in healthcare.







**Marlee Plaxco**, child of Lisa and John Plaxco, is awarded the Renee Thomas Memorial Scholarship and recognizes Tiffany Nicolas, middle and high school English teacher, as most influential educator. Marlee shares, “Mrs. Nicolas has always been so encouraging and supportive, allowing me to grow not only as a student, but as a person. She is truly dedicated to her students and passionate about teaching, inspiring me to work hard and believe in myself.” Marlee plans to pursue a biology degree while on a pre-dental path, with hopes to open a dental practice one day.



**Caden Steede**, child of Cori and Brian Steede, is awarded the Katherine Thurner Memorial Scholarship and names Beth Holmgren, high school computers teacher, as most influential educator. Caden credits her for her support in the classroom, in athletics, and in Business Professionals of America. Caden plans to pursue a biomedical engineering degree, then become an endocrinologist or hematologist.



**Maija Rourke**, child of Leah and Gavin Rourke, receives the Sydney W. Northey Memorial Scholarship and names Cody Scanlon, third grade and seventh grade science teacher, as most influential educator. Mr. Scanlon has “emphasized the mindset of 0-0, the philosophy that one moment, good or bad, does not affect what happens next” and has taught students to take pride in working hard to achieve their goals. Maija plans to study exercise science at Michigan Technological University in pursuit of a career in physical therapy or sports psychology.



**Karina Suardini**, child of Gary and Leslie Suardini, receives the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community Scholarship and recognizes Harold South, middle and high school orchestra teacher, as most influential educator. Karina shares, “Mr. South has been there for me in so many ways beyond just music. He made the transition from middle school to high school much easier.” Karina plans to study mathematics, statistics, or economics before pursuing law school to become an attorney.



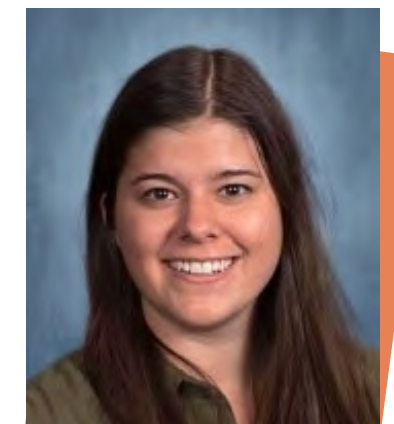
## NICE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



**Ella Standerford**, child of Abby and Chris Standerford, is presented with the Scholarship in Memory of Saima Kuivila. Ella selects Lacey O'Donnell, high school English teacher, as most influential educator, saying “Mrs. O'Donnell has been the most supportive and kind teacher I have ever had. She constantly pushes students to be the best version of themselves both in the classroom and in the real world.” Ella plans to attend Northern Michigan University and double major in computer science and mathematics.



**Kaya Etelamaki**, child of Sarah & Dan Etelamaki, receives the Brian L. Joseph Memorial Scholarship. Kaya names Rachel Perala, high school business teacher, as most influential educator, sharing, “Mrs. Perala drives me to work hard and be a leader all while being understanding and personable.” Kaya plans to study pharmacy at the University of Michigan.







**Isabelle Grochowski**, child of Dan and Melissa Grochowski, is awarded the Cory Nelson Memorial Scholarship. Isabelle honors Sabina Villar, high school business teacher, as most influential educator, sharing, "She always pushes me to be the best I can be and always believes in me even when I don't." Isabelle plans to study business and someday be a CEO in the U.P.



**Ian Kauppila**, child of Tracee and Joel Kauppila, receives the TruNorth Federal Credit Union Scholarship and chooses Sabina Villar, high school computer science and business teacher, as most influential educator. Ian credits her for developing his passion for computer programming and giving him the tools necessary to excel. Ian plans to study computer science at Northern Michigan University and pursue a career in AI development, natural language processing or robotics.



**Gabriel Grondz**, child of Kristen and Michael Gondz, is presented with the Scholarship in Honor of Charles and Lois Smith. Gabriel selects Cara Anderson, high school English teacher, as most influential educator acknowledging her help to enjoy the English lessons as well as with work outside the class, such as scholarship essays." Gabriel plans to pursue a degree in civil engineering at Michigan Technological University.



**Clara Kruger**, child of Angela and Geoffrey Kruger, is awarded the AT&T Scholarship and recognizes Terri Balzarini, high school math and science teacher, as most influential educator. Clara shares, "Her teaching is clear . . . She is always open to helping and assisting with questions when students are struggling. Her love for science and math makes me want to learn more." Clara plans to study molecular or cellular biology, then complete medical school and become an anesthesiologist.



**Abby Hinze**, child of Sara and Eric Hinze, is awarded the U.P. Health System – Bell Medical Staff Scholarship. Abby recognizes Jennifer Young, fifth grade teacher, as most influential educator, sharing, "Mrs. Young fostered a love of reading and writing for me from a young age. Her kindness and enthusiasm helped me realize that I wanted to become a teacher." Abby plans to attend Northern Michigan University in pursuit of a career teaching high school history or government.



**Libby Ollanketo**, child of Brooke and Jeremy Ollanketo, receives the George and Virginia Peters Family Scholarship. Libby names Dr. Steve Annelin, high school math teacher, as most influential educator because, "Dr. Annelin was able to make math relevant and simpler for me. He had high standards, and I felt challenged, but I also knew that it was OK to make mistakes." Libby plans to study biomedical engineering at Michigan Technological University and hopes to become a dermatologist specializing in cancer care.





## REPUBLIC-MICHIGAMME SCHOOLS



**Kreegan Gransinger**, child of Michele Bowler, is presented with the Cleveland Cliffs, Incorporated Scholarship. Kreegan recognizes Annette Gleason, high school math teacher, as most influential educator because she is very supportive and has helped students grow as students and people. Kreegan plans to attend trade school for electrical engineering and become an electrician for residential buildings.



**Ayden Valeski**, child of Adam and Lindsey Valeski, receives the Reijo Aho Estate Scholarship. Ayden chooses Steven Hendrickson, high school shop teacher, as most influential educator, crediting all the advice he has provided, which will continue to be valuable beyond high school. Ayden plans to complete the middle college program through Northern Michigan University and hopes to become a conservation officer.



## SUPERIOR CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



**Ruth Johnson**, child of Tom and Bonnie Johnson, receives the Peoples State Bank Scholarship. Ruth honors Shannon Hancock, middle and high school English and history teacher, as most influential educator sharing "Mrs. Hancock was the first teacher to truly push me to my limits academically. She changed what kind of student I was for the better." Ruth plans to attend Bay College prior to joining the construction management program at Northern Michigan University.



**Calla Porter**, child of Jean Charlebois and William Porter, Jr., receives the UP Health System Scholarship and selects Shannon Hancock, middle and high school English and history teacher, as most influential educator. Calla says "She has always pushed me to go further even if it was out of my comfort zone. She is an amazing and very helpful teacher." Calla plans to study welding technology at Northern Michigan University and become a welding inspector.



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*Thank You!*



2025 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS

AUTRAIN-ONOTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Veronika Johnson**, who teaches kindergarten through second grade, receives the AuTrain-Onota Public Schools Professional Development Award. She will use the award to create a social-emotional calming center with bean bags, additional sensory items and lighting to practice calming techniques such as simple yoga poses.

**Melissa Pillifant**, principal, receives the UP Health System Administrator Professional Development Award. Funds will be used for school membership with the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education (ICLE), which inspires and guides administration and faculty as classical educators. Membership includes professional development sessions, consultation, access to ICLE publications and online materials to renew and improve classical Catholic liberal arts education.



BURT TOWNSHIP SCHOOL



**Weslee Tweedale**, seventh through 12th grade social studies teacher, receives the John and Deborah Veiht Professional Development Award. Weslee will purchase outdoor recreation equipment such as fishing rods and tents to enhance students' connection with nature to improve their mental health and physical wellbeing.

GWINN AREA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

**Kyle Hantz**, sixth-12th grade music teacher, receives the Professional Development Award in Honor of Ruth Ann Marley Holmstrom. Kyle will use the award to provide audio equipment for students to produce high quality recordings as they explore careers in music and theater such as voice acting and audio production.



FATHER MARQUETTE CATHOLIC ACADEMY



**Haley Molenaar**, kindergarten teacher, receives the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Professional Development Award. Haley will bring a Gardyn Hydroponic program into the classroom for students to touch and grow plants, invoking awe and wonder, as they learn.

The Cleveland Cliffs Professional Development Award is presented to **Brian Rice**, sixth grade English language arts teacher. Two teachers will attend the Northwest Evaluation Association Michigan Leadership Summit to gain insight as to how the school district can use NWEA scores to help drive instruction and assist in remediation for students.



# ISHPEMING PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Kassandra Kytola**, kindergarten-fourth grade special education teacher, receives the Peninsula Medical Professional Development Award. Kassandra will use the award for tap-touch lights and an educational carpet to help students feel welcomed and supported in the classroom.



The Phyllis and Max Reynolds Foundation Professional Development Award is presented to **Caitlyn Palomaki**, sixth-12th grade chorus teacher. Caitlyn will use the award to upgrade the classroom piano with an in-piano humidifier to keep the instrument in tune and to preserve its lifespan.

# MARESA



The Dr. Elmer J. Schact Professional Development Award is presented to **Trae Forgette**, director of technology. Trae will attend the Regional Education Media Center of Michigan Summer In-Service in Traverse City to learn about current technology trends in K-12 education including artificial intelligence, esports and gamification of resources to improve student engagement.

# MARQUETTE AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



**Catherine Day**, high school special education/FSP teacher, receives the Rotary Club of Marquette Professional Development Award. Catherine will use this award to purchase a smart board projector and additional materials for a sensory room for students.



The W.K. Kellogg Foundation Award is presented to **Cynthia DePetro**, English, yearbook and photography teacher at Marquette Alternative High School. Cynthia will use the award funds toward a trip for students to the DeYoung Zoo to learn about rescuing animals, the science behind exotic animals, and the art of wildlife photography.



**Mark Hefke**, high school social studies teacher, is awarded the A. Felch Pendill Professional Development Award. Mark will attend the Council for Economic Education’s Annual Financial Literacy & Economic Education Conference. He will bring what he learns back to the district to help implement the new personal finance content requirement added to economics classes.





The Craig and Kristin Wilmes Professional Development Award is presented to **Kelly Simon**, high school French teacher. Kelly will attend the French for All Summer Institute—French as a World Language Program in Madison, WI. Resources and curricula will be shared throughout the institute, and Kelly will develop lesson plans to help sustain the high school French program.

## MUNISING PUBLIC SCHOOLS



The June M. Schaefer Professional Development Award is presented to **Ann Gendron**, speech-language pathologist. Ann will purchase materials supporting the Multi-Tiered System of Support/Response to Intervention initiative for at-risk and speech and language impaired students.



**Heather Nayback**, sixth-12th grade English Language Arts (ELA) and Spanish teacher, receives the Marquette Internal Medicine Associates in Honor of Donald R. Toti Professional Development Award. Heather will purchase a three-year subscription to IXL for Spanish Language. The subscription could be tailored by the world language department and by the special education department to benefit students who struggle with ELA and a world language.

## NEGAUNEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

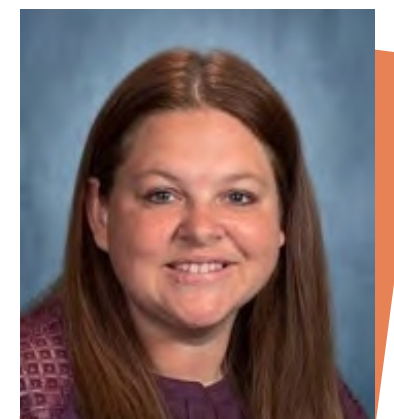


**Sarah Hill**, fourth grade teacher, is awarded the Ellwood and Idamae Mattson Professional Development Award. Sarah will acquire 33 STEM Explorers Domino Action Kits designed to facilitate pre-engineered chain reaction experiments. The kits will provide students with engaging, hands-on learning experiences, enhancing their understanding of energy transfer.



**Shelly Stetson**, fifth grade teacher, is awarded the R.K. Richards Professional Development Award. Shelly will purchase vertical whiteboards, markers, trays, and erasers to create a learning environment that fosters problem-solving and group work, ultimately improving student outcomes and confidence in mathematics.

## NICE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT



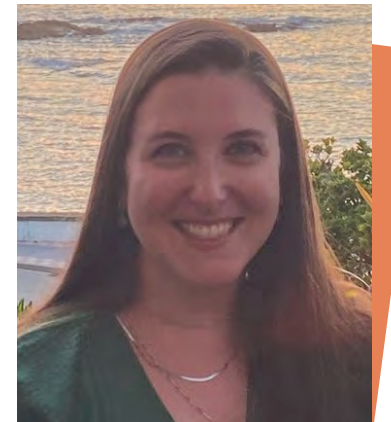
**Kristi Head**, fifth grade teacher, receives the Professional Development Award in Honor of Maxine Honkala. The award will assist students who may face financial hardship in taking part in a 28-year tradition of seventh graders participating in a three-day field trip to Clear Lake Education Center to connect with nature, learn environmental science and develop essential life skills.



**Danielle Levandoski**, Pre-K through fifth grade visual art teacher, receives the Carl and Lynne Hammerstrom Professional Development Award. Danielle will attend the 2025 Michigan Art Education Association Fall Conference in Traverse City in order to strengthen and refresh her teaching as well as learn new ways to nurture her students' creativity.

## REPUBLIC-MICHIGAMME SCHOOLS

The UP Health System Professional Development Award is presented to **Shannon Miller**, middle and high school English Language Arts teacher. Funds will be used to purchase books for the Republic-Michigamme Summer Reading Program which combats summer reading loss. Every student, Pre-K-12th grade, gets to select a book to keep for their very own.



## NORTH STAR MONTESSORI ACADEMY



The Professional Development Award in Honor of Louis and Joan Myefski is presented to **Julia Boynton**, fourth-fifth grade teacher. Julia will use award funds to purchase an aquaponics system and supplies to teach children how to grow their own food.

## SUPERIOR CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Jacob Cogger**, industrial tech teacher, receives the David and Karen Bahrman Professional Development Award. Jacob intends to improve the school's trail network and outdoor classroom opportunities by mapping school trails using a GPS, uploading to AllTrails and mounting locally printed maps on lumber that students harvest and saw using the school sawmill. He will also apply for two more grants to assist with trail grooming.



## POWELL TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS



**Erica Ingram**, special education/life skills teacher, is presented with the Fred W. and June M. Schaefer Professional Development Award. Funds will be used to purchase food and drinks to be cooked/used during life skills class. Errica says students love learning to cook healthy meals they can make at home and show what they learned at school.

**Susan Korpi**, elementary principal receives the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Administrator Professional Development Award. Funds will go toward renovations of the elementary playground which will include new ground coverings, options for students to run, swing, jump, climb, slide and spin all with low transfer points making it inclusive for students with mobility differences.



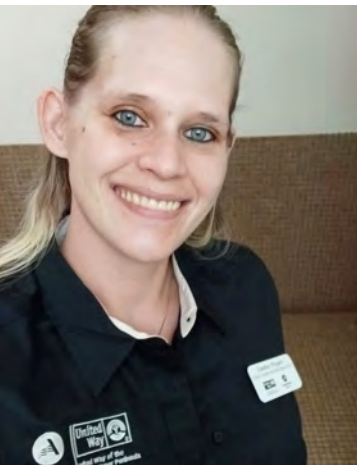


# WELLS TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT



**Mike Lepisto**, science teacher, receives the Wisconsin Energy Corporation Professional Development Award. Funds will be used to purchase supplies for the school and community greenhouse. Students will plant, tend and harvest vegetables that will be added to the lunch program to help provide a healthy balanced diet.

# JUDY WATSON OLSON EDUCATION ENRICHMENT AWARD



**Lindsey Flygare**, community engagement coordinator at United Way of the Eastern U.P., will use award funds in a summer reading program to combat “Summer Slide” learning loss among local children. She will purchase supplies for fun and engaging literacy activities, small prizes for goal completion and a stuffed “reading buddy” for each child to read to, or write about, during the activities. Participants will continue learning through the summer with a better chance of retaining knowledge they gained the previous school year.

Gifts and pledges have been received from the following individuals, families, businesses and foundations for the **EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION ENDOWMENT FUND**.

## AWARD OF EXCELLENCE LEVEL DONORS (\$100,000 - \$1,000,000)

UP Health System  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

## ESTEEMED LEVEL DONORS (\$50,000 - \$99,999)

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## LEADERSHIP AWARD LEVEL DONORS (\$25,000 - \$49,999)

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Mr. & Mrs. Robert Marietti	Wisconsin Energy Foundation
Mr. & Mrs. Lou Myefski	Anonymous

Endowing Excellence in Education Week

In 1998, Grow & Lead — in conjunction with Alger Regional Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of Marquette County — mobilized the community to build an endowment to provide scholarships and awards celebrating academic excellence. Each student honored receives a \$1,500 scholarship to be used to further his or her education. Each selected Professional Development Award recipient honored receives a \$500 award.

With a \$1 million lead gift from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, local businesses and individuals gifts help to ensure the future of Excellence in Education Week for years to come. Your continued gifts can help secure the fund during volatile financial times. Please contact your local community foundation or Grow & Lead for more information on how to contribute to the endowment and secure the future of this exciting program.

Please consider including the Excellence in Education Endowment Funds as part of your annual, memorial and planned giving.



P.O. Box 39  
Munising, MI 49862  
Phone: 906-387-3900  
www.algercf.com



P.O. Box 692  
Marquette, MI 49855  
Phone: 906-228-8919  
www.glcyd.org



P.O. Box 37  
Marquette, MI 49855  
Phone: 906-226-7666  
www.cfofmc.org

A Note to Students...

Step into the nonprofit world and be part of something bigger than yourself

Young people have the power to shape a more compassionate and equitable world, and one of the most impactful ways to do that is by pursuing opportunities in the nonprofit sector. No matter your field of interest—education, environmental work, healthcare, the arts, human services and more—nonprofits offer meaningful ways to align your passion with purpose. Organizations throughout the U.P. and in communities everywhere need your energy, ideas and your drive to make a difference.

Volunteer at a recreation center, serve on a nonprofit board of directors, pursue an internship that supports a cause close to your heart. Wondering where to start? Reach out to us at Grow & Lead, and we'll give you some ideas to help you on your way.



Contact Grow & Lead



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Website  
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