

Excellence in Education



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Cover Photo

Renovated in 2022, the

Whittier Elementary

School library design and

improvements were a

collaborative effort made

possible by Jamie and

Robert Marshall, Jared and

Annie Brown, and Tom and

Cindy Duffy along with LPW

Architects.

Photo credit: John Godwin



Drew Blewett

Board Chair

Hello from your Board Chair

Under the fine leadership of our Executive Director, Stephanie Schnider, and her hardworking and diligent staff, the Foundation continues to grow and expand its work. Last summer, Joel Owen was hired as the Volunteer and Event Coordinator to facilitate events and appreciation efforts for volunteers, teachers, and students. Joel brings a fresh perspective and positive energy to the Foundation team, and we are glad to have him on board.

Of course, I would like to extend thanks to our gracious donors who continue to support the Foundation's mission of enhancing public education in our community. The Foundation's success depends on the willingness of donors to give, and we are incredibly appreciative

of your support. I would also like to recognize our Foundation staff and board members. They spend countless hours working to ensure the Foundation is able to enhance public education in Great Falls through student and teacher recognition, scholarships, grants, and facility enhancements.

In the past few years, we have seen an increase in school-initiated community fundraisers for facility enhancements. The Foundation is glad to play its part in processing gift receipts and acknowledgements for these efforts. Riverview Elementary celebrated the completion of its playground project in August. In September, both Sacajawea Elementary and CMR High School kicked off their fundraising efforts for a new playground and a renovated CMR Hall of Fame, respectively. We are very impressed with the commitment of PTA and staff members in pursuing these initiatives.

Thanks to funding from the Robbins-de Beaumont Foundation, the Foundation initiated a new offering for teachers called the Immersive Professional Learning grant. This pilot program encourages teachers to pursue unique and immersive experiences and to share their learnings with colleagues in the district. Next year one teacher will travel to Nepal for a Mount Everest school exploration and trek while another will travel to Hawaii to explore volcanic activity in the region as a result of this funding. We look forward to seeing what they discover in their travels and how it impacts student learning in our community.

While we are excited for these and other new projects, we sadly recognize that the basic needs of some students are not being met. Since 2012, the Foundation has proudly funded food pantries for all schools in the GFPS District. We know that hunger negatively impacts a child's ability to learn and grow, and we are thankful for the numerous donors who mitigate food insecurity for our youth. We encourage you to read our feature article to learn about the volunteers who make the food pantry program possible.

In June, I will be stepping down from my two-year position as Board Chair and passing the baton to Joanie Agamenoni, who has served as the Scholarship Committee Chair the last several years. Since joining the Board, Joanie has played an integral role in the success of the Foundation, and she will do an outstanding job serving as Board Chair. Suffice it say, the Foundation is in very good hands and well positioned to continue to improve public education in Great Falls as we work our way through 2023 and beyond.



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Great Falls Public Schools
FOUNDATION

Mission Statement

The mission of the GFPS Foundation is to enhance high-quality teaching and life-long learning for students in Great Falls Public Schools by funding innovative educational programs and scholarships.

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2023 Excellence in Education Honorees

Teachers are the key foundation to student learning and success. Since 2012, the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation has celebrated the influence of teachers and the dedication of students through its Excellence in Education program.

Top-rated graduating seniors, recognized as distinguished scholars, have the opportunity to select one educator from kindergarten through 8th grade and one from high school who made a significant difference in their learning experience. These educators often fill the traditional role of classroom teachers, but students may also select school counselors, coaches, or administrators who positively impacted them.

Distinguished Scholars from C.M. Russell and Great Falls High Schools were selected based on academic achievement, GPA, and rigorous coursework. Distinguished Scholars from Paris Gibson Education Center were selected by teachers, counselors, and administrators based on academic achievement, leadership, service, and successfully overcoming obstacles.

The Foundation is pleased to honor this year's selection of 33 distinguished scholars and the 66 distinguished educators who helped to support, mentor, and challenge them to be the best they can be.

Wells Serves as Guest Speaker



*Excellence Event Speaker
Dr. Kathryn Wells*

The Foundation welcomed back 1985 Great Falls High School graduate, Dr. Kathryn Wells as the guest speaker for Excellence in Education 2023. Wells is the Executive Director of

the Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect in Aurora, CO. She is also a Professor in Pediatrics at the University of Colorado and an attending physician at Children's Hospital Colorado.

Great Falls High School

Student: Hannah Bloomgren
Teachers: Chad Getten and Karlene Schraner

Parents: Eric and Sarah Bloomgren

Memorable experiences: My involvement in HOSA, Key Club, National Honor Society, and BPA were memorable. I'll cherish dressing up for theme days and games to show school spirit, painting my face green, and dissecting pigs. Obtaining my CNA license impacted the field I am planning to enter.

Plans after high school: I will attend the University of Montana to study either pharmacy or pre-med. If I take the pre-med route, I aspire to become a doctor that specializes in either orthopedics or otolaryngology.

Distinguished Educator: Chad Getten, Counselor

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mr. Getten helped me these past four years and always made me laugh. He pushed me to challenge myself and strive to reach my greatest potential. He encouraged me to take the harder classes even when I did not want to, because he knew I had the capability to succeed.

Distinguished Educator: Karlene Schraner, Music

School: Holy Spirit Catholic School

Why: Mrs. Schraner has always been an inspiration to me on how to spread kindness to every person I meet. I knew I could always talk to her about anything, and she made music fun. I was not the most musically driven student, but I learned two instruments because of her teaching. She helped me to realize my capability in music, which makes me a more well-rounded student.



Student: **Hayley Bouchard**
Teachers: **Bianca Bouchard and Lisa Shull**

Parent: Bianca Bouchard

Memorable experiences: My most memorable experiences include my arts-related activities, including theatre, orchestra, and choir. I loved participating in the school plays and being able to perform in all kinds of challenging and fun roles. I also loved being in orchestra and choir, especially becoming a stronger cellist.

Plans after high school: I will be attending the University of Montana in the fall, where I will be double majoring in music education and theater.

Distinguished Educator: Bianca Bouchard, Exceptionalities Resource

School: Great Falls High School

Why: I am nominating “Ms. B” because I have had the privilege of being a peer tutor for her for two years. Her genuine care and compassion for her students is admirable, something I hope to carry into my teaching career. She has taught me lessons about leadership and kindness, and I am so proud to call her my mom.

Distinguished Educator: Lisa Shull, Orchestra

School: East Middle School

Why: I chose Mrs. Shull because she is the teacher who inspired a turning point in my musical career. I went into middle school with an apathetic attitude toward music, but she changed that. I am glad that she opened my eyes to the world of music, and I hope to become as impactful a music educator as she is.



Student: **Madison Davis**
Teachers: **Neil Kynett and Penny Haffner**

Parents: Alicia and Michael Davis

Memorable experiences: My most memorable school experience has been impacting my community through my involvement in Key Club. I have been a member the last four years and a board member the last two years.

Plans after high school: After high school I will attend the University of Montana and study management and entrepreneurship through the College of Business.

Distinguished Educator: Neil Kynett, Math

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mr. Kynett has been my math teacher for the past two years. He is always willing to help and re-explain. He is very patient. He tells a new joke every day, and he truly puts his students first.

Distinguished Educator: Penny Haffner, 4th grade

School: Our Lady of Lourdes

Why: Mrs. Haffner was my fourth-grade teacher. I was new to OLL and she exceeded the expectations of what it means to be a great teacher. She was always willing to help me, and she even spent time tutoring me while I was in fifth grade. Mrs. Haffner goes above and beyond and cares about her students' potential.



Student: **Mason Davis**
Teachers: **Ed McNamee and Tammy Madill**

Parents: Alicia and Michael Davis

Memorable experiences: My most memorable school experience was playing high school football. I will never forget the feeling of playing games in front of the entire school with my best friends. The best feeling took place after huge wins while watching the students and parents share the moments with us on the field.

Plans after high school: I plan to attend Montana State University and study architecture.

Distinguished Educator: Ed McNamee, AP Government, Criminal Justice

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mr. McNamee always knows how to make every class a fun experience. No matter the day, he can always put a smile on everyone's faces while making them laugh. He also coaches me in baseball and has taught me the importance of what it means to be a friend in someone's life.

Distinguished Educator: Tammy Madill, English

School: Our Lady of Lourdes

Why: Mrs. Madill loved and treated every one of her students as if they were her own child. Aside from being an outstanding English teacher, she taught me valuable life lessons that I will never forget. She always brought a smile to her classroom and made everyone's day brighter.



Student: **Eliana Dunn**
Teachers: **Rosie Rossberg and Keith Davey**

Parents: Mark and Emily Dunn

Memorable experiences: My freshman year after the homecoming football game, everyone lined up to run down on to the field. I was confused, got separated and couldn't see where I was going. In the panic, I ended up body slamming into Paul Culbertson. I never ran down onto the field after a game again.

Plans after high school: I will take classes online next year and complete my general classes. I plan to travel over the next year as well.

Distinguished Educator: Rosie Rossberg, AP History

School: Great Falls High School

Why: School has always been easy for me, but Mrs. Rossberg's class was challenging. I had to study and I had to work to learn something. Even though the class was difficult, it was fun. She's passionate about what she teaches. I felt comfortable in her class, and she pushed me to work harder.

Distinguished Educator: Keith Davey, Honors English

School: East Middle School

Why: I was usually content in my classes to just be quiet, but in Mr. Davey's class I wanted to participate. He was encouraging and pushed me to be better. His class was also just really funny!



Student: **Emma Griffin**
Teachers: **Jerry Hopkins and Kent Carlson**

Parents: Sarah and James Griffin

Memorable experiences: My most memorable school experiences were in high school during all the homecoming weeks. I loved dressing up, building floats, and attending the parades and the football games. I've enjoyed all four years of high school, and I will always remember the good times.

Plans after high school: I plan on attending the University of Montana to major in the field of science.

Distinguished Educator: Jerry Hopkins, Honors English

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mr. Hopkins's kindness and passion are what make him an outstanding teacher. He always manages to ask me how I'm doing when he sees me around the school. He encouraged my love of reading and to only read what you enjoy. He cares a lot about his students.

Distinguished Educator: Kent Carlson, Science

School: East Middle School

Why: Mr. Carlson's class was one of my favorite classes in middle school. I enjoyed learning about science, and he helped me to be more outgoing. He was always kind to me and I'm grateful that I had him as my teacher.



Student: **Alyx McAdam**
Teachers: **Christine Baroch and Sally Triplett**

Parents: Aaron and Nicole McAdam

Memorable experiences: One of my more memorable experiences in high school was the time the speech and debate team was stuck at a Super 8 hotel without any rooms. I remember just sitting there watching my coach, with two phones in hand, trying to figure things out. The experience was comical and everything ended up working out. There were rooms available at the La Quinta across the street.

Plans after high school: I plan on going to college to get a degree in business with a focus in optometry. Eventually I'll become an optometrist and take my skills around the world to help people in need.

Distinguished Educator: Christine Baroch, AP English

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mrs. Baroch is always willing to take the time to work with her students. I am so grateful to know that if I ever have a question about an assignment, I'm able to ask her about it. She has gone above and beyond by helping to proofread some of my scholarship essays.

Distinguished Educator: Sally Triplett, 5th grade (retired)

School: Lincoln Elementary

Why: I had Mrs. Triplett for my 5th grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary. I remember writing for the Charlie Russell essay contest, and I remember the faith that Mrs. Triplett had in me. Her belief in me, made me believe in myself. I am so grateful to have had her as my teacher.



Student: Zachary Orvis
Teachers: Dawn Reitz and Ralee Thornton

Parents: Dean and Tara Orvis

Memorable experiences: My most memorable school experience took place after a music concert in 6th grade. Two of my friends had the chance to leave school early but stayed to hang out with me. We played games on Coolmath and competed against each other until I could go home.

Plans after high school: I plan to go to Montana State University or University of Minnesota to major in data science or statistics. I want to enter a career in which I utilize my math abilities while creatively solving problems.

Distinguished Educator: Dawn Reitz, German

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Frau Reitz made learning German fun and interesting while encouraging the best out of her students. She has served as a kind and honest mentor to me throughout my entire high school career. She also gave me a calm place to have lunch or do last minute homework this year, allowing us to continue to talk.

Distinguished Educator: Ralee Thornton, 1st and 2nd grade

School: Sunnyside Elementary

Why: Mrs. Thornton was an excellent role model and teacher. She pushed students to think critically and work hard while making her classroom a fun place to be. Having her as a teacher for two years changed my growth as a student, and she is a major reason I strive for academic excellence.



Student: Noah S. Roberts
Teachers: Charlotte Brown and Sandy Brown

Parents: Carmen and Kyle Roberts

Memorable experiences: I vividly remember working with the principal of East Middle School, Mr. Barringer, to recreate the school's website through Weebly as an 8th grader. I remember the senior send-offs from when my brother and close friend were seniors and working with the sound system in the Davidson Auditorium as the sound designer for Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, and the thrill I felt when all the microphones, speakers, and stage monitors all worked after hours of troubleshooting.

Plans after high school: I've already taken dual credit classes and have been focusing on completing my general ed college classes. I plan on studying computer science at the University of Montana and studying abroad, then bringing my newfound education and experiences back home to Montana.

Distinguished Educator: Charlotte Brown, Special Education

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mrs. Brown was the most important educator of my high school career. She made her room a safe space to go to when in distress. She was always there to help with whatever she could, especially with self-advocacy and time management, two skills that I take for granted daily.

Distinguished Educator: Sandy Brown, 2nd grade (retired)

School: Lewis and Clark Elementary

Why: Mrs. Brown's awesomeness defies the boundaries of language. She had a bubble of uplifting energy that followed her wherever she went. Now, if I bump into her, she and I catch up on the past couple months. She has always genuinely cared about the lives and well-being of all her students.



Student: **Anthony Semenza**
Teachers: **Brian Sullivan and Ty Moore**

Parent: Angela Semenza

Memorable experiences: One of my most memorable school experiences was during fourth grade when I had to be away from school for around three to four weeks. When I got back my class had made a poster for me to come back to. It was a hard time for me, but my classmates helped me greatly and kept me on track.

Plans after high school: I plan on going to MSU Bozeman to pursue a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, then I'll go into the field and work.

Distinguished Educator: Brian Sullivan, AP Biology

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mr. Sullivan helped bring out an interest in science in me. I enjoyed his class, and it made learning about biology that much better. He was inspirational with all the quotes he'd say and he kept the class alive, whether it be his antics or making us stand up when he saw we were falling asleep.

Distinguished Educator: Ty Moore, 4th and 6th grade

School: Sunnyside Elementary (currently Principal at Lincoln Elementary)

Why: Mr. Moore's classes were enjoyable and memorable. From building catapults to independent reading, the class was so much fun and was super important for me at the time. He made sure I was feeling my best and learning as much as I could. He was an amazing teacher and an amazing person.



Student: **Sheridan Skerritt**
Teachers: **Beth Wiles and Diane Seder**

Parents: Tom and Dawn Skerritt

Memorable experiences: I have many memories through involvement with various sports and clubs. I loved getting to travel around the state and seeing the beauty Montana has to offer. I appreciated all the teachers who have helped me along my educational path.

Plans after high school: I plan to pursue a degree in environmental science or environmental engineering. Presently, I am still deciding which college to attend.

Distinguished Educator: Beth Wiles, Honors Physics

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mrs. Wiles ensures that everyone understands the content we are learning. She has provided an open and welcoming learning environment. Her friendliness makes her class enjoyable to attend, and I always look forward to it.

Distinguished Educator: Diane Seder, 2nd grade

School: Lewis and Clark Elementary

Why: Mrs. Seder always provided a welcoming learning environment and helped me discover my love for math. She encourages students to find joy in learning and helps students when they need it. I appreciate all that she did for every student.



Student: **Julia Stelzer**
Teachers: **Darcie Aakre and Jennifer Newman**

Parent: Keri Yeagley

Memorable experiences: My most memorable school experiences include a speech and debate meet where our beds were infested with ants and another where I watched a kid “squirt lemon juice in his eye” for placing at state. My high school career was full with extracurriculars including Key Club, speech and debate, talent search and National Honor Society. I’ve met amazing people.

Plans after high school: I’m not sure what college I will be attending yet; however, I plan to study civil engineering with a minor in environmental engineering. My goal is to work for the EPA and make the world a safer place.

Distinguished Educator: Darcie Aakre, Honors English

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Through high school I have had a lot to balance, and it was difficult. However, Mrs. Aakre was always there to listen and care. Going to English I knew I could have a break from everything else and just read. It was one of the best parts of my junior year. Having her for vocabulary now as a senior has renewed my love for reading and writing and has made school so much more enjoyable.

Distinguished Educator: Jennifer Newman, Honors English

School: East Middle School

Why: I had Mrs. Newman for both years of middle school because I was in the ECS English program. Both years she made middle school bearable for me, between understanding when I needed help with something to being kind on a bad day. She made a major difference in my life. Although she probably has a lot of embarrassing stories about me, she will always be one of my most influential teachers.



Student: **Keaton Stuckman**
Teachers: **Kelly Wiles and Anna Horton**

Parents: Shawna and Jack Stuckman

Memorable experiences: My most memorable school experiences consist of playing on the basketball team for all four years and the bus rides, making it to the state tournament and spending time with my teammates.

Plans after high school: After high school I plan to major in physical therapy or exercise science.

Distinguished Educator: Kelly Wiles, Film: Movie & Genres

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mr. Wiles taught a class that I had a lot of interest in and he was able to always keep my attention and make class entertaining.

Distinguished Educator: Anna Horton, 1st grade

School: Sunnyside Elementary

Why: Anna Horton was always very energetic and knew how to have a good time. She was dedicated to all her students and she helped me step outside of my comfort zone.



Student: **Seamus Sullivan**
Teachers: **Scott Smart and Laura O'Neil**

Parents: Brian and Brooke Sullivan

Memorable experiences: An experience that is very memorable to me and one that will stick with me for the rest of my life is senior prom. It was a blast to hang out with my closest friends and laugh and share such a fun moment with them.

Plans after high school: I plan on attending the University of Montana to study biology.

Distinguished Educator: Scott Smart, Honors Algebra

School: Great Falls High School

Why: Mr. Smart is one of the kindest people I have ever met. He helped me to enjoy math, which is a subject I've never been too fond of. He genuinely cares for every one of his students, and he clearly loves his job.

Distinguished Educator: Laura O'Neil, Religion/Art

School: Holy Spirit Catholic School

Why: Mrs. O'Neil has been in my life ever since I was born, and she is the most caring person I know. Every day she would greet me with a smile, and she is a person with whom I could have a comfortable conversation about anything. She has been a major role model throughout my life.



Student: **Hannah Wyman**
Teachers: **Suzanne Sturges and Lance Boyd**

Parent: Jacqueline Wyman

Memorable experiences: My most memorable moments come from DECA. Being a member of the GFH chapter and a state officer for Montana DECA gave me memories that will last a lifetime. Traveling not just to compete, but also to learn, was an opportunity that allowed me to develop confidence and a passion for marketing.

Plans after high school: I plan to attend college to pursue a degree in marketing.

Distinguished Educator: Suzanne Sturges, Spanish

School: Great Falls High School (currently Adult Basic Ed at Great Falls College-MSU)

Why: I am so grateful to have had Profe Sturges as an educator for every year of high school. She is not only amazing at teaching her students Spanish but lifting them up. Every conversation I have with her is so realistic and motivating. She inspires me to continue to be curious every day.

Distinguished Educator: Lance Boyd, Principal

School: Sunnyside Elementary (currently Executive Dir. for Student Achievement)

Why: Mr. Boyd was the type of principal who always made the effort to have connections with all the students within the school. He inspired me every day to be a leader and have confidence. He was always there to support me and give me the opportunities I needed to push my boundaries.



C.M. Russell High School

Student: **Luke Banks**

Teachers: **Christopher Kloker and Lauree Wenger**

Parents: Mike and Stephanie Banks

Memorable experiences: My most memorable experience was going to All State Band my freshman year. I was very nervous because I didn't know many of the kids and because it was one of my first times playing with high schoolers. However, on the last night when we had the concert, it was amazing!

Plans after high school: After a two-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, I plan on studying percussion performance and music education at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, with hopes of receiving my doctoral degree and teaching at a college.

Distinguished Educator: Christopher Kloker, Band

School: CMR High School

Why: Mr. Kloker provided me a home at school over the past four years. When I started playing with his bands, I instantly felt welcomed and at home. It's because of him and many other music teachers that I hope to pursue a career in music education.

Distinguished Educator: Lauree Wenger, Band (retired)

School: Sacajawea Elementary

Why: Mrs. Wenger has done more for my future than any other teacher I have ever had. When I started first taking private lessons from her in 4th grade and then had her in band in 5th grade, my love of music was sparked. It is because of her that I have been able to find something I am so passionate about.



Student: **Madylin Connell**

Teachers: **David Jamison and Mary Somerfeld**

Parents: Laura and Ryan Connell

Memorable experiences: My most memorable experience was going to the 2022 National Speech and Debate Tournament in Louisville, KY. None of us on the team moved on from the preliminary rounds, but we had the best time meeting people from around the country and trying amazing food.

Plans after high school: I plan on attending a university and studying chemical engineering.

Distinguished Educator: David Jamison, German

School: CMR High School

Why: Herr Jamison was my German teacher for three years. During that time, I learned that he was not afraid to challenge students. Also, no matter the circumstances, he would find a way to help us learn. He has been a great example and I am grateful for the German language and life lessons he taught to me.

Distinguished Educator: Mary Somerfeld, Science

School: North Middle School

Why: Mrs. Somerfeld has been one of the biggest influences in my life. She pushed me to do Science Olympiad and Science Bowl in middle school, and that drastically changed my life. She is passionate about what she teaches and taught me to love science and learning. She is one of the greatest in her field.



Student: **Zachary Dean**
Teachers: **Ryan Anderson and Stephanie Frank**

Parents: Bob and Andrea Dean

Memorable experiences: My most memorable high school experiences come from the time spent being involved in many different activities with all my best friends. From football and track, to the awesome student sections, student government, and all the upper level classes at CMR. I am blessed to have formed many lifelong friendships at CMR.

Plans after high school: After graduation, I plan on attending the University of Washington or University of Colorado Boulder to pursue a degree in aerospace engineering. My career goal is to work at an industry-leading company in the aerospace field.

Distinguished Educator: Ryan Anderson, English

School: CMR High School

Why: Mr. Anderson is not only a great teacher in the classroom, but also has had a lasting impact on students outside the classroom. He puts in countless hours and effort in teaching, student government, and so much more. He has been a major role in my success as a student at CMR, and his support and encouragement are greatly appreciated by all students.

Distinguished Educator: Stephanie Frank, 1st grade

School: Longfellow Elementary

Why: Mrs. Frank isn't just a teacher, she's a super hero. She is hard working and dedicated to making a lasting impact on her students' lives. Even through tough times, she always had a smile on her face and brought joy to all her students. She puts others above herself and deserves this recognition.



Student: **Adam Elkin**
Teachers: **Steve Skaer and Russ Kellogg**

Parents: Carrie Ann and Chad Elkin

Memorable experiences: One memorable experience was joining the swim team on a whim my senior year. It was a lot of work, but it was so much fun.

Plans after high school: I will pursue a music degree at the University of Montana.

Distinguished Educator: Steve Skaer, Math

School: CMR High School

Why: I took calculus from Mr. Skaer and the class was extremely challenging. He truly helped me learn and succeed at my studies.

Distinguished Educator: Russ Kellogg, Band (retired)

School: North Middle School

Why: Mr. Kellogg cared so much about everything and everyone, and he was a really special instructor to me. He created a space that allowed us middle schoolers to feel like real accomplished musicians.



Student: **Sarah Faulk**
Teachers: **Kerry Bjornstad and Leslie Whiteman**

Parents: Ryan and Tracie Faulk

Memorable experiences: Some of my many memorable experiences are competing in cross country and softball, being in the symphonic band, participating in the Principal's Academic Cup, and being a part of the orchestra pit for Beauty and the Beast. I laughed, cried, cheered, celebrated and met a lot of incredible people.

Plans after high school: I plan to pursue a degree in nuclear engineering at Idaho State University.

Distinguished Educator: Kerry Bjornstad, Algebra/Trigonometry

School: CMR High School

Why: I look up to Mrs. Bjornstad not only because she is an amazing teacher, but also because she is a strong, confident woman who makes me feel like I can do anything. Her passion for math and for teaching makes students feel supported and valued. Mrs. Bjornstad is always in my corner.

Distinguished Educator: Leslie Whiteman, Math

School: North Middle School

Why: What an influence Mrs. Whiteman had on my life and love of learning! I was fortunate to have her as a math teacher; her passion and dedication stayed with me. She lit a spark in me that fueled my love of math – I would not be who I am today or who I plan to be in the future without her influence.



Student: **Brielyn Ginnaty**
Teachers: **Jacie Schoenen and Kerry Otto**

Parents: Sean and Rayn Ginnaty

Memorable experiences: Participating in softball and student government, competing in Business Professionals of America and Distributive Education Clubs, and business internships. I loved being senior class vice president and being a student government representative. I've had a blast every homecoming, prom, and crosstown. The relationships I've made with peers and school staff will last me a lifetime.

Plans after high school: I plan to attend Simpson College in Iowa to play softball and major in business administration with the intent of one day owning my own business.

Distinguished Educator: Jacie Schoenen, Guidance Counselor

School: CMR High School

Why: Mrs. Schoenen is my most significant mentor. Not only is she compassionate, kind, and encouraging, but she always kept me in my right mind. She encouraged and challenged me in all decisions, such as where I was going to college to how much I should dwell on my last test grade. I spent hours in her office and her door was always open to me. I am grateful for her kindness and friendship.

Distinguished Educator: Kerry Otto, Math

School: North Middle School

Why: Mrs. Otto stands out as an educator because of her big heart and her selfless and nurturing manner. Once I was about to pass out and Mrs. Otto, with cold water in hand, coached me through the whole thing while wiping the tears off my face. I was embarrassed and scared, and she was selfless and nurturing. Her kindness and optimism while teaching encouraged me.



Student: Onika Gray

Teachers: Steve Olson and Cristi Fought

Parents: Seana Westcarr-Gray and Alrich Gray

Memorable experiences: My most memorable high school experiences came from traveling for band. As a freshman, I got to travel to Kalispell for AA band. It was very exciting to experience overnight trips with my friends in band and to make music with musicians my age from other schools.

Plans after high school: I plan to study computer science and music.

Distinguished Educator: Steve Olson, Orchestra

School: CMR High School

Why: Mr. Olson teaches his classes passionately, which inspires me to learn and perform music to my best ability. He is always organized and takes care of his students. Mr. Olson has made my high school experience more enjoyable, and I know I'll always have him to support me.

Distinguished Educator: Cristi Fought, Social Studies

School: North Middle School

Why: Mrs. Fought has a fun personality and vibrant energy when she teaches. Her enthusiasm toward social studies made learning so much easier and enjoyable. She was always fun to talk with and was a teacher I knew I could turn to if I needed any help.



Student: Morgen Hewitt-Holbein

Teachers: Christi Virts and Theresa Busch

Parents: Anna Hewitt and Brian Holbein

Memorable experiences: My most memorable experiences happened while traveling to Nashville, TN, for a National HOSA competition. We went zip lining, line dancing, toured the Grand Ole Opry, and interacted with HOSA members from around the country. It was a great opportunity filled with new experiences that I could check off my bucket list.

Plans after high school: I plan to attend the University of Montana to pursue a bachelor's degree in medical laboratory science. After this, I will complete the exam required to become a certified scientist.

Distinguished Educator: Christi Virts, Health Science

School: CMR High School

Why: Mrs. Virts was my Connections teacher since freshmen year. The positivity and kindness she spread during these brief meetings were enough to convince me that I wanted to be in her classes and the club she advises. She incorporates life lessons into her teaching and pushes her students to find the good things that happen in our lives. She made me feel welcomed at school and in class.

Distinguished Educator: Theresa Busch, Counseling

School: Sacajawea Elementary

Why: Mrs. Busch was the counselor at my elementary school and taught me important life lessons from a young age. She was one of the people I wanted to be like growing up because of the kindness she expressed. Even though I did not keep in touch with her after elementary school, she sent me a card my freshmen year after my Grandpa had died, and I will always remember her thoughtfulness.



Student: **Alex Karns**

Teachers: **Brian Halverson and Jordan Hollern**

Parents: Kirsten and Chris Karns

Memorable experiences: My most memorable school experiences were hanging out with my friends at homecoming, playing in the chess club, and participating in the Montana Aerospace Scholars program.

Plans after high school: After high school, I am attending Purdue University West-Lafayette and plan to major in aerospace engineering. Then, I'll either go on to graduate school or begin work as an aerospace engineer.

Distinguished Educator: Jordan Hollern, AP Physics

School: CMR High School

Why: There was never a dull moment in my AP Physics class. Mr. Hollern believed in learning by making mistakes and gave us the freedom to construct over-the-top lab projects like a classroom-long ramp to study acceleration or a very chaotic egg drop contraption that somehow worked.

Distinguished Educator: Brian Halverson, AP Economics and Government

School: CMR High School

Why: Mr. Halverson's unorthodox teaching style keeps every day in the classroom fresh. It seems like he has a story for every concept he teaches us, and that means learning in his classes never feels like a chore.



Student: **James Onstad**

Teachers: **Burke Allen and Joel Carlson**

Parents: Tara and Lyle Onstad

Memorable experiences: At Sacajawea Elementary School I created a paper town and earned my math credits by keeping track of each town's structures or vehicle's volumes. My high school memories are of playing with my fellow musicians in the orchestra pit for the play Beauty and the Beast, playing for CMR's boys soccer team and creating many friendships, and I made a great decision to join the choir as a junior and participated in All-State Choir and all Northwest Choir. I enjoyed four years in Mr. Olson's orchestra

Plans after high school: I plan to attend Montana State University in the Fall semester of 2023 to study pre-med and further explore the medical fields I wish to pursue for myself in the future.

Distinguished Educator: Burke Allen, AP U.S. History

School: CMR High School

Why: Mr. Allen is a phenomenal teacher, and I had the pleasure of having him as my teacher in AP U.S. History my junior year. He relates current events to past events in history. He helped me the most in my writing abilities, and I have become a far better writer than I was before I entered his classroom.

Distinguished Educator: Joel Carlson, ECS

School: Sacajawea Elementary

Why: Mr. Carlson is Sacajawea's ECS teacher. We spent a good portion of our class learning how to program robots and using math in a realistic setting. I know that this greatly helped me through my high school math experiences.



Student: **Grace Packer**
Teachers: **Erica Davis and Kasi Thompson**

Parents: Rachel and Robert Packer

Memorable experiences: Playing the flute has been a big part of my high school experience. I love getting to play at events like All State and band festivals. Going down to Bozeman my junior year to watch an opera and being able to learn about such a different musical style from what I'm used to was a great experience.

Plans after high school: After high school I plan on attending Franklin University Switzerland to major in psychology and minor in French.

Distinguished Educator: Erica Davis, French

School: CMR High School

Why: I took French for three years and loved it. Ms. Davis made class so much fun and helped inspire a love for learning about other cultures. She is a big reason why I chose an international college. I love the French language because of her class and will pursue it in college.

Distinguished Educator: Kasi Thompson, English

School: North Middle School

Why: 7th grade was a terrifying time for me. I had to make new friends in a new place where I didn't know anyone. Ms. Thompson's class was my favorite by far because she made it so fun and welcoming. I felt comfortable there because of her and was able to make several friends that I still have today.



Student: **Izzabella Rukavina**
Teachers: **Theresa Jacobs and Jan Hickman**

Parents: Jason and Kristen Rukavina

Memorable experiences: Almost every day of high school, I spent my lunch time in the art room; sometimes I would eat with a few friends, sometimes I would chat with Miss J. On my birthday my junior year, I walked into the art room for lunch to find my entire AP Art class waiting for me with a cake. Miss J was behind it all.

Plans after high school: I am going to MSU to major in graphic design and art history with a minor in business.

Distinguished Educator: Theresa Jacobs, Art

School: CMR High School

Why: Miss J has been my beloved art teacher during all four years of high school. She helped me realize that art isn't just a hobby, it is a necessity in our world. It is because of her that I will be pursuing graphic design as a career and utilizing my love for art. I am grateful for everything she has taught me.

Distinguished Educator: Jan Hickman, 2nd grade (retired)

School: Riverview Elementary

Why: My grandma, Mrs. Hickman, is one of the most impactful teachers in my life. From homework at the dining room table after school to reading Roald Dahl to her on summer days, she constantly pushes me to absorb knowledge and love learning. She retired from the classroom, but not from teaching.



Student: **Kamryn Schubert**
Teachers: **Andrew Nagengast and Tamie Pachek**

Parents: Jordan and Trista Hollern

Memorable experiences: My most memorable school experiences are the bonds I built with my teachers and classmates. The teachers' willingness to spend time and improve my school experience helped contribute to this. The friends I have made throughout school make the school days and sporting events more enjoyable and monumental.

Plans after high school: I will be attending Montana State University in the fall of 2023 to further my education. I hope to be accepted into nursing school after I have completed the required classes, with the intention of earning a bachelor's in nursing (BSN). With this degree, I intend to acquire a certification in emergency nursing.

Distinguished Educator: Andrew Nagengast, Art

School: CMR High School

Why: Mr. Nagengast taught me how to inspire and motivate myself to escape my mind and find joy in my artistic ability. He showed me how to break away from reality and experience life for what it's worth in the moment. I am very fortunate to have learned from him and to have built a strong bond with him.



Distinguished Educator in Memoriam: Tamie Pachek, 6th grade

School: Sacajawea Elementary

Why: My 6th grade year is especially memorable as a hard year for family, as I was preparing for middle school and I had my sick brother on my mind as well. Ms. Pachek recognized my unusual behavior and was there for me when I needed it most. Unfortunately, 2018 would be the year I attended my first funeral and said goodbye to my admired teacher and close friend.

Student: **Alexis Thornton**
Teachers: **John Stewart and Jeremy Smith**

Parents: Troy and Ralee Thornton

Memorable experiences: My most memorable school experience was topping off an undefeated season by winning the volleyball state championship my junior year. The feeling of accomplishment and pride that enveloped me as we rushed the court is something I will never forget. I am forever grateful for the friends and guidance I have found through volleyball.

Plans after high school: I plan to attend Colorado Mesa University. I do not yet know which course of study I plan to pursue.

Distinguished Educator: John Stewart, Industrial Technology

School: CMR High School

Why: Mr. Stewart created a fun and safe environment where he helped introduce me to the basics of woodworking and later guided me through some more difficult projects. His class made a large impact on helping me to expand new interests. In addition, he found ways to connect to his students outside of the classroom and showed interest in their other activities.

Distinguished Educator: Jeremy Smith, Social Studies

School: North Middle School

Why: Mr. Smith always found a way to make class stimulating and fun. Even if I had little interest in a topic, his teaching style and the projects he introduced would make it invigorating for me. His class had such a comfortable atmosphere and made anyone feel welcome.



Paris Gibson Education

Student: Hannah Davis

Teachers: Nancy McGonigal and Jill Christensen

Parents: Wynn and Jerry Davis

Memorable experiences: My most memorable high school experiences include homecoming week activities and losing my voice at the football games. I have truly enjoyed my education throughout the years. I am thankful for all my teachers who always pushed me to do my best and all the new friendships I gained that I will have for a lifetime.

Plans after high school: I plan to attend University of Montana in Missoula to pursue a degree in education. I hope to eventually become an elementary school teacher.

Distinguished Educator: Nancy McGonigal, English

School: Paris Gibson Education Center

Why: Mrs. McGonigal was a wonderful English teacher who always took interest in not only my education, but also my personal life. She made me feel like I was being "seen." As I went through several medical issues, she always made the effort to check in on me, whether that be at school or shooting me a text. In addition, I not only consider her a teacher but will forever consider her a friend.

Distinguished Educator: Jill Christensen, Kindergarten

School: Valley View Elementary

Why: I remember how much fun it was inside Mrs. Christensen's safari themed room. To this day when I run into her, she always seems interested in how I am doing academically and personally. She helped create my love for learning at a young age. One day I hope I can make an impact on others as Mrs. Christensen did for me.



Student: Spencer Kist

Teachers: Theresa Besich and Amy Schoenen

Parents: Crystal Kist and James Kist

Memorable experiences: I remember Kinder camp, where I met my elementary school friends who I would spend every day of elementary school with, and meeting my best friend, Ashlynn Kidder, in the fourth grade and still being very close friends. I also remember my first day at Paris, where I met Mrs. Besich who immediately made me feel welcomed.

Plans after high school: I got into University of Montana Western and plan on studying business there.

Distinguished Educator: Theresa Besich, Business and Student Voice

School: Paris Gibson Education Center

Why: Mrs. Besich is always upbeat and happy to see students every morning. She asks how your day is going and makes time to listen to anything you may need to talk about. Mrs. Besich is so much more than an educator; she makes you part of her Paris family the moment she meets you.

Distinguished Educator: Amy Schoenen, 4th grade

School: Sunnyside Elementary

Why: Mrs. Schoenen started every morning with a smile. She made learning fun and always had patience when anyone was having a hard day. Mrs. Schoenen cared about us both inside and outside of the classroom, always making sure every student had exactly what they needed and was ready to learn every day.



Student: Atriana Larson
Teachers: Abby Schleve and Nicole Matoon

Parents: Nichole Larson and Mark Montano

Memorable experiences: My most memorable experiences throughout my years in school were school sports and experiencing what it means to be a team. I will also remember meeting new people and creating new relationships!

Plans after high school: My plan after high-school is to gain experience in a hospital setting as a CNA. I also would like to attend an out-of-state college to pursue a degree and a nursing career. I want to travel around the world providing nursing services.

Distinguished Educator: Abby Schleve, Advisor

School: Paris Gibson Education Center

Why: Although Mrs. Schleve and I spent only a few short months together, she has impacted me like no other. She always understood me and where I was coming from. She pushed me to be a better student every single day and never doubted me once. We shared tons of laughs and giggles together. I will miss her joyful energy!

Distinguished Educator: Nicole Matoon, 3rd grade

School: Sunnyside Elementary

Why: Recently I went back to Sunnyside for my younger sister's concert. Mrs. Matoon and I shared some memories, and we couldn't believe how far we have both come. One memory I won't forget was when I came back to her classroom in the 3rd grade, fresh out of the dentist's office, and the laughing gas hadn't worn off yet. I called her my mom the remaining time of class. She is a wonderful human to be around, and I loved being in her class!



Student: Miah Ledeau
Teachers: Mike Lins and Kristin Dehaan

Parents: Keri Horton

Memorable experiences: I think my most memorable time in school was going on a trip with the immersion program at Paris to Yellowstone. There we learned all sorts of things including how Yellowstone plays a big role in our geography and how animals are important.

Plans after high school: My plans after high school are to go into a dental hygienist program.

Distinguished Educator: Mike Lins, Transitions

School: CMR High School

Why: I chose Mr. Lins because he was my backbone throughout high school. From the day I met him I was glued to his side, trying to improve my school work. He helped me through a tough home life at the time, too. Mr. Lins is the person in my life that I didn't know I needed until I finally got to see myself succeeding in what I previously failed in.

Distinguished Educator: Kristin Dehaan, 4th grade

School: West Elementary

Why: Mrs. Dehaan was the first teacher to experience me at my worst, yet she still managed to have a big impact on how I grew after my 4th grade year.



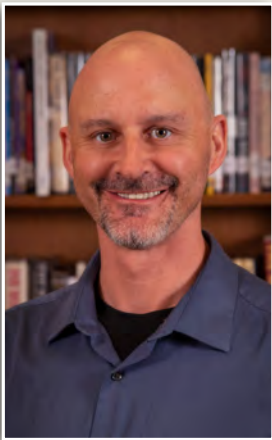


TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to the distinguished educators.

At BNSF, we know investing in education is important. The future of our economy and our state depends on creating a skilled workforce, and we are committed to supporting schools and communities across Montana.

We are proud to partner with the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation in honoring these two outstanding educators with the Teacher of the Year Award. Each will receive \$2,500 to use for continuing education or classroom enhancements.



Steve Skaer, Mathematics Teacher, CMR High School

According to CMR Principal Jamie McGraw, students fight to get into Mr. Skaer's classes, and parents rave about the learning that happens with his guidance.

"Steve differentiates his teaching to meet individual students' needs from Algebra Prep to college level Dual Credit classes. He continually models for kids what it means and looks like to stand for kindness, integrity, compassion, perseverance, honesty, and hard work," said McGraw.

A 22-year educator and eight-time Excellence in Education Distinguished Educator, Steve has served as the mathematics department head at CMR for four years and received during his career the Dufresne Outstanding Educator Award, Teacher of the Year as selected by the student body, and the National Honor Society Doctorate of Service award. He has coached football and soccer as well as track and field over the course of his teaching career.

When asked about his teaching philosophy, Skaer said that some of the best lessons are learned from mistakes. "I don't expect students to be perfect; perfection is not attainable, but the pursuit of perfection is something to strive for."

He believes it is his responsibility to give students the opportunity to learn, to grow, and to improve their skill and confidence every day. "I know that it might sound cliché, but a student will not care unless they know that I care," Skaer added.



Jill Christensen, Kindergarten Teacher, Lincoln Elementary

"Jill has been an amazing teacher for many years. This is a long overdue recognition for a teacher who excels in each classroom she leads," shared Lincoln Elementary Principal Ty Moore. "Jill's number one priority is student engagement and learning. She has the desire to constantly update her strategies in the classroom, while holding true to the district philosophy. She is a creative teacher and parent."

A 20-year educator with the district, Christensen's philosophy of education is to create an inviting environment where all students can learn and be successful through trust, meaningful lessons, and consistency. One way she fosters a welcoming and engaging experience for her young learners is through a creative jungle-themed classroom, complete with animals and hanging vines from the ceiling.

"I form a strong foundation for those entering school. Kindergarten is a grade that sets the tone for the rest of elementary school," she said. She enlists parents and foster grandparents to contribute to this positive tone by volunteering in the classroom with academics and learning activities.

Christensen has received multiple Gold Star awards and serves as the Team Leader for kindergarten teachers at Lincoln. She has mentored other kindergarten teachers in and out of Great Falls since 2016 and is an active supporter of girls basketball and Rush Soccer Club.



The Oakland family with 2022 Toyota truck winner Tammy Dues of Great Falls.

Truck Raffle Raises \$149,400 for Students

For the last decade, the City Motor Company and Oakland Family have generously partnered with the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation to raffle a donated Toyota vehicle each year. Since the raffle started in 2013, City Motors has contributed over \$275,000 to cover the cost of the vehicles each year. The community has donated generously to more than quadruple their investment, raising \$1.2 million for student groups and our grant programs. Since 2016, North40 has bolstered the truck raffle by donating a \$1,000 gift card which motivates even more people to participate. We are grateful for the continued support of these two businesses, which make this raffle possible.

This selling season 14,940 truck raffle tickets were sold, which raised \$149,400, making 2022 the second highest selling year ever! Student groups sell tickets for \$10 each. The group keeps \$6 per ticket to use for

programs, equipment, or other ways that support the student group. Meanwhile, the remaining \$4 goes to the Foundation for classroom grants. Every dollar spent on a ticket stays in the community and benefits Great Falls schools and students. That has meant money for everything from field trips and new science equipment to sports gear and playground equipment.

The winning tickets were drawn at the Crosstown Football Game on Oct. 21, 2022. Great Falls resident Tammy Dues won the new Toyota Tacoma truck. She purchased her ticket from the Great Falls High School Golf team. Victoria Hunt won the \$1,000 North40 gift certificate. She purchased her ticket from the CMR Cross Country team.

Thank you to everyone who made this year's raffle a huge success. Tickets go on sale July 1, 2023!



Top 10 Sellers

CMR GIRLS SOCCER: 836	GFH CHEER: 700
CMR FOOTBALL: 833	NORTH MUSIC: 697
GFH FOOTBALL: 816	EAST MUSIC: 628
CMR DRAMA: 812	GFH XC: 620
	GFH GOLF: 552
	CMR CHEER: 514

14,940
TICKETS
SOLD!

Total Sales Last 4 Years

2022: \$149,400
2021: \$160,940
2020: \$126,230
2019: \$135,840



Foundation Awards \$139,721 in Grants in 2022

In 2022 the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation awarded \$139,721 in grants to assist classrooms and programs across the district for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Teachers often have new ideas for their classrooms and schools but do not have access to needed funds due to tight budgets. Discovery grants—usually between \$500 and \$3,000 each - provide teachers the means to implement their ideas. Meanwhile, groups of teachers or schools also may apply for larger Innovation grants - up to \$10,000 - for projects of greater impact.

Since the inception of the grant program 10 years ago, the Foundation has distributed over \$1.2 million for grants in the district. Grants are primarily funded by the proceeds of the annual truck raffle, which is made possible by City Motor Company and the Oakland family.

2022-2023 Discovery Grant Winners Preschool / Elementary

Sport Stacking Equipment

Kelly Norris, Giant Springs Elementary - \$600

Sensory/Manipulative Books

Brianna Conrad, Loy Elementary - \$850

Scientific Calculators

Katherine Yeisley, Mountain View Elementary - \$425

School-Wide Reading Challenge

Kathryn Haynes, Morningside Elementary - \$1,000

Global Literacy Books

Katie Hurin, Giant Springs Elementary - \$2,465

Books/Study Groups for 1st Graders

Karen Mans, Giant Springs Elementary - \$975

Reading Around the World in 30 Books

Callie Ross, Riverview Elementary - \$1,500

Sensory and Focus Tools

Nicole O'Leary, Loy Elementary - \$2,000

Lincoln students visit the Montana Dinosaur Center in Bynum (Photo Credit: Jayci Braaten)





East Middle School Weight Training Crew (Photo Credit: Jerry Olson)

Middle School

Spin on Learning (mobile desk chairs)

Stacey Krahe, East Middle School - \$1,075

Upgraded Football Uniforms

Tony Hering, East Middle School - \$3,000

Strength Equipment for Inner and Outer Gains

Stephen Sangwin, East Middle School - \$2,000

High School

Forensic Comparison Microscope

Jon Davis, CMR High School - \$2,112

Science Lab Sensors and Technology

Nathan Gregier, CMR High School - \$3,000

Weightlifting Equipment

David Lietz, CMR High School - \$4,760

Choir Robes

Logan Kropp, CMR High School - \$3,000

Geology Club Equipment

Mike Hodges, Great Falls High School - \$3,000

District-Wide

Special Education Alternative Writing Tools

Jan Creed, Paris Gibson Education Center - \$2,975

Great Falls Symphony Visit for All 4th Grade Students

Dusty Molyneaux, Music and Art Department - \$2,500

Paris Gibson Art Museum Tours for All 3rd Grade Students

Dusty Molyneaux, Music and Art Department - \$3,000

Oral Health Program

Ruth Uecker, GFPS Elementary Schools - \$1,800

Patriot Marching Band

Dusty Molyneaux, Music and Art Department - \$2,550



Mountain View students select books from *Inchy the Bookworm Vending Machine*.

2022-2023 Innovation Grant Winners

Preschool / Elementary

Dino Dig Field Trip

Jayci Braaten, Lincoln Elementary - \$4,469

Safety Town Project

Veronica Griffith, Career & College Readiness - \$10,000

Math Facts Technology License

Jayci Braaten, Lincoln Elementary - \$3,795

Inchy the Bookworm Vending Machine

Lindsay Cline, Mountain View Elementary - \$7,940

Riverview Playground

Callie Ross, Riverview Elementary - \$10,000

This PTA project received additional funding from local businesses and private donors.

Middle / High School

Outdoor Physical/Sport Equipment

Nick Herd, East Middle School - \$9,000

Archery Program Equipment

Jeff Rieger, North Middle School - \$9,328

STEM Water Jet

Matt Krahe, Great Falls High School - \$9,999

American Indian Displays

Jessica Boyer, Great Falls High School - \$10,000

District-Wide

Early Reading Intervention Program

Carol Paul, GFPS Title I - \$10,000

This project received additional funding and support from community groups and private donors.

Composer and High School Choir Collaboration Project

Dusty Molyneaux, Music and Art Department - \$10,000



Donors and Volunteers Make Food Pantry Program Possible

Melissa Allen, student advocate at the Giant Springs Elementary school pantry.

Many people associate the Great Falls Public Schools Foundation with classroom grants and scholarships. We're certainly proud of those programs, but we also take a quieter role in helping students, particularly those in need.

The Foundation is the primary supporter of school food pantries, and we also contribute to the food backpack program.

"There's wide consensus that hungry children struggle to learn," said Stephanie Schnider, executive director of the Foundation. "The problem is too big for one organization to handle. Fortunately, the community has come together to feed students, and our donors allow us to help with that."

Of the 10,000 students in our schools, nearly five percent are homeless and more than 40 percent qualify for free and reduced lunch. The needs are so widespread that every public school in Great Falls has a food pantry. And every elementary school has a backpack program that provides a small bag of food each Friday to children who may otherwise not have enough to get through the weekend.

"We have seen an explosion in need," said Shaun Tatarka, executive director of the Great Falls Community Food Bank. "The Great Falls Public Schools Foundation makes it possible for schools to address that need quickly and directly through the school food pantries."

Feeding students and their families is truly a community-wide effort that takes place on many levels. Many schools, for example, conduct their own food drives. Several organizations also collect food and give it directly to school pantries or to the food bank. Others donate funds, either to school pantries through the Foundation or to the food bank to purchase food.

At the Foundation, we've found we can be most helpful by making sure that every school pantry has the food it needs. Representatives from each pantry can "shop" at the food bank to select the supplies it needs, paying 19 cents per pound for most nonperishable items. Meat and produce are also available. But the food bank doesn't bill the schools, it bills the Foundation. Last year the Foundation paid about \$60,000 to ensure that every school pantry remained stocked.

"We are so very grateful to our donors, whose generosity allows us to continue funding these high-need programs," said Schnider. "But we're also thankful that so many volunteers from across the community step up to make sure food gets to students."

First Interstate Bank, for example, not only collects food and raises funds, but their employees show up at school pantries to help organize and distribute food. Several churches provide employees who help stock pantries and assemble food backpacks. PTA members and school employees on their time off also show up to help. Malmstrom has provided teams of airmen to help. Other volunteers come from the ranks of service organizations, private businesses, school clubs, and friend groups.

Together, we're trying to make sure that hunger is not a burden for our students and that every student goes to school ready to learn.

One-time or monthly donations designated to the Food Pantries can be made on the GFPS Foundation website www.gfpsfoundation.org or checks may be mailed to Great Falls Foundation, memo line Food Pantries, P.O. Box 2429, Great Falls, MT 59403.

Scholarships Managed by the GFPS Foundation

The Foundation administers over 100 scholarships, which provided 169 awards totaling \$375,000 to local students in 2022. Scholarships make post-secondary education more achievable and encourage graduates to continue to grow and broaden their perspectives after their time in Great Falls Public Schools. Individuals or businesses interested in establishing a scholarship can contact Stephanie Schnider at (406) 268-6021.

Andrew Nunez Memorial CMR Basketball Scholarship	GFH Class of '80 New Beginnings Scholarship*	Lorraine Bronson Forensic Scholarship
Ann Houliston Scholarship	GFH Class of '87 True Blue Scholarship	Louise Hollar Clarke Memorial Golf Scholarship
Bertha Feaster Memorial Scholarship	GFH Class of '89 Bison Spirit Scholarship	Lowell Hults Scholarship
Bison Family Scholarship	GFH Deserving Scholar Award*	Lowry Family Scholarship
Blewett Family Scholarship	GFH Legacy of '58 Scholarship	Mark Hoard Memorial Scholarship
Blythe Brandvold Award for Academic Excellence	GFH Spirit of '58 Scholarship	Modesto "Jr." Rosales Memorial Music Scholarship
Braget Family Scholarship for Healthcare	GFPS Foundation Art Scholarship	Neil Curry Memorial Scholarship
Braget Family Scholarship for Social Work	Great Falls Farmer's Market Scholarship	O.C. Seltzer Art Scholarship
Bud Robertson Memorial Scholarship*	Great Falls Leadership Scholarship	Palm Appreciation Scholarship
Carl Straight Memorial Scholarship	Great Falls Moose Lodge Scholarship*	Payne Family Scholarship
Carnahan Towing Softball Scholarship	Gus Bannon Cross Country Scholarship	Pearl Matteson Award
Cascade County Bar Association Scholarship*	Hampton Collins Memorial Foundation Scholarships	Phil and Stella Palm Scholarship
Casey Clark Memorial Scholarship	Hinz Family Scholarship	R. Lee and Grace Shockley Memorial Scholarship
CMR Class of '18 Green and Gold Scholarship	Hopkins Family Scholarship	Ron and Becky Nelson CTE Scholarship
CMR Deserving Scholar Award*	Hoppock Memorial Scholarship	Ron and Mary Tihista Memorial Music Scholarship
CMR Quarterback Club Scholarship	Jack and Rosann Johnson Scholarship	Ross Johnson Memorial Scholarship
Continuing Education Scholarship	Jacqueline J. Wright Scholarship	Rudi J. Sabo Memorial Scholarship
Dan Hjelvik Memorial Scholarship	Jake Arntson Teammate of the Year Scholarship	Rudolf Schoesser Memorial Scholarship
Dave Crum Scholarship	James and Miriam Weitz Memorial Scholarship	Sallie Hollecker Linnell Memorial Scholarship
Dave Nebel Memorial Scholarship	Jan Cahill Memorial Scholarship	Samantha Ann Sipes Memorial Scholarship
David and Patty Van Tighem Scholarship	Janie Nicholson Education Scholarship	Sam's Hope Foundation Scholarship
David Delcomte Memorial Scholarship	Jaraczkeski Family Scholarship	Sandy Weber Heath Memorial Scholarship
Dean Riggan Memorial Music Scholarship	Jason Poirier Memorial Scholarship	Seaton Family Scholarship for Healthcare*
Dolores Frisbee Memorial Scholarship	Jason V. Christofferson Memorial Scholarship	Shelby Lorena Eve Memorial Nursing Scholarship*
D.M. Garrity MD Scholarship	Jeannette Garver Memorial Scholarship	Sisters United Scholarship
D.W. Loney Memorial Scholarship	Jennifer Joy Astrin Memorial Scholarship	SRO Cory Reeves Scholarship*
Dustin Parker Memorial Scholarship	Jennings Family Scholarship	Steve Olson Orchestra Scholarship
Earl and Maudene Stice Memorial Scholarship	Joe and Nettie Ogrin Scholarship	Taryn Brody Memorial Scholarship*
Ed Warren Education Scholarship	Kathleen Bowman Memorial Scholarship	Treacy Giesler Memorial Scholarship
Eidel Family Scholarship	Kelly Johnson Memorial Scholarship	Tyson Nimmick Memorial Scholarship
Enio and Mary Bofto Scholarship	Ken Maddox Memorial Scholarship	Vocational Work Scholarship
First Interstate Bank Scholarship	Kent Seaton Memorial Scholarship	Walter Marron Scholarship
Frances Kirwin Scholarship for Girls	Langevin Family Scholarship	Wilford and Lillian Lemire Scholarship
Frank and Arlene Osborne Scholarship	Leroy Bleek Scholarship	William E. Spahr Memorial Journalism Scholarship
Fred and Vasilia Grasseschi Memorial Scholarship	Leslie Lyon Forensic Scholarship	
George W. and Kathleen Tracy Scholarship	Lillian Knudson-Johnson Scholarship	

**New scholarships offered to 2022-2023 seniors*

Gold Star Recognition Awards

Names in bold are teachers or school staff honored by community members for their work.



Patricia Achenbach

Holly Wulf

Kellje Ackerman

Miranda Preston

Sharman Ameline

Chloe Lam

Karly Ames

Dorinda Iverson

Carissa Anderson

Garri Mauch

Julie Anderson

Barry and Jane
Newmack

Ryan Anderson

Jeff and Michelle
Patterson

Karen Atwell

Barry and Jane
Newmack

Sharon Bannon

Jeff and Michelle
Patterson

Kaci Barker

Elizabeth Quinby

Stacy Barnes

Asia Goldsberry

Brad Barringer

Barry and Jane
Newmack

Sanna Beerman

Jeff and Michelle
Patterson

Billi Bergman

Ashley Ray
Casey Furr
Holly Wulf
Kassie Longfellow

Kerry Bjornstad

Jeff and Michelle
Patterson

Amy Bliss

Scheck Family

Annetta Bowman

Leann and John Larson

Kimberlee Boyd

Erin Bucher

Shannon Boyer

Dorinda Iverson

Rebecca Bralick

Kassie Longfellow

Lexi Bremer

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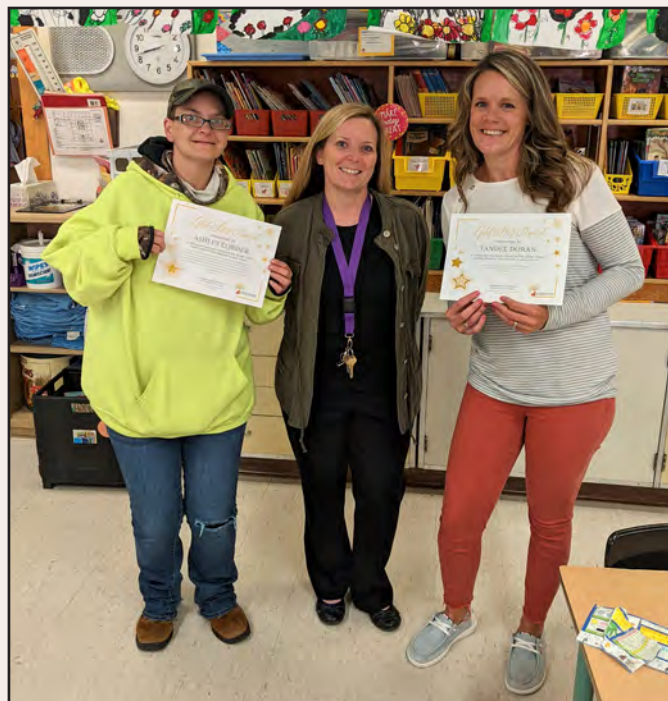
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Heisey Foundation Teacher Scholarships are awarded annually to up to 20 teachers seeking to enhance and advance their education. Each recipient receives \$1,000 for continuing education.

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Alicia Dickman, Kindergarten Teacher, Loy Elementary

Amanda McCarvel, Instructional Coach, Riverview Elementary

Annie Simkins, Social Studies Teacher, Great Falls High School

Ashley Munden, Kindergarten Teacher, Sunnyside Elementary

Bethany Neuman, 1st Grade Teacher, West Elementary

Charlene Ammons, Technology Integration Coach, District Wide

Erica Ferradas, Resource 1 Teacher, Lincoln Elementary

Jennifer Moore, 1st Grade Teacher, Valley View Elementary

Jennifer O'Connell, Librarian, Lincoln Elementary

Jessica Boyer, Academic Achievement Coach, Great Falls High School

Jessica Douglas, 5th Grade Teacher, Valley View Elementary

Joe Lloyd, 6th Grade Teacher, Lewis and Clark Elementary

Jordann Lankford, Instructional Coach, Indian Education Department/ PGEC

Kathryn Heryla, French Teacher, Paris Gibson Education Center

Kylan Hallett, Academic Achievement Coach, C.M. Russell High School

Miranda Murray, Instructional Coach, Indian Education for All Department

Montana Johnson, Counselor, Loy Elementary

Rikka Walters, Art Teacher, Paris Gibson Education Center

Rilee Timmer, 6th Grade Teacher, Riverview Elementary

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