

**ACADEMIC**  
*Achievement*

May 21, 2025

Crete  
Dorchester  
Exeter-Milligan  
Friend  
Tri County  
Wilber-Clatonia

**CN**  
The Crete News

**FS**  
The Friend Sentinel

**WR**  
The Wilber Republican

**Proudly Supporting Our Local Students**  
1302 Linden Ave • Crete

**Ken's Save Pharmacy**  
402-826-3784

**Reinke** PROUD SUPPORTER OF ALL  
MORE RIGHT THAN RAIN  
*Athletes & Students!*

Friend Fertilizer, Inc.  
402-947-2681 • [www.friendfert.com](http://www.friendfert.com)

# Cardinal seniors earn scholarships

Crete High seniors earned a variety of scholarships this year. They include:

Jordyn Adam—Crete Booster Club Scholarship, CHCC Ladies League, SCC Foundation High School Scholars, SCC Freshman Tuition Scholarship

Stefany Aguirre Cruz—SCC Recruiter Scholarship

Britney Alarcon Panzi—MCU Scholarship, Smithfield Foods Scholarship, Crete Chamber of Commerce/FBLA Scholarship, Dwayne & Joan Wittstruck Citizenship Scholarship

Caroline Bevins—Lianne Manning Memorial Scholarship, Rose & Joseph Zumpfe Scholarship

Brock Bohling—David Distinguished Scholarship

Corbin Coe—Crete Lions Club Scholarship, Ruby Stastny Paul Scholarship, Crete Booster Club Scholarship, Leonard Harpstreith Scholarship, University of Nebraska at Lincoln University Award, Hixson-Lied Art Design Scholarship

Lauren Corning—Crete Eagles 3909 Auxiliary Scholarship

Sierra Crist—Blue Valley Post 4959 VFW Auxiliary Scholarship, Crete Booster Club Scholarship, Brian Carnes Baseball Memorial Scholarship, President’s Scholarship, Preferred Admit Scholarship, Colorado Christian Athletic Scholarship: Full tuition

Jeremy Diaz Lopez—Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation Scholarship

Monzeratt Diaz—Julius Misle Scholarship, Marina Havranek Rezabek Scholarship - Business in NE 2-4 yrs, Crete Theater Scholarship

Alexander Eltze—Donald Fix Agriculture/Music Studies Scholarship, FFA Alumni Scholarship, Richard Vlasin Memorial

Scholarship, Crete Booster Club Scholarship

Nicholas Eltze—Jackie Cink Memorial Scholarship, FFA Alumni Scholarship, Dick Navratil Memorial Scholarship, Crete Booster Club Scholarship, TRAEF SCC Academic Excellence Scholarship, SCEFB SCC Foundation High School Scholars Scholarship

Diego Espinoza Mendez—Crete Booster Club Scholarship, Iowa Western Foundation Scholarship

Colton Fey—Clarence Wagner Memorial Scholarship (Construction)

Bryan Garcia Ramos—Crete Noon Sertoma Scholarship, Rotary Club Scholarship, Crete Fire Department Ben Clement Memorial Scholarship

Justus Gardiner—Lohmeyer Brothers Memorial Scholarship, The Perry Academic Scholarship, Mens Basketball Scholarship, Doane Legacy Award

Ashley Guadarrama Garcia—Lohmeyer Brothers Memorial Scholarship

Ashley Gonzalez Rodriguez—TeamMates Scholarship, SCC Foundation Scholarship, SCC Recruiter Scholarship

Josiah Harrington—FFA Alumni Scholarship, American Legion Post #294 Hallam, NE, Les Hlavak Memorial Scholarship, Norris Public District Scholarship, Walter Scott Foundation Scholarship

Perla Hernandez Miranda—TeamMates Scholarship

Ella Heusinkvelt—Emil Pomajzl & Lucille Belka Scholarship (acad trans), Crete Education Association Scholarship, Smithfield Foods Scholarship, Alpha Delta Kappa - Alpha Xi Chapter Scholarship

Nick Hollman—Emil Pomajzl Memorial Schol-

arship (agriculture) - WELDING

Fabian Juarez Guereca—Denton Dollars, University of Nebraska at Lincoln Regents Scholarship

Owen Kennedy—Crete Lumber and Farm Supply Scholarship-Agriculture, FFA Alumni Scholarship, Fraternal Order of Eagles No. 3909 Scholarship, Walter Scott Foundation Scholarship

Camden Kent—Crete Theater Scholarship, Kenney & Ethel Dunn Scholarship (elementary edu), Saline County 4-H Joseph Wagoner Memorial Scholarship, Doane Vocal Scholarship, Doane Community Award Scholarship, Doane Theater Scholarship, Alumni Referral Scholarship

Vivian Kirkpatrick—Al Franta Scholarship (math, science, engineering), Jackie Cink Memorial Scholarship, Hagan Scholarship

Lesli Kratochvil—Lohmeyer Brothers Memorial Scholarship, Rotary Club Scholarship (PALS)

Ivan Lopez Castro—SCC Foundation High School Scholars Scholarship, SCC Foundation Career Academy Scholars Scholarship, United Food & Commercial Workers Scholarship

Elliot Malousek—University of Nebraska at Lincoln Regents Scholarship

Juan Martinez Lopez—Smithfield Foods Scholarship, Lohmeyer Brothers Memorial Scholarship

Trinity McMillan—Bryan Health ‘Acts of Kindness’ Scholarship, Rotary Club Scholarship, Saline County 4-H Council Scholarship, Crete Area Health Foundation Scholarship, Nebraska Community Blood Bank Scholarship,

Bernie Ludvik Scholarship, Crete Diamonds Softball Scholarship, Crete Booster Club Scholarship, University of Nebraska at Lincoln Regents Scholarship

Luis Mendez Mireles—Crete Lumber and Farm Supply Scholarship-Construction, Susan Buffett Scholarship, Norman Kohout Scholarship, SCC Freshman Tuition Scholarship, SCC Foundation High School Scholars Scholarship

Julian Mendez Rodriguez—Helen Vasatka Scholarship, Smithfield Foods Scholarship, Blue Valley Post 4959 VFW Scholarship, University of Nebraska at Lincoln Marcia Ann Boden Scholarship

Tina Nguyen—Smithfield Foods Scholarship, American Legion Post 147 Scholarship-Doane Scholarship, Dean and Deanne Prochaska Memorial Scholarship, Michael Krantz - Doane University Scholarship, TeamMates Scholarship, Teammates Al Papik Memorial Scholarship, Doane Perry Scholarship, Doane Earn My Shield Scholarship, Doane Alumni Referral

Jasmin Olague—Nebraska Community Blood Bank Scholarship, Alpha Delta Kappa - Alpha Xi Chapter Scholarship, Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation Scholarship

Sergio Ortiz Matias—TeamMates Scholarship, Teammates Aksarben Foundation Scholarship

Jordan Parde—Crete Diamonds Softball Scholarship, Neidhardt Scholarship

Joshelin Perchez Pedraza—Crete Public Schools Foundation Scholarship, Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation Scholarship, University of Nebraska at

Lincoln University Award, Nebraska Emerging Leaders Scholarship

Ethan Placzek—Ruby Stastny Paul Scholarship, Ed Hammond Memorial Baseball Scholarship, Lincoln Elks Lodge

Alejandro Rincon Manzano—Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation Scholarship

Jadyamari Sanchez—Edward Belka Memorial Scholarship (health), Crete Area Health Foundation Scholarship, Smithfield Foods Scholarship, Nebraska Community Blood Bank Scholarship, National Honor Society Scholarship, Nestle Memorial Scholarship

Jimena Santos Zamora—Lohmeyer Brothers Memorial Scholarship, Smithfield Foods Scholarship

Pedro Simon Deleon—Ruby Stastny Paul Scholarship, Smithfield Foods Scholarship

Toryn Siske—Barbara Kuzma Memorial Scholarship, Crete Booster Club Scholarship, Jacob Harders Reach-Out Scholarship, Teachers Scholars Academy Scholarship

Rylee Sommer—United Food & Commercial Workers Scholarship

Kenson Spence—Mike Parks Memorial Scholarship (architecture tech, design, drafting at SCC), Brian Carnes Baseball Memorial Scholarship

Troy Svec—Rotary Club Scholarship, Crete Lumber and Farm Supply Scholarship-Construction, Dick Navratil Memorial Scholarship, Farmers Cooperative Scholarship, AKRS Jump Start Scholarship

Patton Svitak—American Legion Post #294 Hallam, Dan Fette Scholarship

Giselle Tellez Sanchez—Southeast Community

College Soccer Scholarship

Damaris Tercero Tercero—TeamMates Scholarship, Southeast Community College Soccer Scholarship

Alondra Valdovinos Euyoque—Lohmeyer Brothers Memorial Scholarship, Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation Scholarship, Nebraska Emerging Leaders Scholarship

Ruby Van Horn—Lohmeyer Brothers Memorial Scholarship, Crete Chamber of Commerce/FBLA Scholarship, Crete Diamonds Softball Scholarship, American Legion Post 147 Scholarship, University of Nebraska at Kearney Distinguished Scholarship

Ricardo Vicente Vasquez—Crete Lumber and Farm Supply Scholarship-Agriculture, Crete Booster Club Scholarship, Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation Scholarship

Trinity Williamson—Crete Diamonds Softball Scholarship, Susan Thompson Buffett Foundation Scholarship

Addison Woods—Lohmeyer Brothers Memorial Scholarship, Crete Wrestling Club Scholarship, FFA Alumni Scholarship, Fraternal Order of Eagles No. 3909 Scholarship, Crete Diamonds Softball Scholarship, Engler Scholarship

Ty Yeager—Milton & Gerry Stehlik Memorial Scholarship (ag/nursing/edu), Crete Booster Club Scholarship

Adysen Ziemann—Alene Lothrop BSN Scholarship Winner, Ruby Stastny Paul Scholarship, Crete Area Health Foundation Scholarship, Crete Diamonds Softball Scholarship, Crete Booster Club Scholarship, Crete Fire Department Ben Clement Memorial Scholarship



**Sweet Tea**  
MARKETING

**Sweet Success Starts Here**

Branding solutions to help your business thrive.

Call us today to get started  
**402-643-3678**



**Vero's Tax Service LLC**

Veronica Ortiz | *Business Owner*  
1005 East Hwy 33 Suite #2  
Crete, NE 68333  
402-826-3630  
vero.ortizdm@gmail.com

**Good Luck Students!**  
**¡Buena suerte estudiantes!**

Nosotros hablamos español



**Go Cardinals!**



**Bauer Insurance**

1241 Main • PO Box 159 • Crete, NE 68333  
"Service is #1 with us"

**Life • Health • Commercial • Auto • Home**

Dave Bauer – Owner/Agent  
daveb@bauerinsuranceinc.com  
402.826.5141 • Fax 402.826.4322



**Good luck, Cardinals!**

**Lothrop Animal Clinic**  
607 Co. Rd. 2400, Crete • 402-826-5149

Gary F. Lothrop, DVM  
Sarah Lothrop Post, DVM  
Eric Post, DVM



**JONESGROUP**  
INSURANCE | FINANCIAL SERVICES  
www.jones-ins.com

**Scott Woitalewicz**  
Account Executive

C: 402-433-5256 | O: 402-821-2156  
swoitalewicz@jones-ins.com  
113 W. 3rd St. | Wilber, NE 68465



**Jay's Oil & Propane**

Local, family-owned and family minded, 45+ years in business.

237 W. 13th • Crete  
402-826-2980



**The Auctioneers that Make the Difference**

For All Upcoming Auctions Log  
Onto [novakauctionservice.com](http://novakauctionservice.com)

**Novak Auction Service**  
Col. Troy Novak - Real Estate Salesperson  
402-641-1526  
Office - (402)826-5302

AuctionTime.com

Dorchester, NE

Nebraska Real Estate First State Realty Broker 402-792-2820

NAA Auctioneer



**ALLEN AGENCY**  
INSURANCE

**Lynette Allen**  
Insurance Agent

1140 Main Street | Crete, NE 68333  
Phone: 402-826-4321  
allenagency@windstream.net



**GO CARDINALS!**

**CRETE ACE HARDWARE**

1025 Main Ave. • 402-826-3397  
creteacehardware.com

# Behrens: DHS grads learned life skills

BY BAYLOR BEHRENS  
DHS valedictorian

Good afternoon, everyone!

It's truly an honor to stand here today, representing the Dorchester High School Class of 2025. I want to start by saying how incredibly grateful I am for this opportunity, though I'll admit, I have a lot I'd like to say ... but since I don't officially have my diploma in hand, I think I'll save those words for after the ceremony.

While many graduating classes talk about growing up together and being like a family, our class has had a different story. We didn't all start here, and not all of us became best friends. Some of us arrived later, some drifted in and out, and some kept to their own paths. And that's OK. Because even without being one close-knit unit, we each contributed something unique to this class.

What we do share is that we made it—through challenges, changes, and plenty of disagreements—and we're walking across this stage today as individuals who've grown in our own ways.

Thinking back on our years at Dorchester, one memory that stands out to me is our eighth-grade year. To be honest, we



Baylor Behrens

weren't exactly the shining stars of the school back then. We gave our teachers some gray hairs, maybe even some migraines. We were loud, stubborn, and some of us were definitely not known for our maturity.

We have seen "fights" which were so bad that it was pretty much two boys slapping each other, we made the toughest teachers cry, and had a total of 11 suspensions handed out to our class that year. Then, one by one, some of our classmates moved away—especially many of the boys—and our class started to shift. Now, we have three boys and 11 girls, and somehow, the energy has changed. We started to get along. We found our footing. And

most importantly, we became a class that learned how to accomplish a common goal, even when we didn't see eye to eye.

Another memory I'll carry with me is the number of Red Bulls and food we collectively consumed just to survive most of the days. Between early morning practices, late-night homework, games, and extracurriculars, I think it's safe to say that caffeine deserves an honorary diploma alongside us.

But beyond the laughs and the exhaustion, those days taught us endurance. They showed us what it means to keep going, even when we're running on empty.

There's one quote that's stuck with me through all of this—and it came from none other than Mr. Kotas. "Don't be an idiot." It might sound simple, even funny, but if you've been in his class, you know that those words are filled with a lot more wisdom than they seem.

Life will test us. It already has. And while we may not always know the right answer, we can always remember that basic piece of advice—and it might just save us from a few regrets.

Now, I'd like to take a moment to say thank you. To the amazing staff at

Dorchester—thank you for everything you've done to help us reach this day. You all played a part in shaping who we are. You've spent countless hours preparing lessons, answering our endless questions, and supporting us through every success and every struggle.

To my classmates—thank you for being part of this journey. We've shared more than just a school building; we've shared the late nights cramming in a paper, the awkward middle school phases, and all the laughs in between. Whether we were close friends or not, each of you has played a part in making this chapter of my life unforgettable. Thank you for the memories, the lessons, and the moments that made high school uniquely ours. As we all head in different directions, I hope you find success, happiness, and a path that inspires you.

To our coaches — If you coached anyone graduating today, please raise your hand. Now raise it higher. What happened to giving it your 110% on your first try?

Thank you for being so much more than just people who ran practices and called plays. You were second parents to many of us. You taught us how

to push past our limits, how to handle loss with grace, and how to win with class. Whether it was two-a-days, late-night bus rides, or tough talks in the locker room, you showed up for us—every time. You reminded us that effort matters, that attitude is everything, and that the way we carry ourselves off the court is just as important as how we play on it. Thank you for believing in us even when we didn't believe in ourselves.

To our parents in the crowd—thank you. Thank you for the countless hours you've spent driving us to practices, helping with last-minute homework, cheering us on from the bleachers, and encouraging us through the tough days. Your love, guidance, and patience have shaped us into the people we are today. None of this would be possible without your support.

To my parents and family—thank you, from the bottom of my heart. You've always pushed me to become the best version of myself, even when I didn't think I could. You taught me to give 110% in everything I do and to finish what I start, no matter how hard it gets. You've believed in me every step of the way, and that belief has given me

the confidence to chase my dreams. You've taught me the value of hard work and you have helped me understand who I want to be—but most of all, you've taught me to always be proud of where I come from. I love you

Lastly, I want to thank the Man above. Thank you for blessing us with this opportunity to stand here today, to celebrate this milestone surrounded by those we love. You've guided us through the highs and lows, watched over us in moments of doubt, and given us the strength to keep going. Today, we also remember those who couldn't be here with us—our loved ones who are no longer with us but are surely watching from above. We carry them in our hearts, and we honor them with every step we take forward.

As we walk off this stage today and into the next chapter, I want to encourage each person here to step out of your comfort zone. Take that leap. Apply for the thing. Join the group. Say yes to the adventure that scares you a little. Because growth doesn't come from standing still. It comes from pushing boundaries.

Congratulations, Class of 2025.

Thank you.

# Pavlish: Thanks to all who helped get here

BY ANDREA PAVLISH  
DHS salutatorian

Good afternoon.

Family, friends, teachers, the graduating class of 2025, and everyone else—thank you all for being here today.

T'was 4, 647 days ago today that the majority of us enjoyed recess for the very first time. I wish I could remember the feeling of going outside in the August sun, not a care in the world, to see not one, not two, not three, but a whopping four slides to choose from. I also wish I could remember the feeling of getting pushed down those same slides so I could exact my revenge.

*\*\*stare at Ariana and do the I'm watching you thingy\*\**

Our class had its fair share of "pushing each other down the slide." Through thick and thin, in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, we were still classmates, no matter how cruel we were to each other.

Those aforementioned

11 suspensions were well deserved. But no matter how much we bickered and disagreed, no matter how many failed group chats we went through, we got stuff done and rolled into our 8 a.m. government class with minimal complaining don'tfact-checkthat. We all had one common goal in mind: those things (point at diplomas).

I wish I had kept some sort of intricate diary over the years to calculate our most embarrassing moment, or our proudest one, but I also believe that some of the best memories are the ones that don't need to be recorded to be remembered.

I still have fond memories of capturing crickets at recess in first grade to feed the class pet wolf spider that Mrs. Burrows had found in the library. We did this until Mrs. Stutzman made us return it to the wild because the glass jar it lived in stunk to high heaven.

And yes, Mrs. Lautzenhiser, we still remember

losing recess privileges because we were being too obnoxious in the hallways. Part of that hasn't changed. And yes, Mr. Zoubek, we still remember when one of our trout got so big it ate one of the other trout in the tank. And yes Julian, I still remember when you accidentally pulled the fire alarm with a chair in music class. Sorry.

That brings us here, four thousand, six hundred and forty-seven days later, wearing formal clown gowns and impractical square hats, just waiting for me to finish talking so we can move on to the more important stuff.

And by gum we collaborated. I don't know if it was the hundreds of group projects we've been in together or the senioritis that did it, but we decorated this place lickety split and not one graduate has their gown on backwards. I think. We made it.



Andrea Pavlish

Now before we put my waterproof mascara to the test, I want to say thank you. Thank you to everyone in this crowd. In some way or another, you were a part of our journey that brought us here today. Thank you.

To the cooks who never made a meal I couldn't eat, besides chili but that's not your fault I just can't get behind bean soup,

thank you.

To the bus drivers who drove us to the countless activities we were involved in, thank you.

To the custodians who ensured our floors were shining and our classrooms were ready to go each morning, thank you.

To my teachers, thank you for putting up with us. I'm not quite sure how you did it sometimes, but you are the reason we are here today. You answered our questions, no matter how many times you had already answered them. Not only that, but you were a distinct part of our school life, a place where some of us spent more time than at home.

To my classmates, I hope we meet again. This will probably be the last time we will all be in the same room together, or so my dad has been telling me for the past 10 months. Thank you for the memories, for the friendships,

and for putting up with me sometimes.

To the people sitting in the folding chairs before me, thank you for your influence in your graduate's life. They would not be who they are without your help.

To the people sitting in the folding chairs with my name on it, thank you so much. Thank you for always supporting me in whatever I do, but also holding me accountable in order to be the best I could be. Thank you for being the sanity in my life when the rest of it got a little crazy.

As we move forward, some of us college, and some of us elsewhere, I can only hope that we carry with the things that kept us together all these years.

So congrats class of 2025!

We did it.

Let's go eat some cake.

Thank you.

# Pres gives welcome

BY OWEN VYHNALEK  
DHS Class President 2025

Good afternoon! Welcome to the graduation ceremony of the Dorchester High School class of 2025!

I want to thank our principal, Mr. Wiese, our superintendent, Dr. Cogswell, and our school board for making this day possible.

I also want to thank all of our teachers that have taught us through the years. We wouldn't be here today without you.

Lastly, thank you to all friends and family for being here today, in support of the 14 individuals who are ready to take the next step in their lives.

To my fellow classmates: we have had our ups and downs, but here we are. After starting a countdown over a year ago, we made it. I thank



Owen Vyhnales

all of you for the fun memories we have made throughout the years. I think Kotas is happy that he doesn't have to see us ever again....until we show up next week to annoy him and ruin his peace.

With that being said, I hope you can all sit back, relax, cry a little, and enjoy the ceremony.

**BECK'S**

**TNT SEED SERVICE**

TRAVIS & TYLER DUE | 402.641.7756

**GOOD LUCK TO ALL AREA STUDENTS!**

**DRAKE REFRIGERATION**  
HEATING, COOLING & APPLIANCE, LLC

**402-947-5591**  
122 S Main Street  
Friend, NE



**Owners: Arthur Drake & John Steyer**

**PROUD SUPPORTER OF OUR AREA STUDENTS!**

*(No matter the number of legs)*



1250 Arizona Avenue, Crete  
(402) 826-2497  
creteveterinaryclinic.com

**Farmers Union Cooperative Co.**

**SUPPORTS LOCAL STUDENTS AND ATHLETES**

Grain Elevator, Feed **402-947-4291**  
Fuel, Propane, Agronomy **402-947-4211**  
Service Station, Parts Store **402-947-5211**  
*For current market bids, visit us at*  
**www.farmersunioncoop.com**

# Scholarships go to DHS seniors

The Dorchester Class of 2025 received the following scholarships:

Baylor Behrens—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Dorchester United Methodist Church Endowment Scholarship, Senior Citizenship Award, Jim Heeren Memorial Scholarship, Papa Axline Memorial Scholarship, Farmer’s Cooperative Scholarship, Justin Kunc Memorial Scholarship – Saline County 4-H Council, Whedon Memorial Scholarship, AKSARBEN Goat Challenge, Engler Scholarship – Univeristy of Nebraska-Lincoln, Klopfenstein Fund Scholarship – University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Regents Scholarship – University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Nebraska Production Animal Health Scholarship, Elite 11 Veterinarian, Program – University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Angelina Cornejo—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, First State Bank Nebraska Scholarship, SCC Foundation High School Scholars, Larry Cerny Kaspar Scholarship – Southeast Community College, DPS Staff Scholarship

Isabella Cornejo—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Dorchester Youth Wrestling Scholarship, First State Bank Nebraska Memorial Scholarship, Don & Lois Eret Memorial Scholarship, Susan T. Buffett Scholarship

Mackenzie Luzum—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Evelyn E. Novak Memorial Scholarship, Doris Kohout Memorial Scholarship, Susan T. Buffett Scholarship

Karina Maldonado Morales—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Dorchester Insurance Agency Scholarship, DPS Staff Scholarship

Andrea Pavlish—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Dorchester Education Association Scholarship, Dorchester United Methodist Church Endowment Scholarship, Galen Lee Johnson Memorial Scholarship, American Red Cross Scholarship, Perry Scholarship – Doane University, Vocal Scholarship – Doane University

Joseph Peacock—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, DPS Staff Scholarship

AyLynn Schwisow—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Dorchester Youth Wrestling Scholarship, Post Prom Scholarship, Don & Lois Eret Memorial Scholarship, Nebraska Career Scholarship – Peru State College, Norma J. Fensler Memorial Scholarship – Peru State College

Ariana Tellez—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Dorchester Guidance Department Scholarship, Future of Health Care High School Scholarship – Crete Area Health Care Foundation, Proteus Grant

Julian Tellez—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Proteus Grant, Larry Cerny Kaspar Scholarship – Southeast Community College, DPS Staff Scholarship

Gabby Theis—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Dorchester United Methodist Church Endowment Scholarship, Lois Williams Memorial Scholarship, Leroy Smith Memorial Scholarship, Academic Excellence Scholarship – Northwest Missouri State University, Bearcat Advantage Scholarship – Northwest Missouri State University, Basketball Scholarship – Central Community College

Owen Vyhnaek—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Dorchester Community Foundation Scholarship, Dorchester United Methodist Church Endowment Scholarship, Crossroads Conference Activities Scholarship, Jim Heeren Memorial Scholarship, American Red Cross Scholarship, Blue Valley Post #4959 VFW Scholarship, Tabor Lodge #74 Scholarship, Farmer’s Cooperative Scholarship, Regent’s Scholarship – Concordia University, Lutheran Heritage Award Scholarship – Concordia University, Football Scholarship – Concordia University

Atley Zoubek—Dorchester American Legion Family Scholarship, Dorchester Community Foundation Scholarship, Dorchester United Methodist Church Endowment Scholarship, Ronald & Mary Ann Sehnert Memorial Scholarship, Blue Valley Post #4959 VFW Auxiliary Scholarship, Entourage Institute Scholarship

# Benitez: Cherish the memories

BY KMILA BENITEZ  
Exeter-Milligan

Hello everyone!

It is a pleasure to stand before you here today. I want to start things off by saying thank you. Thank you all for coming here today. Thank you to our teachers, staff, families, and friends for joining us. For supporting us and guiding us through high school. And to the Class of 2025... we did it, guys!

But this isn’t just any graduation. We are the last class to graduate as Exeter-Milligan Timberwolves. No pressure, right? But that makes us just that much more awesome. We’re not just ending high school—we’re closing a whole chapter of history. And somehow, we didn’t even break anything with our senior pranks—we just mildly inconvenienced Mrs. Kroll, Mr. Sheffield, and Ms. Fousek, so that’s a win, too. I hope you guys liked the balloons.



Kmila Benitez

I moved to Exeter four years ago from Miami, Florida, even though I feel like it’s that long. And let me tell you, it was a wild ride. I went from beaches to lakes. I had to learn that soda is pop and get used to the winters and the bipolar weather, and oh boy, has it been difficult to get used to. But if I had a chance to turn back time, I wouldn’t change it for the world. Here, I found

something I will always cherish: a community that welcomed me, a place where people know your name, your dog’s name, and probably what you had for lunch last Tuesday.

This school and this community have made me feel at home. In school, teachers know you, and you get to know them. You know, there are always people to turn to if you need help, and that is special. I am eternally grateful to this small-town school for everything I have learned and experienced here.

Over the years, we’ve had plenty of ups and downs. There were snow days we hoped for, trick quizzes that had it out for us, assignments that were due at 11:59, and we started at 11:58, and mornings when the snooze button on our alarms seemed so tempting. But in the end, we made it. We couldn’t have done it without all

of you. Thank you for your support throughout the years.

And now, we’re heading out into the world. But we won’t forget how we got here or where we came from, and I think that’s important. Thank you, Class of 2025, for the chaos, the laughter, and the fun. I can say that I am so grateful to you guys, my classmates, for making high school an unforgettable experience.

Now, we may be the last Timberwolves to graduate, but our story doesn’t end here. It will continue in all the memories we have made. Our time here has been filled with unforgettable moments, like our senior trip to Galveston and our graduation. As we step into this new chapter, let’s cherish the lessons, friendships, and memories we’ve made.

Thank you all for being part of this incredible journey.

# Funds to help with college

Scholarships went to the following Exeter-Milligan seniors:

Michael Bartu—Beck’s Seed, Travis and Tyler Due, Boeck Farm Outfitters, EM Foundation, EM Community Scholarship, EMF FFA Booster Scholarship, EMF Network, Fairmont High School Scholarship Fund, Fillmore County Foundation Henry Wagner Memorial Farm Scholarship, Jim Zeleny Memorial, Kubicek Trust, Larry Cudaback Memorial, Mary F. Tous Charitable Foundation Scholarship, Norman Oxhsner Agriculture Scholarship Northeast Community College Scholarship, William Sullivan Post 218 Exeter American Legion

Kmila Benitez—Becker/Rouch Exeter HS Scholarship, CASNR Scholarship, David Distinguished Scholar, EM Community Scholarship, EM Foundation, Erma E Burch Scholarship Trust, Fillmore County Foundation Exeter Community Scholarship, FFA Booster Scholarship, Generations Bank, Knights of Columbus Scholarship, Manning Scholarship – EMHS, Mary F. Tous Charitable Foundation Scholarship, Rosa Novacek Memorial, UNL Speech Scholarship, Warren & Velda Wilson Foundation, Wilfrid and Ruth Ekeler Scholarship

Jayden Capek—Axline Landscaping and Trees, Clarence Weis Memorial, EM Community Scholarship, EMF FFA Booster Scholarship, EM Foundation, Fillmore Country Farm Bureau Board, First Bank of Utica- Milligan, Kristin

Engle Memorial, Missouri Welding Institute Welding Competition Scholarship, Neil F. Hassler Leadership Scholarship, Tuttle Inc.

Lily Jeffries—Clara Fletcher Manning Memorial, EM Community Scholarship, EM Foundation, George and Barbara Hendricks, Harre Seed and Services, Jim Zeleny Memorial, Lillion Barkmeier, Lori Ruhl-Walford Memorial, Marlene Gallup Memorial, MU-DECAS (Beatrice Kiwanis) Scholarship, Milligan Legion Auxiliary Unit 240, Wilfrid and Ruth Ekeler Scholarship, Milligan American Legion

Liberty Johnson—Dr. Ray and Jean Steinacher Endowed, EM Community Scholarship, EM Foundation, FCDC Scholarship, Fillmore County Foundation Milligan Community Scholarship, First Bank of Utica- Milligan, Klima Trust, Kristin Engle Memorial, Learn to Dream Scholarship, Mary F. Tous Charitable Foundation Scholarship, Maynard Jensen American Legion Memorial Scholarship, Milligan American Legion, SCEFB Scholarship, Warren & Velda Wilson Foundation

Emma Meyer—Betty Jane Taylor Plettner Memorial, Denise A. Mahoney Memorial, Dr. Ray and Jean Steinacher Endowed, EM Community Scholarship, EMEA, EM Foundation, EMF FFA Booster Scholarship, Franklin American Legion, George and Barbara Hendricks, Milligan Legion Auxiliary Unit 240, Mary F. Tous Charitable Foundation Scholarship, Ohiowa

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 193

Carter Milton—EM Community Scholarship, EM Foundation, EMF FFA Booster Scholarship, Exeter Feeders and Breeders, Farmers Cooperative Scholarship, Harre Seed and Services, Klima Trust, Kubicek Trust, Richard Michl Memorial, Robert Zeleny Memorial, Mary F. Tous Charitable Foundation Scholarship, MUDECAS (Beatrice Kiwanis) Scholarship, Whitmore Fire Consultants Scholarship

Kierra Papik—Academic Scholarship Concordia University, American Legion Auxilary #218 Exeter Scholarship, Central Nebraska Trapshooting Conference Scholarship, Crimson Scholarship Hastings College, Departmental Scholarship Concordia University, EM Community Scholarship, EMEA, EM Foundation, Harre Seed and Services, Knights of Columbus Scholarship, Mary F. Tous Charitable Foundation Scholarship, Milo and Agnes Stych Memorial, Samuel Alexander Scholarship Hastings College, Warren & Velda Wilson Foundation, William Sullivan Post 218 Exeter American Legion

Aidan Vavra—Dwayne and Cheryl Luzum Family, EM Community Scholarship, EM Foundation, Harre Seed and Services, Joe Sadlo Memorial, Kubicek Trust, NUCA of Nebraska, Robert and Irma Dinneen Memorial, University of Nebraska Regents, Warren & Velda Wilson Foundation

**Supporting Local Students & Athletes Every Step of the Way**



Jake • John • Kristy

**505 1st St. • Friend**

**402-947-3421**

*Growing with your insurance needs for over 30 years*



**1900 F Street**

**GENEVA, NE**

**(402) 759-3167**

**WWW.MYFHC.ORG**

**Trusted Hearts, Touching Lives**

**Over 17 Specialities**

**Over 30 Specialists**



**CITIZENS**

STATE BANK

Community Driven. **Future Focused.**

Citizens State Bank wishes the best of luck to all our area teams!

150 Maple Street  
Friend, NE 68359  
402.947.2211

**citstatebank.com**

# Vavra: Graduation came in blink of eye

BY AIDAN VAVRA  
Exeter-Milligan

Throughout the last 13 years of school, it was common to hear, “Graduation will be here before you know it.” I always shrugged it off, thinking that day was way too far away to worry about.

Well, today is that day — and somehow, it feels like the last 13 years have gone by in the blink of an eye.

Even though a lot has changed over the years, when I look back, not much has changed for me. On one of my very first days of school, we were given our first “homework assignment” — just a simple quiz to take home and ask our families.

I remember being so excited, especially because



Aidan Vavra

if we turned it in the next day, we’d get a piece of candy. But when I got to school the next morning, I realized I had completely forgotten about it. Honestly, not much has changed since then — and if you asked my teachers, they’d

probably think I was talking about something that happened last week.

While my classmates and I may not have always been the best students, we were incredibly lucky to have the staff that we did throughout our school years. To our teachers: thank you for teaching for the right reasons and always putting your students’ education first. I never once doubted that the person standing at the front of the classroom was qualified, or that they didn’t care about us.

To our custodians and cooks: thank you for everything you do behind the scenes — our school wouldn’t be the same without you. And to our office staff: thank you for always running the school with a student-first

mindset.

There aren’t many superintendents who would be as happy as Mr. Sheffield to see a bunch of high schoolers sleeping in their backyard. And thank you to Mrs. Kroll, for still giving us our diplomas after her office was filled with more balloons than I had tardies to first period. After hearing stories from other schools, I can confidently say we’re lucky to have the administration we do.

Growing up in this community is something I’ll always be grateful for. I’ll always see myself as a Timberwolf, and I’m honored to be part of the last graduating class to carry that name.

With our class being together for so many years, we’ve made count-

less memories — and even more stories to tell. Most of them involving Mikey. Hopefully, Mikey doesn’t fall while getting his diploma like his pants did in first grade.

I’ve known most of my classmates for the majority of my life and have grown alongside them year after year. Looking back at old class photos, it seemed like the tallest boy in our class was always changing. Well, congratulations, Carter — I think you’ve officially pulled away from the rest of us in that one.

Although many of us wouldn’t admit it out loud, our class really is like a family. We’ve had our disagreements, our laughs, our inside jokes, and our moments of frustration. But at the end of the day,

we’ve always come back together. We’ve supported each other more than we probably realize, and I think that’s what makes us so close.

Now it’s time for each of us to head in our own direction. Although our journeys will be different, we’ll always share this place, these memories, and this moment.

We may be leaving the halls of Exeter-Milligan behind, but the lessons, friendships, and roots we’ve planted here will go with us wherever we end up. Because no matter where life takes us, we’ll always be the Exeter-Milligan Class of 2025 — the final Timberwolves — and that’s something to be proud of.

Thank you.

# Scholarship funds go to Friend seniors

Scholarships went to the following Friend High seniors:

Ella Archer ~ FPS Staff Jeans, Citizens State Bank, Melvin & Phyllis Cornell, UNK Health Science Explorers Academy, UNK Distinguished Scholar, FPS Foundation, Crete Area Health Care Foundation, EMF FFA Alumni/Booster

Reagan Bartley ~ FPS Salutarian, FPS Foundation, Lawyer Family Memorial, Hastings College Crimson, Hastings College Alexander Academic, Hastings College Trustee Honor, EMF FFA Alumni/Booster

Ashley Braun ~ Zimmer, Melvin & Phyllis Cornell, Voluntarism, Knights of Columbus-Exeter, FPS Foundation,

UNK Loper Achievement, EMF FFA Alumni/Booster

Tyrell Fennell ~ Nebraska Wesleyan Black & Gold, Nebraska Wesleyan Multi Student Grant, Nebraska Wesleyan P-Wolf Priority

Jacob Klooz ~ FPS Valedictorian, FPS Foundation, UNL CASNR, UNL Regents

Dayton Kremer ~ Losh Family, Doane University Academic, Doane University Wrestling, Doane University Alumni, Randall O’Neel Memorial

Abbie Milton ~ Patricia J. Cradick Memorial, FPS Staff Jeans, Lauritsche Peterson, Blue Valley VFW Auxiliary, Friend Community Club, Farmers Cooperative, Aurora Coopera-

tive, Exeter Feeders & Breeders Andy Bruntz Memorial, NCC CHS Foundation, FPS Foundation, Central Valley Ag, EMF Network, EMF FFA Alumni/Booster

Mark Milton ~ Sam Shutts Memorial, Grange, Eastern Star, FPS Foundation, Farmers Cooperative

Chase Paulsen ~ Smithfield Foods Corp., FPS Staff Jeans, Wake Charitable Foundation & Jones Bank, Farmers Union Coop, FPS Foundation, First Bank of Utica, EMF FFA Alumni/Booster, American Red Cross High School

Keila Ricenbaw ~ Friend Education Association, Shirley Gautreaux Memorial, Alter-

nate - Citizens State Bank, Losh Family, Ann Morgan Pospisil, UNK Blanche Kaufmann Berns School, UNK Teacher Scholars Program, Judith A. Weber & PEO, FPS Foundation, UNK Distinguished Scholar

Kyler Sladek ~ Knights of Columbus-Exeter, First Bank of Utica, Generations Bank Post Prom, Jesse Wells Memorial

Zach Spohn ~ Youth Salute-UNL, Blue Valley VFW, Friend Community Club, FPS Foundation, Farmers Cooperative, UNL Engler, UNL Becker Rouch, UNL University Award, UNL Nebraska Achievement Scholar, EMF FFA Alumni/Booster

Mason Vossler ~ Freckled

Door, Citizens State Bank, UNL O. & G. Kammerer, FPS Foundation, First Bank of Utica, Saline County 4-H Council, EMF FFA Alumni/Booster

Will Vyhnaelek ~ Farmers Cooperative, University of Nebraska N Fund, University of Nebraska University Award, Ford Banka SAL, Norman Kohout, FPS Foundation, Sons of the American Legion Holmes Post 178 Memorial, CVA, Exeter Feeders & Breeders Farm Credit Services, EMF FFA Alumni/Booster, Beck’s Seed, Tabor Lodge #74 Jeralyn Skala Memorial, Gene R. Rohrig, BetterLife Presidential

# Congratulations, graduates

**SWEET TEA PRINTING**

**NEED SOMETHING PRINTED?**  
Our dedicated staff can help.

From business cards to posters, and everything in between, our experienced designers get the job done.

Call us for a quote today!  
**402-643-3678**

*Proud supporter of all area students!*

**Bartels BODY SHOP**

1304 1st Street, Friend, NE  
**402-947-2222**  
bartelsbodyshop@diodecom.net

**Generations BANK**

139 S Exeter Ave | Exeter, NE 68351  
1-800-5Exeter | www.generations.bank

Member **FDIC**

**PROUD TO SUPPORT ALL AREA STUDENTS!**

**Farmers and Merchants Bank**  
Member FDIC  
MILLIGAN NEBRASKA

Member **FDIC**

501 Main St. • Milligan  
**402-629-4251 • fmbmilligan.com**

*Good Luck Bobcats!*

**EXETER LUMBER LLC**  
‘Your Hometown Home Center’

103 W. S. Depot • Exeter  
**402-266-3421**

**PROUD SUPPORTER OF WILBER-CLATONIA, DORCHESTER & TRI COUNTY STUDENTS!**

**Western United Mutual Insurance Assoc.**

116 West 3rd Street • Wilber  
**402-821-2370**  
Wind • Fire • Liability

**westernunited.net**

**OLIVA INSURANCE AGENCY**

**OIA**

Scott & Rose Oliva  
Box 218 • Milligan, NE  
**402-629-4446**

*Good Luck, Bobcats!*

**KELCH**  
Plumbing, Heating and Refrigeration Inc.

**Proud supporters of all area students and athletes giving 100!**

**402-266-3801**  
Mike Kelch & Jerry Kelch  
Exeter, NE  
**TEMPSTAR**  
Heating and Cooling Products®

**JOHNSON PHARMACY**

151 Maple • Friend, NE • **402-947-2341**

*Proud Supporters of All Area Students*

# Klooz: Experiences help shape class of '25

BY JACOB KLOOZ  
FHS valedictorian

Welcome, board of education, administration, staff, family and friends. It is my honor and privilege to stand before you on this special day as the valedictorian of the Class of 2025. I would like to offer some appreciation before I share with you some of my reflections on these past four years.

Thank you to my parents for supporting me through all my activities. Thank you to my grandparents for showing up to almost every game, even the ones I didn't play in. Thank you to my siblings for everything you did for me behind the scenes.

Thank you to the incredible teachers, staff and administration here at Friend Public Schools. Thank you for your hours of hard work and for pushing us to be our best.

Because you set high, achievable expectations we became more and achieved more than we thought we could. Thank you to our community, for the endless support in all our activities. It is because of you that it has been so great to be a Bulldog and a Bobcat. To my coaches, thank you for the time and energy you invested in me and my teammates. You made a difference.

And finally, thank you to my classmates. I came to Friend in the midst of



Jacob Klooz

Covid. We all wore masks to school and kept our social distance. It was a strange time to be the new kid, but the past five years have made it seem like I have always been here. We have made memories and grown as people. Thank you for helping shape me into the person I have become.

The class of 2025 will forever be known as the last class to graduate from Friend High School. The last dogs in the pound, as our t-shirts say. We have been an important part of the transition from Friend to EMF.

I think that in the coming years as we reflect on our time in the halls of FHS, we will be proud of the things we did to lead the way. We have had state qualifiers in track, wrestling, and speech. Both the boys and girls golf teams earned trips

to state in the past year. Just a few short weeks ago, the boys basketball team made a great run to get the opportunity to play at Bob Devaney. The volleyball team also made it to Lincoln and brought home a state runner up trophy, adding a banner next to the first EMF banner earned by the football team our junior year.

Football. I love the game and all that it taught me. I will never forget the appointment at New West Sports Medicine in July before my junior year. Torn labrum. Surgery. Six months recovery. Certainly not words I wanted to hear. Then Dr. Crockett said, "You want to play football? Play football and we will fix it when your season is done." At that point, we didn't know when my season would be done because we didn't know how long I would be able to play with it torn.

The triple overtime loss to Sandy Creek pushed me beyond my limits. I was in so much pain that game. But the next week was homecoming so I told my parents I just wanted to play in the homecoming game and then I would be done. But I lied and I wasn't done yet. I had learned how to better handle the pain and even how to use it to motivate me. I kept getting through one more game, even when that turned into five games beyond the regular

season, ending as state runner-up.

I loved every minute of that season, even the painful ones. I learned to fight through challenges, even if it hurts. I learned to play for something greater than myself. As difficult as it was to miss both basketball and golf season after surgery, I will never regret sticking it out that season. The victories, and even the disappointments, have shaped me into who I am and given me memories to last a lifetime.

Joshua 1:9 says "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." As I get ready to leave home and pursue a degree and career, I am grateful for my faith and the way that God has led me to this moment.

I hope that each one of us up here can go forward into our future feeling strong and courageous, having learned these lessons. Live with no regrets. Do hard things. Push yourself to be your best. Be grateful for the foundation you have been given by Friend High School and these people sitting in front of you that support you and believe in you.

Class of 2025, I challenge you to go live your life without regret.

Thank you.

# Zulauf: Class ready to make difference

BY JORDYN ZULAUF  
Tri County High School

Good afternoon, guests, faculty, board members, parents, family, friends, and my fellow graduates—welcome to the graduation ceremony for the class of 2025.! I am truly honored to stand before you today, representing the Class of 2025.

Wow, we made it! Today is a day we've all been looking forward to for so long. It feels like just yesterday we were walking through these doors for the first time, unsure of what was ahead. And now, here we are—ready to walk across this stage and step into the next chapter of our lives. This moment is not just about celebrating the completion of classes, assignments, and exams. It's about recognizing the journey that brought us here.

Along the way, we've faced challenges, overcome obstacles, and pushed ourselves beyond what we thought was possible. Whether it was staying up late to finish that one last paper, working through difficult group projects, or managing school with everything else life threw at us, we persevered. And today, all that hard work has paid off.

But we didn't do it alone. To our families—thank you for your endless support and encouragement. To our teachers and mentors—thank you for your guidance, patience, and for believing in us when we sometimes doubted ourselves. To our friends—thank you for the laughter, the late-night study sessions, and for always having our backs. Each of you played an important role in helping us reach this moment, and we are incredibly grateful.



Jordyn Zulauf

As we look ahead, I know many of us are feeling a mix of excitement and maybe a little bit of uncertainty. Some will stay close, and others will go afar, but wherever your future takes you, let it take you somewhere. The future is full of possibilities, and while it may be unknown, I believe we are ready to face whatever comes our way. We've learned not just from textbooks, but from each other. We've gained the skills, the knowledge, and most importantly, the resilience to take on the world.

So, as we close this chapter and begin the next, I hope we all remember that success isn't just about reaching a destination—it's about the journey and the impact we make along the way. Let's go forward with courage, confidence, and a determination to make a difference. I want to leave you with this message I was once told, 'In life, there are leaders, followers, and complainers—strive to lead or contribute with purpose, but never waste your potential by becoming a complainer.'

Congratulations, Class of 2025! This is our moment, and the best is yet to come.

Thank you!

# Vyhnalek: Class grows, changes over years

BY WILL VYHNALEK  
FHS salutatorian

Good afternoon, friends and family of the class of 2025. Welcome to the last Friend High School graduation ceremony.

I would like to thank all of you for joining us for one of the most important moments in our young lives. Everyone gathered here today, has seen us change and grow over the years, your support, encouragement, and wisdom have shaped us into the young adults we are today and for that we are thankful. So thank you again on behalf of the senior class for gathering here today to celebrate us one last time.

It is hard to fathom that this day has come so quickly. It feels like just yesterday we started high school as freshmen walking through the doors of FPS. Over the past 13 years, our class and school have changed. Before you here today are the final 17 seniors who get to call

themselves Bulldogs.

Let's take a look back at how the last Dawgs came to be. Nine of us; Keila, Chase, Mason, Zach, Kyler, Regan, Abbie, Ashley, and myself have been here since the beginning when our journey began in Kindergarten.

In third grade Tyrell joined us for the first time. Third grade is also the year we tried to make Keila and Zach kiss. Chase, Mason, and I had to sit the 100th day of school celebration out for that one....sorry Keila we were just trying to help out our buddy.

Then in fifth grade, Dayton joined our class and we were able to go on the ever famous fifth grade campout where we learned Keila and Ashley are not very good at canoeing. In sixth grade, we were able to witness Friend join Exeter-Milligan for football. During seventh grade, William Joseph joined. Sorry you had to change your name JOE!



Will Vyhnalek

Eighth grade brought us Marshall and Jacob Klooz. That year Jacob Klooz and I learned an important lesson about electricity: never cross the prongs of a pencil sharpener with a staple, you may just get a big...POOF. Freshman year, Ella joined. We were all excited but Chase was especially excited.

One random day during sophomore year, Tyrell moved away and Mark

and Jacob Yocum joined the class. Junior year, my classmates and I were a part of a big change, all sports became EMF. This brought us a lot of excitement and a chance to play at Memorial Stadium, something we will never forget.

Senior year, the volleyball girls also got a trip to Lincoln to compete for a state championship at the Bob. Finally, this past February Tyrell rejoined the class, and the 17 of us were complete.

Class of 2025, when we walk out of the doors today, our class will make one final change. We will no longer be seniors, we will officially be Friend Public School alumni. And with that, the final class of Bulldogs to ever walk these halls.

While change is sometimes hard, it is also exciting and brings us new beginnings. Class of 2025, go out into the world and make a change.

Thank you.

## FOLLOW US ON

FACEBOOK

WE'RE  
**NEBRASKA**  
IN A BANK

Nebraska is inspiring, with beauty in unexpected places.

Pinnacle Bank

MEMBER FDIC CRETE 143 E. 13<sup>th</sup> St., 402.826.2121

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

and keep up to date with your community.

402-826-2147

CN

Crete News

FS

Friend Sentinel

WR

Wilber Republican

THE PRINTSHOP

SEWARD COUNTY INDEPENDENT THE CRETE NEWS

129 S. 6th St. | Seward, NE 402-643-3676

1201 Linden Ave. | Crete, NE 402-826-2147

CONTACT US TODAY

for all your printing and graphics needs!

# Speakers: Overcome challenges as move forward

BY ADDISON AND ALEX PAXTON  
Tri County High School

Addison: As we say farewell to this amazing chapter of our lives and get ready to start our next journey, it is an honor to stand in front of you today, honored teachers, proud parents, beloved family members, and of course, our incredible graduating class of 2025.

Alex: It seems like yesterday that we were anxious freshmen navigating these hallways, unsure of our classes and wondering how we would make it through the four years of high school. Now, as we stand on the verge of our future, we reflect on a journey that was full of challenges, laughter, and numerous priceless memories. We have been through it all together, from late-night

homework assignments, anxiety-inducing tests, and an occasional forgotten assignment, to spirit weeks, sporting events, school plays, and family-like friendships.

Addison: But now it is time to move on, to take the skills and knowledge we have gained and use them to make a difference in the world. Whether we go on to further our educations or to start our careers, we must never forget the lessons we have learned and the people who have helped us along the way.

Alex: Naturally, without the leadership and constant support of a few very special individuals, we would not be where we are today. Our teachers have served as role models, motivators, and occasionally even therapists, in addition to being educators. We appreciate you

encouraging us to realize our greatest potential.

Addison: To our parents and families with and without us here today: we survived every obstacle because of your love and sacrifice. We will always be appreciative of the support you gave us by reminding us about our homework, attending every game or performance, or simply being there for us when we needed someone to depend on in.

Alex: And to our friends—thank you for the memories, the inside jokes, and the endless support. Whether it was playing the cat and mouse game in Coach K’s PE class, dissecting things in Scheiding’s class, throwing sandwich meat in the cafeteria—which ended in several days of mopping, putting pennies in an outlet, taking spoons from the lunch room, or Avery



Addison Paxton

almost taking my eye out in Horticulture class. We thank you for making these years unforgettable.

Addison: As we say farewell to each other and to this chapter of our lives, let us remember the good times we shared and the challenges we overcame. Even if Alex had to memorize a million extem-



Alex Paxton

poraneous speeches for Speech Team, and I had to say “Under the sea,” a thousand times in One-Act, we both leave here with skills we have gained, and we should all take those skills and use them to create a brighter future for ourselves and for those around us. Remember that we have the power to

influence the future as we stand here today, prepared to head into the unknown. If high school has taught us anything, it is that we are capable of conquering the obstacles that lie ahead. We are prepared, resilient, and strong.

Alex: In the words of Dr. Seuss, “You’re off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way!” We are standing at the base of our mountains, and it is up to us to climb them, one step at a time, with courage and determination.

So here’s to the Class of 2025, may we always strive for greatness, embrace every opportunity, and never forget where we came from.

Congratulations, Class of 2025! We did it!

# TC seniors receive education scholarships

The Class of 2025 at Tri County High School announced their post-graduation plans and received the following scholarships:

Arianna Bellinder—SCC Lincoln for Pharmacy Tech; MyEducationQuest Scavenger Hunt Scholarship, Tri County Teammates Scholarship, Tri County Education Foundation Scholarship

Brooke Boyce—SCC Lincoln for Business; Swanton Community Club Scholarship, Marvin & Gladys Yost Family Scholarship, Tri County Music Boosters Band Scholarship

Ashlynn Brown—UNL for Business; First State Bank of DeWitt, Tri County Education Foundation Scholarship

Ibrahim Castillo—SCC Milford for Diesel Truck; D & K Agri Sales Inc. Scholarship, Plymouth Car Show Scholarship, Swanton Community Club Scholarship, Learn to Dream Scholarship

Pierce Damrow—UNK, Wayne State, or Concordia for Psychology; Wayne, Dean’s Excellence Scholarship, Education Foundation Board, Elks Lodge Teenager of the Month, Sokol Hall Scholarship, Shopp-Ewing-Nispel Plymouth Legion Post #243 Scholarship, American Red Cross Scholarship, Tri-County National Honor Society Scholarship, Tri County Student

Council Scholarship, NEAPCO Scholarship

Benjamin Holsing—University of Nebraska, Omaha for Aviation (Air National Guard); L.E. & Bethel Heist Memorial, Tri County Athletic Booster Club Scholarship, Tri County Music Boosters Band Scholarship

Ethan Jobman—SCC Milford for Automotive Technology; SCC Foundation High School Scholars Scholarship, Wallace & Kethleen Hare Career Academy Scholars Scholarship, Centenary United Methodist Church Scholarship, Robert R Kassik (Kush ik) Memorial Scholarship, Plymouth Car Show Scholarship, Kiwanis MUDCUS Scholarship, Willard Waltke Memorial, Tri-County Youth Basketball Scholarship, Tri County Music Boosters Choir Scholarship

Riley Kopf—SCC Milford for Heating & Cooling; SCC (KASPR) Larry Cerny Kaspar Scholarship, Tri County Education Foundation Scholarship

Kristin Lange—SCC Lincoln for Paramedic; SCC Discovery Day Tuition Scholarship, Tri County Teammates Scholarship, Susan Thompson Buffett Scholarship, Tri County Education Foundation Scholarship

Hailey Lauenstein—UNL for Dental Hygiene; N-Fund Student Scholar-

ship, David Distinguished Scholarship, DeWitt Community Club Scholarship, Lawrence E. & Alberta E. Hermesmeier Memorial Scholarship

Rylee McCune—Wayne State College for Health Science; Wayne President’s Excellence Scholarship, Fairbury Elk’s Student of the Month Scholarship, Nora J. Bubb Memorial Scholarship, Tri County Education Foundation Scholarship, Tri County Denim Dollars Scholarship, DeWitt Sportsman Club Scholarship

Addison Paxton—UNK for Nursing; Regents Scholarship for Tuition, Health Explorers Scholarship, UNK Carpenter Nursing Scholar Scholarship, Education Foundation Scholarship, Jeff & Karen Reynolds Memorial Scholarship, American Red Cross Scholarship, PEO Star Scholarship

Alex Paxton—Wayne State College for Dentistry; RHOP Scholarship, Presidential Scholarship, Presidential Housing Waiver, Shopp-Ewing-Nispel Plymouth Legion Post #243 Scholarship, Plymouth Improvement Association Scholarship

Ashley Sasse—Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture for Veterinary Nursing; NCTA Rawson Scholarship, Farmers Cooperative Scholarship, Larry Germer Memorial

Scholarship, Plymouth American Legion Auxiliary, Dale J & Zella B. Cooper Scholarship, Merlyn Anderson Scholarship, George & Clara Plucknett Memorial Scholarship, Elks Lodge Most Valuable Student Scholarship

Avery Schultis—UNL for Nursing, We Are Nebraska Commitment RES, David Distinguished Scholar, N Fund Student Scholarship, Tri County Education Foundation Scholarship

Ashton Schwisow—Bryan College of Health Sciences for Nursing; Eastern Star Chapter #9, Elmer & Anna Selk Memorial Scholarship, Eugene Bock Memorial Scholarship, TC Denim Dollars Scholarship

Aubrey Siems—SCC Beatrice for Nursing & Precision Ag Certification; Farm Bureau Scholarship, FFA Alumni Scholarship, TRFRA SCC Freshman Tuition Scholarship, SCEFB SCC Foundation High School Scholars, Curt Schuerman Memorial Scholarship, First State Bank of DeWitt Scholarship, Tri County Athletic Booster Club Scholarship, TC Denim Dollars Scholarship

Kenton Sowards—UNO for Biomechanics; UNO Regents Scholarship, Chris R. Badman Scholarship, Elks Lodge Most Valuable Student Scholarship

Cole Spahr—Peru

State College for Physical Education Teacher; Dean’s Success Scholarship, Football Scholarship, Sam Lindley Memorial Scholarship, Tri County Wrestling Club Scholarship, TCEA Scholarship

Cooper Stokebrand—Concordia University for Ag Education; Dee Reisen Memorial Scholarship, Ellen M. Runty Scholarship, Janice Burr Scholarship, Harold & Harriet Fort Memorial Scholarship, Tri County Wrestling Club Scholarship

Aiden VanEperen—SCC Milford for Automotive Technology; Plymouth Car Show Scholarship, First State Bank of DeWitt Scholarship

Macoy Wollenburg—SCC Lincoln for Cyber Security; SCC (POHLL) Raymond & Marjorie

Pohlmann Family Scholarship, Area, SCC Foundation High School Scholars, SCC Academic Excellence Scholarship, L.E. & Bethel Heist Memorial Scholarship, First Tri County Bank of Swanton Scholarship, Josef Parker Memorial Scholarship

Jordyn Zulauf—SCC Beatrice for Agribusiness; Farm Bureau Scholarship, Marvin Schultis Agricultural Scholarship, FFA Alumni Scholarship, SCC Ray & Marj Pohlmann Scholarship, TRFRA SCC Freshman Tuition Scholarship, SCEFB SCC Foundation High School Scholars, Plymouth Improvement Association Scholarship, First Tri County Bank of Plymouth, Peace Lutheran Church Scholarship, TC Denim Dollars Scholarship

**Hanson, Hroch & Kuntz**  
**Attorneys At Law**

1331 Main Ave. • Crete, NE  
(402) 826-4354

**Show your school spirit while giving back!**

*All you have to do is use your school pride debit card regularly and we'll send a donation to Wilber-Clatonia Public Schools.*

**Contact your local branch to order yours today!**

**WILBER** | 203 W. 3rd Street | 402.821.2241

**Beatrice Community Hospital**

**Family & Internal Medicine Clinic**  
402-228-4295

**Women's & Children's Clinic**  
402-228-3117

[www.BeatriceCommunityHospital.com](http://www.BeatriceCommunityHospital.com)

*Proudly supporting our area students!*

224 W. 4th St. • Wilber, NE • 402-821-2127  
chuck41autoparts@gmail.com

Real Estate, Auctions, Appraisals,  
Crop Insurance and  
GPS Farm Field Management

402-947-2301  
133 Maple St.  
Friend, NE

**HOME & COUNTRY, LLC**  
[www.homeandcountry.net](http://www.homeandcountry.net)

**HORIZONTAL**  
**BORING & TUNNELING CO.**

505 S. River Ave. • Exeter, NE 68351 • 402-266-5347

647 US Highway 6  
Friend, NE

**(402) 947-2080**



# WC Class of 2025 earns scholarships

The Wilber-Clatonia Class of 2025 received the following honors:

Students who are wearing the blue/white cords have successfully completed 12 or more credit hours through Southeast Community College: Maddux Johnson, Cooper Palmer, June Petersen, Emily Rhodes, Aiden Zajicek and Stephanie Zajicek

The Top 10% of the graduating class: Channer Koepp, Aiden Zajicek, Ivan Znamenacek and Mackenzie Anthony

4.0 and/or Above Students: Channer Koepp, Aiden Zajicek and Ivan Znamenacek

Omaha World Herald Academic All-State Teams: Channer Koepp and Aiden Zajicek.

Academic All-Conference Awardees ACT scores (these students are wearing medallions):

Bronze (24-26 Composite): Mackenzie Anthony; Gabriel Klabenes, Aiden Zajicek

Gold (30 or above Composite): Channer Koepp

National Honor Society (wearing white stoles and blue & yellow cords): Jordan Musil, President; Aiden Zajicek, Vice President; Cash Keslar, Secretary; Cooper Palmer, Events Committee Chair; Members: Mackenzie Anthony, Addison Combs, and Stephanie Zajicek

Colleges, majors and scholarships include:

Mackenzie Anthony: University of New Mexico, majoring in Archaeology  
Scholarships earned: University of New Mexico In-state tuition scholarship; University of New Mexico LOBO Incentive Grant; University of New Mexico Academic Grant; Greater Omaha Youth Salute Scholarships: [\$1,000 UNL scholarship; UNL (\$4,000); NE Wesleyan (\$1000 per year); Simpson College (\$4,000); NE Methodist (\$4,000)]; First State Bank Nebraska Scholarship; Nebraska Czechs of Wilber Scholarship; Wilber Czech Craft Shop Scholarship; Richard & Helen Zach Mares Scholarship; Friends of W-C Scholarship; Charles F Mundil Memorial Scholarship (alt)

Lexand Baker: Wayne State College, majoring in Health Sciences  
Scholarships earned: D.J. Hero \$15,000 Scholarship; Ladislav Rezabek Memorial Scholarship; Elsie Sukovaty, Cauble, Gibson & Allen Lee Cauble Memorial Scholarship; Jaroslava M. Homolka Memorial Scholarship (alt); Herbert & Sylvia Schmale Memorial Scholarship (alt); Emma Chaloupka Shramek Memorial Scholarship (alt)

Kohen Burda: Seeking Employment with Tredz Central

Scholarships earned: FFA Betterment Scholarship  
Mika Chlupacek: Briar Cliff University, majoring in Secondary History Education  
Scholarships earned: Participating in Softball

Addison Combs: UNK, majoring in Dental Hygiene

Scholarships earned: Northwest Missouri State University Academic Excellence Bearcat Advantage Scholarship; University of Nebraska Kearney KHOP Scholarship; University of Nebraska-Kearney Distinguished Scholar Scholarship; Greater Youth Salute Scholarships [NE Wesleyan (\$1000 per year); Simpson College (\$4,000); NE Methodist (\$4,000)]; T.J. Sokol Scholarship; Farmers & Merchants Bank \$250 Scholarship; Albert S. Chmelir Memorial Scholarship; Robert & Eleanora Houser Memorial Scholarship; Ladislav Rezabek Memorial Scholarship (alt)

Miranda Duntz: Seeking employment

Gianna Ellis-Erickson: SCC-Lincoln, majoring in Academic Transfer

Rene-Ryan Guerrero Mildward: SCC-Milford majoring in Electrical Technology

Scholarships earned: Smithfield \$500 Scholarship; Iola Brolliar Memorial Scholarship; Dan Fette Scholarship; Wayne Janda Memorial Scholarship; Marian & Eddie Rezabek Memorial Scholarship; Abbie & Albert Trousil Memorial Scholarship; Elsie Sukovaty, Cauble, Gibson & Allen Lee Cauble Memorial Scholarship (alt); Agnes Trnik Memorial Scholarship (alt), SCC Norman Kohout \$1,000 Scholarship; SCC First Generation Scholarship  
Evan Hatfield: Seeking employment

Trevor Hayek: Seeking employment the Electrical Workers Union

Ethan Inthavong: Seeking employment at Sid Dillon - Crete

Maddux Johnson: UNK, majoring in Pre-Nursing

Scholarships earned: Susan Thompson Buffett Scholarship; Nebraska Opportunity Grant; UNK Loper Achievement Scholarship; UNL University Award Scholarship; W-C Teammates Scholarship; Order of Eastern Star Scholarship; Wilber Lions Club Scholarship; Walter & Helene Baer II Memorial Scholarship; Albert S. Chlemir Memorial Scholarship (alt); Valarie J. Rezabek Memorial Scholarship (alt)

Lucas Karpisek: SCC-Milford, majoring in John Deere Technology

Scholarships earned: Full John Deere Technician Scholarship provided by Landmark Implement in Beatrice; Southeast Community College Foundation High School Scholars Scholarship; Allen Pecka Memorial Scholarship; Agnes Trnik Memorial Scholarship; Steve & Lynn Wiese Scholarship; John Chrastil Memorial Scholarship (alt); Robert & Eleanora Houser Memorial Scholarship (alt); Huneke Family Memorial Scholarship (alt); Wayne Janda Memorial Scholarship (alt); Louis Trnik Memori-

al Scholarship (alt)

Cash Keslar: Concordia University, majoring in Accounting

Scholarships earned: Farmers Cooperative Scholarship; Concordia University Football Scholarship; Concordia University Lutheran Heritage Scholarship; Michael Hroch Memorial Scholarship; Sertoma Service to Mankind Scholarship; Arlan Lohmeyer Memorial Scholarship (alt); Marian & Eddie Rezabek Memorial Scholarship (alt); Participating in Football and Track & Field

Gabriel Klabenes: SCC-Lincoln, majoring in Radiology

Channer (Hannah Grace) Koepp: Doane University, majoring in Environmental Studies

Scholarships earned: Northwest Missouri State University Academic Excellence Bearcat Advantage Scholarship; Viola C Jelinek Memorial Scholarship; Raymond Lohmeyer Memorial Scholarship  
Trenton Kotas: Seeking employment at Kawasaki

Alexa Landeros: University of Kansas, majoring in Behavioral Neuroscience

Scholarships earned: University of Kansas Academic Distinction \$14,000 Scholarship; Greater Omaha Youth Salute Scholarships [NE Wesleyan (\$1000 per year); Simpson College (\$4,000); NE Methodist (\$4,000)]; Security First Bank-Clatonia Scholarship; Michael J Hroch Memorial Scholarship; Charles F. Mundil Memorial Scholarship; ZCJB/WFLA Lodge Libuse/Praha #54 Scholarship; Clatonia Cardinal Club Scholarship; Jon & Cheryl Glaser Scholarship; Richard & Helen Zach Mares Memorial Scholarship (alt)

Sarina Lavilay: Metro Community College, majoring in 3-D Animation/Video Gaming Systems

Scholarships earned: Susan Thompson Buffett Scholarship; W-C Teammates Scholarship; Award Scholarship; Walter & Helene Baer I Memorial Scholarship; Friends of W-C Foundation Scholarship; W-C PTO Scholarship; Betty & Alan Steinacher Memorial Scholarship

Marlee Lloyd: Northeast Community College, majoring in Nursing

Scholarships earned: Jaroslava M. Homolka Memorial Scholarship; Robert & Eleanora Houser Memorial Scholarship (alt); Irene Pivonka Sokolik Memorial Scholarship (alt); Joe & Helene Steinacher Memorial Scholarship (alt)

Owen McCright: SCC-Lincoln, majoring in Business

Scholarships earned: W-C FFA Betterment Scholarship; Elmer & Edra J. Broz Memorial Scholarship; Louis Trnik Memorial Scholarship (alt); Jill Rezabek Ahrendts Memorial Scholarship (alt)

Ryan Marsh: Northeast Community College, majoring in Electrical Tech-

nology/Lineman

Iverson Mejia: Chadron State College, majoring in Exercise Science

Participating in Wrestling

Anderson Melendez Dominguez: Seeking Employment in Rental Real Estate

Jordan Musil: Butler Community College, KS, majoring in Ag Science/Business

Scholarships earned: Gage County Ag Society Evie Crawford Scholarship; Gage County Ag Society Gage County Agriculture Scholarship; Farmers Cooperative Scholarship; Northwest Missouri State University Scholar Bearcat Advantage Scholarship; Northwest Missouri State University Bearcat Advantage Scholarship; Merlyn Anderson Scholarship; W-C FFA Betterment Scholarship; Loup Valley Livestock Show Scholarship; Gage County Agricultural Society Scholarship; Gage County Ag Society Evie Crawford Scholarship; First State Bank Nebraska Scholarship; Wilber Lions Club Scholarship; Justin Kunc Memorial Scholarship; John Chrastil Memorial Scholarship; Huneke Family Memorial Scholarship; Kral Memorial Scholarship; Brian Mager Memorial Scholarship; Shirley Pecka Memorial Scholarship; Steve & Lynn Wiese Scholarship (alt); W-C FFA Alumni Foundation Scholarship (alt)

Carter Neukirch: Seeking employment at Duncan Aviation  
Scholarships earned: FFA Betterment Scholarship  
Garrett Nohavec: SCC-Milford, majoring in Heating/Air/Plumbing  
Scholarships earned: Farmers Cooperative Scholarship; Farm Bureau Scholarship; Dorchester Methodist Church Scholarship  
Chance Odvody: seeking employment  
Bryson Olin: Seeking employment  
Cooper Palmer: Northwest Missouri State University, majoring in Pre-Physical Therapy  
Scholarships earned: Northwest Missouri State University Scholar Bearcat Advantage Scholarship; NWMS Bearcat Advantage Scholarship; Emma Chaloupka Shramek Memorial Scholarship; Herbert & Sylvia Schmale Memorial Scholarship; First State Bank Nebraska Scholarship (ALTERNATE); Clatonia Cardinal Club Scholarship (alt)

Micah Panning: SCC-Milford, majoring in Programming

Caden Parham: SCC-Lincoln, majoring in Criminal Justice

Scholarships earned: Smithfield Scholarship  
Rhett Paul, Jr: Seeking employment

Grant Petersen: UNL majoring in Sports Management

Scholarships earned: UNL University Award Scholarship; Nebraska Emerging Leaders Schol-

arship; James & June Glaser Memorial Scholarship; Otto & Antionette Smith Memorial Scholarship (alt)

June Petersen: SCC-Lincoln, majoring in Business

Scholarships earned: FFA Betterment Scholarship; Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #4959 Scholarship; Wilber Garden Club Scholarship; Jill Rezabek Ahrendts Memorial Scholarship; Irene Pivonka Sokolik Memorial Scholarship; W-C FFA Alumni Foundation Scholarship; Wilber Czech Craft Shop Scholarship (alt); Shirley Pecka Memorial Scholarship (alt)

Joseph Pucket: Doane University, majoring in Music Education

Scholarships earned: Doane University Alumni Referral \$1000 Scholarship; Doane University Teammates \$17,000 Scholarship; Doane University Piano \$2,000 Scholarship; Doane University Instrumental Music \$5,000 Scholarship; W-C Teammates Scholarship; Ludvik Simecek Memorial Scholarship; Mary Ellen Matulka Excellence in Education Scholarship; Joe & Emma Vesely Memorial Scholarship (alt); Participating in Instrumental Music  
Emily Rhodes: SCC-Lincoln, majoring in Radiology

Scholarships earned: W-C Teammates Scholarship

Kevin Salcido: Wayne State College, majoring in Journalism

Scholarships earned: Susan Thompson Buffett Scholarship; Wayne State College Dean's Excellence Scholarship; Smithfield Scholarship; Greater Omaha Youth Salute Scholarships [NE Wesleyan (\$1000 per year); Simpson College (\$4,000); NE Methodist (\$4,000)] Wayne State College Dean's Excellence Scholarship; Betty & Alan Steinacher Memorial Scholarship; Walter & Helene Baer II Memorial Scholarship (alt); William & Albina Musil Memorial Scholarship (alt)

Jamil Sampson Antunez: SCC-Lincoln, majoring in Emergency Medical Technician

Scholarships earned: William & Albina Musil Memorial Scholarship; Abbie & Adolph Trousil Memorial Scholarship (alt); W-C PTO Scholarship (alt)

Star Thelen: SCC-Lincoln, majoring in Culinary Arts/Baking/Business

Scholarships earned: Blue Valley Lodge No. 54 of Wilber Scholarship; Nebraska Czechs of Wilber Scholarship; Louis Trnik Memorial Scholarship; Iola Brolliar Memorial Scholarship (alt); Sertoma Service to Mankind Scholarship (alt)

Brooklyn Valenta: Seeking employment in Healthcare

Alena VanLaningham: Seeking employment

Aiden Zajicek: UNK, majoring in K-12 Physical Education

Scholarships earned: UNK Regents Scholarship (full tuition); UNK Football Scholarship; UNL (\$4,000); Greater Omaha Youth Salute Scholarships [NE Wesleyan (\$1000 per year); Simpson College (\$4,000); NE Methodist (\$4,000)]; Mary A. Greer Memorial Scholarship; Robert & Eleanora Houser Memorial Scholarship; Lad & Dorothy Kastanek Memorial Scholarship; Arlan Lohmeyer Memorial Scholarship; Pat Wallman Memorial Scholarship; Joe & Emma Vesely Memorial Scholarship; Wilber-Clatonia Education Association Scholarship; Kral Family Memorial Scholarship (alt); Raymond Lohmeyer Memorial Scholarship (alt); Mary Ellen Matulka Excellence in Education Scholarship; Participating in Football

Stephanie Zajicek: UNK, majoring in Pre-Nursing

Scholarships earned: Susan Thompson Buffett Scholarship; University of Nebraska-Kearney Opportunity Grant; UNK Grant; Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #4959 Auxiliary Scholarship; Wilber Garden Club Scholarship; Valarie J. Rezabek Memorial Scholarship; Joe & Helene Steinacher Memorial Scholarship; Walter & Helene Baer I Memorial Scholarship (alt); Friends of W-C Scholarship (alt)

Ivan Znamenacek: UNL, majoring in Mechanical Engineering

Scholarships earned: UNL University Award Scholarship; Nebraska Emerging Leaders Scholarship; Nebraska Czechs of Wilber Scholarship; Otto & Antoinette Smith Memorial Scholarship; ZCJB/WFLA Lodge Libuse/Praha #54 Scholarship (alt)

GOOD LUCK

Wilber-Clatonia Wolverines!

Hanson, Hroch & Kuntz

Attorneys At Law

302 South Wilson • Wilber, NE

(402) 821-2221

Edward Jones

Member SIPC

edwardjones.com

Brent S. Cole

Financial Advisor

1132 Main St.

Crete, NE 68333

402-826-5104

Preston Meints

Financial Advisor

511 2nd St. Suite D

Friend, NE 68359

402-947-2104

Tom Sorensen

Financial Advisor

1132 Main St.

Crete, NE 68333

402-826-5104

Eric Thornburg

Financial Advisor

975 E. Hwy 33 Suite 1

Crete, NE 68333

402-826-4719

Edward Jones

MKT-5894NA

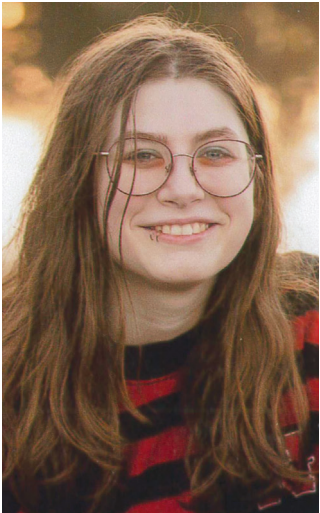
Edward Jones celebrates all area schools.

# Koepppe: Don’t judge before you know

BY CHANNER KOEPPPE  
Wilber-Clatonia valedictorian

Good afternoon everyone. I’m sure we’re all ready to be done with the formalities and get to the grad parties, but I’m forced to come up here and speak for you all. I’ve chosen to keep this fairly short and concise– but still impactful– for anyone willing to listen.

Many of you don’t really know me. I’ve heard assumptions about me that just aren’t true from classmates, parents, and even teachers. These assumptions have changed how people thought of and treated me, often negatively impacting both their behavior and my quality of life. I personally know others who have had much worse experiences as a result of incorrect judgments, and I believe it’s upsetting for anyone to have untrue things said about them and believed.



Channer Koepppe

I’m not here to sugarcoat, reminisce, or to reflect on the past and all of the memories we had in high school. The memories you have are for you to do with as you wish. Cherish them, hold them close, learn from them, and use them to push you towards your next goals. I’m here because I want to inspire improvement in all of us for what comes next.

In my nearly four years here at Wilber, I’ve learned a lot of things. One of those things is just how cruel people are to each other. I’ve seen how harsh and how judgmental people can be. (Myself included. None of this speech excludes me, because I’m a flawed person.) Everyone complains about school – even the students that enjoy learning dislike some aspect of it. Often, that’s the social aspect. Why is that?

I believe it’s because of judgment. We ALL have judged each other. When I first arrived here in my freshman year, I was to-tally convinced Kevin was a senior. I don’t know why I thought this, but I did, and I was scared to ask otherwise. But as a consequence – and as a very shy person – I was intimidated by him and too nervous to interact. This was an incorrect judgment I made about him, because Kevin

has been a wonderful and supportive friend for me throughout all of my high school years.

What if I had avoided him this whole time because I was too intimidated by him? I would have missed out on a meaningful friendship for the past three years. What if all of us have wrongfully judged someone and ended up missing out on a person that could have become a reliable neighbor, an important connection, or even our closest friend?

Many of us are heading into college or entering a new work environment, and we will meet new people with different ways of life. Many parents and current students in the audience also need this skill – we will all encounter someone we judge prematurely. Maybe there’s a person you saw sitting a couple seats or rows away, and you thought, “I could never interact with

them, because they seem a certain type of way.”

Let’s reevaluate that thought. Let’s learn to set aside judgments– because, yes, judging is human nature– but it shouldn’t change the way we initially greet them or the level of respect we give them at first meeting.

Learning to overcome our initial judgements about someone, whether those judgments are good or bad, is essential to growing as a person and learning about the world.

To be honest with you all, I was terrified to give this speech. I was scared of being judged or seen as stupid for whatever I said, regardless of the topic – no matter how much I try to push off that anxiety or reassure myself. Maybe that’s a flaw within myself, or maybe it says something about the values of our society. Me, the valedictorian, is scared of looking stupid. Is that my

fault... or everyone’s?

If you ever find yourself looking at a stranger and thinking that you could never talk to them, or thinking they seem stupid, or even thinking they must be so smart or good-looking that they’re above your level – take a step back. Is that really true? Why am I thinking this? Let’s choose to be kind to people as we get to know them, and make a difference moving forward.

I urge you to reflect on these ideas and your values this summer, and do your best to push forward and become a better version of yourself. Let’s be prepared to move on with this ceremony, our summers, and our lives.

Remember, nothing will ever be perfect, but we can always make things better. Thank you all for teaching me valuable life lessons, and let’s enjoy the rest of our graduation.

# Zajicek: School journey leads to growth

BY AIDEN ZAJICEK  
Wilber-Clatonia salutatorian

Hello Everyone.

I want to start off by saying how honored I am to speak to you all today. A little bit nervous, but still honored. When Ms. Shea first asked me to give a speech, I’ll admit I wasn’t exactly jumping around, but not because I didn’t want to do it, rather I had no idea what to write about. I looked up different speeches on the internet and on Youtube, but couldn’t find anything that I really wanted to do. It’s hard to put together four years of high school into just one little speech, but I’ll give it a shot.

Graduation is a strange mix of emotions. It’s exciting, it’s scary, and honestly it’s just hard to believe

it is already here. It feels like just yesterday we were walking into Miss Matulka’s class for the first time figuring out what it meant to “poke the bear.”

So much has changed since those early freshman days. We’ve grown, not just taller, but into people who are confident, resilient, and ready to take on what’s next.

We’ve learned how to keep going when things got tough, how to lean on each other, and how to find our way even when there wasn’t a clear map in front of us.

I think that is one of the most important things we learned in the halls of Wilber-Clatonia. Life isn’t going to give you step-by-step instructions. You have to figure it out on your own, and with the people around you. You



Aiden Zajicek

have to try things, mess up, change course, and keep going.

Along our journey of life, we need to decide who we want to be, and be it. Find something you enjoy, and pursue it. When we get knocked down, keep fighting. When we were

learning to walk, we didn’t just give up when we fell, we kept trying. Life is one big journey of trying to walk, and we’ve just completed the first chapter.

There will be moments in life when the path forward isn’t clear. When you feel uncertain or like you’ve hit a dead end. But that’s OK. The beauty of life is that we can reinvent ourselves as many times as we need to. It’s all about growing, evolving, and learning to trust that the right path will reveal itself.

Along the journey, we need to remember to thank the people who are stepping alongside of us. To our parents and families, thank you for standing behind us every step of the way. Your support, love, and patience carried us more than you probably

realize.

To our teachers, thank you for challenging us, helping us grow, and for caring about us not just as students, but as people. To our coaches, thank you for being more than just leaders on the field or court. You taught us how to handle adversity and how to lead with confidence. The lessons you gave us go far beyond sports, and we’ll carry them with us for the rest of our lives.

And to the Wilber-Clatonia community, thank you for being present and supportive of us. Whether you showed up at our games, helped with fundraisers, or just simply were there for us when we needed it, you made a difference, and we’re grateful.

So, as we head into this next chapter, remember

this: you have the power to shape your future. Embrace who you are, with all your strengths and imperfections, and go after your dreams with everything you’ve got.

Whether you are attending college, working, or still deciding, remember that our graduation here isn’t the end of our story, but the beginning of a new chapter in our lives. A chapter that we get to write.

So, take the next chapter on with courage. Stay curious. Stay kind. Surround yourself with good people, and don’t be afraid to fail. Michael Jordan once said, “Don’t be afraid to fail, be afraid not to try.”

Thank you, and Congratulations to the Class of 2025.

# McCrigh: Celebrate, look forward, enjoy day

BY OWEN MCCRIGT  
Wilber-Clatonia High School

Before we get started, Foam... you got to use the restroom? Knowing him, if he stands up to go to the bathroom once during this deal, he ain’t coming back....

Alright...Good afternoon, everyone! On behalf of the Wilber-Clatonia Class of 2025, I’d like to welcome all of you...family, friends, teachers, staff, and community members to our graduation ceremony. Thank you for being here today to celebrate this special moment with us.

It’s no secret that Wilber-Clatonia is a smaller school, but that’s exactly what makes today more meaningful. I believe that we are more than just classmates; we’re a family. We’ve grown up together, cheered each other on,



Owen McCrigh

made fun of one another, and somehow made it through Conway’s Pride and Prejudice book together... as we stand here today, ready to take the next steps, we know we didn’t get here alone.

To our teachers...thank you for your patience, and for always believing in us even on the days when we

didn’t make it easy... and I’m sure there were a lot of those days. You’ve shaped us not just as students, but as people, and we’re grateful.

To our families and friends...thank you for your constant support and encouragement. You’ve

been some of our greatest help, whether we were on the field, on the stage at senior class play, or at the kitchen table with late-night homework.

Now....To my fellow graduates...we made it! Today marks the end so celebrate! Wherever we

go from here...whether it’s work, college, the military, or your parents’ house... we carry the lessons and friendships from this school with us. Let’s celebrate this time, look forward to our future, and most importantly have fun today.

Thank you all for being here and welcome to the graduation ceremony of the Wilber-Clatonia Class of 2025! Oh and lastly... always remember... never argue with a fool, they will bring you down to their level... and beat you with experience.

Bryan

CRETE AREA MEDICAL CENTER

CRETE • WILBER • FRIEND

PROUD SUPPORTER OF SALINE COUNTY STUDENTS!

402-826-2102

BryanHealth.com/CAMC