Spring 2026

Connections

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More Than Bricks and Mortar: WAO's Vision for the Future

By: Melanie M. (Fulks) Nelson

WHS Class of 1981

In 2022, the Warren-Alvarado-Oslo community began envisioning something bigger than a building project. Meaningful change in an educational facility begins with a vision for the future—a commitment to creating spaces that inspire curiosity, foster collaboration, and empower every student to reach their full potential. That vision took root when school leaders, staff, and community members across Warren, Alvarado, and Oslo began exploring how best to meet the evolving needs of students for generations to come. What followed was a transformational journey that has reshaped not only the physical landscape of the WAO School District, but also the educational opportunities available to its students. Today, students, families, educators, and school leaders continue to work in partnership to provide a strong educational experience that inspires students to dream big and achieve their fullest potential.

The continual progress taking place within the Warren-Alvarado-Oslo School District reflects a long-term commitment among our three communities to meeting the evolving needs of students. While many community members have followed the project through news coverage, public meetings, and facility tours; understanding the history behind these improvements—and their impact on teaching and learning—provides valuable insight into what this growth means for current and future generations of WAO students.

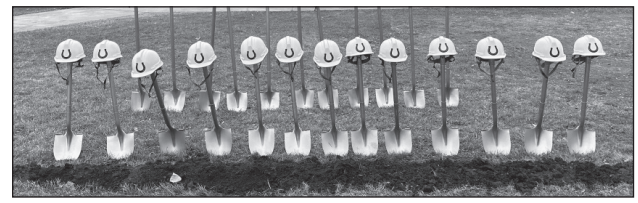
To understand the significance of this investment, it is important to examine both the district's history and its vision for the future. The story of WAO's growth is about more than facilities; it is about creating opportunities that will serve students and the community for generations to come.

As conversations about the WAO building project continue throughout the community, one question arises time and again: Why? Why now?

Many residents remember a time when enrollment was higher and question why a significant facility investment is needed today. It is a fair question. The answer extends beyond enrollment changes and reflects the evolving nature of education itself. Classrooms designed in the 1970s and 1980s were not built to support the diverse learning needs of today's students or the instructional approaches now shaping modern education.

Today's learning environments must support technology integration, hands-on experiences, and meaningful connections between students and curriculum. As education continues to evolve, so too must the spaces in which it takes place. Flexible, student-centered facilities are essential to supporting collaboration, engagement, and real-time access to information—skills that are critical for success in an ever-changing world. This vision became the foundation for reimagining how learning environments at the WAO Schools became necessary to evolve to meet the needs of every student within our learning system.

Prior to the public vote to approve a $24.9 million referendum in November 2022, school board members, administrators, staff, and community members spent months discussing the challenges facing the district's aging facilities. As plans began to take shape, it became clear that several needs would have to be addressed simultaneously, including school security, outdated infrastructure, limited learning space, and inefficiencies in building maintenance and operations.



Following voter approval in November 2022, planning quickly transitioned into action. What began as conversations about facility needs soon became visible progress as construction crews broke ground on improvements designed to serve students for generations to come.

The proposed project represented far more than a construction plan. It was a long-term investment in the future of WAO students and the communities the district serves. While new and renovated spaces would be the most visible result, the vision also focused on creating safer, more efficient, and more effective learning environments designed to meet the needs of today's students and tomorrow's learners.







Building through the seasons: Throughout the construction process, students, staff, and community members watched as new spaces emerged from months of planning and hard work. Each phase brought the district one step closer to creating modern learning environments that support safety, collaboration and student success.

Continued on page 6

Join the WAO Education Foundation for our 21st Annual

Golf Scramble Fundraiser

Friday, July 24, 2026

at Riverside Golf Course
Warren, MN

18-hole, 4-person scramble

Come for lunch and play 9 holes for fun.

Registration is NOW Open

Doors open at 7:00 a.m.
Shotgun start: 8:30 a.m.
$50.00/person

Pre-registration & payment strongly suggested.

Contact us at (218) 745-4646 ext. 1317 or email: edfoundation@wao.k12.mn.us
To reserve a golf cart, call 218-745-4028 and leave a message. Your call will be returned.

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Warren-Mesa Picnic

February 20, 2027 in Mesa, AZ

See page 8 for more information.

Warren-WHS/WAO Florida Picnic

February 6, 2027
Pavilion at Maxine Barret Park
beginning at noon

See page 8 for more information

150th Anniversary In 2030

The City of Warren is proud to announce the upcoming celebration of its 150th Anniversary in the year 2030. As part of the planning for this significant milestone, the Sesquicentennial Committee is seeking help from the community to gather stories, photographs, and historical memorabilia from the past 50 years (1980–2030). Please email information to warrenmn150@gmail.com or mail to:
Warren Sesquicentennial, PO Box 3, Warren, MN 56762

Marshall County Fair

July 22 – July 26, 2026

Recipients of 2026 Scholarships awarded by the WAO Education Foundation



WAO Education Foundation Scholarships

Front row: Markelle Pederson, Carissa Monroe, Rachel Wimpfheimer. Back row: Aiden Fitzgerald, Matthew Johnson, Ethan Ellerbusch, Cooper Deschene, Tucker Franks, Eli Solvik.



Greg M. Haugen Memorial Scholarships

Jorie Miska, Annie Peterson, Kyden Kotrba, Dalton Nelson, Noah Sedlacek



Tracy Chruszch Memorial Scholarships

Carissa Monroe, Rachel Wimpfheimer



Richard P. Nelson Memorial Scholarship

Markelle Pederson, Sheila Nelson



Chris Riopelle Memorial Scholarship

Cooper Deschene



Clifford and Richard Adrian Memorial Scholarship

Noah Dvorak



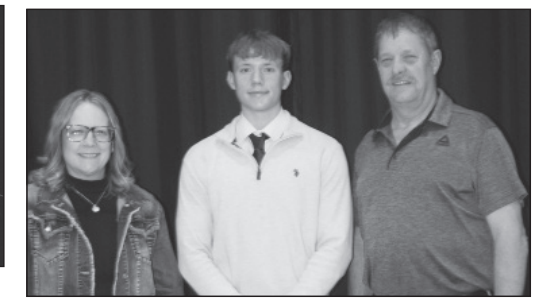
Vivian Olson Scholarship

Markelle Pederson



Lyle H. Engelstad Scholarships

Madeline Hamrick
Savannah Corbin



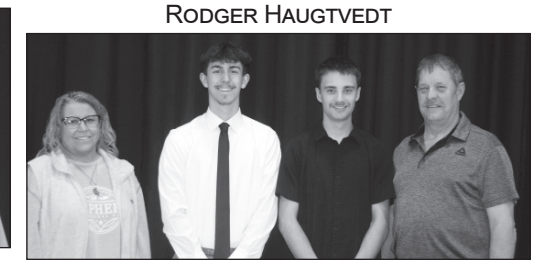
Warren Volunteer Ambulance Corps

Sally Roller, Kainen Koponen, Rodger Haugtvedt



Robert L. Strandberg Memorial Scholarships

Elliott Clark, Sebastian Johnson



Justin "Huggie" Haugtvedt Memorial Scholarships

Kim Haugtvedt, Cooper Deschene, Tucker Franks, Rodger Haugtvedt



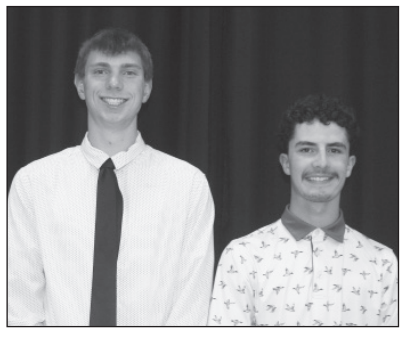
Gary Schuler Endowment Scholarships

Markelle Pederson, Kyden Kotrba



Myron & Margaret Carlson Scholarship

Mylo Carlson, Ava Maruska, Janet Aakre



Albert R. Chruszch Scholarships

Noah Dvorak, Blair Potucek



Merrill and Mildred Stroble Memorial Scholarships

Mikailah Brekke, Ava Maruska



Alvarado Lions Scholarships

Carissa Monroe, Ava Wittman



Paula Laudal Memorial Scholarships

Kainen Koponen, Mikailah Brekke



Don & Shirley Mager STEM Scholarships

Carissa Monroe, Cooper Deschene



Morris and Ivy Maruska Memorial Scholarship

Ava Maruska



Jeanne E. Kotrba Memorial Scholarships

Kainen Koponen, Ava Wittman, Markelle Pederson, Mitch Kotrba, Matthew Johnson, Michael Elseth, Tucker Franks



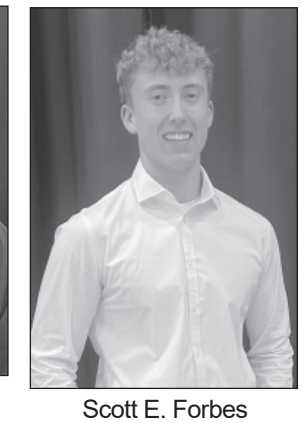
WHS Class of 1953 Scholarship

Aiden Fitzgerald



William G. Porter Memorial Scholarship

Michael Elseth



Scott E. Forbes Memorial Scholarship

Chase Kalt

Recipients of 2026 Scholarships awarded by the WAO Education Foundation



Stefan Johnson Memorial Scholarship
MATTHEW JOHNSON, WINSTON JOHNSON



Jeff Evin Memorial Scholarship
RYLAN FREDRICKSON



Lowell B. Goplin Scholarship
MATTHEW JOHNSON



Gertrude & Louie Kuznia Memorial Scholarship
ETHAN ELLERBUSCH



Stuart Hurst Angel Award
KENNY PRZYBYLA



Judovsky Family Farm Scholarship
BLAIR POTUCEK



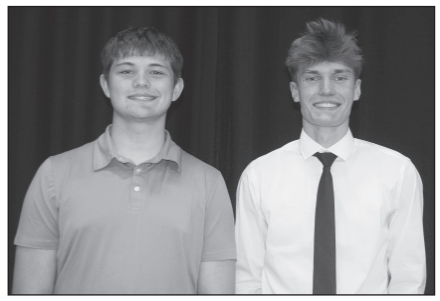
Noble and Dorothy Storbakken Memorial Educational Scholarship
AVA MARUSKA



WHS Class of 1959/ Lyle Anderson Football Challenge
ELI SOLVIK



O.J. Peyton Memorial Scholarship
CHASE KALT



WHS Class 1969 Scholarship
RYLAN FREDRICKSON, NOAH SEDLACEK



Elizabeth A. Porter Memorial Scholarship
CARISSA MONROE



Dennis & Louise Brekke & Family Endowment
CHASE KALT



Jim Johnston Football Scholarship
JIM JOHNSTON, CHASE KALT



WHS Class of 1957 Scholarship
AIDEN FITZGERALD



Fern Gilbert Memorial Scholarship
AVA MARUSKA



Rachel Peterson Memorial Scholarship
KURT PETERSON, ELLA OTTERSTETTER, JOHN PETERSON



Percy Gilbert Memorial Scholarship
MICHAEL ELSETH



Jim & Joyce Boardson Memorial Scholarships
BACK ROW: CHASE KALT, NOAH DVORAK. FRONT ROW: MADELINE HAMRICK, SAVANNAH CORBIN, ELLA OTTERSTETTER



Curt & Fay Kuznia Family Endowment Scholarship
MARKELLE PEDERSON



Edwin C. Johnson Memorial Scholarship
COOPER DESCHENE



Bob Mattson & Dave Schroeder Scholarship
RYLAN FREDRICKSON, DAVE SCHROEDER



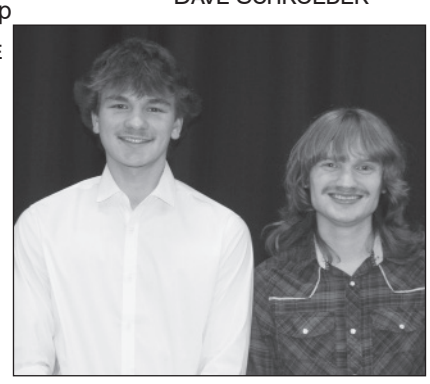
Percy & Fern Gilbert Memorial Scholarship
TUCKER FRANKS



Wayne Wrolson Memorial Scholarship
MARKELLE PEDERSON, ANNIE PETERSON, ELLA OTTERSTETTER, RYLAN FREDRICKSON, MATTHEW JOHNSON



Janice Johnston Memorial Scholarship
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Eric Johnson Memorial Scholarship
ELLIOTT CLARK, WINSTON JOHNSON



John and LaVerne (Storbakken) Messelt Educational Scholarship
AVA MARUSKA



Ron & Eleanor Wallenberg Memorial Scholarship
MATTHEW JOHNSON



Beverly and David Duckstad Memorial Scholarship
AVA MARUSKA, MARY CARLSON

Tribute and Memorial Gifts

November 1, 2025 – April 30, 2026

In Memory of Andy Deitz
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In Memory of Arlyn & Judy Stengrim
Junior & Carol (Stengrim) Buzalsky
In Memory of Barb (Elseth) Weis
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Suzie (Omdahl) Jevning
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Mary (Stanghelle) Coleman
Robert & Delores (Elseth) Ricker
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Judy (Wosick) Cochran
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In Memory of Ervin Rokke
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Sharon (Edgar) Abrahamson
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In Memory of Kim (Hanson) Jacobs
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Marlene (Wittman) Silnes
Suzie (Omdahl) Jevning
In Memory of Milo Monroe
Gerald & Sharon (Cheney) Cook
In Memory of Norita (Goplin) Beaudry
Don & Corrine (Goplin) Slaughter
Suzie (Omdahl) Jevning
In Memory of Orlan Ranstrom
Jacquelyn Ranstrom
In Memory of Patricia (Swanson) Rolland
Steve & Marie Goodwin
Jon & Brenda (Ackerson) Hapka
In Memory of Rachel Peterson
Allyn & Susan (Matcha) Roley
Arlyn & Marilyn (Kuznia) Stroble
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Karen Pearson
L. Peder & Karen Larson
Larry & Donna (Mackie) Laudal
Les & Gloria Reister
Linda (Engelstad) Turn
Lonnie Stauffenecker
Lori (Toupin) Johnson
Luann (Knudsen) Johnson
Margaret (Olson) Nelson
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Yvonne (Engelstad) Bossman
In Memory of Rick Neegard
Cindy (Neegard) Goulet
In Memory of Ron Abrahamson
Alan & Lana (Goplin) Schoenack
In Memory of Russell Goplin
Evelyn (Kasprowicz) Aylesworth
In Memory of Sandra (Stone) Forslund
Alan & Lana (Goplin) Schoenack
In Memory of Sharon (Barclay) Micoch
John & LaVerne (Storbakken) Messelt
In Memory of Sigvart "Sig" Silnes
Marlene (Wittman) Silnes
Charles & Rosemary (Wilkinson) Berget
In Memory of Susan Boman
Jon & Brenda (Ackerson) Hapka
Steve & Marie Goodwin
In Memory of Sylvia (Larson) Palmer
Lana (Hangsleben) Reynolds
In Memory of Trish Rogalla
Don Loeslie
Jan Aafedt
In Memory of Deceased WHS Class of 1958 Classmates
Dolores (Weiland) Zammert
In Honor of Arthur William Bossman's Birthday
Patty (Bossman) Hines
In Honor of Mylo & Marlene Carlson
Wayne & Deanna (Carlson) Zink
In Honor of WHS Class of 1965
David P. Johnson

The WAO Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization and every contribution is greatly appreciated. Even though we have carefully compiled this list of Memorials and Donations, please notify the Foundation if you believe any error has occurred.

News & Notes . . .

Brittany Palm, WAO 2003. After graduating from WAO High School, Brittany attended Minnesota State University, Moorhead where she earned her degree in Social Work. Following graduation, she was employed as a social worker in New York Mills for one year. Brittany moved back to Warren in 2008 and spent 13 years at Polk County Social Services. She served a variety of roles including caseloads of Adult Mental Health, Chemical Dependency, Child Protection, Child Care Licensing and Foster Care Licensing. Brittany returned to Warren in 2021 and began work as a high school counselor at her alma mater, WAO High School. She enjoys building relationships with students and helping them navigate their future plans. In her free time, she enjoys cooking and spending time with family and friends as well as attending WAO extra-curricular events and reading (when she has time for it).

Mallory (Westberg) Craik, WAO 2004. Mallory attended UND after high school. She took some classes from Bemidji State and also at Aakers Business College. In 2005, Mallory went to photography school at Central Lakes Technical College in Staples, MN. After one year of photography school, she entered the work force as a photographer assistant and graphic designer at Tweten's Photography in Grafton, ND. In 2008, Mallory married Jake Craik. Unfortunately, that same year her dad, Lowell Westberg, passed away. Mallory and Jake decided to move to Warren where she opened up her own photography studio and Jake worked for the Westberg Body Shop and now Jake works for the U.S Postal Service. They have two sons John and Wilson.

Now you will learn what everyone in Warren knows: Not a single blade of grass grows under this lady's feet! Her photography shop in Warren was known as Mallory's Studio. She photographed hundreds of high school seniors, younger children and families. As her family grew, Mallory started scaling down her photography business to spend more time with her growing boys. She also worked part-time jobs as a Rodan & Fields Skin Care Consultant, worked at Simply Boutique, a women's clothing and gift store in Warren, Warren S.O.S outreach, Our Savior's Lutheran Church as secretary and as the WAO Education Foundation secretary. Mallory is currently a writer and photographer at the Warren Sheaf. In 2023, she and Jake opened a pet cremation business (Great Eastern Pet Cremation) to serve area pet owners in their time of loss. Mallory teaches an exercise and strength class at Iron Wheel Fitness. She is also a North Valley Health Center board member and a WAO Curriculum Committee board member. Since 2020, Mallory has been passionate about bringing clean water and the gospel to the unreached. She has helped fundraise for 5 clean water wells in Africa and India. She is ordained to officiate wedding ceremonies and will officiate her third wedding this fall. One last thing but certainly not the least, her sons are very active in WAO athletics, FFA and rodeo (especially bull riding)!

Gary Goroski, WHS 1983. After graduating from high school, Gary enlisted and served in the U.S Navy. His first assignment was to the USS George Washington Carver (SSBN 656 Blue Crew). His Nuclear Ballistic Submarine home port was Groton, Connecticut. He was honorably discharged in 1987. After finishing his military service, he attended the University of North Dakota and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice. For the next 23 years, he worked as a correctional officer at the North Dakota State Penitentiary in Bismarck, North Dakota. Currently, he is working as the Outreach Ministry Coordinator at the Spirit of Life Catholic Church in Mandan, North Dakota. Gary has been married to his wife, Stephanie for 34 years. They have three children and two grandchildren.



From left to right are, Chelsey Gloude, WAO 2006; Lisa Johnson (mom) and Colin Gloude, WAO 2009 (brother) in Illinois at Chelsey's last race.

She did it! Congratulations to Chelsey Gloude for finishing a half marathon in all 50 states plus Washington D.C. We shared about Chelsey's journey in the August 27, 2025 edition of the Sheaf. It was great to learn about her goal and to now see her complete that goal. Her final race was on May 31st in Illinois.

Chelsey reflected on Facebook with these words, "When I started this journey, there was never really a timetable of when I would finish, if that would ever really become reality. Through injuries, COVID, race cancellations, sickness, every kind of weather, elevation changes, flights, car rentals, hotel stays, jet lag, car rides, through it all…God is so kind and I'm just really grateful for the opportunities and friendships along the way! Not every race went well, but to finish safely was/is/will always be the number one goal. And to have a body, mind, soul, and heart that got me through it all!"

Chelsey's mom, Lisa Johnson, hosted an open house celebration for her at the Warren American Legion and many friends, family and community members came out to congratulate Chelsey on a goal well met. On display was an impressive spread of race medals and her US map with all states filled in.



High School Reunion

2026 Class Reunions

AHS 1971
Terry Yanish
terryyanish@yahoo.com

AHS 1976 — July 25th
Alvarado Community Center, 5-7 pm
Karen (Hoff) Gowan
701-739-2570

OHS 1976 — August 15th
Vicki Fruetel
Vicki.fruetel@manvelk8.com

WHS 1956 — July 22nd
Don Loeslie's Home
4-5 p.m.
Suzie (Omdahl) Jevning
suzie@mn.cable.net

WAO 1996 — July 24-25
Amy (Maurstad) Bartels
218-201-2530

WHS 1966 — July 24
Warren American Legion
2-5 p.m.
Jerrilyn Olson Potucek
djpotucek@yahoo.com
218-201-0551

WHS 1976 — July 24th
Kelly Foerster
Kjfoerster23@gmail.com
218-791-6200
Friends of the Class of 1976 would be welcome to stop by to reconnect and visit after 6:30-7 p.m., Golf Club House

WHS Class 1986 — July 25th
Brent Strickler
strickler.brent@gmail.com
218-289-7333
Stacy (Bossman) Nicholls
dsnicholls@gra.midco.net
218-289-7337

WAO 2001— July 25th
4:30 pm
Marshall County Fair Beer Gardens
Emily (Hille) Gustafson
218-201-0546

WAO 2006 — July 24th
7 p.m.
Warren Golf Course
Chelsey Gloude
chelsglo28@gmail.com
Bethany (Mock) Wright
218-251-7599

OHS Class 1986 — August 15
40th Class Reunion
Linda Keegan Paschke
651-402-8569

Donations

November 1, 2025 - April 30, 2026

Barbara (Anderson) Jorgenson
Ben & Kari (Stinar) Miska
Brian & Denise Laymon
Calvin & Amber Schoepp
Cathie Kallstrom
Cynthia Ann Braun
David & Annette Maurstad
David J. Engstrom
David Sorensen
Dean & Mary Jo Chandler
Dennis J. Dwenger
Dona (Fagerstrom) Nielsen
Duane Erickson
Duan M. Bjerke
Ed & Renee (Rehder) Rosendahl
Eloise (Austinson) Wheeler
Eric & Mary Stanislowski
Evelyn (Kasprowicz) Aylesworth
Fern (Hendrickson) Fleck
Gerald & Sandra (Potucek) Maruska
Gerald & Sharon (Cheney) Cook
Gerry & Patti (Olson) Evin
Henrietta (VanBaalen) Bergman
Janet (Srnsky) Broesch
Jared Goodwin
Jeanne Johnson
Jeremy & Jaime Woinarowicz
Jerry & Mary (Sorenson) Sedlacek
Jim Johnston
Joe & Karen Dunn
John & LaVerne (Storbakken) Messelt
John Peterson
John Short
Jon & Julie (Fulks) Jonasson
Jordan & Brooke (Bork) Johnson
Joy (Johnson) Lavik
Karl & Jennifer Pawlowski
Kelsey (Sorenson) Deschene
Ken & Joanne (Maruska) Kostka
Laura Efta
Leslie & Patty (Pickett) Howard
Linda Short
Lori Ann Cameron
Lou Ann (Steffen) Beck
Margaret (Streich) Dufault
Mark & Judy (Evin) Flaten
Mark & Lisa Turgeon
Mark & Mary (Duckstad) Carlson
Mark & Merilee Potucek
Mason & Annah Wang
Matt & Ashley (Holien) Vongroven
Melba Laidley
Michael & Donna (Laymon) Miller
Michelle Boroski
MiChelle (Miller) Nybo
Mintie Ferguson
Myrna (Godel) Super
Neil & Kison (Schuler) Miller
Pat (Gilbert) Carlson
Pat Znajda
Patricia Wallenberg
Phyllis Novak
Raymond Larson
Richard Stanghelle
Robb & Kay (Hendrickson) Root
Robert & Delores (Elseth) Ricker
Robert & Paula Mischel
Rodger & Kim Haugtvedt
Russell Hickman
Scott & Tamara (Johnson) Oberg
Sharon (Edgar) Abrahamson
Sharon (Botko) Kays
Stanley & Marilyn (Strickler) Sirek
Stephen & Elizabeth Murray
Sylvester & Carol Vanyo
Terry Jordan
Tim & Linda (Haugen) Conely
Todd & Jan (Narlock) Mortimer
Todd & Kathy (Clausen) Johnston
Todd & Shelly Maruska
Tony & Michelle Gullikson
Verona Poolman
Wayne & Rhonda Jordheim
Wendy (Rustad) Storey
Zachery Stene

More Than Bricks and Mortar: WAO's Vision for the Future

(Continued from page 1)



Students, staff, school leaders, and community members gather to celebrate the ribbon cutting ceremony at the WAO School District, marking the culmination of a shared vision that began in 2022. The completed project reflects years of planning, collaboration, and community support, resulting in updated learning spaces designed to inspire curiosity, collaboration, and achievement for current and future generations of WAO students.

As the Warren-Alvarado-Oslo School District continues with a forward vision, the impact of this project will be measured not only in updated facilities, but in the daily experiences of students and staff who learn and work within them. From the earliest conversations in 2022 to the completion of new and renovated spaces today, this journey reflects a shared commitment by the tri-community to invest in education. Ultimately, the greatest outcome of this effort will be seen in the opportunities created for students—those who will carry forward the legacy of learning, growth, and possibility for years to come. When discussing the entirety of the project with Mr. Bryan Hackbarth, WAO Superintendent, shared, "Looking back, I don't think there was ever a day without the excitement and anticipation of something special happening at WAO. Even with all of the challenges along the way, that is what kept all of us all so positive and supportive of one another. One of the things I am personally most proud of is that we continued to operate our schools on time and without interruption throughout the course of the building project. But what makes it even more special, is that we continued to "grow" and "get better" the whole time. That is something I observed from my vantage point and why I know that the future is very bright at WAO! "It was definitely an experience like no other; and thanks to the support and trust of our community, we now have a very special school for the greatest students and staff in the world! Let's Go Ponies!!!" Thank you to Mr. Hackbarth for his time during the writing of this article.

There will be an opportunity to view the renovated project on Saturday, July 25th from 10 am to 2 p.m. during the Marshall County Fair. For more information on the completed project, please visit the WAO district website: https://www.wao.k12.mn.us/buildingprojectupdates.







Newly completed learning spaces at WAO—including modernized classrooms and expanded commons areas in both the high school and elementary school—reflect the district's vision to create flexible, student-centered environments. Designed to support collaboration, engagement, and a wide range of learning needs, these spaces represent a continued investment in providing high-quality educational opportunities for current and future WAO students.

Chat with the Chairman

Dear Alumni and Friends of the Foundation,

The snowbanks are finally gone, and they have been replaced with green grass. The sounds of lawn mowers, birds chirping, and the sights and sounds of spring are all around us. The Warren area endured a long, cold, snowy winter. Now it's time to turn our thoughts to summer and all of the inspirational, fun activities.

The past two years have been very exciting with the remodel/building project. A few things remain to be finished once school has closed for the summer. I know many of you that are coming back to the area are looking forward to visiting the school to see all of the updates, and new locations for certain areas, etc. You are going to be so proud to be a "Pony!"

On May 20th, we announced that we facilitated fifty scholarships to twenty eight WAO seniors that applied to the Foundation totaling $200,400. In addition, twelve of these scholarships are renewable. Wow! The WAO Senior Class is most fortunate to have the great support from the alumni and friends of the various scholarships.

Students and staff are thinking that they won't have to totally pack up their classrooms and all items, but rather summer vacation and the Foundation is thinking class reunions and our 21st annual Golf Scramble. Come join us for a day of fun, food, and prizes at the Riverside Golf Course beginning with a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, July 24th. The registration fee remains at $50.00 and can be mailed to PO Box 125 at Warren or be paid with Venmo. We're looking forward to seeing many of you when you come home for your reunions or the fair!

Long time Foundation board member Darren Carlson left the board this spring. We welcomed Bob Conley as a new member. Bob grew up in Warren and is a 1976 WHS graduate.

We truly appreciate your help in keeping our database as current as possible. Your letters, notes, texts with changes are very important. If you have a winter address beginning in December, please let us know that also so we can make sure you get your Connections wherever you are. Thank you for taking the time to update us. Postage rates keep going up and it helps when we don't have to resend the "Connections" when they come back marked undeliverable!

The Florida and Arizona gatherings were held in February and were very successful. Special thanks to David Sholy, Kay (Hendrickson) Root, Mary (Ovsak) Gazada, Dean and Joanne Dahlman, and Hank Hendrickson for all of their work and preparation of these two events.

Over the past many years the Foundation has sponsored the annual spelling bee that has been historically held in January. The 2026 WAO Winner, Natalie Larson, moved on to the regional spelling bee in Thief River Falls. Natalie placed fifth out of thirty contestants in this event!

National Teacher Day was May 5th. Each teacher was given a dilly bar gift certificate to the Warren Dairy Queen in appreciation for all of their work and devotion to WAO.

Thanks to the generous donations, memorials, etc. we have been able to provide many things for our staff and students. We sponsored field trips for various elementary classes that applied to us for funding. A trip to the Fargo Zoo, the Bemidji Science Center, a day of ice fishing at Lake of the Woods, a trip to the pumpkin patch in late autumn, and a movie at a theater were some of the trips. We provided many dollars for decodable books for various grades along with books for classroom libraries. Along with other organizations related to WAO we contributed $30,000 towards a plasma cutting table for the Industrial Tech Department. You'll be wowed by the items that this piece of equipment can make in a short time. We are grateful for a substantial estate gift that has allowed the high school science department to expand its resources and equipment.

Enjoy the summer days and we look forward to seeing you when you come "home" for the fair, a class reunion, the golf scramble, or just to reminisce and visit family and friends!

If our board can be of any help to you, please reach out to us via email (edfoundation@wao.k12.mn.us) or phone (218-745-4646 EX. 1317). As our motto states WE CAN'T SUCCEED WITHOUT YOU!



WAO Schools Open House

Saturday, July 25

10 am to 2 pm

Everyone Welcome!



Claire Decker, WAO sophomore, qualified to attend the 2026 Visual Arts State Festival with her digital art piece named "Perla OC". Claire writes " I enjoy designing characters, so I created my own original character (OC) inspired by the show Hazbin Hotel, which I have loved since it's release. This piece reflects my goal of becoming a character designer for show, movies and video games in the future. Content and design I explored references on Pinterest, especially siren designs with wider-set eyes and used them to shape Perla's features. I also designed multiple outfits that match her everyday style. Her look is influenced by an "office siren" concept. The color scheme comes from VoxTek, a business in the show, since Perla works there. I begin with a general idea, gather references, sketch, line and then color using base tones, harsh and soft shading and highlights. Sometimes my drawing app crashes and loses progress, forcing me to redo work, which can be frustrating but helps me improve patience. I discovered a border tool in my app that makes my work cleaner and more consistent. Over all, I am improving my drawing skills and gaining confidence in my artistic process. I plan to continue practicing anatomy, color theory and story telling to further develop my personal style and creative voice."

Kyden Kotrba Invited To Compete In The Coast To Coast Golf Championship



Kyden Kotrba, WAO 2026, was invited to compete in the Coast 2 Coast International Golf Championships taking place from July 13-15, 2026, at the stunning RACV Royal Pines Resort on the beautiful Gold Coast of Australia. Kyden earned his invitation by meeting specific qualifying standards during his 2025 golf season while competing in the 2025 Minnesota State Golf Tournament at Becker, Minnesota. His journey began at the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport on July 7th, (his 18th birthday), with following flights to Sydney, Australia and then on to the Gold Coast. TEAM USA will stay in Surfers Paradise, Australia where he will practice and compete at the Royal Pines Resort. Kyden is traveling with 16 other male golfers from around the United States. They will compete against various international golfers from Australia and other parts of the world over the three-day tournament. Kyden is very excited for his opportunity. He has been overwhelmed by all the community support and well-wishes he has received to make this all possible.

2026 WAO Alumni Hall Of Fame Selectees

The 2026 WAO Alumni Hall of Fame selectees are,

William "Billy " Saetre
Duane " Dewey" Swanson
Darlene (Johnson) Pagnac

Congratulations to these selectees and to all those who were nominated. All nominees not selected will remain eligible for future consideration for five years.

The induction Ceremony will be held on Friday, July 24 during the Marshall County Fair.



Recently Deceased Alumni, Staff & Friends

These are death notices of alumni and staff that we have received. If you have additions or corrections, please contact the Education Foundation.

WHS 1942	Florence (Loeslie) LaMonte
WHS 1948	Doris (Wimpfheimer) Erickson
Friend	Jan (Carik) Riopelle
Friend	Marlene Owens
Friend	Joyce Holmstrom
WHS 1952	Norita (Goplin) Beaudry
WHS 1962	Duane Ranstrom
WHS 1961	Daryl Olson
OHS 1953	William "Billy" Zola
WHS 1953	Ethel (Kliner) Safranski
WHS 1976	Brenda (Rosten) Pokrzywinski
WHS 1981	Bonnie Kaml
AHS 1951	Mark Edman
WHS 1953	Marlys (Mattson) Nelson
Friend	Ed Turn
WHS 1949	Yolanda (Stymiest) Carlson
WHS 1975	Beverly Maurstad
WHS 1955	Marcy (Swanson) Sessions
OHS 1947	Norman Sather
Friend	Wayne Christner
WHS 1949	Vivian (Swanson) Rogholt
Friend	Charles "Chuck" Steffan
WHS 1951	Richard Pinkerton
WHS 1962	Marcia Olson
OHS 1972	Kimberly (Hoff) Nordling
OHS 1969	Sandra (Ebertowski) Neil
WHS 1969	Edward Golden
AHS	Allen Shane
Friend/ Teacher	Rachel Peterson
WHS Custodian	Hazel Hendrickson
WHS 1989	Mitch Anfinson
WHS 1957	Marlene (Wesolowski) Tureson
Friend	Robert Pape, Jr.
Para	Gail (Ebertowski) Knutson
OHS 1976	Lori (Holter) Chisholm
WHS 1975	Jayne Broten
Friend	Phil Hebert
Friend	Louise Brekke
WHS 1967	Donn Pribula
OHS 1958	Paul Messelt
WHS 1964	Yvonne Rogalla
Friend	Michael Wichmann
WHS 1966	Duane Flaten
Teacher	Howard Hendrickson
AHS 1976	Dale Narlock
WHS 1962	Donald L. Olson
WAO 2001	Austin Roley
WHS 1958	Calmer V. Anderson
WHS 1969	Curt Myrfield
Friend	Marilyn Chruszch

Recently deceased family and friends list is updated weekly on the Education Foundation link at www.wao.k12.mn.us

WAO Student Selected As FCCLA National Contest Creator



WAO FCCLA member Nora Otterstetter has been selected as one of only 10 FCCLA National Content Creators for the 2026 National Leadership Conference (NLC) in Washington, D.C.

As part of this prestigious team, Nora will work alongside FCCLA National Staff to capture and share the excitement, leadership, and connections that make the National Leadership Conference such a memorable experience. Through photos, videos, and social media storytelling, she will help showcase the conference to FCCLA members across the country.

Being selected as a National Content Creator is a significant honor and reflects Nora's creativity, leadership, and dedication to FCCLA. She will represent both WAO FCCLA and Minnesota FCCLA while helping tell the story of FCCLA's Ultimate Leadership Experience from our nation's capital this July.

Congratulations, Nora! We are incredibly proud of you and look forward to following your journey in Washington, D.C.

Some Of Those Who Attended The Warren Area Spring Arizona And Florida Reunions



ARIZONA GATHERING — Don Vettelson, WHS 1962; Stan Sirek, WHS 1958; Gary Vettleson, WHS 1956; Sharon (Strunk) Carlson, WHS 1956; Jerry Dalzell, Superintendent and Principal; Ruth (Wood) Sease; WHS 1963; Marion (Hickman) Pace, WHS 1961; Suzie (Omdahl) Jevning, WHS 1956.



ARIZONA GATHERING — Brothers Gary and Don Vettleson.



FLORIDA GATHERING — Magician Star Newman; Jim Johnston, WHS 1968 and Lowell Sedlacek, WHS 1965.



FLORIDA GATHERING — Jim Emerson (husband of Pat Stroble); Magician Star Newman and Dean K. Peterson, WHS 1968.



ARIZONA GATHERING — Arizona/WAO area picnic committee: Mary (Ovsak) Gazda, WHS 1974; Joanne and Dean Dahlman, WHS 1967; Hank Hendrickson, WHS 1972; Kay (Hendrickson) Root, WHS 1969.



ARIZONA GATHERING — Perry and Mynette (Copp) Kolnes, her son Chris Frederick and daughter-in-law Rebecca (Loeslie) Frederick.



FLORIDA GATHERING — Larry Daby, WHS 1962.



FLORIDA GATHERING — Jim Johnston, WHS 1968 and Wayne Edgar, WHS 1961.



FLORIDA GATHERING — Pat (Stroble) Emerson, WHS 1964 and Carole (Stroble) Edgar WHS 1963.



ARIZONA GATHERING — Rita and Jerry Dalzell, center, visiting with a few of the 70's students. Front row: Jeanne (Mattson) Larson, WHS 1972. Back row: Kathy (Lam) Mattson, WHS 1970 and Susie and Curt Kuznia, WHS 1972.



ARIZONA GATHERING — Larry Sabol, WHS 1981 and Debbie Sabol, Argyle 1980.



FLORIDA GATHERING — Larry Daby, WHS 1962 and David Sholy, WHS 1967.

Another fun-filled gathering for family and friends from the Warren and surrounding area was held in Mesa, AZ, February 21, 2026.

As always, Kay (Hendrickson) Root started the day the same way her father Orvin, "The Voice of Warren" started the Warren radio broadcast back in the day. Although the Mesa weather was perfect, this year she surprised everyone with the Warren weather report. "Looking out the weather window, it's a sunny day with a high of 6 degrees and a low of -2. But hang around, tomorrow you'll see a balmy 7 degrees." This brought chuckles from the group and a reality check on why we are in Arizona.

Last year we had a group sharing of stories. This year there was so much noisy conversation that it was hard enough getting the group quiet for the prayer. So, mark your calendars for February 20, 2027, and join us for good food, door prizes and lots of hometown stories. We would love to see more attendees from the surrounding towns.

Committee members are: Joanne and Dean Dahlman, Mary (Ovsak) Gazda, Hank Hendrickson and Kay Root (kayroot@gmail.com).

Warren-WAO Florida Picnic

February 6, 2027

The visual extravaganza of Sarasota awaits you!!

It's a sight to see and a perfect day will be in store for you.

Come one and all to Florida for the 2027 WAO & Friends gathering at the Pavilion at Maxine Barret Park.

More details will be in the fall "Connections" and on various Warren sites on Facebook.

Arizona Warren And Surrounding Area Potluck

Feb. 20, 2027

At the Viewpoint Golf Resort, Mesa, AZ

Come Connect with Classmates and Yet Make New Friends!

Warren/Alvarado/Oslo Public School Education Foundation

Office: 745-4646, Ext. 1317
P.O. Box 125, Warren, MN 56762
e-mail: edfoundation@wao.k12.mn.us
Visit us on Facebook!

Does your business/company have a matching gift program? This often enables your gift/donation to double in size. If so, contact us for our tax ID number when you fill out the forms for the match.

BOARD MEMBERS:

Lisa Almquist
Carol Anderson
Bob Conely
Rodger Haugtvedt
Jen Nelson
Melanie Nelson
Ed Rosendahl
Dewey Swanson
Jessica Syverson

SCHOOL BOARD LIASONS

Jordan Johnson
Ashley Reinier
Sally Roller

Life for our children, our grandchildren, and the neighborhood children will be better because of your efforts and contributions. Be a part of this campaign to ensure that our children are equipped to succeed.

Enclosed is my contribution to support the work of the WAO Education Foundation

❑ $_____ ❑ Membership ❑ Tutor ($1-99) ❑ Educator ($100-499)
❑ Mentor ($500-999) ❑ Scholar ($1,000-4,999) ❑ Benefactor ($5,000 or more)

Class of: WHS _____ OHS _____ AHS _____ WAO _____

Other: (specific) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I would like information on the benefits of planning a gift to the WAO Education Foundation through ❑ my will ❑ an insurance policy

Make checks payable to: WAO Education Foundation
(All gifts to WAO Public Education Foundation are tax deductible.)
Send to: PO Box 125, Warren, MN 56762

Name _____

Please specify here whom should receive notification of this gift

Notice to: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Gift Recognition

For accumulated gift totals of $500 or more, an engraved recognition plate bearing your name will be added to the Recognition Wall in the Warren/Alvarado/Oslo School.

www.wao.k12.mn.us email: edfoundation@wao.k12.mn.us (218) 745-4646

Warren-Alvarado-Oslo Public School Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization to benefit education.

Gifts of $100 or more to the Foundation are recognized on an attractive donor board located in the east entrance of the high school.

Please Contribute The Ed Foundation would appreciate your financial support, so we can continue to send you this newsletter.

Give Us Your Ideas Let us know what is interesting to you or what other information you'd like to see in this newsletter.