



YMCA of the Northwoods
Teen Character
Awards
April 14, 2024



Presented by



Rotary
Rhineland



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Welcome

Tonight, we recognize teens for strengthening their community through the demonstration of exemplary character and living the Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Each award recipient has found a way to be a positive role model for their peers as they overcame unique challenges in their own lives.

The Teen Character Awards are a chance for us to pay forward our gratitude for the hard work and dedication of our local teens, encouraging them to continue to lead their lives with positive character values.

As our community's largest youth-serving charity, we nurture the potential of every child and teen. We encourage, support, and motivate them to live up to their potential. With these future change makers in our community, we are convinced we are in good hands.

Join me in celebrating these impactful teens. For a better you. For a better us. For a better community.

***Linda May, Chief Executive Officer
YMCA of the Northwoods***



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Program

-Welcome-

Linda May, Chief Executive Officer, YMCA of the Northwoods

-Introduction-

Tammy Zellmer, Youth Enrichment Director, YMCA of the Northwoods

-Invocation and Blessing-

Colton Mellinger, Executive Director, Headwaters Christian Youth

-Dinner-

-Masters of Ceremony-

Geoff Weller, Chief Meteorologist, WJFW-Newswatch 12

Dan Hagen, News Anchor/Assistant News Director, WJFW-Newswatch 12

-Keynote Speaker-

Coach Eric K. Dixon

Youth Sports Performance Coach, Forest County Potawatomi Community

Certified Domestic Violence Counselor

Certified International Olympic Youth & Adult Athletic Coach

-Presentation of Awards-

Greg Harvey, President, Rhinelander Rotary Club

-Y Teen Character Scholarship-

Matt Steingraber, Scholarship Founder

Program and Development Director, YMCA of the Northwoods

-Closing Comments-

Stephanie Dahlquist, Associate Executive Director, YMCA of the
Northwoods

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About the Awards

This special evening marks the 21st Annual Teen Character Awards which celebrates the hard work and commitment of teens in our communities who make a lasting impact on others.

The YMCA Teen Character awards started in 2003 honoring twenty teens. Since then, over five hundred teens have been honored with this award. The opportunity to share their stories and impact is unique.

These award winners are a living example of strong moral character, leadership, and service, who are dedicated to strengthening families, schools, and communities. Each one of these teens is a testament to the character traits of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. In a time when our communities are faced with immense challenges, it is vital that we reach out to each other and share these amazing stories.

Tonight, we demonstrate character in action and applaud all our winners for their accomplishments. We encourage them to continue to lead their lives with the positive character values they have displayed. Through their actions, we are reminded that each of us can make a difference, even when no one is watching. One person's actions are contagious and can inspire a family, a school, or a community.

YMCA CORE VALUES:

CARING is evidenced by helping and loving others.

HONESTY is evidenced by truthfulness and integrity.

RESPECT is evidenced by valuing the worth of others and self.

RESPONSIBILITY is evidenced by accountability to others and self.

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Keynote Speaker: *Coach Eric K. Dixon*

The abusive childhood and teenage years Coach Eric Dixon endured gave him firsthand insight into the psychology of abuse victims. Despite the abuse, Coach Dixon was able to create a psychological path to positive living. Coach Dixon is a sought-after track coach for all ages training and mentoring kids despite his abusive upbringing. He currently coaches elite high school students, college athletes, US Air Forces Wounded Warrior members, and a national master's women's team. In addition, Coach Dixon competes for USA Track and Field in the Master's Men's Division in National and International competition. As a child, Coach Dixon was unable to compete in track because in uniform people would see the scars on his body.



2024 Nominees

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Nate Ariola

Lakeland Union High School-Senior

Nominator: Deena Woller

Nate, an honor student and senior, is known for his hard work, dedication, and positive attitude. He excels in basketball, football, and baseball, and has been recognized on the homecoming court. Nate is also employed at a local supper club and has independently paid for his car. He is currently considering multiple college offers. His community service includes environmental work with the Minocqua Lake Society, assisting elderly church members, and spreading holiday cheer at a local nursing home. His actions have had a significant, appreciated impact on the community, natural resources, and the elderly. Nate's involvement in sports, church youth group, and maintaining honor roll status exemplify his commendable character.



Omar Bailey

Crandon High School – Senior

Nominator: Ryan Siggelkow

Omar, a dedicated basketball player and respected member of the Forest County Potawatomi Community, is known for his maturity, integrity, and grit. His sportsmanship on the court is unparalleled, often being the first to assist fallen opponents. His work ethic has earned him respect as a team captain. Omar's positive influence extends beyond the court, impacting his community significantly. He represented his tribe at the 2023 North America Indigenous Games, winning gold and bronze medals. His achievements have set a precedent for the youth athletes in his community. Beyond sports, Omar works as a lifeguard at the community's aquatics center, dedicating his time to educating and assisting others. His focus and dedication are truly commendable.



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Alivia Barthels-Cheslock

Rhineland High School - Junior
Nominator: Michael Cheslock

Alivia is a model of responsibility, respect, honesty, and caring. She joined the workforce at 14, demonstrating maturity and responsibility beyond her years. Her respectful demeanor is appreciated by her teachers, peers, and coworkers. Alivia's honesty is evident in her open communication with her parents, and her caring nature shines through her mentoring work with 5th graders at Central School. Her involvement in community events, such as face-painting at "Hodag Day at the Dome," showcases her artistic talent and willingness to give back to the community. Alivia's actions have positively impacted many, especially the 5th graders she mentors. Her extracurricular activities include her job at Menard's, membership in the Art Club and Key Club, and involvement in the Educators Rising Club.



Aubrey Beyer

Northland Pines High School – Senior
Nominator: Dan Marien

Aubrey is known for her academic diligence, leadership in sports, and humble service to the community. She excels in her studies, maintaining a 4.0 GPA while taking a rigorous course load. As a respected member of the National Honor Society and the Student Athlete Leadership Team (SALT), she sets a positive example for her peers. Aubrey's leadership extends to the basketball court, softball field, and cross-country courses, where she inspires her teammates with her focus and responsibility. Beyond school, Aubrey actively volunteers at her church and participates in numerous charitable activities, demonstrating her genuine care for others. Her supportive nature is also evident in her relationship with her three brothers. Aubrey's impact on her school and community will undoubtedly continue as she moves on to greater endeavors after high school.



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Taya Bolte

Northland Pines High School – Senior
Nominator: Amber Tilley

Taya, a respected student, and community member is known for her communication skills, kindness, and efficiency. She serves as the Secretary of the Student Council and is a trusted liaison between the Student Council and the administration of Northland Pines. Taya is deeply involved in her community, volunteering at various events and working with the local community to maintain the beauty of downtown Eagle River. She also manages several school teams and organizes community service activities. Taya’s actions have positively impacted both her school and the Eagle River community. Her extracurricular activities include sports, Student Council, National Honor Society, and volunteering, among others. Taya also works at the Arrow Gift Shop during the summer.



Reese Connor

Laona High School – Freshman
Nominator: Jason Bertrand

Reese is known for her kindness, leadership, and integrity. She recently demonstrated her compassion by purchasing shoes for a less fortunate peer, a gesture that left a lasting impact. In the classroom, Reese is admired for her work ethic and her willingness to stand up against injustice. Her positive influence extends to the volleyball and basketball courts, where she is a respected varsity player. Beyond school, Reese is active in her church, St. Leonard’s, and contributes to her community through various charitable activities. During the summer, she participates in waterskiing teams and assists an elderly couple with gardening. Reese’s involvement in Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) further highlights her commitment to personal growth and community service.



Timber Cronauer

Laona High School – Junior
Nominator: David Cronauer

Timber consistently demonstrates caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility through his various activities. He volunteers monthly at a local food bank, distributes backpacks to less fortunate children, and coaches the Mites hockey team at Rhinelander Ice Arena. Always ready to assist, Timber is a hard worker who leads by example on and off the field. In addition to his three-sport athleticism, Timber is involved in the National Honor Society and Rising Phoenix Program among other endeavors. He also works full-time over the summer doing concrete work. His actions and involvement have made him a positive role model in his community.



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Olivia Eliason

Northland Pines High School – Senior
Nominator: Dan Marien

Olivia is a dedicated student, known for her academic rigor and diverse course load, including AP classes and electives like art. She demonstrates her caring nature as a tutor for 4th graders in math and assisting teachers in younger classrooms. Her maturity, honesty, and helpfulness have earned her the respect of peers and teachers, establishing her as a school leader. Olivia’s responsibility extends beyond school, as she works at a local marina during summers. She contributes positively to the community through various activities, including her work at Your Boat Club, participation in the cross-country team, and membership in the National Honor Society and Student Athlete Leadership Team. Olivia’s commitment to excellence is evident in all her endeavors.



Madelynn Erdmann

Crandon High School – Junior
Nominator: Jody Kalata

Madelynn, a diligent student-athlete, has the Power Player title for the Wisconsin Blaze 17u Black Midwest Team and a Student of the Year award at Crandon High School. She also babysits and is a caring aunt. Madelynn was selected as a student leader for the U.S. State Department and contributed to the Collaborative Online International Training (COIL) program, where she traveled to New York last summer to take part in their training program. She volunteers for the Crandon Youth Basketball program mentoring young girls in her community. Madelynn has had opportunities in her life to demonstrate remarkable responsibility and resilience. She has shown herself to manage her home, academics, and team responsibilities during high stress situations in her life. She participates in varsity basketball, cross country, the National Honor Society, the Spanish National Honor Society, and the Global Scholars Program at Crandon High School.



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Jenna Erickson

Three Lakes High School – Senior
Nominator: Rhonda Buss

Jenna is known for her impeccable character, leadership skills, and commitment to her community. Through her high school career, she has shown a genuine desire to learn and is always present and engaged in the classroom. She demonstrates caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility, making her a dependable and sincere individual. Her role as the co-president of the Student Council and vice president of her senior class showcases her leadership skills. She has organized numerous school activities, contributing to the school spirit and community pride. Jenna’s efforts also ensured her class could go on their Washington DC trip, despite initial setbacks due to Covid. In addition to her school activities, she is a member of the varsity volleyball, basketball, and softball teams, and works at a local coffee shop. Jenna’s actions have positively impacted her peers, her school, and her community.



Madeleine (Maddie) Ewan

Rhineland High School – Senior
Nominator: Amy Schmitz

Maddie, captain of the Rhineland Northwoods Pine Alpine Ski Team, is a remarkable individual known for her caring, and respectful nature. She is supportive of her teammates in any situation on or off the ski hill. Maddie can navigate stressful situations with honesty and compassion and can de-escalate conversations and situations allowing both sides to agree on a solution. As a team captain, Maddie has shown immense responsibility, leading her team to the state championship. Her hard work and dedication have positively impacted her teammates, leading to future success for the girls’ team. Maddie’s influence extends beyond the ski team, making a significant impact on the Rhineland community and at her workplace.



Nicholas Fluegel

Northland Pines High School - Senior
Nominator: Dan Marien

Nick is a student who embodies the Y’s four core values in all his endeavors. His leadership skills are evident in his two-year tenure on the student council and its Officer Team. Nick’s quick thinking and responsibility were demonstrated when he extinguished a microwave popcorn fire in the middle of the cafeteria at school. He excels academically while participating in numerous extracurricular activities,



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including the high school musical, cross country team, National Honor Society, and Student Athlete Leadership Team. Outside school, Nick works a part-time job and volunteers with the Eagle River Fire Department, Chamber of Commerce, and Lions Club. His maturity and passion for involvement have positively impacted his peers and the community.

Eva Heck

Rhineland High School - Sophomore
Nominators: Matt Nichols and John LaChapelle

Eva Heck is a beacon of positivity and kindness in her high school community. Known for her unwavering kindness, she consistently chooses to uplift others, refusing to engage in negative talk about anyone. Her actions, often unseen, embody integrity and friendliness. Her positive influence permeates the school, inspiring others to emulate her kindness and willingness to help anyone in need. Beyond her impactful presence in school, she is actively involved in extracurricular activities. She is a member of the National Honor Society (NHS), Student Council, Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), and Key Club. Her commendable character and active involvement make her a deserving nominee for this award.



Eva Hetland

Rhineland High School - Senior
Nominator: Eric Burke, Megan Chila and Denis Zalewski

Eva is a high school student who has shown exceptional responsibility and leadership. Excelling in rigorous courses and leading significant initiatives as the president of the National Honor Society, Eva's dedication is evident in her high GPA. She has initiated a literacy program and implemented the "Cans for a Cause" initiative, reflecting her commitment to making a positive impact. Eva's dedication to the Key Club has increased its membership and led to additional various events. Her reading program initiative, which provided two books to every Kindergarten student and organized reading sessions, has inspired other student groups to do the same for grades 4K to 5th. Eva is sure to continue to inspire others throughout her journey.



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Zachariah King

Rhineland High School- Senior
Nominator: Jenny Heck

Zachariah is a leader in and out of the pool. As a captain of the swim team, he led his team to victories while also showing up as a mentor to budding swimmers. His participation in the LINK leadership program at the high school further showcases his commitment to fostering growth in younger students. His spirit of volunteerism shines brightly, from ringing bells for the Salvation Army to organizing fundraisers for the swim team. His mentorship extends beyond the pool, supporting younger members of the swim club, and embodying the core values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility.



Ashlynn Klabunde

Rhineland High School – Senior
Nominator: Cara Kulhanek and Abbey Dall Lukowski

Ashlynn is the embodiment of resilience and compassion in her community. Despite challenges that sidelined her athletic pursuits, she channeled her energy into academics, community service, and caring for special needs children and animals. She has made significant contributions to the community, volunteering at Frederick Place, collecting food to fill the little local pantries, mentoring youth, and performing other various random acts of kindness to boost peoples' spirits. Ashlynn demonstrates responsibility and independence. She encourages respect among her peers and is not afraid to stand up against disrespect. Having completed high school ahead of schedule, she is now pursuing studies at Nicolet College with aspirations to become a family therapist. Her actions have positively impacted many, from homeless youth to elders in the community, embodying the spirit of hometown grace.



Kruz Kulinski

Crandon High School – Senior
Nominator: Anike Sulaimon

Kruz, a lifeguard at the Forest County Potawatomi Community Center, exemplifies caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. He takes his role as a lifeguard seriously, prioritizing patron safety and leading by example. Despite being a student-athlete, Kruz effectively manages his school, sports, and work schedules, even adding a work study to his routine to support the center during staff shortages. His respectful demeanor has fostered meaningful relationships with patrons of all ages. Kruz's positive influence extends beyond his workplace,



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inspiring a coworker to join him in early morning workouts. A three-sport athlete in cross country, basketball, and baseball, Kruz's commitment to everything he does is commendable and inspiring.

Dominic Lehmann

Rhineland High School – Junior
Nominator: Aaron Kraemer

Dominic is known for his caring and respectful nature. He is actively involved in Football, Basketball, and Track and Field. His commitment to the community is evident in his organization of the Service Night football game. With the help of his veteran parents, Dominic coordinated with local Army entities, invited community veterans for a team meal, and arranged a color guard and 21-gun salute for the National Anthem. He also initiated a fundraiser for Camp Ryan Adams by selling specially designed shirts. His meticulous planning began in December for the event held the following September. Dominic's actions have not only positively impacted his teammates but also honored his parents and those who have served and ensured our community's safety.



Naomi Lowery

Northland Pines High School – Senior
Nominator: Dan Marien

Naomi is a high-achieving student who is known for her honesty, respect, and responsibility. She has a caring personality and treats everyone with respect, both in and out of school. Naomi is involved in numerous activities, including the high school musical, forensics team, One Act Play, Student Council, Cheer team, and SkillsUSA. Her positive demeanor and ability to handle situations maturely have significantly impacted her peers and the community. Naomi's leadership and work ethic are evident in all her endeavors, making her a role model for others.



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Jerome Morrison

Tomahawk High School – Senior
Nominator: Theresa L’Esperance

Jerome is known for his caring nature and responsibility. He is involved in Cross Country, Boys Swim, Track and Field, Drama/Theater, Choir, and Boy Scouts, serving as a captain in several of these activities. Jerome’s actions have positively impacted the entire community. Despite facing challenges and adversity, his determination and resilience led him to excel in various fields, from athletics to drama and choir. He has been a source of inspiration for many. Jerome’s commitment to helping others is evident in his role as a mentor to freshmen and a swim instructor. He is also working on his Eagle Scout Award, planning to beautify a Veterans Memorial. Jerome’s story is a testament to the power of perseverance and the impact of a caring heart.



Larissa Page

Northland Pines High School – Senior
Nominator: Amber Tilley

Larissa, known for her friendliness and approachability, is a valued member of the Student Council, often relied upon for her ability to connect with students and staff. Her kindness and quiet intelligence make her a sought-after collaborator in class. She has demonstrated leadership, notably when she created a breakout session for a Student Council event, focusing on icebreakers and team-building activities. Larissa’s actions have positively impacted the local community, particularly through her role as chairperson for several Student Council events. She has also welcomed new members onto the Forensics team, ensuring they have a positive introduction. Larissa’s extracurricular activities include the Student Council, a Mentoring Program, the National Honor Society, Forensics, and the Musical, in addition to holding a summer job.



Caden Palubicki

Crandon High School – Senior
Nominator: Dan Witman

Caden is a bright spot in his community who demonstrates caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility in various ways. As a captain of the football team, he is an intrinsically motivated, hard-working individual who has grown into a well-rounded leader. Beyond his athletic ability, Caden is an unselfish, smart player who always puts his team first. Caden is an all-conference player, a starter on both defense and offense and an all-state academic award winner. Off the field, Caden spearheads community outreach and team-building events. His hard work and



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discipline are reflected in everything he does, including maintaining a strong cumulative grade point average while being active in a variety of school activities. Caden's actions have positively affected his school and the entire community.

Kaeden Piller

Rhineland High School - Senior

Nominator: Sharon Collins and Abbie Cline

Kaeden, a dedicated youth mentor and staff at the YMCA, began his journey as a sophomore in youth sports and quickly transitioned to being a role model for the youth at Friday Teen Nights. His strong work ethic and commitment led him to become a Counselor in Training at Summer Camp, where he quickly picked up knowledge and skills for working in camp. He earned a counselor position before the required age. As the youngest counselor, Kaeden has positively impacted his colleagues, the YMCA, and most importantly, the youth he works with. He continues his work with youth in the school-age program and teen nights, aiming to become a lead teacher. A three-sport athlete involved in football, wrestling, and track, Kaeden also participates in the LINKcrew and the youth apprenticeship program. His influence is evident in the community, with children looking up to him. Admitted to UWSP for Fisheries and Water Sciences, Kaeden aims to make a global impact.



Willow Schroeder

Three Lakes High School – Senior

Nominator: Terri Kroll

Willow, a student known for her responsibility and leadership, has made significant contributions to her school and community. As a Student Council co-president, she has demonstrated exceptional leadership, organizing various school events and activities. Her reliability and commitment have positively impacted her peers, staff, and administration. In the community, Willow has been involved in numerous fundraising projects and volunteer work. Her extracurricular activities span sports, Student Council, National Honor Society, Forensics, and drama club. Willow's caring and thoughtful nature, coupled with her dedication, paved the way for the impact Willow will continue to make on her community in the future.



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Brady Shepard

Laona High School – Senior
Nominator: Jason Bertrand

Brady is a compassionate leader who has made significant contributions to his school and community. From his early days, he has shown empathy towards those struggling with anxiety, leading groups to provide support. He has volunteered extensively, from refereeing sports events to distributing meals for the Department of Aging. Brady initiated an aquaponics project in collaboration with the Forest County Potawatomi Tribe, demonstrating his commitment to environmental sustainability. He is a dedicated mentor, always ready to assist others academically. Brady’s advocacy work has brought positive changes to his school district and tribe, promoting social justice and mental health awareness. He also runs a summer lawn-cutting business, showcasing his entrepreneurial spirit. His involvement in sports, the National Honor Society, church activities, and Peer Health Education further highlights his diverse interests and commitment to service.



Sloan Snedden

Northland Pines High School – Senior
Nominator: AJ Zayia and Jacob Husing

Sloan is a dedicated student and community leader, known for her caring attitude and responsible demeanor. As the event outreach coordinator for Student Athletic Leadership Team (SALT), she has successfully coordinated numerous events, including a local food drive and an elementary reading program. Her academic diligence is reflected in her strong GPA, and she consistently demonstrates leadership in group collaborations. Sloan’s involvement extends to cross country, track and field, dance, and the National Honor Society. Her leadership in the reading buddies program has fostered strong relationships between high school athletes and elementary students, positively impacting both groups. Sloan’s hard work and dedication have made a lasting impact on the school community, making her a role model for all students.



Cameron Sorenson

Laona High School – Senior
Nominator: John Markowski



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Cameron is a respectful and diligent student, known for his honesty and caring nature. He is an active member of Wisconsin Youth Power, a political organization that advocates for teenage issues and has successfully invited politicians to visit his school. Cameron's community involvement includes volunteering for blood drives, dog walks for the Humane Society, and maintaining the Lakewood Nordic Ski Trails. His extracurricular activities include cross country, track, school plays, and the National Honor Society. He also works a part-time job while maintaining a high GPA. Cameron is on track to become the valedictorian of his class. His efforts have positively impacted his school and community, making him a well-rounded individual and a role model for those around him.

Raelee Steeno

Phelps High School – Junior
Nominator: Lisa Duquaine

Raelee is a student who consistently demonstrates the values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Despite personal challenges, she has turned to her schooling as a positive outlet, pushing herself to excel in all areas. She participates in volleyball, basketball, musicals, Solo and Ensemble, and Honors Band. As a quiet but grounded leader, Raelee has positively impacted her peers, teachers, and the community of Phelps. Her hard work and dedication have not only made her a role model for her peers but also an asset to those around her. In addition to her school activities, Raelee works part-time, further demonstrating her commitment to responsibility and growth.



L.J. Terlizzi

Three Lakes High School – Senior
Nominator: Scot Lindquist

L.J. is a student-athlete who is highly respected by his peers and teachers. He is a role model, showing genuine concern for others, and is an active participant in the student council. L.J. has organized food drives and numerous community blood drives, demonstrating his commitment to community service. He also volunteers as a coach for the Three Lakes Park District Little League Baseball Team. A three-sport athlete, L.J. has been a team captain for football, basketball, and baseball teams. His peers often look to him for guidance, and he is a member of the National Honor Society. He is consistently a mentor and role model for many in his community.



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Brynn Teter

Rhineland High School – Junior
Nominator: Susan Appell

Brynn, a responsible and reliable individual, has demonstrated her leadership skills in everything she does. She has shown remarkable calmness and support during crises. Brynn’s honesty and respect for others are commendable. She is known for bringing diversity to conversations and sharing her culture and leadership skills with others. Brynn’s commitment to academics and leadership has positively affected her peers, community youth, community groups, community members, and her school. Her extracurricular activities include sports, student council, key club, FBLA, National Honor Society, and volunteering for various causes.



Lillian Treder

Rhineland High School – Senior
Nominator: Elisah Williams

Lillian is a respected leader known for her academic prowess, athletic abilities, and strong moral foundation. She maintains a high GPA, participates in three sports, and is an active member of multiple school clubs. Lilly’s mature character and understanding of advanced topics set her apart from her peers. Her commitment to public service has positively impacted her school, her teams, and the community where she volunteers. Lilly’s extracurricular activities span from sports to community service, including membership in the National Honor Society and the Oneida County Teen Court. She is also a member of Zion Lutheran Church and assists in coaching youth basketball.



Tobias Volkmann

Three Lakes High School – Senior
Nominator: Marc Busco

Toby Volkmann exemplifies strong character, servant leadership, and positivity. He is known for his caring nature, often putting others before himself, tutoring underclassmen, and making everyone feel part of the school community. Toby’s honesty is evident in his commitment to his responsibilities, including a rigorous workout plan that led to an outstanding track and field season. He treats everyone with respect, earning him a nomination for Student of the Month. Despite managing a full course load with college-level courses and maintaining a high GPA, Toby participates in



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multiple sports and extracurricular activities. His dedication extends beyond school, inspiring young athletes in the community and leaving a lasting positive impact.

Emma Weber

Northland Pines High School – Senior
Nominator: Dan Marien

Emma is a dedicated student-athlete, involved in cross country, basketball, and soccer. She is an active member of the Student Council, National Honor Society, Student Athlete Leadership Team (SALT), Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA), and SkillsUSA. Emma’s commitment to her academics is evident in her enrollment in numerous AP and honors courses. Her positive influence extends beyond the classroom, impacting her teammates, classmates, teachers, and school administration. As a math tutor and an active member of her church youth group, she has made significant contributions to her community. Emma’s unwavering consistency, focus, and goal-oriented nature make her a role model for her peers.



Abi Winnicki

Rhineland High School – Senior
Nominator: Jan and Ken Winnicki

Abi demonstrated strong moral character in all aspects of her life. From academics to swimming, she shows respect for everyone, regardless of their age. As a volunteer at the Rhineland Area Food Pantry and Ruby’s Pantry, she strives to give back to her community. Abi is an active member of the National Honor Society and Key Club and believes in the importance of literacy education. This belief was a motivational factor in creating a reading and literacy initiative geared toward youth in kindergarten and first grade. In addition to this work, she has been involved in various drives for organizations such as NATH Fredrick House and Toys for Tots. She shows strong leadership and character as the president of the senior class, vice president of the National Honor Society, secretary of the Key Club, and a member of LINK Crew and HOSA (Health Occupation Students of America).



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Teen Character Scholarship

The YMCA Teen Character Scholarship, made possible by the **Steingraber Family**, was created to reward students for exuding exemplary character in their lives and communities. For the past 20 years, the YMCA of the Northwoods has been honoring teens who demonstrate outstanding character and live the Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

This scholarship is a chance for the YMCA to help these students get a chance to prepare for a career in which they can continue to demonstrate positive character values. It is our opportunity to give back to students and support them on their continued journey towards futures filled with greatness.

Please join us in congratulating our 2024 Teen Character Scholarship Recipient:

Eva Hetland (2024 Nominee)

The process of refining an individual's character is a continuous journey that is molded by experiences, upbringing, and choices. By embracing challenges, stepping outside comfort zones, and having integrity, I have cultivated a strong character within myself.

I demonstrate my strength of character by facing challenges with perseverance. As a dedicated athlete, there is nothing more disheartening than dedicating numerous hours of hard work into a sport, only to end up spending most of the game on the bench. Joining soccer freshman year, I was the least experienced player, competing against upperclassmen who were not only more skilled than me but had established chemistry together. Despite my initial intentions of contributing and making a difference to the team's success, I found myself feeling discouraged and questioning my value. Wanting to feel like I was making a meaningful difference, I decided to redirect my focus and seek alternative ways to contribute.

I turned my attention to various clubs at the school with the aim of creating a positive impact in my school and community. By taking a step back and figuring out that leading clubs rather than teams is more for me, I truly found my place and made a difference. I decided to run for the positions of Vice President of Key Club and President of National Honor Society (NHS) which was a way for me to utilize my leadership skills to make a difference within my school and community. I organized eight new programs to NHS and four programs for Key Club such as community service projects, fundraisers, and events that benefited both the school and the community.



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Facing the adversity of feeling like my efforts on the field gave no value to the team has significantly contributed to shaping my character. Adversity compelled me to step outside my comfort zone and actively participate in various clubs. This experience also helped change my perspective. As a member of both the soccer and basketball team I realized every member of the team plays an integral role in the overall success. I learned to support my teammates rather than compare my skills to theirs. I realized that being a team player that is supportive to others is important for the success of any team. Although I haven't received "Most Valuable Player" in soccer or basketball, I have received the "Hodag Award" two times. The Hodag award is given to one individual from each team that exemplifies a team first mindset and consistently displays positive sportsmanship, thereby contributing to the team's success. As I go onto my future endeavors, I am aware that I will encounter additional obstacles and difficulties. However, I am determined to confront it with courage. Each challenge will serve as an opportunity for me to develop, much like how I have grown by directing my attention towards a new role that brings out the best in me.

Character encompasses more than just actions; it's a person's integrity and honesty. When we are truthful in our words and actions, we build trust and credibility with those around us. My ability to lead through my strong character is evident through my elected officer positions of FBLA/DECA, Key Club, and NHS. Furthermore, my willingness to assist others led to my selection as a student guide to new transfer students. I have guided four students, spending a week accompanying them to and from class but also creating a friendly bond, ensuring they felt supported. Moving forward, I plan on continuing my credibility and expanding my involvement in various clubs as I transition to college.

As a 4H leader, I wanted to be able to instill confidence in youth, equipping them with the necessary skills to become leaders in the future. During the summer, I developed a course that focused on self esteem, positive friendships, and mindfulness. Witnessing the children experience a new sense of confidence was rewarding. Just as I guided 4H members towards building their confidence through various activities, I look forward to the opportunity in assisting more children in boosting through self esteem, although through physical therapy. As a PT I will help children overcome mobility issues and regain confidence in their physical abilities.

A part of my character is facing challenges with a proactive attitude. With the Superintendent of the SDR as my Key Club advisor, he brought to the Officers of Key Club the literacy challenges faced by elementary students. Many students are without learning resources outside of school. To address this issue, we created the Literacy Program. The aim was to improve reading comprehension among children and provide them with access to reading materials - both at school and at home. As the leader in organizing this initiative, I recognized an opportunity for the NHS to participate in this project due to my role as President. NHS provided two free books to all 189 first graders in the district while Key Club provided books to 187 kindergarteners. Because of the success of the two clubs launching this program, other clubs such as Educators Rising and FCCLA took on additional grade levels. Moving forward, I intend to persist in maintaining a proactive approach to new challenges.

Overall, character is an internal compass that guides how individuals act. While society often prioritizes superficial qualities, one's character is what truly leaves a lasting impact, shaping how a person is remembered and perceived by others. Through my active involvement in leadership positions through various clubs, I have had the opportunity to make a positive difference in my school and community. Furthermore, my involvement in the soccer team has taught me the importance of teamwork as I recognized each person plays an integral role to the overall success of the team. Throughout my senior year, I have undergone significant personal growth, which all began with a shift in perspective regarding my involvement in the soccer team. I am eager to continue to refine my character to further grow as an individual.

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Dan Hagen, News Anchor/Assistant News Director

Dan came aboard Newswatch 12 in February 2019. He grew up in Appleton, Wisconsin, and spent many weekends at his family's cottage in Arbor Vitae. Dan graduated from St. Olaf College in 2017 with a major in mathematics. He is a member of a mathematics national honor society Pi Mu Epsilon. During Dan's sophomore year at St. Olaf, he started a radio show at the college station. During his senior year, Dan had an internship at KYMN 95.1 in Northfield, Minnesota, where he wrote and read news stories. After graduating, he joined a major healthcare company in the Twin Cities metro area to work as an analyst. He enjoyed his coworkers and paycheck, but a year and a half into his job he decided to pursue his passion for journalism and returned to the Northwoods. Nature and outdoor recreation have always been big parts of his life, most prominently working for the Forest Service and cross-country skiing. During the summers between college terms, Dan worked in the Kootenai National Forest. He spent most of his weekends backpacking and still enjoys camping, especially in the Boundary Waters. Dan was on the ski team in college and has done five Kortess and five Birkies to date. You'll often find Dan either at the Minocqua Winter Park or WinMan Trails working on his V2 technique. Dan is also passionate about music. He knows perhaps too much about the Beatles and was even in a Beatles cover band in college. He plays guitar, piano, ukulele and started writing music a couple years ago. Dan released his first solo album "Stranded" in February 2019. Dan is an owner for the Green Bay Packers and a lifelong, diehard fan. He is a congenital anosmiac--meaning that he has never had a sense of smell. Dan climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in 2016.

Geoff Weller, News Director/Chief Meteorologist

Geoff joined the Newswatch12 team in November 2015 as a weekend meteorologist and reporter. Geoff didn't travel far to end up in the Northwoods. A native of Grayslake, Illinois, Geoff spent his summers at the family lake house near Stevens Point. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Geoff supplemented his broadcast meteorology education at Mississippi State University. Directly out of college, Geoff took a career detour. He entered the business world working in several large cities all over the country, including stops in Chicago, Miami, Orlando, Dallas, Phoenix, Cleveland, Atlanta and Las Vegas. While his experiences in the business world proved successful, they took him away from his true passion. In late 2013 Geoff decided the time was right to follow his dreams. He quit his job, re-enrolled in school, and picked up a full-time weather internship at WGBA-TV (NBC26) in Green Bay to complement his previous years-long internships in Oklahoma City. Geoff loves the outdoors. While he is technically always working (observing the weather is a 24/7 job!), you can also find him skiing, biking, and boating that is, when he isn't up in the air sharpening his skills as a licensed pilot and Certified Flight Instructor. Geoff could not be happier to be working in north central Wisconsin.

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Forest County Potawatomi

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The Forest County Potawatomi (FCP) have lived in Forest County, Wisconsin, since the late 1800s. Around 1880, groups settled in areas near Blackwell and Wabeno and have lived in that area since, as well as in the Carter and Crandon (or Stone Lake) areas.

Today, life on the reservation is very different than it was for the elders. They have done much for the younger generation, and it is because of the elders that the younger generations are who they are today.

By pursuing a diverse set of business models, the Forest County Potawatomi of today are the largest employer in Forest County. With revenues from various tribal enterprises, the Potawatomi have invested in the health, wellness, education, environment and future of its people.

The FCP have also worked hard to preserve its culture and honor its past. The Cultural Center, Library and Museum provide an important link to the past and serves to facilitate important ceremonies.

We invite you to discover the modern Forest County Potawatomi. You will find a thriving Native American culture that is proud of its past and eager for the future.

Education Mission Statement:

We must all work together to create an environment where each individual spirit may grow



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Thank You

Many heartfelt thanks to all who have made this inspirational night possible!

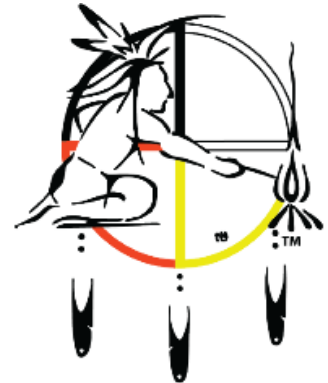
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