

## The ASHBY LEGACY FUND

### TAKES A GIVING BACK APPROACH

*By Heidi Hoff*

*Ashby Legacy Fund Executive Director*

**T**he Ashby Legacy Fund (ALF) is a community-led foundation established by current and former members of the Ashby community. The single purpose of the ALF is investing back into the community to assist in preserving Ashby as a special place to live for generations to come.

ALF consists of three initiatives: Community, School and Scholarship. **The Community Team** invests in the progression and development of Ashby. During the past year, they have worked on updating the senior center, park improvement projects, opened an ice rink in town, and plan and host Ashby Appreciation Days. Most recently, the Community Team assisted in two very impactful fundraisers.

Their Covid Relief Fundraiser raised money for businesses and families in need during the pandemic. Shortly after this fundraiser, the Ashby and Dalton communities were devastated by a tornado. ALF quickly acted with a Tornado Relief Fundraiser to raise money for those families most impacted. These two fundraisers generated an impressive \$125k, with one hundred percent of proceeds given directly to the community

from the Ashby Legacy Fund. Executive Director, Heidi Hoff noted, "The outpouring of love and support from those near and far is truly remarkable".

The second initiative of the ALF is School; the School Team partners with teachers and the school community to provide funding for equipment, curriculum and school programs. During the past year, they have awarded grants to Ashby staff for extra resources in their classrooms, hosted teacher appreciation events, and recently completed the Legacy Lounge project, which gives students space they need for online learning. The school team also visits with every class, each year, and discusses the importance of education and making the most out of their time in school.

The third and final initiative of the ALF is Scholarship; the Scholarship Team provides a school-wide opportunity that reaches and impacts every Ashby student in grades 1-12. Once enrolled in the ALF scholarship program, students who remain in the Ashby district and adhere to the appropriate code of conduct, complete two tasks annually to stay enrolled. First, they participate in a class fundraiser.

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*Electronic Edition*

[www.lcsc.org](http://www.lcsc.org)

## A FEW WORDS FROM

*LCSC Deputy Executive Director, Jane Eastes*

As I write this we are in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic that is not letting up. It's a very uncertain and frustrating time for everyone in the school community. That's why we were thrilled to see so many positive stories submitted to this month's Communicator. It's a good reminder of how we persevere for our kids and how kids win when we pull together as communities to support each other.

Like you, the staff at LCSC are challenged every day when our "normal" delivery models don't work. When our Knowledge Bowl community realized they would not be able to hold in-person meets, they got creative and combined an online chat platform with our familiar Google and Zoom tools to take meets online. The coach community came together with tech coordinators to maintain a valuable educational experience for kids and keep them safe online at the same time.

Examples like this remind me to use my growth mindset to look deeper into myself in order to find the opportunity that exists in every challenge.

Staci Allmaras' article, Education, Equity, and Emergency Distance Learning, is particularly timely. In this time of challenge and sometimes conflict, Staci reminds us that it is okay and necessary to look inward, to study, listen deeply, and change our perspective. It's how we will see the opportunity that exists in the challenge for us to do better for all students.

We hope you smile at the community successes profiled this month; we did! As always we would love to hear from you. You can share your photos, articles, features, or just ideas to [communicator@lcsc.org](mailto:communicator@lcsc.org). Finally we'd like to give a special thank you to Paul Johnson of Paul Johnson Design for the new and improved LCSC Communicator design!



## MEET SCOTT WENDORFF – *Lakes Country's New Technology Manager!* *Committed to Customer Service*



While not new to Lakes Country Service Cooperative, we are proud to welcome Scott to his new role as Manager of Technology Services! Scott Wendorff has been at Lakes Country for 4 years working as an IT Specialist.

In his new role, Scott looks forward to expanding LCSC's IT services to current members, as well as begin offering services to new members. Two IT specialists have been added to the Technology Team to aid in this growth and to continue offering the best possible service to LCSC members.

Welcome Travis Johnson and Matt Holtberg!

Scott and his wife Shannon live in Breckenridge and enjoy spending evenings together while their daughter and son are both away at college.

We are thrilled to have Scott bring his years of IT experience to the LCSC Leadership and Technology Team as the Manager of Technology Services!

**SAY HELLO!**



Photos top left to bottom right:

Sr. students receiving scholarships at graduation from board member, Dallas Rylander

Students participating in "Day of Caring"

Students participating in ALF Adopt-a-Highway Program

Students participating in "Day of Caring"

Student participating in "Day of Caring"

Students are encouraged to come up with a fundraiser that is community driven. Students have been very creative at their fundraising over the past years. Some fundraisers include snow removal, basketball tournaments, ice fishing tournaments, art shows, elementary dances and community meals.

Second, students must participate annually in a community give-back project. Typically, in the spring, students participate in Day of Caring. Some examples of Day of Caring projects include park cleaning, painting curbs and fire hydrants, planting flowers around town, cleaning public accesses, window washing on main street, washing fire trucks, yard clean-up, etc. The scholarship team also belongs to the Adopt-a-Highway program.

A major component of the scholarship program is that every Ashby student will receive a scholarship if enrolled and if they fulfill the requirements of the program. If fully funded, a student who is enrolled in Ashby from 1st-12th

grade meeting the yearly requirements, could receive a \$7,800 scholarship towards post-secondary tuition. The scholarship program was designed to encourage students to continue their education and to promote community give-back at a very young age. The hope is that the same students that learned and benefited from the program, will one day give back and keep the program going for generations to come.

With less than three years from the official roll-out, the Ashby Legacy Fund has raised over \$700,000. The program would not exist without the continued support of those who want to invest in community and education. If you would like more information about ALF, visit their website, [www.ashbylegacyfund.org](http://www.ashbylegacyfund.org). Follow Ashby Legacy Fund on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter and enjoy their daily posts. "We are overwhelmed by the positivity of our program and hope to be a platform for surrounding communities in the future."



# Education, Equity, and Emergency **DISTANCE** Learning

by Staci Allmaras  
Regional Center of Excellence

Over the past months, systems have been interrupted; from school closures and a shift to distance learning in response to COVID-19, to our response in the urgency of racial justice and the dismantling of systemic barriers. As leaders and educators, we signed up for the responsibility of doing what it takes to build equitable systems, break down systemic barriers, and transform the opportunities each and every student deserves to experience as they learn and grow in our systems.

In order to do this work, we must commit time to learning the historical narrative that wasn't taught from our history books. We must spend time in self-reflection around the experiences that created our implicit bias and mental models and the impact those experiences have on our current actions and behaviors. We must also acknowledge policies and practices that continue to perpetuate the trauma our black and brown students and families have experienced.

I often quote the lovely Maya Angelou:

DO THE BEST  
YOU CAN UNTIL  
YOU KNOW  
BETTER,  
THEN,  
WHEN  
YOU KNOW  
BETTER,  
DO BETTER.

- MAYA ANGELOU -



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We can begin with challenging assumptions based on our learning during emergency distance learning...

- Learning takes place in the confines of a place called school.
- Learning must happen within the school day schedule and school year calendar.
- Learning looks the same for all learners.
- Learners with resources (housing, money, working and educated parents, etc.) are successful.

And continue by thoughtfully considering...

- Families have different levels of access to material resources (devices, internet access, and learning supplies).
- Families are coping with different and varied stressful situations in their homes (health and wellbeing, employment, economic, education needs, other stresses).
- Some students have home responsibilities (care for younger siblings, elders, and employment for family income); presume positive intent vs. work avoidance.

As a part of knowing better, the voices of our students and families are crucial in our commitment to do better. This perceptual data is one way in which leaders and educators can listen to their stakeholders and respond in a way that provides improved, more equitable outcomes for our students.

Finally, to share directly from [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org); Don't Say Nothing, Silence speaks volumes. Our students are listening.

Learn from and for your students. Hear their needs, listen to their struggles—and don't shy away just because you may not understand them. Immerse yourself in literature that matters and that sharpens your zeal for human rights, social justice, and teaching. Connect yourself with others who are doing this work.

And when you don't have the words and can't plan the lessons, don't just say nothing; say exactly what you are feeling. That will mean more to your students than you may ever know (Pitts, J. ISSUE 54, FALL 2016).



# STUDENT LOAN RELIEF

## LCSC Partner Fiducius Can Help

LCSC Regional Eligible Employees See an Average \$521 Saving per Month

### FORGIVE

Average Original Student Loan Payment	\$650.01/mo
Average New Monthly Payment	\$128.98/mo
Average Monthly Savings	\$521.03/mo
Average Student Loan Forgiveness	\$54,994.00
9 Employees had monthly student loan payments reduced to ZERO	
2 Employees aligned to receive over \$100,000 in student loan forgiveness	
Eliminated \$1.9M in student loan obligations for employees	

LCSC/Region 4 Savings

Student loans have always been a source of anxiety for most of us. Living through the age of COVID-19 is worry enough. Is there anything you can do to lessen the burdens of your student loans? There is an avenue to help you understand if you qualify for student loan relief. If you work for a school, local government or a nonprofit, you may qualify for Public Service student loan relief.

Lakes Country Service Cooperative has long partnered with the student loan relief specialist, Fiducius, for personalized Student Loan Financial Wellness Plans through several federal Loan Relief benefits. Fiducius is a reputable advisor and has demonstrated success in our region.

You deserve an easy-to-understand plan, and with Fiducius, the path to taking control of your loans is fast and straightforward. We love the way Fiducius provides one-on-one support by phone and email to our members, giving much-needed financial direction so you can put your best foot forward. And in addition to being the experts on loan forgiveness, refinancing and consolidation, they are fully up to speed on all student loan policy developments, including recent changes through the CARES Act and executive orders.

Join your Lakes Country Service Cooperative colleagues who are saving an average of \$521 on their monthly student loan payments.

It's simple, fast, and free for you to learn about your best path forward. In just a few minutes you will understand your loan restructuring options and can schedule time to talk with an expert Advisor who will answer all your specific questions. You decide if you want to engage them to manage your loans, or not. Get started now:

Visit <https://lakescountry.myfiducius.com/register> to register and learn more.

Take care of yourself and your family by taking control of your student loans.

## Low-to-No Cost Employee Training Opportunities Available

Minnesota State Community and Technical College's (M State) Workforce Development Solutions (WDS) is currently offering an incumbent Worker Training Program at little-to-no cost to the applying business through *Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program, Inc.* (RMCEP). This grant provides direct financial assistance to train current employees and improve economic competitiveness of regional businesses. M State can customize curriculum based on employer/employee needs, but could include Conflict Management, MS Suite, Leadership/Team Development, Train-the-Trainer, and many other courses.

For over 20 years, M State's WDS program has supported businesses and industries throughout the region with custom designed training. Greater Fergus Falls CEO Annie Deckert said,

*"These grant opportunities to enhance the skills of our workforce are an extreme benefit to our business community. This program provides funding for our businesses to take advantage of the high-quality education provided by M State. We are grateful for this partnership and the value it will add to our local workforce!"*

Businesses interested in learning more about these training opportunities should contact Amy Hochgraber, Director of Business & Industry for M State via email at: [amy.hochgraber@minnesota.edu](mailto:amy.hochgraber@minnesota.edu) or by calling: (218) 846-3766.

# West Central Area's Brand New Brand

by Kari Kreft

WCA Instructional and Communication Coach

In the fall of 1993, West Central Area was introduced; and with it, the Knight mascot. The image attached to the mascot was a one color stylized knight helmet. In the time since its debut, the use of school mascot logos and identity has changed drastically. Online usage has made visual identification more important. New and easier ways of reproducing graphics in print and on clothing have helped fans and students show their school pride in a myriad of ways. The original "Knight" was not versatile enough to be used in these new and exciting directions.

West Central Area's "brand" was in need of a facelift.

In order to develop a new visual identity WCA obtained the services of VIP Branding. With the go-ahead from the school board, a group of staff and community members began meeting 14 months ago. Initial conversations centered around verbs and

adjectives that would describe the new mascot.

The new Knight was to be "stately, strident, resolute, and fierce", while not being portrayed as aggressive or violent. The full complement of school colors was to be utilized – Red, Black and Silver.



In the subsequent months, dozens of drafts were shared. Revisions were honed, reworked, or abandoned. Through live artwork sessions with the graphic designers the group arrived with a sword-wielding Knight wearing a flowing red cape with a determined clenched fist!

## GroShed Comes to WCA

Thanks to an incredible donation directed through the Runestone Electric Association, Great River Energy, and Horizon Public Health, WCA FFA are the owners of this fully functioning hydroponic GroShed!

The shed has been installed by the Ag Room and will immediately be used to grow and deliver produce that will be donated to the local food shelf. The students of West Central Area Schools are excited about this opportunity to Grow local, Eat local and Love local! Thank you to the REA board, staff, and partners who made this possible!



# Hats Off to Early Childhood Staff!

ECFE Consortium, School Readiness Staff, ECFE Parent & Childhood Education teachers!

by Beth Achter

Regional ECFE Coordinator at LCSC

Since 1985, Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) programs have been successful in providing information, education and support to parents and their children ages newborn to kindergarten.\*

ECFE is based on the belief that parents are a child's first and most important teachers, and that the home is the first learning environment.

Throughout the past 35 years, parents and family engagement has been offered through parent-child classes, home visits and classes for parents and caregivers. Using research and evidence-based curriculum, ECFE Parent Educators and Early Childhood Educators provide support and encouragement to parents and caregivers.

The spring of 2020 found ECFE Coordinators and teachers creating innovative programming to reach the parents/caregivers in their programs.

ECFE teachers worked hard to continue their connections through virtual meetings, virtual parent-child classes, virtual parent discussion groups and other forms of social media that parents requested. This school year, districts who offer in-person classes may continue their regular format using the MDE and MDH guidelines for safety and reduced class sizes. Other districts are planning "outdoor" parent-child classes, on-line meetings with parents and children, and some hybrid classes. Parents may also request an individual zoom or phone visit.

The goal of ECFE is to enhance the ability of all parents and other family members to provide the best possible environments for their child's learning and development.

Now more than ever, parents need the support and information the ECFE Parent Educators and Early Childhood Educators provide.

*\*In 1984 the Minnesota Legislature made it possible for any school district with a Community Education Program to offer ECFE programs that are for ALL parents and their children ages newborn to kindergarten, Minnesota was one of the few states to offer a Parent Education degree and a MN Parent Education teaching license.*



## Early Childhood Staff top left to bottom right:

Row 1: Tonya Matson, Staci Haiby,  
Tina Billings, Shonna Gnahn

Row 2: Sarah Velde, Lori LeBrasseur,  
Melissa Amundson, Linda Morical

Row 3: Laura Lempe, Laura Holzworth,  
Kim Wiertzema, Heidi Christensen

Row 4: Christine Crompton, Deb Berry,  
Beth Achter, Astri Bjornlie

## Not pictured:

Jamie Pohl  
Jan Woolever  
Linda Saari  
Lindsey Green  
Megan King  
Terra Fitzsimmons



# Do the **ACT & SAT** Matter in a Test-Optional World?



**I**s it time to kill the ACT and SAT? It's a valid question. But even as universities make temporary moves to be test-optional in light of current events, these tests still play a significant role in college admissions.

One fact is often misunderstood as more schools update their policies: test-optional only applies to students willing to pay full price or to those eligible for significant need-based aid.

Most private and public colleges offer scholarships based on test scores. In fact, a National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) study found that nearly

four out of five colleges use standardized test scores as an eligibility criterion for merit aid. This is one of the reasons why the ACT and SAT still matter.

When schools say "test-optional", optional is a misleading word. For example, extracurricular activities are optional, but students should participate in them. Filling out the FAFSA is optional, but families should still submit one. Many colleges have gone test-optional, but students should maximize their scores because test scores matter. Test scores matter for those seeking merit scholarships, a freshmen year with no remedial classes, a competitive advantage for need-based aid,

or selective college admissions.

That's where OnToCollege comes in.

OnToCollege motivates and prepares students with online resources, whether at home or back in school. These materials supplement all students' grade level curriculum (6-12) and prepare students for the ACT & SAT. OnToCollege also offers college counseling materials to enhance your college and career readiness culture.

OnToCollege has partnered with Lakes Country Service Cooperative and MREA to offer discounts to their members. To learn more, contact Betsy Arnold Bahn at (612) 987-8098 or [betsy@ontocollege.com](mailto:betsy@ontocollege.com).

## RETIREMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS



*Dr. Pam Paulson, photo submitted*

**Dr. Pam Paulson**  
PCAE, Perpich  
Director of Professional  
Development & Resource Programs

Dr. Pam Paulson, Director of Professional Development and Resource Programs, has retired from Perpich Center for Arts Education after 33 years. In her position as Director of Professional Development and Resource Programs, Paulson was responsible for professional development programs at Perpich; connecting with state and national arts and education organizations; heading administration of the statewide Perpich Library;

and collaborating on data projects for statewide arts education with CreativeMN. When reflecting upon her time at Perpich, Pam offered this: "I am the last of the original founding members to leave the agency. I stayed a long time because there is so much work to do to make sure every student in Minnesota has the arts as part of their complete education. And the way we can assure that students have this opportunity is to make certain we have the most effective arts educators teaching our students. Professional Development and Resource Programs works hard to provide teachers the support they need to improve their practices and nurture the next generation of thinking artists."

**Kathleen Evenson**  
Ulen Hitterdal  
High School Math Teacher

After 35 years of teaching 7-12 grade math classes, Kathy is looking forward to having time to enjoy other things in life. She will be doing some substitute teaching at UH and working around her rural Ulen home. Kathy has enjoyed the most about teaching is her students,

relationships with coworkers and the fact that she loves math! She will truly miss her students and going to work each day doing what she loves.

**Karen Schultz**  
Ulen Hitterdal  
Speech Language Pathologist

As part of a special education team, Karen has enjoyed helping to provide an excellent education for students that experience some difficulties. For Karen, working one-on-one with students has enabled close relationships, and she will truly miss this work. Through it all, she has enjoyed working with children, especially watching them grow from preschoolers to graduates. "It has been rewarding to see the changes in students as they become more and more independent and confident, and it was exciting to watch as their communication skills improved." Karen plans to stay involved with children as she continues to help with the Awana program at Hawley Alliance Church. She also looks forward to enjoying motorcycle trips with her husband to explore some of the beautiful places around the United States.

# Ulen-Hitterdal Receives Resiliency Grant from WCI

by Therese Vogel

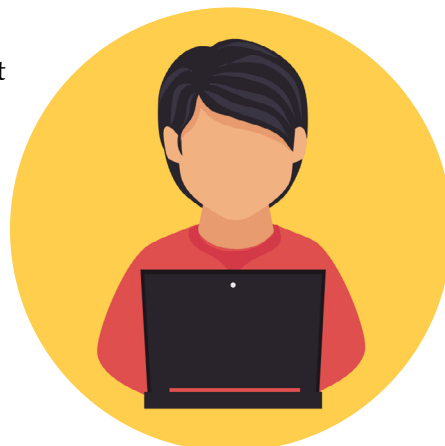
Career Guidance Counselor, Ulen-Hitterdal Public Schools

**W**est Central Initiative (WCI) established the 2020 Resiliency Fund this spring to respond to immediate COVID-19-related needs and the long-term recovery of West Central Minnesota. "We established our 2020 Resiliency Fund because we see an immediate opportunity to help those who need it most during this unprecedented event that continues to unfold," said WCI President Anna Wasescha. "West Central Minnesota is strong and resilient because of the residents who know and love their communities. By working together, we'll overcome together."

Ulen-Hitterdal School received \$5,000 to offset the technology costs of distance learning, enabling the purchase of additional Chromebooks and a charging cart so 3-12 grade students have access to individual computers. Through six grants rounds WCI awarded \$400,000 of COVID-19 relief for West Central Minnesota. They have now temporarily

suspended their 2020 Resiliency Fund Grant Application as they assess the evolving needs of the region with plans to reopen the application process in fall 2020.

*West Central Initiative is a regional community foundation serving the nine west central Minnesota counties of Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse and Wilkin and the portion of White Earth Nation in Becker County. WCI invests resources in our communities for regional success, using the tools of economic development and community development, and by promoting philanthropy. Learn more at [wcif.org](http://wcif.org).*



## WEST CENTRAL AREA SCHOOLS WELCOMES 6 NEW FACES



**LUCAS BEIRES**  
Senior High Math



**SHELBY DANIELSON**  
Special Education



**TRACY FRYKMAN**  
Fifth Grade



**REBECCA HOLLAND**  
Sixth Grade



**MATT NEMEC**  
Social Studies



**DEVONIE SMITH**  
Middle School Counselor

## Ulen Hitterdal Public Schools Welcomes 4 New Faces



**JASON SMITH**  
Dean of Students

### TAMMY BROOKS

High School  
Math Teacher



**LINDSAY BEHRENS**  
Speech-Language  
Pathologist



**KAYLA POTTER**  
Health Aide



# CPC Vendor Spotlight



CPC participants can obtain Safety Data Sheets through SDS Depot & Resource Training & Solutions Service Cooperative

- Agency will provide current chemical inventories, including chemical name, manufacturer, part or serial number and ISBN (barcode).
- RTS will upload all SDS documentation into the Depot site established for the agency and/or applicable building.
- RTS will provide full access to the purchasing agency's Depot site.
- RTS will provide an annual report at the end of the fiscal year or at the renewal process for all chemicals on an agency's site.

For more information please visit [www.purchasingconnection.org](http://www.purchasingconnection.org)

Voted the **WINNER** of the  
**Best Place to Work**  
category in the **Best of Otter Tail County**.



*Member Driven, Member Strong.  
Thank You!*



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**LCSC IS HIRING - FOR CURRENT OPENINGS VISIT [WWW.LCSC.ORG](http://WWW.LCSC.ORG)**

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THE LCSC COMMUNICATOR IS A PUBLICATION OF  
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Lakes Country Service Cooperative (LCSC) is a public, non-profit membership-based organization dedicated to providing services that help make our members successful. Originally created by legislation in 1976 as one of Minnesota's nine service cooperatives to provide services to pre-K through 12 education, we have grown and expanded to provide high quality, innovative programs to cities, counties, other governmental agencies, and non-profit entities. Together, we build relationships that help make all members and communities stronger.

*Together...We Achieve.*

**STAY CONNECTED.**

