



staying CONNECTED



A NEWSLETTER FOR THE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF MINNESOTA WEST COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE

SUMMER 2021
IN THIS ISSUE

- From the President
- Awards & Program Updates
- Athletics
- Retirements & New Board Members
- Alumni Updates
- Philanthropy Corner & Scholarship Winners
- Fitness Court Donation

A Year Like No Other 2020/2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Like the world around us, Minnesota West students, faculty, and staff struggled, adapted, and persevered during the 2020/21 school year. It was a year like no other!



Students kick off a socially distanced in-person class in Fall 2020



Plexiglass dividers invade offices



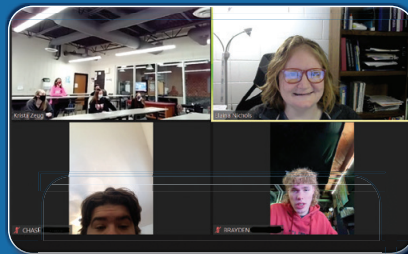
Demand increases for local food shelves and college food pantries



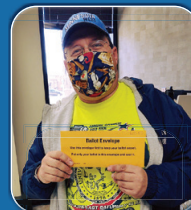
Worthington faculty have a little fun



Graduation fist bump



Zoom meetings and classes dominate the education landscape



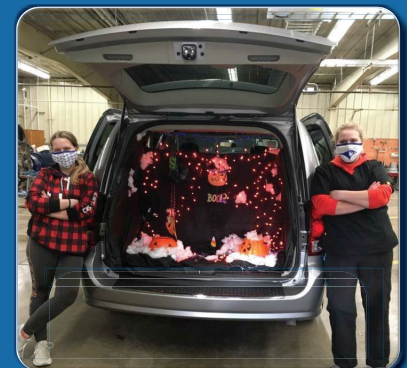
Absentee voting push



Nursing students prepare for their labs and classwork



On-site labs for tech programs continue



Trunk or Treat for Halloween

The Minnesota West Foundation is a private non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.

Mission:
The Minnesota West Foundation provides resources necessary to support learners for a lifetime of success.

Values:
Integrity, Transparency, Equity, Community Engagement, Growth



From the **PRESIDENT**

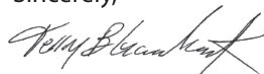
As our communities and our country emerge from a year of challenges and uncertainty, I have found myself being ever more thankful to those around me and grateful for their resiliency.

Our college began its fall semester in August of 2020 with many uncertainties, yet we ventured into this uncharted territory with a commitment to our collective well-being as our north star. With the dedication of our faculty, staff, and most importantly, our students, we persevered. As of May 5, 2021, we concluded 14 distinct commencement exercises celebrating the success of our students. At each celebration students and families were overcome with emotion – we even witnessed a few tears of joy among our faculty and staff as our purpose evidenced in our students achieving this academic milestone in the midst of a global pandemic. To our faculty staff, and students, I am truly grateful.

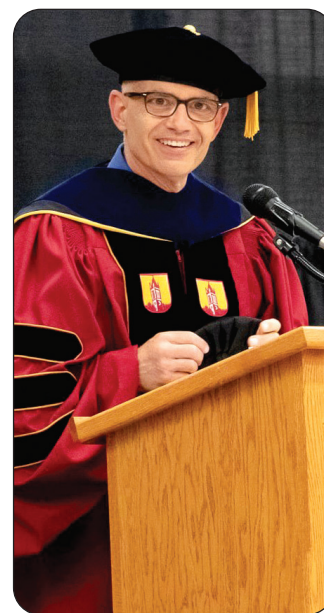
Of course, our colleges do not exist in a vacuum, and we know that everyone's lives have been shaped by events of the past year. Throughout the communities in which we serve, I have been grateful for the support we have received in our mission to prepare learners for a lifetime of success. Your support evidences in our students' ability to persist, establish careers, and raise families. For your continued support of that mission, even when your own financial resources may have been limited, thank you.

I am excited by what our future holds and am grateful that you are sharing it with us.

Sincerely,



Dr. Terry Gaalswyk



Thank You!

Thank you to all of the alumni and friends of Minnesota West who stepped up this past year to support the efforts of the Minnesota West Foundation to help students. The Foundation just wrapped up its targeted spring phone-a-thon, and this past year with your help we raised funds for student emergency needs, many of which surfaced as a result of the pandemic. Due to the enormous generosity of supporters across our college communities, we have been able to continue to fund our operations and provide targeted help to students throughout the year. Our Bluejay Emergency Fund, which helps students in need with everything from rent payments to phone bills to daycare costs and more, is now a permanent part of our Foundation's support structure for students at the college.

“ I was blindsided by the events of Covid in my life. I was suddenly home caring for my 3 children and no longer able to work due to the shutdown. I heard about the emergency funds from Minnesota West Community and Technical College and was able to get help with my monthly bills. Thank you for the helping hand in the face of uncertainty and disaster. I am honored to be a part of this institution. ”

Emily, business major

Making a
Difference
in the
Life
of another

*If you didn't have the means or the opportunity to donate, you can easily donate online by texting **MNWEST to 44321** or go to www.mnwest.edu/foundation/giving.*



Awards

Administrative Assistant Program Among Best in Nation

Minnesota West Community & Technical College has been recognized as one of the Best 24 Associate's Degree in Administrative Assistant in 2021 in the Nation by BestValueSchools.org. BestValueSchools.org researches thousands of colleges and programs to compile information and create useful resources for students looking at different college options.



Associate's in Nursing Program Recognized in Top 25

Minnesota West Community & Technical College was recently ranked in the Top 25 Associate's Nursing Programs in the nation by Nursing School Hub. Rankings by Nursing School Hub were determined using information which features accredited recognized schools, while considering cost of tuition, reputation and salary potential.

Program Updates

Minnesota West Celebrates 50th Year of Nursing Program Graduates

Minnesota West Community & Technical College celebrated its 50th Graduation of students from the Practical Nursing Program this year. The Practical Nursing Program admitted its first students in 1970 and graduated its first class in 1971. Over the next 50 years, the Minnesota West Practical Nursing Program has graduated over 1,850 students. Dr. Dawn Gordon, Dean of Science & Nursing, stated, "We are proud of our legacy of providing quality nurses for our communities for the past 50 years!"

The Practical Nursing program is a one-year program and is designed to create upward mobility nursing education opportunities. After successful completion of the Practical Nursing Program, students will receive the Practical Nursing Diploma and be eligible to take the NCLEX-PN examination. Students may exit at this point or continue in the program to receive the Associate Degree in Nursing and are then eligible to take the RN licensing examination.



Carpentry Program Refurbishes Another House!

The Blight House Project, a partnership between the City of Pipestone, MN, the Pipestone Economic Development Authority, Pipestone Area Schools and Minnesota West Carpentry students, rehabilitated another property in the Pipestone community this past year. Check it out!



Athletics

Minnesota West ATHLETICS OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Like so many activities around the country, the pandemic led to the cancellation of all sports seasons in the MN College Athletic Conference (MCAC). However, local and state efforts led to the resumption of winter and spring athletics, which started up again in January 2021. Although the schedule was anything but smooth, Minnesota West athletics found a way to play during the 2020-21 season.



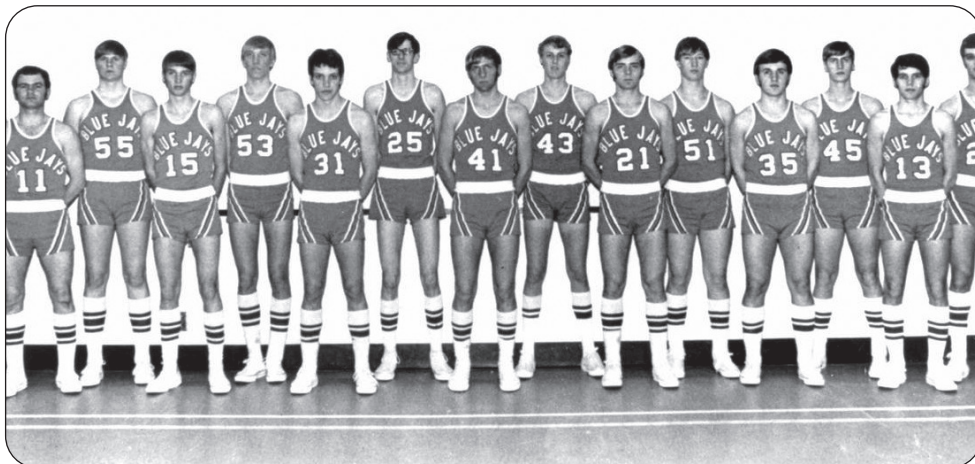
2021 Lady Jays basketball



Arlo Mogck coaching his squad
(courtesy of *The Globe of Worthington*)

50 years ago!

During a stretch from 1970-1972, the Worthington Junior College Men's Basketball Team was at the height of its power. The team captured the Minnesota Junior College State Basketball Championship three years in a row under head coach Arlo Mogck. The extraordinary run was capped off by a trip to the national tournament in 1972.



The 1971 team (courtesy of *The Globe of Worthington*)



The Minnesota West wrestling team encountered long delays in competition but sent three athletes to the NJCAA National Tournament this spring.

The men's and women's basketball teams reworked and rescheduled games when needed, and the baseball team was able to take the field in a shortened season under first year coach Zach Bakko. Minnesota West softball also resumed this spring. Led by head coach Jeff Jager, the team advanced to the MN College Athletic Conference tournament for the first time in years.

Coaches for the upcoming fall 2022 season are looking forward to a closer to normal 2021, as they coach and mentor student athletes in both on and off the field success.



National Qualifier
Elliot Jurries



National Qualifier
Lance Wagner



Baseball
Head Coach
Zachary Bakko



Members of the 1970 team
(courtesy of *Nobles County Historical Society*)

Retirements

Minnesota West is saying goodbye to a number of long-time employees.

Sandi Mead
Librarian
23 years



Barbara Hubley
Customized
Training Support
16 years



Suzanne Iverson
Executive
Assistant
22 years



Lynn Vanderplaats
Academic Advisor
37 years



❖ **Dean Hebig** - General Maintenance Worker - 20 years

❖ **Susan McCuen** - Faculty Support - 16 years

❖ **Rick Morrison** - General Maintenance Worker - 19 years

*Thank you for your
dedicated service!*

New Board Members

Welcome to the Foundation Board of Directors!

The Minnesota West Foundation welcomes new members to its Board of Directors!

Art Frame and Kristin Kovar began in the Fall of 2020, and Katie Gillette joined us in April 2021. On July 1st, 2021, the Foundation welcomed new Board members Amy Christensen, Cathy Heredia, and Jose Ivan Parga.



Kristin Kovar

Kristin is an Associate Professor of Agricultural Education at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, MN, where she prepares future Minnesota Ag teachers. She taught for five years outside of Atlanta, GA before going back to school to pursue a doctorate in Agricultural Education at the University of Missouri. She currently serves as the Secretary for the Lyon County, MN Farm Bureau. She is also a representative on the Lyon County Extension Committee and is a board member for the Minnesota Agricultural Education and Leadership Council. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, completing home projects, and promoting greyhound adoption.



Katie Gillette

Katie was born and raised in Slayton, MN. She graduated from Ridgewater Community College with an Associate of Arts degree in Criminal Justice before finishing a Bachelor's of Science degree in Corrections from Minnesota State University, Mankato in 2002. Since 2009, she has worked with the Senior LinkAge Line focusing on Medicare issue resolution throughout the state. She is also a Certified Residential Appraiser and works with Prins Appraisal Service in Worthington as well managing her own business, 8th Street Appraisal. Katie and her husband, Doug, have two girls and reside in Chandler, MN. She has volunteer coached the Murray County Central Marching Band Color Guard for twenty years and currently serves on the Parish Education committee at her church.



Amy Christensen

Amy is an Assistant Professor at St. Cloud State University in the Educational Administration and Leadership Department. She teaches in the Master's, licensure, and doctoral programs and is licensed as a Superintendent, K-12 Principal, and Community Education Director. She graduated from the University of Minnesota-Morris in 1993 with an elementary education degree and completed her EDD in Educational Administration and Leadership through St. Cloud State University in 2012. Amy and her husband (Carmen) live by Ruthton, MN, and in her free time, she enjoys watching her children, playing sports, walking, reading, shopping, and traveling!



Cathy Heredia

Cathy was Born in Santa Ana, California. She went to California State University San Bernardino where she graduated with a Mathematics Degree. She moved to Worthington MN in 2015, and today is the Human Resources Director for JBS USA, where she has worked for the past six years. Among her many HR functions, she has also helped JBS to partner with Minnesota West's Mechatronics program in providing technical training to the JBS workforce. She is also excited to continue to create connections between Minnesota West, the Minnesota West Foundation, and resources throughout her community. She and her husband Jorge have two beautiful children, Sofia (4 years old) and Jorge (2 years old).




Jose Ivan Parga

Ivan works as a Community Liaison for JBS USA in Worthington, MN. In his role, he works to connect the company's diverse workforce to resources and services in the community as well as help employees overcome language, literacy, and cultural barriers. A lifelong resident of Worthington, Ivan has also supported other nonprofits throughout the community, including the Worthington International Festival Committee, the Be the Change: Leadership on Purpose youth leadership program, and Friends of the Auditorium, which promotes economic development through performing arts in the Worthington community.

Arthur Frame

Art has lived in Worthington, MN since 1975, when he was first hired to serve as administrative agent for the Nobles County Extension Service. He continued in Nobles County eventually specializing in Crop Production and Horticulture Education programs. Today, Art is a Director of the Nobles County Historical Society, and has served as treasurer and president of the society. He also works with Manna Food Shelf in Worthington where he is a volunteer worker, serves on the board of directors, and is secretary for the board of directors. He has also been active in the National Association for Active and Retired Federal Employees and is currently president of the regional chapter. Art joined the United States Marine Corps Air Reserve in 1960, and served six years in the reserve. Upon his discharge in 1968, he attended college and graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Ag. Education.

Alumni Updates

What have you been up to? We would love to hear from you! Go to www.mnwest.edu/profile-update update us on life since Minnesota West. Also, "Like" us on facebook  and message us your selfie! - www.facebook.com/minnesotawest

Lynn Braband (1970, Pre-forestry) – Lynn retired from the New York State Integrated Pest Management Program (NYSIPM) in June, 2020 after 20+ years with the organization, where he served as a Community Educator. Among his numerous accolades, during his time with the NYSIPM, Lynn created and led New York's Statewide School Integrated Pest Management Committee.



Jeanne Adams (1970, Accounting) – Jeanne "loved going to Jackson Technical College" and knew she was going to one day be a CPA. Jeanne acquired her CPA license in California in 1979 and again in Colorado in 1999. Today she has her own accounting business – Jeanne M Adams, CPA PC. She and her husband Harry live in Centennial, CO.

Todd Pack (1974, Liberal Arts) – Todd retired in October 2020 After 42 years as a professional educator, most recently with Education Minnesota. He is looking forward to the next chapter in his life. He continues to live in Buffalo, MN with this wife Debi.

Dennis VanBeest (1976, Aviation Management) – After retiring as a lieutenant colonel from the Army Reserves after 32 years, Dennis taught computers for 10 years in a maximum-security prison for youth offenders. Today he splits his time between Michigan and Florida. He is also a Life Member of the DAV and VFW.

Joel Kunze (1980, Liberal Arts) – After working 30 years as an assistant professor and then webmaster at Upper Iowa University in Fayette, Iowa, Joel took early retirement in October 2020 and returned to Worthington, MN in April.

Cyndy Raedel (1982, Sales/Marketing) – Cyndy and her husband Doug live in Saint Augusta, MN, where she works for Fairview Health in Nursing. They have two grown children and three grandchildren. She still remembers her "awesome" instructors and the many friends she gained during her time in Granite Falls.

Daniel Baumann (1993, Fluid Power) – Daniel is working as a Sr. Facilities Coordinator at a large pharmaceutical company near Madison, WI. He and his wife Kalynn live in Edgerton, WI and have been married for 15 years and have two children.

Dave and Nancy Tate (1975) - Dave and Nancy (Larson) Tate dropped by the Worthington Campus recently for a visit. 45 years ago, they met one another for the first time in the Student Commons. Nancy was a Bluejay Basketball cheerleader, now a retired Special Education Teacher. Dave played football, baseball and basketball as a Bluejay and is now a retired insurance agent. They love to spend time with their family, including 5 grandchildren and 2 grand-dogs.



Elaine Villasenor (1998, Communication Arts & Public Welfare Financial Worker) – Elaine, who lives in Canby, MN, remembers how she completed her degree with Minnesota West. "I was a farm wife raising 7 children at the time and my husband got sick, so I decided to go back to school and get a better education and that's what Southwestern Technical did for me. The teachers and staff were helpful, and it was nice to be able to work in the computer lab until 9pm if you didn't have one at home. It was well worth it in the end."

Jennifer Wichmann (1999, Graphic Arts) – Jennifer is a

Productivity Manager for one of the largest family owned civil engineering firms in the US with 16+ years of service. She lives just 20 minutes from Cocoa Beach, and 10 minutes from the Kennedy Space Center entrance in Florida. ("Rocket launches are the best!") She has two children, and they are living the best life they can in sunny Florida.

Ben Havens (2010, Powersports Technology) – Ben is the owner of Benny's Powersports in Lake Crystal, MN, a shop he opened shortly after graduating from Minnesota West. Ben and his store were featured in a Fall 2020 issue of Connect Business Magazine of southcentral Minnesota.

Mariah Slocum (2014, Liberal Arts) - After graduating from Minnesota West, Mariah went to the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities and graduated in 2016 with a B.A. in Political Science with summa cum laude honors. She went to law school at the University of Chicago and graduated in 2019. She began her law career clerking for Justice Thomas Waterman on the Iowa Supreme Court for a year and now works at Belin McCormick in Des Moines in the litigation group. Mariah credits Minnesota West and its great faculty with giving her a fabulous start to her higher education.

Krystal Thovson (2013, Cosmetology) - Krystle recently opened her own hair salon, GraceAnna Beauty, in Canby, Minnesota!

K.C. Riley-Schweer (2015, Liberal Arts) – K.C. was recently matched with Sioux Falls Family Medicine to begin her medical residency in the summer of 2021. After her graduation from Minnesota West, K.C. completed her Bachelor's Degree in Nutritional Sciences at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, and attended medical school at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, Medical School. During her training, K.C. has had the opportunity to learn in the rural communities of Luverne, Redwood Falls, and Marshall, MN.



Ashley Kane (2015, Law Enforcement) – In May of 2021, she received a lifesaving award and letter of commendation for her quick work in helping to save the life of a resident of her community who had severe bleeding due to an accident. (Ashley is an officer with the Adrian, MN police department.)

Haley Ammann (2016, Ag Business Marketing) – Haley is currently employed with NuWay-K&H Cooperative in Energy Sales in Trimont, MN. She also works with her father and husband on their cow-calf herd in southern Minnesota. Haley began her education at Minnesota West and transferred to SMSU where she completed her BAS in Agriculture Business Management.

Karlie Griebel (2017, Medical Lab Technician) – In late 2020, Karlie was recognized as a 5-star employee at Pipestone County Medical Center in Pipestone, MN, where she works as medical laboratory technician. PCMC employees receive this honor by being recognized by their peers in the areas of compassion, attitude, respect, and excellence.



Kerri Hooge (2020, Dental Assistant) – Kerri is currently employed with Adrian Family Dental in Adrian, MN. The convenience of the Dental Assistant program, which recently expanded to Luverne, was perfect for her to continue her education. Kerri lives in Fulda with her husband and has three children and a dog, Koda.

Considering a Charitable Donation? 2021 is a good year!

The CARES Act of March 2020 and the subsequent federal stimulus bill of December 2020 resulted in a few important provisions for any person making donations during 2021, whether the dollar amount is big or small.

If your federal income tax filing status is "married filing jointly," you can claim up to \$600 in deductible donations (in 2020 it was \$300, regardless of your filing status).

If your filing status is "single," you can claim up to \$300 in deductible donations.

You DO NOT have to itemize to enjoy this donating advantage.

Additionally, if you do itemize deductions in 2021 you can deduct

up to 100% of your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for cash donations to qualifying public charities such as your church, the Minnesota West Foundation, and other 501c3 organizations. In prior years this benefit was limited to 60% of your AGI.

Example: If you are in the 12% federal income tax bracket, a \$600 donation will save about \$100 in federal and state (MN) income taxes. If you are single filer, \$300 will save you about \$50.

The bottom line is that donating to charities in 2021 will very likely reduce your final tax burden when tax season rolls around. As always, don't just take our word for it. Be sure to consult your tax adviser for detailed tax advice.

Scholarship Winners

Spring and Fall Scholarship Winners

Supporters, alumni, and friends of the college help to power the scholarships provided to Minnesota West students. Although our spring awards banquets were once again cancelled this year, we still collected photos from a variety of our Spring 2020 and Fall 2021 scholarship winners. On behalf of all of our students, thank you!



MINNESOTA WEST WELCOMES YOU



Fitness Court Donation

Jeff Rotert, Executive Director of the Worthington Regional Health Care Foundation, Inc. presented Law Enforcement Program Director Mike Cumiskey with a \$10,000 grant to help fund the new Fitness Court that will be installed on our Worthington Campus!



1011 First Street West • Canby, MN 56220



Non-Profit Org
US POSTAGE
Paid Permit
Slayton, MN
Permit No. 22