

TRADITIONS

MONONA GROVE ALUMNI

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FALL 2023

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We would love to have more alumni on the board. If you live in the Monona/Madison area and are interested in joining us, please email mononagrovetraditions@gmail.com



To receive *Traditions* via email please contact us at mononagrovetraditions@gmail.com

MGEF CARES Campaign Begins

The Monona Grove Education Foundation (MGEF) recently kicked off its annual fundraising campaign – **MGEF CARES - Children, Awareness, Resources, Education, Stability**. These are the pillars of the MGEF as it supports the Teachers and Students of Monona Grove. The goal of the foundation is to expand educational opportunities for MG students of all ages through scholarships and grants, and fund projects that benefit students and teachers both inside and outside the classroom. We do this through the following five programs:

- **The Pay It Forward Program (PIF)** provides financial assistance to MG students struggling with food stability or clothing; and those needing additional educational support. The PIF program has helped fund a wide range of initiatives, but routinely provides a supply closet for students in need of food, toiletries, or clothing at each school and helps support the district's student services' clothing reserves.
- **The Monona Grove Weekend Snack Pack Program** strives to support district students who are struggling with food insecurity on the weekends.
- **The Summer Scholarship Program** is designed to help support summer educational and enrichment opportunities for students in the district that may otherwise be out of reach. Examples include funding for arts/music camps, leadership seminars, and summer courses, among others.
- **The MGEF Teacher Innovation Grants** support efforts to bring innovative new ideas and programs into the district that fall outside of traditional funding. Since 2010, the MGEF has supported 75 different innovation grants valued at more than \$93,000.
- **The Starting Line Fund** was established in 2023 by private donors and supports the idea that every student should have an equal opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities or clubs, and that access to equipment or needed items should not be a barrier.



As we kick off this campaign, **Mark (Class of 1982) and Laurie Rundle** have generously stepped forward to match the first \$25,000 raised between now and the end of the year. Mark and Laurie are continuing the tradition of supporting the students of Monona Grove just as Mark's parents, Dick and Marg, did for many years.

To support the MGEF CARES campaign, please visit us at supportmgef.org. As a 501(c)3 organization all donations are tax exempt. Remember that **gifts through the end of the year will be matched by the generous support of Mark and Laurie Rundle**. Thank you for your consideration – together we can continue to support educational excellence for all students in the Monona Grove community!



Staff & Alumni NEWS

This issue of the *Traditions* newsletter wishes to welcome the 249 Class of 2023 Monona Grove High School graduates to its alumni list. The addition of this class marks 14,031 students who have graduated from Monona Grove since 1957. Congratulations to all Silver Eagles!

Paul Trimberger, Class of 1960, Green Bay, WI reports, “My wife passed away on April 27, 2022. She died due to Dementia/Alzheimer’s. I took care of her in our home for 13 years. Life just isn’t the same anymore. I am 82 and still alive.”

Denise (Meyers) Moore, Class of 1973, Beavercreek, Ohio says, “I retired in 2020 and am enjoying family, especially my 5-year-old twin grandsons. Life is GOOD!”

Gayle (Whitmyer) Usinger, Class of 1976, Westfield, IN, reports that “After 15 years living in Phoenix, AZ, my husband and I have returned to Indiana to retire and be close to our kids and four grandkids. If you ever come to Indy for the 500, let me know! Back Home Again in Indiana!”

Ellen Balsley, Class of 1978, sent the following updates on the Balsley siblings, who are scattered across the globe and says that “All the siblings appreciate the solid education we received at MG, and enjoy receiving the Alumni newsletter!”

Martha (Balsley) Elmali, Class of 1965, and husband Evren, live on the Aegean Sea coast in Foca Turkey. She speaks Turkish like a native. Martha’s #1 hobby is knitting- she can knit and read a book at the same time! She visits the US every year.

David Balsley, Class of 1966, and spouse Susan live in Terra Ceia, FL. David rides his bike 12 miles a day, and volunteers at Terra Ceia Preserve State Park. His two brilliant daughters and 4 grandchildren live in the NYC area.

Jenny (Balsley) Erickson, Class of 1976, is in Bonners Ferry, ID with spouse Dave. Jenny manages a clothing store that has been in business for over 100 years! Everyone in town knows Jenny! She loves northern Idaho’s milder and less windy winter and visits Madison often.

And I, **Ellen Balsley**, Class of 1978, and my husband Jimi, live in Hawaii, not far from Honolulu. My job these days has me traveling to each of the Hawaiian Islands every few months, fun! Our kids, a lawyer and a plumber, live on the East Coast.

Melissa “Lissa” Pawlisch, Class of 1993, Minneapolis, MN, reports that “As of March 8, 2023, I have transitioned out of CERTs. I am now the Energy Development Section Director at the Minnesota Department of Commerce.”

Joel Coyne, Class of 2003, Sun Prairie, WI, recently published a children’s book, *The Home That Love Built*.

Lauren “Lo” (Bocher) Meyer, Class of 2013, Minneapolis, MN, recently published a dystopian fantasy romance novel, *The Gaill*.

Lila Szyryj, Class of 2019, Madison, WI, won the Miss Wisconsin 2023 crown among a field of 25 contestants on June 24. She received \$12,500 in scholarships along with other gifts and awards and will compete for the title of Miss America, 2024 in January, in Orlando, Florida. Szyri performed a classical piano solo for the talent competition. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2022, earning her degree in Journalism and Mass Communications. Her community service initiative, “Breaking Down Breaking News” focuses on media literacy for youth who may not be receiving education on misinformation or media sourcing.

Stay
connected!

Visit us at our new and improved website –
www.supportmgf.org and “Like” us on Facebook.



MGEF Grants

In 2023, the MGEF Board has approved the following grant expenditures:

2023-2024 Teacher Innovation Grants:

- **Allison Wojta** (Taylor Prairie School) - \$3200 for substitute teachers to enable 4K and kindergarten teachers to observe live lessons led by peers. The goal is to allow for a more collaborative and impactful experience by giving peer feedback to improve teaching techniques.
- **Jacinda Wapenski & Elizabeth Wodzinski** (Taylor Prairie School) - \$4,500 to purchase a collection of audio-enabled picture books for 4K and kindergarten students. The grant committee increased the amount requested to cover the same grades at Winnequah.

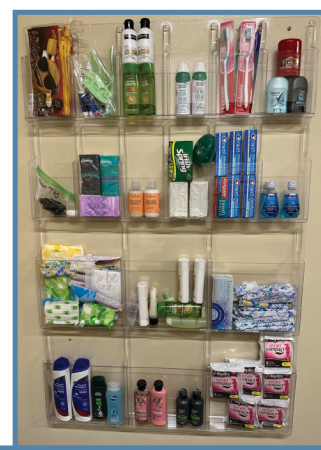
Brandt Grant

- **MG Black Student Union** - \$12,500 to fund transportation costs for 35 MGHS students to travel to New Orleans. The trip will focus on student voice, post-high school career and academic planning, and building a stronger community. In New Orleans, the students will visit 5 universities, two of which are Historic black Colleges and Universities. They will also visit museums to learn more about Black History and participate in a service-learning opportunity. Students have fundraised on their own to cover other expenses.

Pay it Forward Grants

- **Winter Clothing** - Grants were approved for the following schools to assist students in need of winter clothing during the 2023-24 school year: Taylor Prairie, Cottage Grove School, Granite Ridge & MG21 - \$250 each; Winnequah - \$300; Glacial Drumlin Middle School and Monona Grove High School - \$500 each.
- **“Grab-N-Go”** – The Pay It Forward program has started a “Grab-N-Go” personal care service at Monona Grove High School and Winnequah School. A shelving unit has been installed at each school, containing travel sized personal care items. Students can discreetly go into the student services office at either school for a care item any time they have a need. A few examples of items that are stocked for students are: shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste among other items.

GRAB-N-GO UNIT



2022 MGEF Scholarship Recipients

In May, 2023, several members of the MG Class of 2023 received scholarships administered by MGEF. Recipients included:

Frank & Mary Jean Hlavac Basketball Scholarship (\$1500) – **Taylor Moreau**

Kent Evenstad Memorial Teachers Scholarship (\$500) – **Zawadi Ozulamoi**

Ann Ahearn Memorial Scholarship (\$500 x 4 years) – **Kennedy Gage**

Frank & Mary Jean Hlavac Basketball Scholarship (\$1500) – **Cole Inda**

Raymond & Carol Krizmanic Education Scholarship (\$1,000) – **Dominic Martell**

Ann Ahearn Memorial Scholarship (\$500 x 4 years) – **John Rathgeber**

Frank & Mary Jean Hlavac Basketball Scholarship (\$1500) – **Josh Kirore**

Gordon & Janet McChesney Scholarship (\$750) – **Mikhail Thompson**

Glenn D. McNaughton Memorial Scholarship (\$2,500) – **Alexis Skowronek**

Frank & Mary Jean Hlavac Basketball Scholarship (\$1500) – **Delaney Bracken**

John Klement Scholarship (\$1,000) – **Cuinn Larsh**

Lasting Angels Scholarship (\$2,500) – **Danielle Lucy**

Frank & Mary Jean Hlavac Basketball Scholarship (\$1500) – **Eduardo Rivera**

John Klement Scholarship (\$1,000) – **Erica Eastman**

Lasting Angels Scholarship (\$2,500) – **Ally Etzler**

Patti McGinnis Teaching Scholarship (\$1,000) – **Gavin Larson**

Ann Ahearn Memorial Scholarship (\$500 x 4 years) – **Fatoumatta Kamdi**

Tygun Building Trades Scholarship (\$500) – **Dalton Card**

Wilma Bernards Memorial Scholarship (\$1,000) – **Holden Truman**

Staff/Alumni Passages

Beverly Jean Anderson, McFarland, a former teacher at Cottage Grove Elementary School, passed away on October 10, 2023.

Janice K. Lehnherr, Monona, a former teacher in the Monona Grove Schools who retired in 1991, passed away on June 14, 2023.

Maryann Ruth Steckling, Madison, passed away on May 8, 2023. She taught 2nd grade at Maywood School for 25 years.

Gertrude “Trudi” Veronica Theisen, Monona, passed away peacefully on June 26, 2023. She was a former physical education teacher in the Monona Grove School District.

Judy Mae (Mather) Baukin, Class of 1957, passed away peacefully after a battle with dementia, with her family at her side, on March 28, 2023.

Gregory A. Cirves, Class of 1958, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, passed away on July 12, 2023.

Martin W. “Marty” Haney, Class of 1958, Portage, WI, passed away peacefully on July 25, 2023, at Unity Point Health Meriter Hospital in Madison.

William T. “Bill” Berend, Class of 1959, DeForest, WI, passed away peacefully on July 24, 2023.

Phyllis Jean (Gehrke) Rodefeld, Class of 1959, Necedah, WI, passed away on September 24, 2023, at her home.

Walter J. “Butch”, “Walt” Olson, Class of 1960, Deerfield, WI, passed away on June 18, 2023.

Claudia Traisman Ward, Class of 1960, Santa Rosa, CA, passed away on June 1, 2023 due to complications from a rare blood clotting disorder.

John Gilbert Urso, Class of 1962, Nacogdoches, TX, passed away on August 22, 2023.

Dale Everett, Class of 1963 passed away on Aug 11, 2023.

Daren Rae Carley, Class of 1964, Talbott, TN, passed away on September 25, 2023 due to Covid.

William E. “Bill” Kurt, Class of 1964, passed away peacefully at his home on August 3, 2023, after a year-long battle with cancer.

Kenneth A. “Ken” Kleinheinz, Class of 1965, Monona, passed away on September 4, 2023, following a short illness.

Lawrence “Larry” Scott, Class of 1966, Sun Prairie, passed away on June 24, 2023 after a brief illness.

Glen Richard Woosley, Class of 1968, Atlanta, GA, passed away on October 4, 2023, following a prolonged battle with Multiple Sclerosis.

Shawn Ann (Forseth) Morrow, Class of 1969, Boise, ID, died peacefully at home on May 1, 2023.

Deborah (Rakow) Frank, class of 1970, passed away on Oct. 9, 2023.

Vicki L. Gilomen, Class of 1970, Eau Claire, passed away on October 29, 2023.

Ronald Thomas Gundlach, Class of 1970, Madison, passed away on May 16, 2023 at St. Mary’s Hospital.

Jerry Gust, Class of 1970, Cottage Grove, has passed away.

Gary Dean Hollis, Class of 1970, Rio, WI, passed away on October 7, 2023.

Bonita L. “Bonnie” (Bork) Daggett, Class of 1971, Cottage Grove, passed away on April 28, 2023.

Homer Simpson, Class of 1972, Hillsboro, WI, passed away unexpectedly on May 13, 2023 due to a heart attack.

Kim Anne (Koenig) Hansen, Class of 1974, Black Earth, passed away on October 18, 2023, at her home.

Dineen Grow, Class of 1976, Monona, passed away on October 8, 2023.

Larry Paul Vondrasek, Class of 1976, Cullman, Alabama, passed away on August 25, 2023.

Maryellen Barth, Class of 1978, passed away on May 26, 2022.

Joe Bruno, Class of 1978, Reno, NV, passed away Oct. 16, 2023.

Kelley Kay (Harbort) Polito, Class of 1979, Mazomanie, passed away on May 24, 2023, at Agrace HospiceCare.

Jeffrey A. “Jeff” Lehnherr, Class of 1979, Cottage Grove, passed away on July 21, 2023, at St. Mary’s Hospital.

Lisa Rae (Martinson) Roper, Class of 1980, Knoxville, TN, passed away on September 6, 2023.

Jon Carlton Hammond, Class of 1981, Reedsburg, WI, passed away on August 16, 2023 at his home.

Kelly Ann Adler Schueler, Class of 1983, Walnut Creek, CA passed away unexpectedly on April 10, 2023, following a recent medical procedure.

Tina Louise (Rundell) Wolf, Class of 1984, Battletown, KY, passed away on July 21, 2023 at her residence.

Michael T. “Mike” Baldwin, Class of 1985, Brooklyn, WI, passed away on May 1, 2023 at the Leacy of Noel Manor.

James D. Foerster, Class of 1986, Marshall, WI passed away on August 10, 2023, at Prairie Ridge Health.

Todd W. Normington, Class of 1989, Madison, WI, passed away on September 8, 2023, after bravely battling challenges brought on by declining health.

Jason Jose Diaz, Class of 1993, Verona, passed away on July 6, 2023, at his home.

Jason Lance McInnis, Class of 1998, Hewitt, TX, passed away peacefully at home on June 22, 2023.

Cory Daniel Olson, Class of 2001, Monona, passed away at his childhood home on October 28, 2023.

Tyler Dean Thompson, Class of 2011, Madison, passed away suddenly on September 29, 2023, after a long and hard-fought struggle with mental illness.

Michael “Mikey” Jensen, Class of 2014, Sun Prairie, passed away on October 29, 2023.

Liam Martin McCarty-Dick, Class of 2014, Madison, passed away on October 18, 2023, at his home. A Liam McCarty Memorial Music Scholarship has been established at the Monona Grove Education Foundation. Contributions can be sent to MGEF, 5301 Monona Drive, Monona, 53716 or at supportmgef.org. If contributing by check, please note the scholarship name in the memo line.

Gavin Thomas Wendricks, Class of 2021, Cottage Grove, passed away as the result of a motorcycle accident on October 28, 2023.

CLASS Reunions

Class of 1974, 50th Reunion

Please save the date for the Class of 1974 50th Reunion, September 6-7, 2024.

Friday night gathering is at:

Door Creek Golf Course
4321 Vilas Road
Cottage Grove, WI 53527

Saturday night venue is at:

The Oaks Golf Course
4740 Pierceville Rd
Cottage Grove, WI 53527

If you have any questions, please contact Kris Coppens at kriscoppes@gmail.com or call (608) 334-3939 or Kathy Coppens at klcoppens@gmail.com or call (608) 698-3595

Greetings!

we've recently received:

Kay (Wikoff) Brooks, Class of 1966, New Richmond, WI

Anne (Huston) Moon, Class of 1968, Argyle, TX

Christine (VanHoof) GurrolaGal, Class of 1970, Los Alamos, NM

Captain Ted Seefeldt, Class of 1970, St. Petersburg, FL

Kris Coppens, Class of 1974, Dane, WI

Cheryl (Smith) Johnsen, Class of 1975, Cottage Grove, WI

Tim Nowlen, Class of 1977, Cedarburg, WI

Shaun Steiner, Class of 1984, Portage, WI

Sharon (Ogden) Sturtz, Class of 1984, Canton, MI

James "Jim" Doran, Class of 1988, Denver, CO

Heidi (Barth) Engbring, Class of 1988, Wauwatosa, WI

Erin (McNamara) Grosskopf, Class of 2003, Shawano, WI

Christina Etzler, Class of 2021, Military APO

Be a TRADITIONS Reporter!

Help us gather information and news for the next *TRADITIONS* newsletter! Send us the scoop about engagements, weddings, births, deaths, promotions, new jobs, awards, or honors, even your change of address ... or just tell us what you are doing now.

Take a minute to complete this form or email us! We'd love to hear what you are doing now, and we will share that information in our next newsletter. Please include class year and city/state with correspondence.



mononagrovetraditions@gmail.com



Traditions, MGEF
5301 Monona Drive
Monona, WI 53716

Reporters' Name (first, maiden, last)

Address

Class of

City, State, Zip

Phone

E-mail address:

Information is about (name: first, maiden, last)

Address

Class of

City, State, Zip

Phone

The Scoop:



Monona Grove Education Foundation

Monona Grove Public Schools
5301 Monona Dr., Monona, WI 53716

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



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Please take a moment to check your mailing label. If there are any errors, please email us at mononagrovetraditions@gmail.com or send us the label with your corrections.

Planning a move? Don't forget to let us know. Your class doesn't want to lose you!

Join Us

The Monona Grove Education Foundation publishes this alumni newsletter as a service to all residents of the Monona Grove School District, past and present. Your donation to the Monona Grove Foundation Fund will support grants for innovations in education and will guarantee the future of MG Alumni Traditions. Consider a gift to the Monona Grove Education Foundation in your year-end tax planning. Just fill out this form and send it in with your contribution in one of the suggested categories or donate online (see details below).



Choose a category

- "Professor" \$15,000 + "Fellow" \$5,000 - \$14,999 "Scholar" \$500 - \$4,999
- "Graduate" \$250 - \$499 "Undergraduate" \$100 - \$249 "Associate" Under \$100

Class Year _____ E-mail _____

Name (first, maiden, last) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (Evening) _____ Phone (Daytime) _____

Credit card #: _____ Expiration date: _____

Name as it appears on card: _____ 3-digit security code: _____

Make checks payable to: **Monona Grove Education Foundation** or provide credit card information as indicated.

Mail to: Monona Grove Education Foundation, 5301 Monona Drive Monona, WI 53716

You may also donate online www.supportmgef.org/givenow

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