



EDGAR SCHOOL DISTRICT

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2024



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LEARNING ABOUT LEADERSHIP: Edgar FFA is Building Tomorrow's Leaders

FFA is not just about farming anymore. In fact, Edgar High School FFA advisor Matt Reinders says the primary goal of the organization known as Future Farmers of America is to help students develop strong leadership skills and prepare for careers in many diverse areas.

One student who has thrived in this environment is senior Aubrey Behling, who will compete at the National FFA Convention in October. She advanced by winning first place in the Employment Skills category at the state level last June. At nationals, Behling will compete against students from 46 states in tasks that simulate a real-life job application process, including resume building, professional emailing, and interview performance. Other competitive categories in the FFA's Career and Leadership Development events include environmental and natural resources, livestock evaluation, food science, public speaking, and veterinary science.



Reinders, a former FFA member himself, joined the district 11 years ago. Since then, he's expanded it significantly, including the addition of a middle school program three years ago.

Middle school FFA advisor Megan Lassa now works with 7th and 8th graders, introducing them to leadership events and competitions. A favorite is a Quiz Bowl format event testing FFA trivia knowledge, which helps prepare them for high school-level programs. This year, students will compete in a new event focusing on native animals and plants.

"We're already seeing the impact," Reinders said. "We're reaching more students, and opportunities have increased." From public speaking to team building, the FFA's diverse offerings prepare students for future success in various fields.

DELIVERING A 'FAMILY FEEL' IN EDGAR

by Dr. Cari Guden, Edgar District Administrator

As we begin this school year, I want to reflect on what makes our school such a special place. We are more than just a school: we are a school community and we take great pride in fostering a family-like atmosphere that supports every student – from our youngest students to our graduating seniors.

One of the unique aspects of our school is that we are all under one roof—our students, our teachers and staff, and even our leadership team. This allows us to build meaningful relationships, not only with each student but with each other. Our Food Service Director often says she has the best job in the world because she has the opportunity to serve and interact with every student, from 4-year-olds to high schoolers, every week. Her words reflect how many of us feel. This strengthens our school in ways that are hard to describe but easy to feel. This year, our leadership team adopted the three C's - Communication, Collaboration, and Clarity - as our theme.



Communication

Good communication builds relationships and that's what makes our school thrive. Whether it's teachers stepping up to substitute for one another, or staff collaborating to ensure our students are developing the skills they need, we work together to ensure the best possible environment for students. Our leadership team, housed within the same building, is always close by to lend a helping hand or to ensure that we stay in tune with the needs of both students and staff.



Collaboration

Collaboration is another key to our success. It's not just about helping one another, but about creating an environment where everyone—students, teachers, and staff—feels supported and valued. We emphasize professional learning and believe we each have much to offer. When everyone feels as if their contributions and ideas are valued, and when we can tap into each other as resources, we enrich the school environment and each other.



Clarity

Clarity is essential for any organization to function at its best. It helps everyone understand the direction of our school, their role within it, and their responsibilities more clearly. It is about ensuring that everyone knows how they fit into the bigger picture so that we can all move forward with purpose and unity.

WE ARE SMALL - BUT MIGHTY

While we are a small, rural district, we believe that every student deserves the best we have to offer. When we communicate and work together as staff and families so that every student feels supported, we believe we can deliver the best education possible. Thank you for your ongoing support of the School District of Edgar!



“Our Food Service Director often says she has the best job in the world because she has the opportunity to serve and interact with each one of our students.”

2024 EDGAR HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Edgar Recognizes Debra Dahlke and Holly Nowak

Debra Dahlke (class of 1984) and Holly Nowak (class of 2013) are the 2024 inductees into the Edgar Alumni Hall of Fame. The two were inducted during Edgar Homecoming activities in September. Inductees are recognized for significant contributions in at least one of these areas: business/job related; career advancement; community leadership; education; and service.

Debra Dahlke: Nursing Leader and Advocate

Dahlke, a nurse anesthetist, is currently Chief of Anesthesia at Stoughton Hospital. After graduating from high school, she completed a three year program at St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing as a diploma nurse. She received a BSN degree from Marian University, a master's degree in biology from the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse and completed the nurse anesthesia program at Franciscan Skemp School of Nurse Anesthesia.

She has been involved with the Wisconsin Association of Nurse Anesthetists for over 20 years, serving as president twice and as a member of the board of directors. She is the clinical coordinator for nurse anesthesia students from Marquette University and was named the Clinical Preceptor of the Year by Marquette in 2022. She is currently on a national committee to serve the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology and has completed seven medical missions to Honduras and Guatemala.

Dahlke said she was honored and very pleasantly surprised by the nomination to the Hall of Fame. She has always wanted to be a nurse and particularly enjoyed her science classes at Edgar. The district prepared her well for her future career, she said. "The education I got there was solid," Dahlke explained. "It's a small enough school that they paid attention to you."

Holly Nowak: Building Strong Foundations in Construction

Nowak is a project engineer at Miron Construction. After high school, she attended Milwaukee School of Engineering and received bachelor of science degrees in architecture and construction management.

At Miron, she was a key founder and leader of the Young Project Manager Group. She is a mentor to interns and a recruiter for Miron at MSOE and other schools. She is a leader in the corporate initiative to launch Procure, a new project management software, to over 2,000 office and field employees. She has managed a wide variety of construction projects at Miron including approximately \$60 million of healthcare projects that have improved hospital infrastructure and brought patient care services to rural communities.

She managed the construction of the Aspirus Family House in Wausau, a "home away from home" for Aspirus Hospital patients and families, and solicited donations for the project. She also set up a job site fundraiser for an injured tradesman and is a volunteer for the Miron Construction's Women In Construction event.

Nowak was the assistant girls varsity basketball coach at Edgar High School and currently coaches girls Edgar Middle School Basketball. She has also led and assisted in basketball camps at the district.

Nowak said she remembered seeing other alumni inducted to the Hall of Fame while she was a student in the district and does not feel worthy of such a nomination. She remembers many people who encouraged and supported her during her education at Edgar – teachers, coaches and staff members. "I look forward to being someone like that to someone else," she added.



DEBRA DAHLKE
CLASS OF 1984



Career Highlights

- Chief of Anesthesia at Stoughton Hospital
- Clinical Coordinator for Marquette University's nurse anesthesia students
- Awarded Clinical Preceptor of the Year by Marquette University in 2022



Education

- Diploma Nurse, St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing
- Bachelor's Degree Nursing, Marian University
- Master's Degree in Biology, UW-La Crosse
- Nurse Anesthesia Program, Franciscan Skemp School of Nurse Anesthesia



HOLLY NOWAK
CLASS OF 2013



Career Highlights

- Project Engineer at Miron Construction
- Managed approximately \$60 million in rural healthcare project improvements
- Key founder and leader of the Young Project Manager Group at Miron



Education

- Bachelor's of Science Degrees in Architecture and Construction Management, Milwaukee School of Engineering



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We Edgar Schools!

The Edgar School District provides a safe and positive environment and is committed to continuous improvement for all students, staff and community members.



We are Committed to Student Success

We provide diverse opportunities for students to excel. Our students are leaders, prepared for college and career opportunities!



Dedicated and Professional Staff

Our staff go above and beyond through coaching, mentoring, and running community events—modeling strong values and teamwork for our students.



Safe and Respectful School Facilities

Our facilities are more than just classrooms—they include a School Forest, an auditorium, and welcoming spaces used by both students and the community.



Financially Responsible and Future-Focused

Our finances are managed responsibly, ensuring resources are focused on creating the best educational experience for our students.

High standards, dedication, and shared values make Edgar a place where students, staff, and community thrive together!

