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The Stanley County Cutups performed at Winkler's Canada Day festivities. For more July 1st photos, check out Pg. 7.

PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Bluegrass harmonies

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SUBMITTED PHOTOS BY REINALDO OLIVEIRA

Last Wednesday's downpour gave Winkler its very own lake briefly along South Railway Ave. Reinaldo Oliveira snapped a few shots of a kayaker making the best of the situation (above) and another person putting their vehicle's water resistance to the test (right).




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getinformed

Regional Connections saw record numbers in '22-23

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It was a record-setting year for Regional Connections Immigrant Services.

At the non-profit's annual general meeting in Winkler last month, executive director Steve Reynolds shared they reached a new high for new arrivals, with over 1,600 people moving to their service area (which stretches across the Pembina Valley and also includes an office in Dauphin) and more than 4,000 clients helped overall.

A good number of those newcomers came from Ukraine in the wake of the Russian invasion.

"About 40 per cent of our newcomers last year were Ukrainians arriving on the emergency travel visa," Reynolds noted.

As a result, a full 55 per cent (895 people) of new settlement clients at Regional Connections over the past year came from Ukraine. Rounding out the rest of the top ten were newcomers from India (190 people), Philippines (185), Nigeria (118), Mexico (52), Russia (43), Germany (40), Bangladesh (35), Pakistan (33), and Kazakhstan (33).

The increased numbers coupled with a return to more normal operations post-pandemic made for a busy year indeed.

"Lots of our activities were well above targets from what we had planned for due to the new arrivals," Reynolds said. "But our staff were all flexible and responsive and just focused on helping people however we can."

The ways they help newcomer families are varied, the reports from

"LOTS OF OUR ACTIVITIES WERE WELL ABOVE TARGETS FROM WHAT WE HAD PLANNED FOR ..."

the agency's various program leads showed.

Tina Barkman, Settlement Program director, shared the focus of their work is to help immigrants settle and integrate into their new communities and adapt to life in Canada.

Settlement workers sit down with all newcomer clients to do a needs assessment and create a personalized settlement plan for them. They also host information and orientation events and provide referrals to local and government services.

In the past year, settlement workers assisted people from 75 countries speaking 57 different languages.

Their services were also expanded to include more in-person availability in Carman, Morris, and Rosenort as immigrant numbers increase there.

Meanwhile, the Employment Program's three divisions saw hundreds of people helped in 2022-2023, shared coordinator Jessica Lopez.

The program includes Employment Assistance Services, which helps newcomers in their job searches; Professional Bridging, which assists internationally-educated professionals obtain their licenses so they can find employment in their fields; and the Gateway to Work Experience for Newcomers (GWEN) program, which helps unemployed or underemployed newcomers learn workplace specific

language and essential skills and gain entry-level work experience.

"87 per cent of our participants gain employment after completing the GWEN program," Lopez shared, noting they ran four cohorts in this first year of the program.

Another program wrapping up its first year in operation is the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), which focuses on government-assisted refugees.

Program leader Russelle Collantes noted they've been working the kinks out of the program—language is often a big barrier for people who find themselves fleeing to Canada from their homelands—but are seeing great progress.

"Before arriving in Canada, our clients were full of fear and despair, not knowing what the future would hold for them," he said, explaining staff work to allay those fears and connect people with other Regional Connections programs so they can learn English, find work, and settle into their new community.

"As one, we are all helping our clients to divert their fears and anxieties to endless opportunities and a new beginning here in Canada," Collantes said. "We are passionately working to earn their trust, to make them feel welcome, so at night they can say, 'We are finally home.'"



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE
At the Regional Connections AGM last month, executive director Steve Reynolds shared some of the successes of the past year.

The AGM also heard success stories from the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI) program, the Settlement Workers in Schools program, the Language program (English classes), and several others that seek to welcome and aid newcomers in a myriad of ways.

Financially, Regional Connections ended the year with a surplus of \$72,629—a far cry from the deficit of over \$15,000 from the year before.

It received nearly \$4.7 million in revenue in 2022-2023, mainly from the federal and provincial governments. On the other side of the sheet, its expenses came in at just over \$4.6 million.

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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



"It's been a good partnership"

Citizens on Patrol receives operating grant

By Lorne Stelmach

A community partnership that has been supporting the Winkler Police Service for over two decades received its annual grant last week.

It may be just \$4,500, but the support is not taken for granted as it is what makes the Citizens on Patrol Program possible year after year.

"It's been a good partnership, and we hope that it continues on for a long time," said co-ordinator Dustin Brown.

The operating grant for the program comes through the Winkler Police Service and is part of the department's annual funding from the City of Winkler.

"It covers things like our administration costs, our fuel vouchers, meetings that we have and any related costs," explained Brown, who has been involved with COPP for 21 years. "It covers all of the costs that we have, and it allows us to keep operating the way that we have been, so it is very much appreciated."

"It's worked really well, and we appreciate the relationship that we have with the Winkler Police Service and appreciate our volunteers who give their time to go out on patrol,"



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Winkler Police Chief Ryan Hunt presents Citizens on Patrol Program lead Dustin Brown with the annual grant of \$4,500 to help cover the costs of the program.

he said.

The program is made up of volunteers who contribute to the safety and security of Winkler, basically serving as an extra set of eyes and ears for police.

"It absolutely makes sense for us to support this program," said Chief Ryan Hunt. "Our officers can't be everywhere. Sometimes they're tied up with other calls for service, so we just really appreciate having that extra set of eyes driving around the city and keeping an eye for crime that they can notify our officers to and they can get

to that area then if they need to.

"We really appreciate the effort that Dustin and all of the volunteers put in to the program ... we wouldn't want to do without it."

Brown noted that they are open to more people getting involved in the program.

"We currently have eight volunteers, but we're always looking for more," he said, encouraging interested individuals to find the COPP application on the Winkler Police Service website or stop by the Winkler Chamber offices in City Hall.

Big Bros looks back on a busy year

By Lorne Stelmach

The past year has been one of optimism but with challenges remaining for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley.

The organization was able to move forward once again with its programs and fundraising post-pandemic, but it also continues to see more of a need than they are able to meet at the moment.

Speaking after their annual meeting last Wednesday, president Rebecca Wiens said their mandate of ensuring that every child in need of a mentor in our region has one remains unchanged.

"Our focus for 2023-24 is to find matches for children on our waiting list, run programs, and facilitate in-school mentoring," she said. "As an

agency, we must continue to uncover mentors for youth in need of mentorship."

Finding volunteer mentors is a top priority for the agency.

"That is a big challenge because we currently have 17 kids on our waiting list ... and in comparison to the mentors that we have, it's quite a big number," Wiens said. "We are always looking to find new matches and find more people who are interested. That is one of our bigger goals. We hate to not be able to find them support when they're waiting on the list, and some of them age out and some move away and they don't get the opportunity that we can provide."

Otherwise, it was a positive year overall for the organization.

It did see revenue decrease slightly from 2022 due to a few factors, in-

cluding not having the charity golf tournament or being able to offer the Minds for Mentors program. However, the revenue of \$104,158 only left the agency with a deficit of \$1,074, as expenses came in \$103,084, allowing for an accumulated surplus of over \$91,000.

There were several vital grants over the last year, including \$18,900 from United Way Pembina Valley and \$17,000 from Healthy Child Manitoba, as well as major fundraisers such as the sale of Smile Cookies at Tim Hortons (which brought in \$18,132) and Bowl for Kids (\$14,349).

"We are quickly bouncing back and trying to find new ways to incorporate the old events we used to have and just try to bring them back and spark

SCRL branches launch summer reading program

By Lorne Stelmach

The five branches of the South Central Regional Library expect to be getting busier as the annual summer reading program begins this week.

For Morden branch administrator Gail Hildebrand, the prospect of more noise and activity than normal is more than welcome, though.

"We love how busy the summer is here. It's loud in here, so it's not a studying place. We enjoy it though. We enjoy having the kids come in and enjoy themselves," Hildebrand said last week in advance of registration opening Tuesday for the program.

She anticipates the level of involvement will pick up even more this year now that we are further along post-pandemic.

"Last year we were not quite back to normal, but it's getting there," she suggested.

"Actually, the more we bring it back to basics, the more people are responding and coming back. We did it virtual for two and a half years because that was what we had to do," she added. "They want to come in now; they want to be with other kids. They want to do stuff ... the kids seem more excited about it this year ... they're super pumped."

The theme for the 2023 program is Bookland Explorers in Space, so every branch has decorated accordingly.

"If you go to Winkler, you'll see the galaxy done to scale ... they have lots of room for it," Hildebrand noted. "[In Morden] we have lots of stars and we have the planets ... the Grade 6

students from École Morden Middle School, their art club, did the planets that you'll see hanging in our space."

Hildebrand said they are overall keeping it pretty straightforward this year.

"It's a really simple program. For every hour that kids read they will get a weekly book draw ticket, and they get 10 space credits," she explained. "With those space credits they can either buy things from our store—things like finger skateboards or goo or fruit snacks—or they can buy grand prize tickets and try to win the big prizes at the end of the summer."

"We'll also all have lots of activities. Every week we'll have a story time, we'll have a craft, and we'll have an activity ... we'll have some really great stuff happening over the summer."

The program plays a vital role in terms of getting more people into the libraries and especially to keep kids reading.

"It gives us a chance to show kids ... perhaps the parents haven't been here ... a lot of newcomers do make this one of their first stops, but there are kids who that have never been in the library and are new to the area," Hildebrand said.

"It gets them excited and gets the parents in, and sometimes we get a whole family of readers out of it," she said. "And a lot of times people don't realize the resources we have here. It's not just books, it's puzzles, movies, audio books, games. It's all sorts of different things in the library."

"It's good for the kids to keep them busy and keep



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The Morden Library's Gail Hildebrand with the spaceship entrance they've built for the summer reading program.

them reading in the summer," Hildebrand added. "One of the things I did see working in the school system for many years is that a lot of kids do lose their reading comprehension over summer if they struggle, and it's a good thing to keep them going through the summer."

Learn more about summer reading program online at scrl.mb.libraries.coop or stop by your local branch.



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From left: Tim MacKinnon from Saskatchewan, Glenda Schwarz from Morden, Wanda Burchert from B.C., and John Fleck from Alberta were part of a Billy Graham Rapid Response Team called to Dauphin in the wake of last month's bus crash tragedy.

Local mobilized to Dauphin with chaplain rapid response team

By Lorne Stelmach

A Mordenite recently spent a week in Dauphin to help provide spiritual and emotional support to shocked and grieving residents after the horrific June 15 bus crash that killed 16 people.

Glenda Schwarz was there from June 17-24 as a crisis-trained chaplain with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's Rapid Response Team ministry.

This was her third deployment with the program, having also been in Ottawa in the wake of flooding in 2017 and during the 2010 Winter Olympics, and the 65-year-old did not hesitate to make the time to go and help out.

"This one I knew ... as soon as I heard about the accident ... I get to Dauphin at least once or twice a year. I'm in relationships with some people there ... so I thought I have to get to Dauphin. It was kind of a no-brainer to say yes."

The opportunity to be part of the rapid response team initiative arose after she was previously involved with Operation Christmas Child through Samaritan's Purse, which is connected to the Billy Graham organization.

"I was still kind of fresh in the minds of that team ... so they contacted me

in 2009 to see if I would be willing to train as a chaplain. They knew I was taking pastoral ministry courses already," said Schwarz. "I took the training in 2009 for the primary purpose of working as a chaplain at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver in 2010."

"I haven't been on a lot of deployments, but I've been on a few," she noted. "I absolutely go when I can. You only deploy for a week at a time, so if I look at the schedule for the week and, okay, can I drop this and this and just go? Then I definitely say yes."

It has felt very meaningful when she has had the opportunity to be part of the response team.

"I really enjoy it ... it's really awesome and rewarding work," said Schwarz. "We're

all specifically trained to bring, not a band-aid exactly, but it's sort of like emergency spiritual and emotional first aid.

"It's not counselling, but it's that ability to sit down and talk to people and even just listen ... what do you need right now? What's the primary thing that's on your mind right now and can I help in some way or can I get you help in some way?"

Continued on page 15

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PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT AND LORNE STELMACH/VOICE



Cultural mosaic

Morden-Winkler marked Canada's 156th birthday Saturday with parties at the Winkler Parkland and Morden's Colert Beach that not only celebrated the Canadian identity but the wonderful cultural mosaic our nation prides itself on as well. Clockwise from above: CultureFest brought a diverse group of performers to the stage in Winkler, featuring dance and music from around the world; enjoying the water at Lake Minnewasta; learning all about Peru at the CultureFest educational booths; a youngster gets her groove on in Winkler; Seven Pines performs at the Beach Bash stage in Morden; sand castle competition at the lake; vintage wheels at the car show in Winkler; the North Wolf Ojibway Singers and Dancers in Morden.



Morden Adult Ed. Centre celebrates its grads

By Lorne Stelmach

The Morden Adult Education Centre celebrated the achievements of its class of 2023 last week.

It is always a day of immense pride for centre, said director Todd Folkett, who commented on being able “to witness firsthand the determination, the resilience and the unwavering commitment that has brought you to this momentous occasion.”

He offered words of praise for what the 20 graduates had to overcome to get to this day.

“We have shattered stereotypes, proven that adult learning has no boundaries and no age limits. Each of you has demonstrated the power of perseverance, the strength of purpose and immense capacity for growth.

“Some of you may have set aside your education to focus on raising families, building careers, or fulfilling other responsibilities. For others, it may have been personal or professional setbacks that momentarily derailed your dreams,” Folkett continued. “Regardless of the circumstances, you made a choice ... to create a brighter future for yourselves and most importantly your loved ones.

“In the face of challenges, you exhibited immense courage and determination” he continued. “The journey of a mature student is not an easy one. It requires discipline, sacrifice, and an unyielding belief in oneself ... it is precisely these qualities that brought you to this moment of triumph.”

In her valedictory address, Maria Funk echoed those thoughts.



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Morden Adult Education Centre's class of 2023 shattered stereotypes to prove "learning has no boundaries and no age limits," centre director Todd Folkett said in his address at the June 26 ceremony.

“We have overcome challenges, worked tirelessly while supporting each other to get here today,” she said. “Great friendships have been built, and the effort and dedication everyone put in to get here today is commendable.”

She touched briefly on her own journey.

“I had wanted to go back to school for a long time, but I was really nervous. My sister graduated here at Morden Adult Ed Centre in 2017 and highly recommended that I give it a try.

“With day care available, it was an easy decision to make,” she said. “I then talked to my sister-in-law about going back to school, and it wasn't long after that she decided to join me.”

Funk also offered her praise for Folkett and the staff of the centre for their dedication and support.

“The environment here at MAEC is incredibly welcoming,

Valedictorian Maria Funk shared that she had wanted to go back to school to get her high school diploma for some time, and the adult ed. centre helped make it a reality.

and it doesn't take long to settle in here,” she said. “We can all agree the teachers were nothing short of incredible and guided each student through ... on behalf of all of our graduating class, I want to thank the staff here at MAEC for welcoming, helping each of us.

“Fellow graduates, congratulations on a job well done,” Funk concluded. “The hard work you committed to is what brought us here to celebrate our accomplishments.”

Brian Fransen, chairperson of the board of trustees for Western School Division, also addressed the graduates.

“We are glad that we can offer educational programming in a way that works for you, and we are proud of

what you have done to get here today,” he said. “Never forget that you did not stop. You did not give up. You came back; you persevered and you won. What's next?”

“What makes your journeys even more incredible is that we know your success didn't follow a typical straight pathway,” said assistant superintendent Marianne Fenn. “That is what makes your own individual success stories so unique.

“As you go forward and continue on your path of life, we want you to remember how you were able to embrace the unexpected and to embrace the challenges involved in achieving this important accomplishment ... we want you to continue to embrace the moments ahead.”

WSD fills new student services administrator position

By Voice staff

Carla Wiebe steps into the new role of student services administrator in Morden this fall, Western School Division announced last month.

Wiebe began her teaching career in 2006, moving into the role of resource teacher in 2016. She has been working as both the interim vice-principal and a resource teacher at Maple Leaf Elementary School since 2022.

Wiebe will continue in a dual role moving forward, working half-time as interim vice-principal and half-

time as student services administrator.

“Carla has been instrumental in supporting inclusion for all students in the roles she has held with Western School Division,” WSD said in a statement. “Through collaboration with the student services team, students, their families, and relevant outside agencies, she strives to support the planning and coordination of effective, appropriate and inclusive learning opportunities for all students in Western School Division.”



More Art on the Trail installed at Lake Minnewasta

By Lorne Stelmach

The newest addition to a public art project at Lake Minnewasta is very much inspired by the nature around it.

The piece recently installed by artist Margie Hildebrand towers at over 10 feet and features some of the variety of animals that can be found in the setting.

"It starts with the fish that are in the lake ... then it goes up to some of the animals who live on the shore like the frogs and the turtles and the snakes, and then it goes up to the things that are up in the trees like the squirrels and the crow," Hildebrand explained during a recent visit to the site on the lake trail.

"This is specifically about the animals that live in and around the lake," she said. "I like walking in nature, and I also like art, of course ... I thought if people come upon it while they're hiking, it might be a point of interest."

It's the fourth installment of the Pembina Hills Arts Council's Art on the Trail initiative at Lake Minnewasta. The aim of the project is to create and place public art amidst the natural beauty of the lake while also challenging artists to create pieces that are sustainable and land-conscious. Other artists featured include Jen Martens, David Peters, and Lauren McLean.

"I've known about the Art on the Trail program for a few years, and I've been thinking about it for a while," Hildebrand said. "I think it's a great idea to put some art on the trail."

Her work features a number of clay pieces that have been fired and glazed and put together on an under structure of 3/4 inch iron bar that is four feet into the ground for stability.

"It's kind of a big job, and it's a little bit of a



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Margie Hildebrand with her tower of clay animals recently installed along the trail at Lake Minnewasta.

labour of love," she said. "My son Mark came and helped me ... he helped dig the hole, and it was not easy. The soil was dry and gravelly. It took us a couple sessions of putting water down the hole to make it soft enough to dig the hole.

"It's got silicon sealant between the units to hold them more firmly in place ... so I think it's going to be able to withstand the elements," she said. "And I never saw it completed until here ... it worked out almost perfectly."

One thing Hildebrand likes about the initiative is how encountering the art can be unexpected.

"That's a neat part of it, that it's a bit of a surprise for people," she said. "That's what's interesting about public art in general, that everybody can see it and they don't need to go into a place ... it may not be high in their points of interest."



"They have to come a little further to see this one," Hildebrand added, noting it is located a bit further along the trail. "I hope people get an appreciation for the animals that live around the lake. Our lake is a special place that is dear to many people in Morden, and the trail is dear to many people as well ... maybe they will pause for a moment."

In an earlier interview, programs and outreach co-ordinator Tye Dandridge-Evancio said he appreciates how all of the pieces thus far have been unique, and he sees it as a reflection of the artist community here.

"We have a selection of artists in the area who are all very different and unique, and that is something that is coming out of this that we are really excited to show just how diverse the arts community really is here in Morden."

Repair work well underway on Highway 75

By Voice staff

If you're taking Hwy. 75 into Winnipeg this summer, be prepared to encounter road crews at work.

Construction on highway improvements began in May and is expected to continue to the end of the year.

"As Manitoba's main north-south trade route, PTH 75 is critical to the safe, efficient transportation of goods, products and services to international markets," Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Doyle Piwniuk said. "These projects will ensure this

major economic corridor is in peak condition to continue supporting economic growth and opportunity in Manitoba."

The minister noted the existing pavement on PTH 75 between PTH 23 and Provincial Road 305 was constructed more than 30 years ago. Despite ongoing maintenance, it has deteriorated to the point that full reconstruction is required.

Last August, the Manitoba government announced an investment of more than \$61 million to restore the segment of PTH 75 from Morris to

Ste. Agathe as part of its \$1.5 billion three-year commitment to improving Manitoba's highway network.

Concrete reconstruction work on the 24.5-kilometre section of the highway began May 15 and is scheduled to be completed by fall.

Piwniuk noted two other projects on PTH 75 are currently underway or in planning:

- Concrete rehabilitation for joint repairs on the southbound lanes of PTH 75 from PR 201 to PTH 23 is ongoing. Work on the 25-km section is anticipated to be completed by fall 2025.

- Design of a \$9-million project to reconstruct the southbound lanes of PTH 75 at the Pembina-Emerson Point of Entry is in the early design phase. The project, cost-shared with the federal government, and will include a new dedicated truck lane west of the current highway's alignment.

More information about these upgrades, including updates, is available at www.gov.mb.ca/mit/mip-map/map.html.

Check out the Voice online at www.winklormordenvoice.ca or altonavoice.ca

sports & recreation



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The Morden Mud Hens beat the visiting Winkler Whips 4-3 last week Tuesday.



Mud Hens beat Whips, Bisons down Cardinals

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Morden Mud Hens came out ahead of the visiting Winkler Whips last week in Border Baseball League action.

It's the third time the two rivals have come up against each other this sea-

son. The first game ended in a 6-6 tie and then Winkler took the second one 7-2.

On June 27, Morden got its revenge with a 4-3 win.

Meanwhile, that same night saw the Altona Bisons travel to Carman to beat the Cardinals 6-5.

Morden is at the top of the East Divisions standings with a 6-2-1 record. Altona is in second place at 5-2 followed by Winkler at 5-2-2 and Carman at 2-7-1.

In the West Division, Cartwright leads the way followed by Pilot Mound, Baldur, and Clearwater.

This week Altona hosts Morden Tuesday night while Winkler is in Carman. Results were not available at press time.

The Whips also play on the road in Cartwright Friday night while the Bisons play in Baldur and the Mud Hens host the Cardinals.

Altona Bisons beat Pembina Valley Orioles 9-7

By Lorne Stelmach

The Pembina Valley Orioles and Altona Bisons faced each other for the final time this season Monday evening as the MJBL regular season comes to a close.

It was the only game of the week for both teams as they both looked to try to head into the playoffs on a winning note, but they were two teams heading in different directions.

The 9-7 win was the third straight victory for the Bisons while the Orioles saw their losing streak extended to eight games.

Altona remained in seventh place

but improved to 9-13 while Pembina Valley remained in eighth and last place at 6-15.

The Orioles had their game last Wednesday against the St. Boniface Legionaires rained out.

The regular season concludes this

week for Pembina Valley starting with a home game Wednesday against St. Boniface followed by away games in Carillon and St. Boniface Friday and Sunday.

Altona was to take on Elmwood in Winnipeg Wednesday and then close

out the season by hosting Interlake Friday.

If the standings heading into this week remain unchanged, Pembina Valley will take on first-place Elmwood while Altona faces second-place St. James in the playoff openers.

Storm 1 post a loss, Storm 2 a win

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Storm 1 soccer team closed out June with a 3-1 loss to the World Soc-

cer Academy.

Cornelius Siemens got Winkler on the board in what is the Storm's fifth loss so far this summer.

Their record is 1-5, which has them right now in seventh place in the 10-team Manitoba Major Soccer league Premier Division. The bottom two teams will drop down to 1st Division next season.

Winkler Storm 2 are having better luck in the league's 3rd Division, with

a 3-2 record that has them in fourth place.

Last Thursday they beat the Bandits FC 3-1. Mosi William, Pah Dah, and Mohammed Shahab scored for Winkler.

This week Storm 1 take on Hellas SC on the road Wednesday and then host Luso Canadian Sunday at 7 p.m.

Storm 2 also plays at home Sunday, hosting the Richmond Kings at 5 p.m. at the 15th St. soccer pitch.

The Voice Get in touch with us at 204-325-6888



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Angels on the field

By Voice staff

Altona Angels Softball invited the community down to the ball diamonds at W.C. Miller Collegiate June 26 for the first annual Softball Night in Altona.

"Having seen a record number of 110 players registered in 2023, our club executive felt it was the perfect time to celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of these young athletes, the families that support them, and all the volunteer coaches and managers that make it happen," said Angels spokesperson Rachel Wahl.

The evening featured a Skills Showcase for the U7 and U9 Timbits groups followed by exhibition games featuring teams made up of the U11 Angels players and the U9 Timbits as well as games between the U13 and U15 Angels playing against the U17 and U19 players.

Attendees also enjoyed free hot dogs and watermelon.

"Altona Angels wishes to acknowledge the dedication of over 30 volunteer parent and non-parent coaches, assistants, and team managers, as well as numerous parents who step in to help as needed," Wahl said, sending thanks as well to the Town of Altona, Border Land School Division, and event sponsors Sun Valley Co-op, Altona Farm Service, and GJ Chemical.



Special O athlete wins silver at World Games

By Lorne Stelmach

A Morden athlete not only had the experience of a lifetime but also came home with a medal to show for her efforts.

Colleen Voth was part of the Team Canada contingent at the 2023 Special Olympics World Games in Berlin, Germany June 17-25.

It brought together 7,000 athletes from about 170 countries, including 138 Canadian athletes competing in athletics, basketball, bocce, bowling, golf, power lifting, rhythmic gymnastics, soccer, and swimming.

Voth was part of the bowling team and earned a silver medal in her division after earlier having had sixth and seventh place finishes.

"I was surprised that I came home with a silver. I did not expect that," said Voth. "One of my coaches said you better do better, and I did."

Voth is originally from Altona but moved about a year ago to Morden, where she works at the Hope Thrift Store.

She's part of the Valley Rollers Special Olympics Manitoba 10-pin bowling club that practices weekly from October through April at VB's Entertainment Centre in Winkler.

Bowling is something she has enjoyed doing for some time now.

"It's just a kind of sport that I've always liked ... it's good exercise for me," said Voth, who not only bowls in Winkler once a week but outside of that practices under the direction of her coach, Chris Sumner.

She has occasionally competed at tournaments in Winnipeg, but this was her first major competition

and quite an opportunity for her.

"This was all new to me. It was a very good experience," said Voth, who noted she loved taking the train from Munich to Berlin. "That was a good experience for me because I had never been on a trip with a train."

She also enjoyed having the chance to meet so many people from all over the world and seeing some of the cultural differences abroad.

"Things were different because they had bike stands everywhere and people could use them. I had never seen that before ... there were lots of bikes around," Voth said. "The food was really good, and the hotel was really good."

"It was different ... but I was ready to come home. I missed my staff, and I missed my work, so I was ready to go."

Sumner noted the two of them had one-on-one training from the start of May until Voth left for Games.

"I am so proud of Colleen for coming home with a silver medal and only a few pins shy of winning gold in her division," he said. "As her local coach, it was really gratifying to see all those hours of practice and training pay off in Berlin."

"It can't be overstated the effort she put in over the last six to seven months leading up to Berlin in order to perform at such a high level at the highest level of Special Olympics competition. Her commitment and effort are the big reasons why she had a successful Games," he added. "My ultimate hope for Colleen is she will have made memories that will last her a lifetime and new friends she will be close to for years to come."



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE
Colleen Voth returned home last week from the 2023 Special Olympics World Games in Germany with a silver medal in bowling.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS
 IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF: ARTHUR MARTENS, late of the City of Winkler, in Manitoba, Deceased. ALL claims against the above estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be filed with the undersigned at their offices, 2500 - 360 Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 4H6, on or before the 4th day of August, 2023. DATED at Winnipeg, Manitoba, this 26th day of June, 2023. PITBLADO LLP
 Attention: Jessica M. Hersey
 Solicitors for the Administrator

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At the Boundary Trails Health Centre
Financial Year-End Statements
will be available at the meeting and in the Foundation office.

For more information, please call or email 204-331-8808 ext2 or info@bthcfoundation.com
 Refreshments to follow

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The *Winkler Morden* Voice

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ANNIVERSARY



Happy 60th Wedding Anniversary
to our Mom and Dad:
John and Sally Letkeman
of Winkler (previously from Austin)!
We love you!

-Your children

OBITUARY



Theresa Anne Swedick
August 4, 1952 – June 25, 2023

With heavy hearts we announce the unexpected passing of our sister, Theresa (Terry) Anne Swedick, formerly of Winnipeg, who died at her home in Morden on June 25, 2023.

She will be deeply missed by her brother Leonard (Lori) Swedick, sisters Marlene (Manuel) Viveiros and Susan (Rick) Kaatz, and her aunt and uncle Patsy and Walter Saarela and their families, as well as step-brothers and sisters Donny, Joyce, Billy, Debbie, and Sheila and their families.

She was predeceased by her parents and step-father. Terry was born in St. Boniface, MB on August 4, 1952 to Bernard and Florence Schweedick. A childhood reaction to medication left her deaf, and she grew up attending school at the Saskatchewan

School for the Deaf and the Manitoba School for the Deaf.

In her working life, Terry was employed in various capacities for the governments of Manitoba and Canada. She was also involved with the Winnipeg Community Centre of the Deaf and the Canadian Association of the Deaf for many years.

An avid movie and TV-lover, in the '80s Terry launched a personal letter-writing campaign to encourage wider closed captioning of television programs and movies. She contacted all the major video tape distributors, asking them to include closed captions or subtitles on all their releases. When she received little initial response, she began reaching out to movers and shakers in the entertainment industry—actors, program hosts, and other celebrities—by the thousands, urging them to speak to their producers about the importance of closed captioning. It was a cause she championed for many years, feeling passionately that entertainment should be accessible to everyone. In 2004, she had a hand in advising the Canadian Association of Broadcasters as it drafted new standards and protocols for closed captioning for Canadian English language broadcasters.

Terry's passion for accessibility extended beyond entertainment. Over the years she lobbied for many other deaf rights—better and more interpretive services when it came to post-secondary education, fairer hiring practices and work accommodations, a broader awareness of deaf culture, and related issues.

Terry's lack of hearing certainly didn't stop her from falling hard for a certain King of Rock 'n Roll, whose movies she loved and whose life she was fascinated by. She long dreamed of one day going to Graceland. In the meantime, she filled her bookshelves with Elvis movies, biographies, and collectibles. She was also the founder of the Ann-Margret Canadian Fan Club.

In part because of her love of movies and in part because she sought to check that as many as possible included closed captioning (and if they didn't, you better believe the distributor would hear about it), Terry had an expansive collection of VHS tapes and DVDs, which she shared freely with her family. Her niece recalls that every visit to Auntie Terry's growing up resulted in a stack of borrowed tapes coming home with them to enjoy. Terry continued to grow her collection in recent years, and spent many hours enjoying favourite shows from the '70s and '80s and discovering newer programs to binge as well.

Terry loved to bake and to share her creations with friends and family. We will miss your Christmas shortbread, Terry, along with your bright smile and infectious laugh. Rest in peace.

Terry requested cremation and no service be held

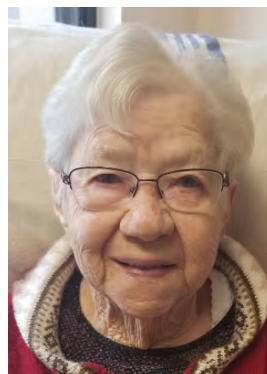
In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the charity of your choice in her memory.

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The *Winkler Morden* Voice

OBITUARY

Elizabeth Groening (nee Thiessen)
1924 - 2023



Our mother, Elizabeth Groening, went to be with her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ on Monday, June 25th at 4:15 a.m. at Salem Home with her daughter by her bedside.

"I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that last day, and not to me only, but unto all of them. Also, that love his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7 and 8.

Mom was born to Jacob and Helena Thiessen at home at Chihuahua, Mexico. She was baptized upon confession of her faith. She married Bernard Groening, following a three-month whirlwind courtship on October 7, 1945, at her family's farm at

Plum Coulee. We were so privileged to have had parents who were very concerned about our spiritual upbringing as well. As small children we were privileged to be taught of the love of Jesus and our need to make a decision for Christ in order to ensure our future home in eternity. Dad and Mom prayed for each of their children and grandchildren by name regularly. Mom was a homemaker in every sense of the word, her cooking and baking were the best. She gave willing/generously to Dad, we children and anyone who came to visit. We never left to go home without some baking or canning. She supported Dad in every way. Mom and Dad were foster parents for many years and maintained contact with many of them over the years. We, the children and our families were so very, very blessed to have had Mom and Dad as our parents. We were never wealthy in this world's standards, but oh the love our parents shared with us. There were hard times, but we never went without. Their nearly 70-year marriage was an example of how marriage should be.

Mom is survived by daughter, Esther Little (Larry) of Beausejour, their children, Sherry Meilleur (Wayne), Cathie Bernd (Carl), Curtis Little, Suzane Little (Graydon); Heavenly Sinclair, Lexie Sinclair (Vince), Marshall Sinclair, Stephen Sinclair, Gordon Sinclair; son, Gerald of Winnipeg, his son, Michael (Michelle); son, James (Susie) of Burnaby, BC, their children, Matthew (Kass), Amanda and Rachel; daughter-in-law, Irene (Don-deceased) Groening of Starbuck, their children, Kristy Smith, Scott and Lucas (Kayla), 22 great-grandchildren and 14 great-great-grandchildren, 49 foster children including especially Sandra, Beverly, Roberta and Agnes; sisters-in-law, Margaret Thiessen and Elsie Groening and many nieces and nephews and friends.

"Blessed is the man/woman whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate. Psalms 127. (Children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren)

She was predeceased by her parents, Jacob and Helena Thiessen, three sons, Andrew Arthur Groening in 1966, Walter Elmer Groening in 1972, Donald David Groening in 2002; granddaughter, Jenny Groening in 1987; great-great-granddaughter, Mia Mackie in 2013; brothers, Cornelius, Jacob and Peter, sisters, Helen Hiebert, Mary Wiebe, Margaret Dyck, Anne, Catherine Bergen and many in-laws. Elizabeth was the last surviving member of her family.

Funeral service was held at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 4, 2023 with interment at Clearwater Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Ancla Orphanage in Mexico.

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Local high school athletes honoured with MHSAA awards

By Voice staff

A trio of local students were honoured by the Manitoba High Schools Athletic Association last week.

The agency announced their 2022-2023 High School Athletes of the Year in the A, AA, AAA, and AAAA school size categories, as well as the overall male and female athletes of the year.

W.C. Miller Collegiate's Mia Sawatsky was named the AAA Girls Athlete of the Year and also the overall High School Female Athlete of the Year.

Sawatsky participated in cross country, soccer, volleyball, basketball, badminton, and track and field this year.

She was a 2023 Manitoba's Credit Unions Scholar Athlete of the Year, the school's JV and varsity female athlete of the year, and maintained an

academic average of 95 per cent.

Her soccer team took home the gold at the A-AAA Provincial Soccer Championships, where she was named MVP, while her volleyball team captured the Zone 4 banner.

Sawatsky finished fourth overall at the Provincial Cross Country Championships. At the Provincial Track & Field Championships, she finished first in the 300m, third in the 1500m, and sixth in the 400m.

Nellie McClung Collegiate's Kieran Reid was named both the A Boys Athlete of the Year as well as the overall High School Male Athlete of the Year.

Reid holds an academic average of 93 per cent and was a 2023 Manitoba's Credit Unions Scholar Athlete of the Year.

He played badminton, was the starting left-side hitter and captain of his

volleyball team, the skip for his boys curling team, and played mixed doubles curling where he was a semi-finalist at the Provincial Mixed Doubles Curling Championships.

Reid was also a starting pitcher, back catcher, shortstop, and center fielder on the school's baseball team, and competed in long jump, triple jump, 100m sprint, 4 x 100 relay and 100m hurdles. At the Provincial Track & Field Championships he finished second in the 100m hurdles, sixth in triple jump and seventh in long jump.

Finally, winning the AA Boys award was Chad Pouteau of Prairie Mountain High School (Somerset).

Pouteau held an academic average of 80 per cent while participating in cross country, volleyball, hockey, basketball, and track & field.

He placed second in the Zone 6 cross

country championships and helped the school win the Zone 6 Cross Country banner.

He was co-captain of the volleyball team, captain of his hockey team, nominated for the Lloyd C. Orchard Most Sportsman Like Player Award in the Zone IV High School Hockey League, and selected to play in the league's all-star game.

Pouteau was in the starting line up with his basketball team where he helped the team win the Killarney invitational tournament, finish first in the Zone 6 league, and qualify for the AA Provincial Basketball Championships. He was named player of the game and an all-star at the Provincial Championships and was selected to play in Basketball Manitoba's A-AAA graduating all-star game.

"We are building a stronger, more vibrant community"

From Pg. 4

interest in the community and continue our organization," said Wiens. "It is a challenge because I believe a lot of us are still in the pandemic mindset ... we're not used to going out. We're getting back into it, but it's still an adjustment.

"I do feel very optimistic. Things have been going very well, and we've had some successful fundraisers and community matches and programs we've been able to hold in schools,"

> RESPONSE TEAM, FROM PG. 6

"We don't come in with an agenda. The whole premise or the primary goal of the team is to come and listen, provide support where we can.

"In a case like Dauphin, 16 people died in that accident. That's way more trauma in a community that size than all of the pastors and psychologists and whatever helpers that are there can deal with ... it's overwhelming," Schwarz observed. "It affected everyone. If they aren't related in some way, they're friends, go to the same church, worked at the same place or they're friends of friends. These deaths touched everybody."

She recalled meeting one lady who clearly had been grieving hard. It turned out the woman had been related to a couple of the victims and was friends with others.

Simply approaching it with the thought of how can we help you and how can we pray for you got the

she said. "It's been going really well, and we want to continue that growth and make as much of an impact in the lives of little's in our community as we can."

In her report, executive director Jenelle Neufeld emphasized they remain steadfast in their mission to provide youth facing adversity with the transformative experience of having mentors who believe in them.

"Throughout the past year, we have felt our mentoring programming has needed to restart post pandemic," she

woman, who they learned was connected with a church in Dauphin, engaged, Schwarz said..

"We talked and encouraged her ... and it seemed she just walked out of that building then a whole lot straighter and with hope in her heart.

"Maybe in the shock and the trauma of the moment, they don't realize it ... what are the supports that are in place already. They're in too much shock and trauma to think about it."

Schwarz is just grateful to have had the chance to help out.

"We're just there to serve wherever and however we can serve," she said. "It does feel meaningful ... I'm always just amazed at the doors that open for the team and the people.

"There was so much grief, but Dauphin is a resilient community," she added.

said, noting support from businesses and the communities it serves has enabled the organization to aim "to expand our reach and provide even more young individuals with the life changing opportunities they deserve. Together, we are building a stronger, more vibrant community where every young person can realize their full potential.

"As we look to the future, we remain resolute in our commitment to continuously enhance our mentoring

programs and expand our impact," Neufeld said.

"Great things can happen when we can come together and support each other," said Wiens, who reflected on how they might be able to sway more people to get involved as mentors.

"I would say that the impact on these kids' lives is huge, and it can be so beneficial to their success and their feeling of community and that they have support, and it really does matter in their lives."

The Funnies



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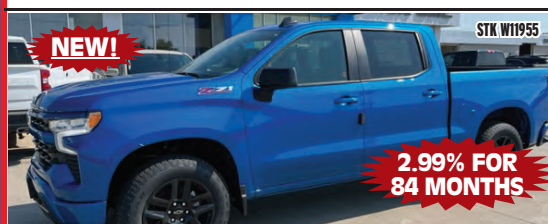
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Garden Valley Collegiate

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From Pg. 1

"Power demands responsibility ... the education is the power, it's the gift you've been given. The responsibility



ity is your homework.

"If the thought of a new situation makes you nervous, that's where you will learn something new. It is your responsibility to do things that make you nervous.

"It is your responsibility to be a good neighbour ... using your tools and skills to improve your community," Giesbrecht stressed. "It means understanding that your community is not a place, but it is the people around you. Taking care of your community means helping those people and making them feel included.

"It is your responsibility to see as much of the world as you can ... it is a very big place and you only get one chance to see it," he said, noting travelling teaches courage, humility, and empathy—all things that "will make you a better neighbour.

"Learn new things, be a good neighbour, see the world," Giesbrecht summed up his advice for the class. "Sounds good? Okay, let's get to work."

Valedictorian Jamie Reimer urged her classmates to take chances in life.

"I'd rather regret the things I've done than the things I didn't do," she said, quoting Lucille Ball.

She hopes the class of 2023 live in a way that reflects who they truly are.

"What if you looked into a mirror that showed a true reflection of yourself? All your experiences. Your strengths and flaws. All your joys and regrets. Would you be proud of that person you see in there?"

"We're a class that has been through a lot of hard stuff where it was difficult to be satisfied with who we saw in those mirrors," Reimer said, noting the pandemic years certainly had an effect on them. "We were split apart and isolated from each other for nearly two years. It was undoubtedly a hard time for us all, and today is a true testament of our grit, determination, and character. We should

Continued on page 16

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Tessa Elias

Claudia Enns

Tahlia Enns

Jonny Esau

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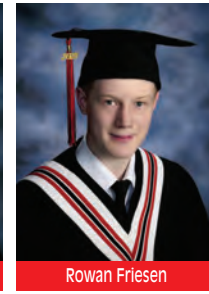
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Hudson Friesen



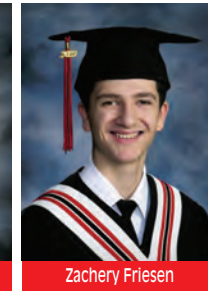
Jaseleh Friesen



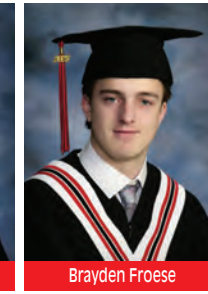
Rowan Friesen



Tina Friesen



Zachery Friesen



Brayden Froese



Joshua Froese



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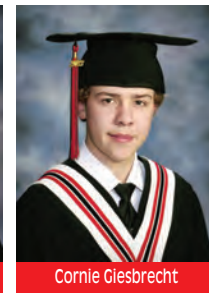
William Froese



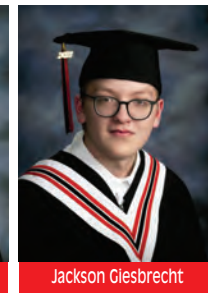
Michael Gabriel



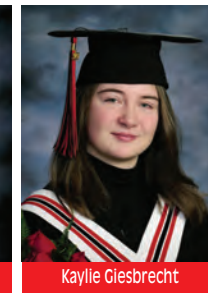
Aliyah Giesbrecht



Cornie Giesbrecht



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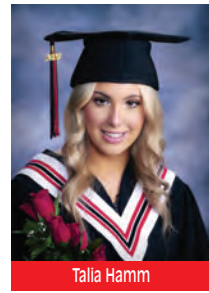
Lilliana Golovchenko



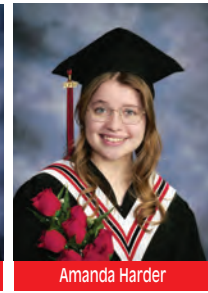
Michael Guenther



Susan Hamm



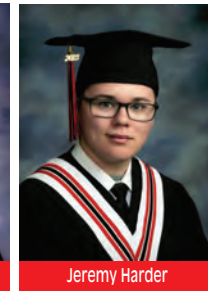
Talia Hamm



Amanda Harder



Chloe Harder



Jeremy Harder



Andy Harms



Matthias Harms



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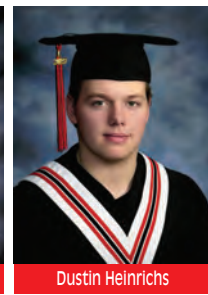
Griffon Hart



Morgan Haslam



Brook Heide



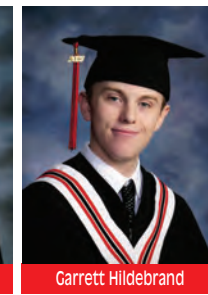
Dustin Heinrichs



Lucia Hildebrand



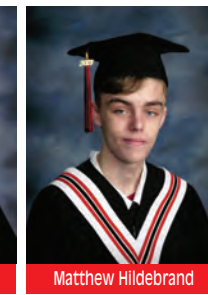
Brian Hildebrand Penner



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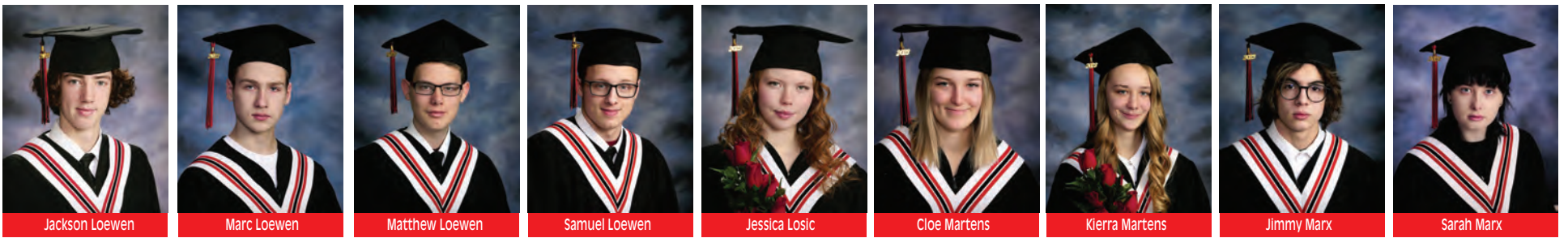
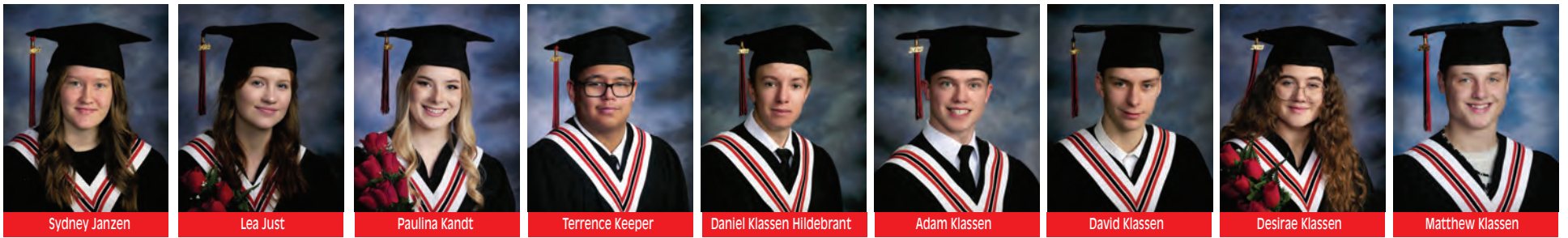
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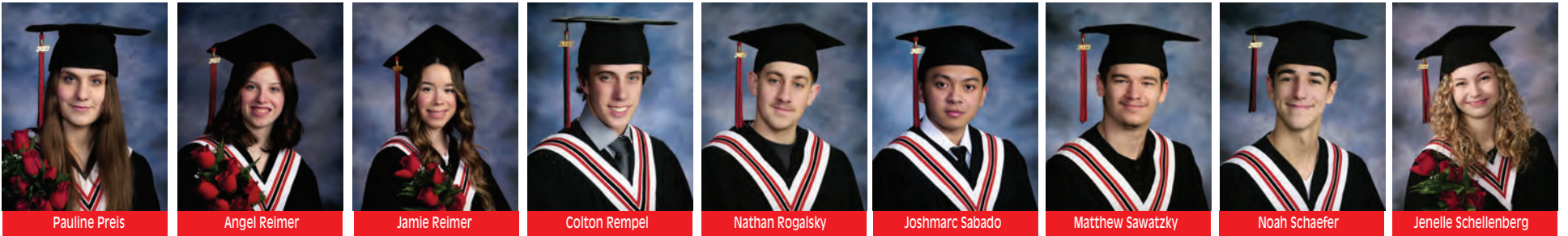
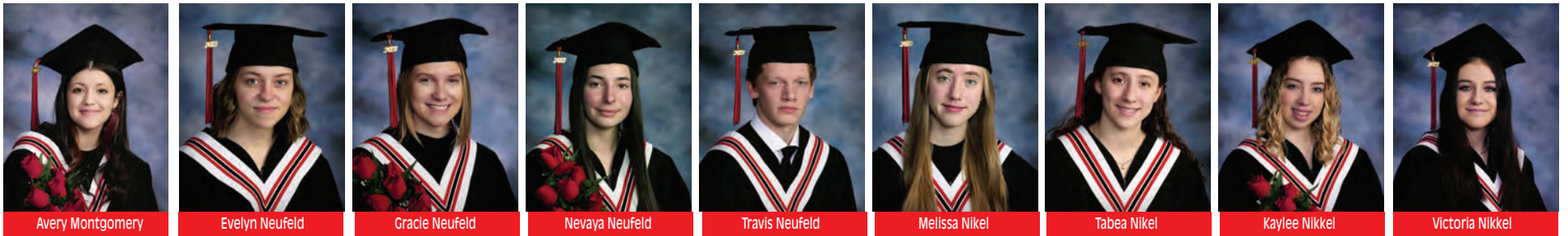
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Jeremy Wiebe



Madalyn Wiebe



Madden Wiebe



Matthew Wiebe



Tobias Wiese



Lauren Wolfe



David Yoffe

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Mulan Boucher
Zeriah Bueckert
Marvin Dueck
Bennet Eggert
Mia Fedrau

Sam Freeheart
Heinrich Funk
Rebekka Funk
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Britney Krahn
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TO THE
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Northlands Parkway Collegiate *Congratulations*
to the **Graduating Classes of 2023**



From Pg. 7

“Be confident in your choices and stick to them ... stay true to the path you have chosen ... whatever you choose ... give it your all.”

He also noted how he has seen so many changes in the class of 2023 each day and each year.

“Pride doesn’t even explain the way I feel,” he concluded.

The valedictory address by Olivia Groening had her reflecting on how graduation means saying goodbye to the friends who have inspired and encouraged and the teachers who have become their role models, but she also feels much gratitude and addressed each of them.

“I see the familiar faces, the school staff, who had an essential role in shaping us into the individuals we are today. They are the teachers who’ve adapted to every

scenario and provided us with our education.

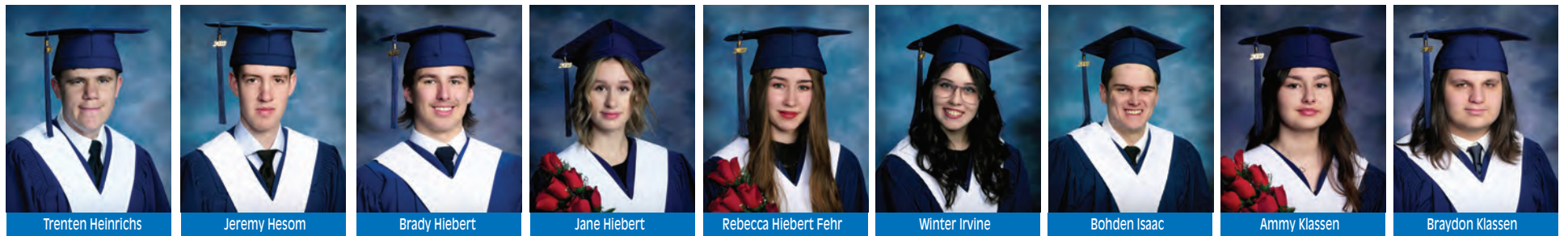
“The EAs and guidance counsellors, who’ve supported us with unwavering dedication on our journey to success ... the custodians, office staff, and senior administration who’ve put so much effort into making NPC the incredible school it is.

“I see our friends and our family who have been with us through it all. Your constant support has been instrumental in our success. You’ve been our rock through every trial, our biggest cheerleaders.

“The classmates who’ve been with each other through thick and thin, who’ve laughed and cried together, grown and learned together,” said Groening. “We stand here today as a true testament to

Continued on page 16

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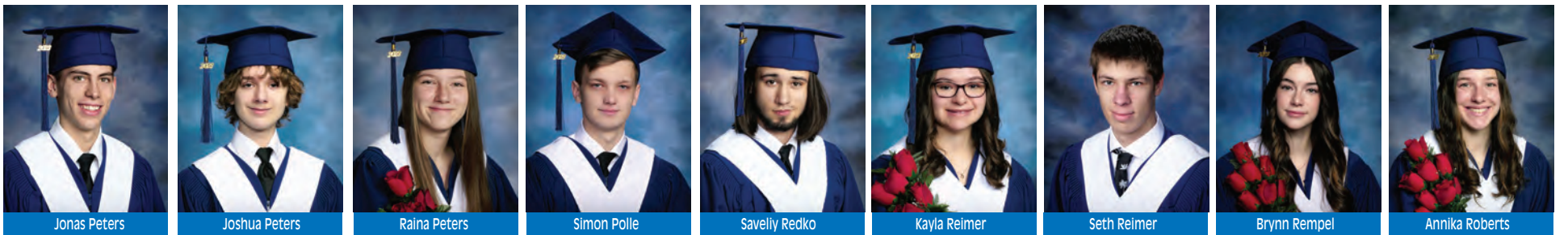
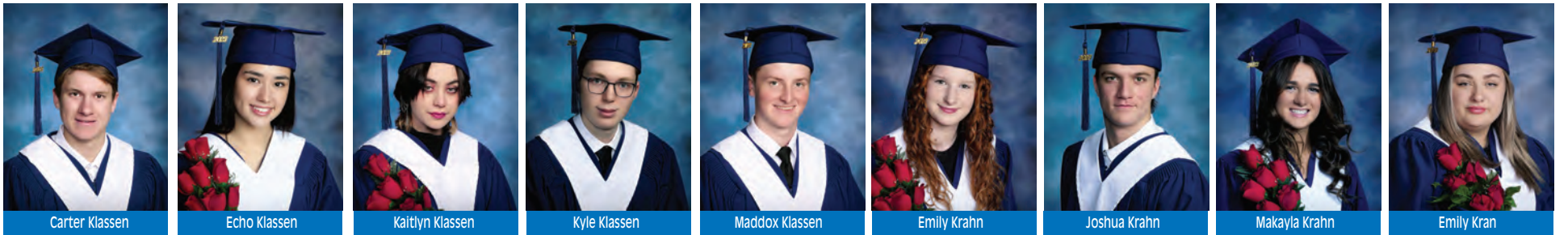
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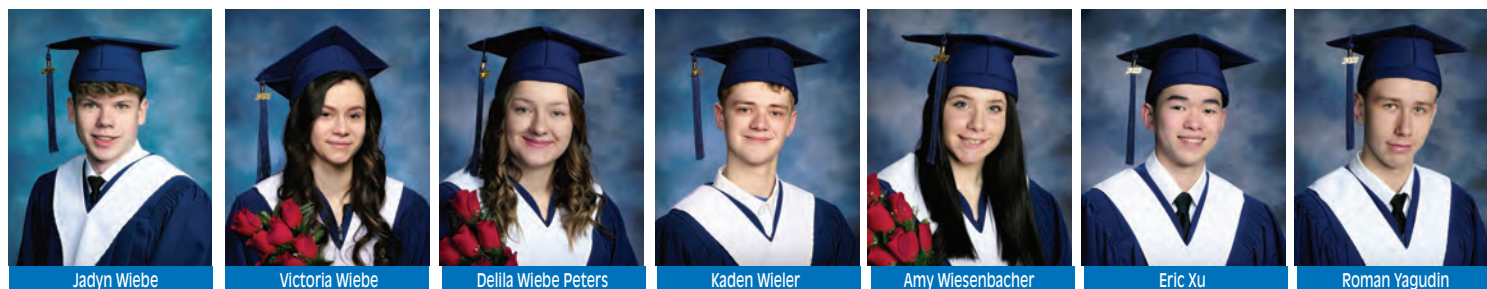
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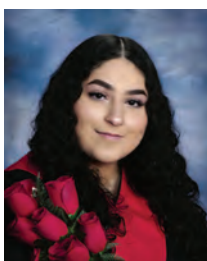
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 Darby Olson	 Faye Ona	 Karl Padua	 Pia Patena	 Emma Patterson	 Chelsea Penner	 Brady Peters	 Jayden Peters	 Maja Piekarska
 Slava Podkorytov	 Saif Qureshi	 Natalie Rach	 Jordan Reimer	 Lochlan Rempel	 Teagan Rempel	 Adam Rob	 Ethan Rosten	 Melanie Rouire

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LENRRIE FAYE ONA Child of Reynaldo Ona Jr. Morden Collegiate Institute	MADDY FRIESEN Child of Lianne Friesen Mennonite Collegiate Institute
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SHANEN DENISE ARCILLA Child of Raul & Marita Arcilla Morden Collegiate Institute	YSAH DEL MUNDO Child of Jayson Del Mundo Morden Collegiate Institute
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Nellie McClung Collegiate

Congratulations
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“Make mistakes, take risks”

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Nellie McClung Collegiate celebrated its class of 2023 at a graduation ceremony June 23. Fourteen graduates took to the stage in a ceremony filled with advice and memories.

Guest speaker Ryan Steppler, who taught the class in Gr. 6, began with a bit of a disclaimer.

“A lot of the principles or advice I’m going to share I try to implement in my life, but I fall backwards all the time. What is really important is to try to be self aware and understand when that happens not to beat yourself up.”

He urged the grads to strive for positivity in their life outlook, but to also be prepared for curve balls.

“When on your journey and following your path, there will be moments when things don’t go as planned,” he said, advising them to avoid handling those situations like a deer frozen in a car’s headlights.

“What do we do when things don’t go as planned? We think, ‘That wasn’t supposed to happen.’ But it did,” Steppler said. “Do we react like the deer and go crashing into the car? Or do we choose to pause and respond instead?”

“When you have major problems in your life ... you might want to take some consideration and just take a step back and pretend that somebody else has come to you with the same problem. What advice would you give them?” Steppler said. “I encourage you to treat yourself like a friend in these situations. Be kind to yourself.

“We must work on not being afraid to fail by making



mistakes,” he continued. “When we’re really young, we do an amazing job of learning to walk. We fall down countless times, and never want to stop.

“Try new things. Getting out there and doing something that might scare you a little bit. Make some mistakes. Take some risks.”

Finally, he encouraged the grads to have some discipline in their lives.

“Being disciplined leads to success,” he said. “Doing hard things makes life easier. I encourage you to make things that are the most important to you a priority, even if they’re hard.”

Co-valedictorians Kieran Reid and Bethany Sanders began their speech by thanking everyone who helped the graduates get to this point in their lives.

“To the teachers, thanks for the endless lessons

you have taught us, and for putting up with our utter laziness,” Reid said. “To our parents for being our number one supporters and for always pushing us to do our best. And, lastly, to our fellow graduates, thanks for the wonderful memories we have made growing up together.”

The pair took a moment then to shine a spotlight on each one of their peers, reflecting on their unique personalities and sharing a fond memory or two.

They ended with some parting advice.

“I think after today we will all have a taste of just how fast life goes by,” Sanders said. “So please appreciate every moment that you have.

“Live in the present, have confidence, reach for your dreams, and remember: each and every one of us will be cheering you on, no matter where you go.”

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Ayden Dobson



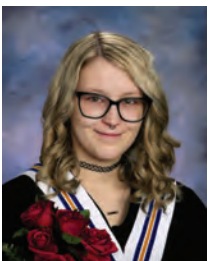
Erica Fijala



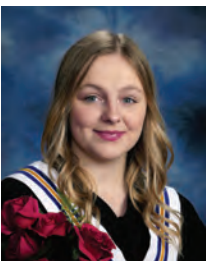
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NPC, from Pg. 8

the power of devotion, friendship and unwavering spirit of determination.”

She recalled the nerves and excitement of the first days in high school.

“Building connections with the staff and meeting new students from other middle schools helped in the transition to high school,” said Groening.

“Our first two years of high school came with challenges. COVID-19 classrooms were empty. School was a

different experience ... social interaction and the comfort of all our classmates and friends were no longer something we had.

“I learned something about us during this time. When faced with adversity and the unexpected, we push through, adapt, and come back stronger,” said Groening. “Thankfully, our Grade 11 and 12 years have been a chance to reconnect, making new defining memories that will be in-

grained in our minds forever.

“Years from now, when we think back on these shared experiences, the common factor that will stand out every time, be it a sports game, event, pep rally, dance or concert, was the

passion, friendship and support that was so present within our class,” she concluded. “No matter where our journeys take us, we will always share NPC’s values, supporting opportunity, achievement, and responsibility.”

MCI, From Pg. 11

Morden Collegiate principal Tania Sigurdson recalled an important lesson she learned when she first became a parent. She was told to appreciate all of the moments.

“Be present, take it in; don’t wish away this moment to get quickly to the next ... pause and recognize that you are only going to get one opportunity to cross this stage,” she said. “Being a part of your high school experience has been privilege for all of us. You grew up right in front of us, and for us, it seemed to happen in a blink. It has been a pleasure to walk alongside all of you.”

Brian Fransen, chairperson of the board of trustees for Western School Division, offered a message that included the thought that the risk of failure is not something to be afraid



of but actually something to be embraced.

“Over the years, as a board we have worked to make sure the priorities we focus on throughout the division would have a profound, positive impact on the future of our students,” he said. “We hope you can look back on your time in our schools with a sense of accomplishment and pride.”

GVC, From Pg. 2

all be very proud of ourselves and each other, as this adds depth and significance to our reflections.”

Reimer shared fond memories of her years at GVC, and thanked its teachers and staff for helping prepare students for the road ahead in a myriad of ways.

“They’ve truly had an impact on how we’ve grown. All our memories and experiences add up to create an intricate, qualified person to take life on.”

She encouraged the class to strive

to make their future selves proud.

“In the future we will accomplish many things, whether great or small, and we will make an impact on the world. But nothing can be worse than looking in that mirror and saying, ‘I’m not happy with who I see. I regret how I live my life.’

“What’s holding you back? The world is harsh and rapidly changing, yes, but we are a very adaptable group of humans. There’s no doubt we will find our own places in the world, and we will thrive.”

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PHOTOS BY LORI PENNER/VOICE





W.C. Miller grads persevered

By Lori Penner

Ninety-six students from W.C. Miller Collegiate proudly donned caps and gowns June 29 to receive their well-deserved high school diplomas.

The Millennium Exhibition Centre in Altona was packed with parents, friends, teachers, administrators, and local dignitaries eager to celebrate the accomplishment and launch the grads into their future with hugs, smiles, and words of encouragement.

"This day belongs to the graduates of 2023. Graduation marks a major milestone for each of these students—the

completion of K-12 education and the freedom and responsibility that comes with the next stage of their lives," noted principal Angela Pilkington. "As a community, we are here to recognize the unique individuals these students have become and celebrate their many achievements together. The success of every graduation is not only the results of their own hard work, but it also stems from consistent support, love, and guidance from many significant others throughout life."

Valedictorian Coen Gagne brought humour and sentiment to the special day.

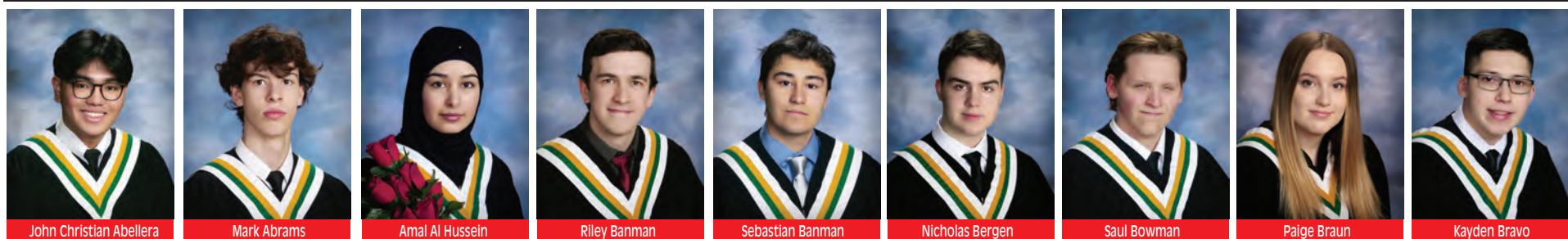
Continued on page 28



PHOTOS BY LORI PENNER/
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Valedictorian Coen Gagne.

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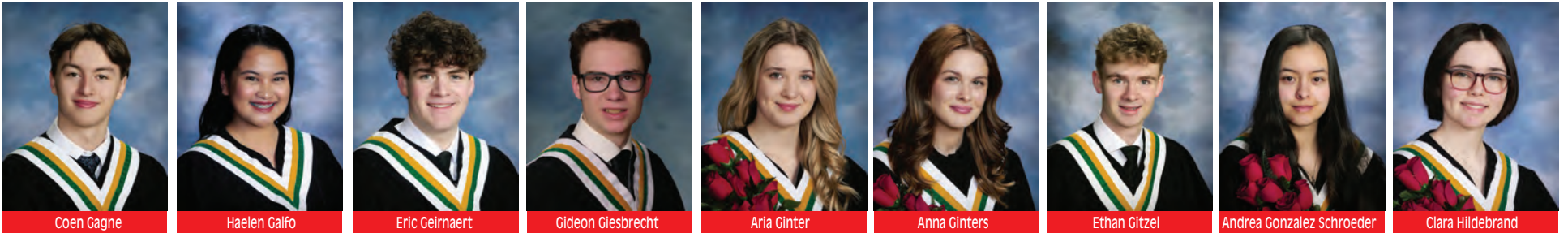
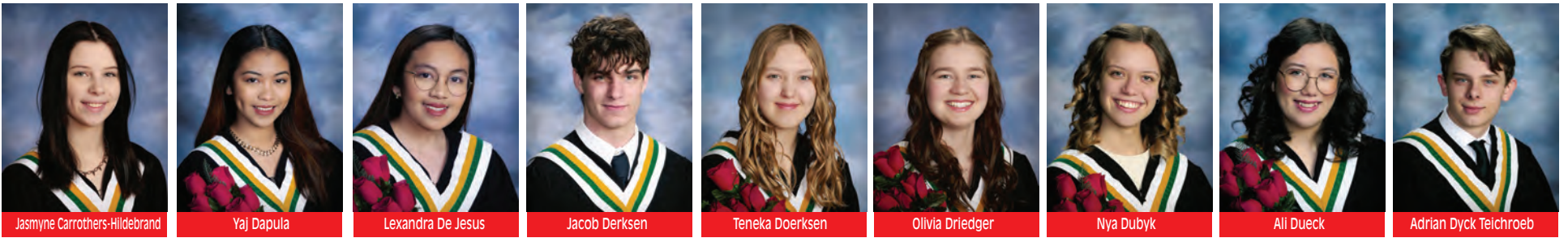
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W.C. Miller Collegiate

Congratulations
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 Danait Tewoldeberhan	 Clare Thiessen	 Saul Thiessen	 Elmer Thomas	 Kallista Thomas	 Cole Tkachuk	 Josee Toews	 Lacey Toews	 Dayna Wahl
 Emily Wiebe	 Gabi Wiebe	 Hazel Wiebe	 Gavin Wiens	 Esra Yagoub	 Jordan Yan			

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Congratulations

Class of 2023!

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Mennonite Collegiate Institute

Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2023**

MCI class of '23 ready to take on the world

By Lori Penner

Teachers, friends, and family filled the Altona Bergthaler Church on June 25 to celebrate the graduation of the Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI) class of 2023.

Sixteen graduates received their hard-earned diploma as loved ones and educators cheered them on. They hail from communities across Manitoba, with two from West Africa and Hong Kong.

Co-valedictorians Katriel Fehr and Eric Robinson recalled the quirks and gifts that defined each of their fellow graduates, and the moments that will

always stand out.

They also thanked their parents and teachers for encouraging them and putting up with their shenanigans.

"We could not have come this far without the support of many people. Our parents paid tuition to get rid of us and provided unconditional love. Our teachers put up with us, some of us for four whole years," Fehr said.

Robinson added, "You answered our dumb questions, but mostly you encouraged us to explore life.



PHOTOS BY LORI PENNER/VOICE
Co-valedictorians Eric Robinson and Katriel Fehr.

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Oskar Dyck

Itoabasi Fakunle

Jorja Fehr

Katriel Fehr

Maddysun Friesen

Tyra Harder

Arthur Hayden

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WISHES YOU ALL THE BEST IN
YOUR NEXT ADVENTURES!



Mennonite Collegiate Institute *Congratulations* to the **Graduating Classes of 2023**

From Pg. 22

"In Bible class this year, we read a speech written by Martin Luther King Jr. He spoke about having a tough mind and a tender heart and how both qualities are equally important. Compassion and wisdom are traits which we are trying to understand and learn, but some of us still have a way to go."

"Wisdom was a big thing in our class this year. As we move on with our



lives, our teachers put in great effort to help us apply our abilities to real life," Fehr said, recommending the Book of Proverbs as a place to find wisdom.

"We encourage our fellow grads to follow your hearts, be compassionate and wise, and let God be with you, helping you every step of the way."

In her address to the graduates, MCI teacher Danika Thiessen said it was a privilege to teach this fabulous graduating class.

"On the first day of Bible class in September, I challenged the students to look deeply and see themselves at their very core."

Thiessen encouraged the use of journals, and the class became affectionately known as "Therapy with Mrs. Thiessen."

"They were willing to bare their souls, and even share some opinions they knew not everyone would agree with. This takes a bravery I don't always see in adults, never mind young adults. What I wanted them to do every day was have time to slow down and look within themselves and decide who they were and who they want to be as they move on from this



Above: The grads toss their caps high. Left: Guest speaker Danika Thiessen. place.

"In their journals they discussed topics about what it means to be kind, what it means to ask Jesus into your heart and how to actually live that out. What motivates them? What they struggle with. And what they do in times of hardship and how to look beyond the shallow and into the depths of a person."

Thiessen said this class is not afraid to be vulnerable.

"They share their failures as much as their successes. Instead of running away from the open hearts their classmates showed, they chose to run towards them and embrace them. I could not be more grateful to have walked with them on this journey, and I feel like they are more than ready for the next

Continued on page 25

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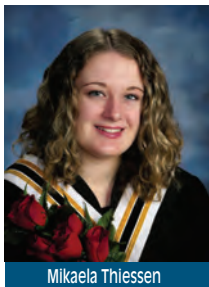
Samuel Law



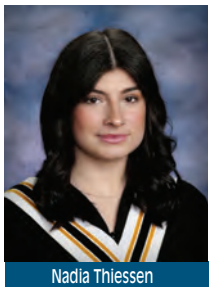
Brooklynn Peters



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Roseau Valley School grads demonstrated resilience, kindness

By Lori Penner

Sixteen students at Roseau Valley School said farewell to high school and are moving forward into their future with a diploma in hand.

Their graduation ceremony on June 24 reflected the strength and perseverance each student demonstrated to finally arrive at this point.

Border Land School Division trustee Steven Wiebe encouraged the class of 2023 to continue to make bold choices with their future.

“Approach your education, your employment, or whatever travel opportunities that come your way with passion and enthusiasm.”

Co-valedictorians Triton Schuck and Morgan Smith recalled many memorable moments that will remain in their minds and hearts forever.

“RVS was where we were raised, met lifelong friends, and made some of the most important decisions of our lives. This group has been through thick and

thin, but they always stuck together and made it to their graduation day,” Smith said with tears in her eyes.

“We’ve been counting down the days since Grade 9 and now that we’re here, it doesn’t feel real. We’re going to be leaving a place that we’ve come to every single day for many years, and now we won’t be seeing the same faces, and we won’t know what’s going on in each other’s lives. And we aren’t going to see our favourite teachers and staff who made our days here some of the best we’ve ever had. We’re all moving on. Some of us will stay at home for a while, others are going to university. Soon we’ll be working 9-5 wishing we were back here living our lives as high school students.”

She added, “This school has some of the most amazing support I’ve ever seen and so I’m so grateful to have been a part of it. The staff here truly cared about us students; we will always carry that after we graduate. I’d like to thank the staff for always be-



PHOTO BY LORI PENNER/VOICE

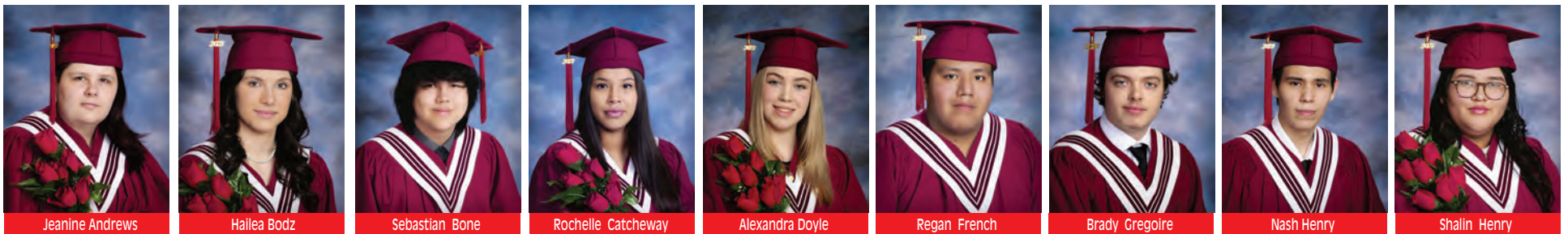
Roseau Valley School celebrated the achievements of 16 graduates June 24.

ing here and helping us whenever we needed it. Whether it was school problems or life just getting in the way, there was always someone here to talk to. You guys listened. Your

teaching and influence have made us who we are today and your lessons on life will stay with us for the rest of ours.”

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Jeanine Andrews

Hailea Bodz

Sebastian Bone

Rochelle Catcheway

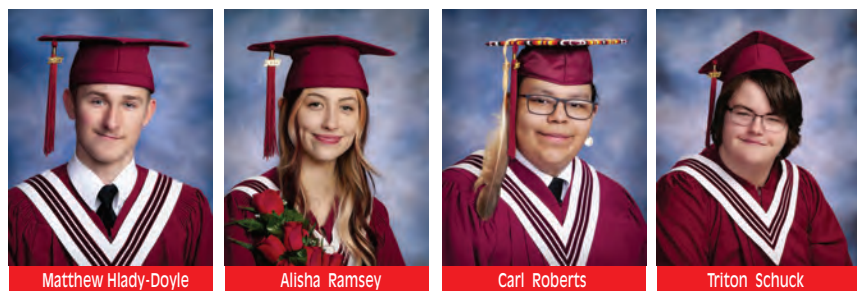
Alexandra Doyle

Regan French

Brady Gregoire

Nash Henry

Shalin Henry

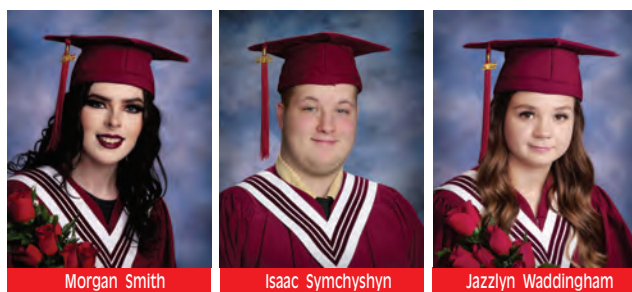


Matthew Hlady-Doyle

Alisha Ramsey

Carl Roberts

Triton Schuck



Morgan Smith

Isaac Symchyshyn

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Class of 2023

Congratulation Graduates

Wishing you continued success!

To the sponsors of the Grad Awards, the clubs, businesses, organizations and individuals that contribute to the Graduates of 2023.

Thank you for your generosity!

From the Staff and Students of RVS

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Congratulations
to the **Graduating Classes of 2023**

Saint-Jean-Baptiste award/scholarship winners

- Caleb Boulanger: Comité scolaire ERSJB Bursary, Lavallée Trucking Bursary.
- Maisie Breckon: AGT Foods Bursary, Miller Environmental Scholarship, Lavallée Gravel Bursary, Morris Bigway Bursary.
- Jaydyn Gilmore, BSI Insurance bursary.

- Sébastien Hicks, Commissaires de la DSFM Denis Clément et Guy Gagnon Bursary, Winkler Consumers Cooperative Scholarship, Athlete of the Year.
- Emma Klaassen, RM of Montcalm Bursary.
- Mason Manning, Morris Bigway Bursary, GJ

- Chemical Bursary, Prix de la direction.
- Cody Sabourin: Caisse Groupe Financier Bursary, Miller Environmental Scholarship, Chevaliers de Colomb de SJB Bursary, Seed-Ex Bursary, MLA Josh Guenther Student Recognition Award, Prix Dylan-Bérard.

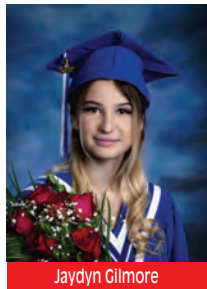
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Caleb Boulanger



Maisie Breckon



Jaydyn Gilmore



Sébastien Hicks



Emma Klaassen



Mason Manning



Cody Sabourin



> MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE, FROM PG. 23

steps life will take them."

She added, "As you leave here, I see you all heading off to better yourselves. Whether that's a university, a Bible college, volunteer program or a gap year, you are moving on to do what you need to do to succeed. Your confidence comes from having a strong support system. You were willing to push yourselves and try new things this school year and make it as fabulous as possible. And I think you succeeded. You also put into practice what you've learned and are fine examples of Jesus' mission on earth, and


I know I speak for many when I say we are all incredibly proud of you."

Thiessen left them with words to ponder by Marianne Williamson:

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world."




Resonate performs "How Far I'll Go" from the Disney movie Moana.




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Persistence pays off for RAEC graduates

By Lori Penner

Students from the Regional Alternative Education Centre (RAEC) in Altona proved that it's never too late to pursue your goals and dreams.

Graduates Sarah Wilby, Lillie Harder-Hovorka, David Thiessen, Carissa Di-Marco, Rebecca Friesen, Red Juerra, and Megz Lysack returned to school as adults, and left with diplomas.

At the RAEC graduation ceremony on June 22, director Kelly Skelton said in this alternative learning environment, the students found a safe and caring

Continued on page 27






Congratulations, Graduates!

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RRC POLYTECH GRADS, CLASS OF SPRING 2023
Learn about benefits available to RRC alumni: rrc.ca/alumni

Class of 2023



Congratulations Graduates!

On behalf of the Council & staff of the Town of Altona, we wish you all the best in the next chapter of your lives.





Congratulations to the Graduating Classes of 2023

From Pg. 26

space to resume their education. "We are fortunate to have this centre in the community, to meet the learning needs and support the academic aspirations of adult learners."

To the grads, she said, "Graduation is such a wonderful time. Your hard work, persistence, and belief in yourself has brought you to this very important moment. Returning to high school as an adult requires lots of planning, patience, and dedication, pursuing academics while juggling work, family, and community involvement. Thank you for trusting us to be your school, and for trusting us to be part of your story. We also thank those who supported the graduates along the way. We are deeply grateful for that."

Skelton also acknowledged the hard work of the teaching staff, who met students exactly where they were and walked alongside them every step of the way.

Border Land School Division superintendent Krista Curry offered her congratulations for the graduates' achievement.

"I am always inspired when I attend the RAEC grad. At this ceremony I always hear unique individual stories

of resilience, perseverance, and commitment to finishing their education journey that for many of you has not been a straight line. No matter what road you took, you stayed on it, and you stayed with it and now today you received your high school diploma.

"It is no surprise to see a sense of pride in you. You should be proud, and you deserve to be celebrated. My hope is that today you can look around and see the team that sits alongside each of you. This team consists of your biggest cheerleaders. Some of those people have been cheering for you your whole life, and some of them came alongside you when you became involved with RAEC.

"Please know that even though your journey at RAEC is ending, the staff that has been supporting you are still going to be cheering for you. Be sure you stay in touch, and always remember you have a village of support. I wish you happiness and joy as you celebrate your accomplishment."

Prior to handing out the diplomas, RAEC teachers praised the graduates for their determination and hard work, adding that each one of them stands as an example of believing in



PHOTOS BY LORI PENNER/VOICE
Above: BLSD superintendent Krista Curry addresses the grads. Right: Tassel turn.



yourself.

"You certainly have faced a number of curve balls, but you didn't let them throw you off your path," said Lisa Eisbrenner. "Instead, you chose to listen to your supporters and cheerleaders in the background, who have helped to drown out the voices of doubt. Look at the friends, family and people that support you. They see your strength and determination. And now you've earned your graduation, proving all of us right.

"As you set off into this next chap-

ter, you know that life will continue to keep you on your toes, and challenges won't magically disappear. But now our hope for you is that you carry with you the strength and resolve that brought you to this moment.

"Remember that you can do hard things, you can trust your instincts, remember that our graduation is a reflection and celebration of your strength, your spirit, and your persistence. The world eagerly waits for contributions that only you can make."



From Pg. 24

Schuck recalled what it was like being the new kid in school in 2019.

"I was trying to assert myself and I felt like I was making progress, until it all went down the drain. COVID put a damper on all of us. But we tried to move forward. But as everyone else kept trying to move forward, it seemed like I couldn't stop going backward. During the height of COVID I got sick. I missed a lot of school time, but I got back up. I couldn't have done that on my own. Without the support of my family, my friends, my teachers, and my classmates, who are some of the strongest people I know. I commend them for persevering through all the challenges"

His advice, not just to his fellow graduates but to everyone, is to "live every day to the fullest and do the

Morgan Smith was the big award winner at RVS this year, walking away with the Governor General Award, the Garnett Kyle Scholarship, and a host of other honours.

PHOTO BY LORI PENNER/VOICE

things that make you feel happy. "We only get one chance at life, so let's make it a dang good one."

Teacher Alex Mirza described this year's graduates as resilient, humble, kind, and funny.

"I've had the pleasure of working with this year's graduating class for the past four years. It's been a fantastic journey with many twists and turns. What a phenomenal group of young adults who will be moving on from this school.

"You can talk at length about the pandemic and the effect it had on student learning," Mirza added. "The perseverance it took to make it to this stage today would be enough to make any adult proud.

"This group had every reason not to be here, yet here they stand, ready for what comes next. Our struggles make us who we are, the resilience that you've learned will serve you well with what comes next. It takes strength and fortitude to finish what you started.

"Take a moment to appreciate what it took for you to get here. Whether that's a university degree, a college program, or a specific career, you've shown that when

Continued on page 28



Congratulations to the Graduating Classes of 2023

From Pg. 18

He quoted NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt, saying, "You can't let one bad moment spoil a bunch of good ones."

Gagne went on to say that life at W.C. Miller wasn't always perfect, but it was the everyday hiccups that made it so memorable.

"High school threw a lot at us—exams, homework, and assignments—and it sometimes pushed us to the edge. But we didn't let those difficult things define our high school experience. What's crazy is that we technically only had two traditional years of high school. The other two years were spent staying inside, and still trying to care about grades and assignments, even though we were either bogged down by restrictions and rules or going to school on green or gold days."

Gagne noted that some good came out



Teacher Laura Thiessen bid the class of 2023 farewell.

of distance learning during COVID.

"We had to be organized. We managed our own schedules and were productive without being told to be. I think our hiatus from Miller created a whole bunch of mini adults, who sometimes did dumb things."

He described his fellow graduates as some of the most responsible and mature people he knows.

"It was their perseverance through those unsure times that made them the people they are today. We as a graduation class are a hardworking bunch. I watch my classmates overcome challenges, whether in the sports, the classroom, or the halls. Their perseverance and determination to succeed is something we should all be proud of.

"What's even more special is how we as graduates have helped each other overcome challenges. Whether it was everyday social problems, or a good study session, we wouldn't have had much fun in high school without these guys. The support of this grad class is immense. It's a super diverse class with many beliefs and cultures. We gained way more knowledge and experience by the differences between us."

Gagne went on to thank the bus drivers and teachers for their patience and understanding through the years.

To the parents, he said, "I'm sure all of you are overjoyed you'll never have to look at PowerSchool again. The parents are truly the heroes. So, fellow grads, appreciate them. Hug them."

Finally, he told the graduates to thank themselves.



"We all just grinded through 13 years of school, and now imagine how many trees our grad class has single-handedly killed during those years of paper assignments and tests. But seriously, we really did it all. Those late nights, studying for something we didn't think we'd pass. All those times we asked ourselves in class, what the heck is going on? And all those times things felt difficult or stressful, we put our heads down and pushed through our problems and uncertainties. But we all realized at the end of the day we did it, and today we celebrate that accomplishment."

The W.C. Miller Class of 2023 chose a quote by Sir Winston Churchill to represent the emotions attached to their graduation: "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

"Our graduates know our story isn't over. We all know that we're moving on to bigger and better things," Gagne said. "For our future, some of us are going to universities nationwide, some students are invested in trades or joining the workforce right away. Some of us are taking a gap year to decide what direction they want to take."

"No matter what, we as a class can hardly wait. We shouldn't live in the moment and realize it's only the end of this beginning and the start of a new one."

From Pg. 27

you put your mind to something you do it. Use the tools that you have gained here to get there. I'm sure you will, and I can't wait to see where you are five years from now."

Awards and scholarships

- Jeanine Andrews: The Tractor People Trades Award, RVS Student Council Award.
- Hailea Bodz: Ecumenical Award, Municipality of Emerson Franklin Award, Josh Guenter Leadership Award, Roseau Valley School Award.
- Alex Doyle: RVS Student Council Award.
- Regan French: RSV Staff Award, Food & Nutrition 40S, Global Issues 40S.
- Brady Gregoire: Calderwood's Country Store Inc. Award, GJ Chemical Co. Award, Law 40S.

- Nash Henry: Runnin' Red Transport Award, Emerson Bigway Music Award.

- Shalin Henry: Ginew Wellness Centre Award, Ecumenical Award, George Forsyth Memorial Award, Essential Math 40S.

- Matthew Hlady-Doyle: The Tractor People Business Award, Ecumenical Award, DC Curling Club Award, Vocational 40S.

- Wankiyan (Carl) Roberts: Roseau Valley School Award, Current Topics in FNMI Studies 40S.

- Triton Schuck: RVS Staff Award.

- Morgan Smith: RVS Drama Award, RVS Fine Arts Award, English Comp 40S, English Trans 40S, Physics 40S, Chemistry 40S, Biology 40S, Pre-Calc 40S, Applied 40S, Arts 40S, Garnet Kyle Scholarship, Governor General's Award.

- Jazzlyn Waddingham: DC Curling Club Award.

