

# **Staff Commendations**

## **October 2025**

*Many thanks to Bonnie Ihde and Alec Garringer for helping me connect with the right students to form the pit orchestra for this fall's musical! Your expertise about students' readiness for this year's show was essential in creating a great ensemble.*

*-Becca Cassel*

*Big shout out to Ashton Reams for taking honor band students to Central College in Pella while I was in recovery. The students had an amazing time and you took the honor band photos to a new level! I'm grateful for your support*

*-Steve Britt*

*Congratulations to Alec Garringer, Bonnie Ihde, and Sandi Ellis on an extremely successful marching season! Your hard work and dedication are inspiring*

*-Steve Britt*

*We would like to commend Kathryn Hopper. She has shown such dedication to our Alt.Ed. program. She consistently works to grow, define, and support the program, students and staff. We truly appreciate her!*

*-Matthew Blackmore, Austin Roy and Sheila Hudson*

*I would like to recognize bus driver, Rod Roshek. Rod is typically our varsity volleyball bus driver but his duties extend way beyond just driving our team. Rod is there with a greeting and smile or a "good morning" when we get on the bus to head to a match or tournament and a "go get 'em" as we exit. He is an invested fan in our stands, a ball shagger during warm-ups. He is our hype guy when we need a pick-me-up and ready with high fives after a big win. Our players and coaches appreciate Rod and his support so much!!*

*-Meg Jackson*

*I would like to recognize Tammy Tegtmeier. Thank you so much for covering for me while I was home with my sick child all week. It means so much to know I can count on her. She handled everything wonderfully, and I appreciate your kindness and support more than she knows. She truly did a wonderful job and it made it a lot easier to be at home knowing the office was in good hands. Thank you!*

*-London Erdman*

*Thank you to Jeff Wolfe for always finding transportation solutions in a timely manner with positivity and out of the box thinking!*

-Alyson Finley

*Thank you to Natalie Rolow, Emily Drey, Abby Crannell, Diann Williamson, Kari Kinnick, Chloe Ruhs, and Mcenna Zanders for analyzing student data to come up with instructional packages that meet the needs of all 4th grade learners at Heritage.*

-Alyson Finley

*8th Grade SPED team at Oak View-- Shannon Tanner, Jeff Cain and newly back Kasey Roberts - We have some challenging students in our 8th grade class. These 3 individuals have been so supportive and communicative as we all work together to problem solve solutions, support ideas, communicate with teachers and parents etc. We have been navigating our students' needs and it is great to work with such a dedicated team of adults! It is also great to have Kasey Roberts back from maternity leave. She was ready and willing to jump in to support and problem solve to help our students! I could not do my work without these three and their willingness to be creative, collaborate, and come to solutions that are student focused!! #GoMustangs! Thank you!*

-Sarah Rose

*I am so grateful for **Cindy Armstrong** and her amazing instructional leadership in our preschool program. She makes teaching preschool look effortless—though we all know it's anything but easy! Cindy keeps her students deeply engaged in learning while nurturing their social-emotional growth every day. Her students know their routines and transition seamlessly, a true reflection of her structure and care. Thank you, Cindy, for all you do—our students and families are so lucky to have you!*

-Deb Cale

*A big shout out to **Bambi Schlenker** for the incredible support she provides in Jenn's preschool classroom! Bambi is dependable, collaborative, and always willing to step in at a moment's notice. Her kindness with students, strong leadership skills, and overall effectiveness make her an invaluable member of the team. Our students, families, and staff are so lucky to have Bambi—thank you for all you do!*

-Deb Cale

*A big shout out to **Stephanie Birmingham** for her exceptional organization, leadership, and teamwork! She is quick to problem-solve and always finds innovative ways to support our team. Stephanie's kindness, calm demeanor, and steady support make her an invaluable member of our preschool program. We are so lucky to have her!*

-Deb Cale

*A big thanks to **Stephanie Madsen** for her incredible commitment to Dallas Center Elementary! She warmly welcomes our visitors while simultaneously answering phone calls and supporting staff with questions—all with a smile. I'm always amazed at how she can juggle radio calls and family needs at the same time. Our DCE team is so lucky to have Steph!*

*-Deb Cale*

***Megan Klein** has faced challenges this year with incredible grace and positivity. She amazes me with the way she greets each day as a new opportunity and always sees the best in others. Megan is an excellent teacher—reflective, dedicated, and continually striving to make her classroom more effective and efficient so that high-quality learning and teaching can thrive.*

*-Deb Cale*

***Asia Olson** consistently goes above and beyond, taking on extra tasks and responsibilities with a positive spirit. She is always looking for ways to support student learning, leadership growth, and social-emotional development. Her classroom runs like a well-oiled machine, with students who demonstrate PRIDE and leadership at all times. Asia is a true leader in our building.*

*-Deb Cale*

*I would like to celebrate **Whitney Boaz**. Whitney brings continual positivity to both staff and students. She creates a PE environment that is not only fun but also high in quality learning. Always willing to innovate and collaborate, Whitney is a wonderfully positive force in our building, and we are so grateful to have her on our team.*

*-Deb Cale*

*A BIG shout out to **Aimee Munson**. Aimee is an incredibly collaborative team member who leads with compassion, care, and dedication. She naturally supports student needs, making it look effortless. Aimee is a truly valuable member of our team—students, staff, and families are lucky to have her at DCE.*

*-Deb Cale*

*Megan Klein is a remarkable colleague and teacher. Her warmth, radiant smile, and genuine care light up every room she enters. She goes above and beyond, not just in her work, but in the way she connects with students and uplifts our team.*

*-Brittany Halsrud*

*I would like to thank Camily Deitrick for always being willing to help out with covering where we are short on associates. Whether this involves assisting with traffic drop-off or pick-up, covering a door, or helping a class of students down a long hallway. Camily always says yes, she will help.*

*-Kari Traver*

*I would like to recognize Sharon Southwick for her exceptional kindness, reliability, and dedication in the classroom. She consistently goes above and beyond to support her student, and steps in seamlessly whenever help is needed. Sharon's knowledge and understanding of classroom routines and student needs make her an invaluable part of our classroom. Sharon approaches every task with professionalism, patience, and a genuine care for others. Our classroom runs more smoothly and feels more welcoming because of her presence.*

-Stephanie Schultes

*I would like to recognize Ethyn Gray for his support and dedication in our kindergarten classroom. He consistently steps in to help with students whenever needed, offering patience, understanding, and a funny sense of humor that makes a true difference in our daily routines. His willingness to ensure our classroom runs smoothly and our students feel supported is deeply appreciated. He really makes connections with his student(s) and genuinely cares about their success.*

-Stephanie Schultes

*The Admin Staff and those who help with board meetings would like to give a big THANK YOU and gratitude to board member Shaylee Vander Velden. Thank you for being so thoughtful and bringing such great treats to our staff. The desserts and treat boxes were a delight to our day and so delicious!*

-Michelle Wearmouth

*Barb Chieves, Eric Meyer, and Chris Stammerman deserve recognition for leading the technology department with exemplary customer service and support. Their ability to maintain such a high level of service while the director was out of office is very much appreciated, and it serves as a testament to their work ethic and commitment to DCG Schools. Thank you.*

-Steven Hopper

*I would like to acknowledge all of the work Rebecca Skow is doing while in a new teaching position. She collaboratively works with me to see where the students are and finds ways to support them in a fun way. She gives of her time to ensure success for each student she comes into contact with.*

-Gena Pierce

*I would like to acknowledge Renea Conway for being a fun, involved and supportive teacher to all of her students. She strives to make learning fun, yet challenging.*

-Gena Pierce

*I would like to recognize The North Ridge Encore Team for exemplifying DCG's core values by fostering a collaborative, passionate, supportive, and inclusive environment where every student can explore their creativity and thrive through learning experiences that are designed to be fun and educational at the same time.*

-April Heitland

*I would like to thank the North Ridge Elementary Food Service Staff—Kristina, Lexie, and Deb—for their dedication to providing our students with nutritious meals served with warmth, efficiency, and care each day.*

*-April Heitland*

*I would like to thank Travis Donahue, Sean Shatave, Darla VanKooten, Cody Milburn, and Mark Lux for their outstanding attention to detail and dedication to maintaining a safe, clean, and welcoming environment that supports the needs of our students, staff, and community.*

*-April Heitland*

*I would like to thank Erin Bryant for being the welcoming face of North Ridge Elementary, consistently demonstrating positivity, professionalism, and a caring spirit that brightens the day for students, staff, and families alike.*

*-April Heitland*

*I would like to thank Jenn Dunker, one of our substitute teachers, for her unwavering willingness to support all teachers and students at North Ridge, consistently going above and beyond to ensure success, collaboration, and a positive school community.*

*-April Heitland*

*I would like to thank The Transitional and Kindergarten Team for creating a safe, nurturing, and supportive learning environment where our youngest learners feel valued, encouraged, and confident to take risks and grow every day*

*-April Heitland*

*I would LOVE to nominate Sara Cockrum (6th grade literacy/social studies). She is such an inspiration in so many ways. All of the students have the utmost respect and love for her, and it's obvious every single day. She is passionate, patient, fun, yet enforces all of the expectations constantly. The students learn so much from her and she always shows how much they mean to her and in return, the kids also adore her! I think she's an absolutely fantastic teacher, mentor, and coworker and I would have loved to have a teacher like her growing up! Thank you,*

*-Cejae Eastman*

*SP associates would like to thank the Building and Grounds crew for fixing our playground drainage issue! Thank you for thinking outside the box and installing a grate that we can keep clear of wood chips. We appreciate you!*

*-SP Associates*

*I'd like to extend a big thank-you to the science teachers/instructional coach (Tom Clark, Grant Hayward, Katie Johnston, Natalie Vegter, Lucy Seiwert, and Phillip Seiwert) who attended the Department of Education's 2025 Science Professional Learning Conference! Your participation, engagement, and collaboration in exploring new resources and tools to bring back to DCG are truly appreciated. It was a great day of learning, and we're grateful for the opportunity to be part of it!*

*-Ashton Reams*

*Tome Hope, You have been such a light for your student! I love how much you care about him, support behavior and give him the structure he needs to be successful! I am so thankful you are part of my team!*

*-Hannah Clark*

*Hannah Klatt, Not many can do what you do every single day and with such ease! You are the perfect person for your student. I love that you never give up on him! I am so thankful you are on my team!*

*-Hannah Clark*

*Megan Sing, Thank you for being firm and loving with your student! You two have such a great bond and that comes with your hard work! He wants to make you proud and knows you hold him accountable! I am so thankful you are on my team!*

*-Hannah Clark*

*Jenna Krause, I couldn't have hand picked a better person to be with your student! You are the calm and loving he needs while still holding high expectations! You came in this year and have exceeded expectations! I am so thankful you are on my team!*

*-Hannah Clark*

*Emma Evans, Way to just jump in and absolute rock your position and support for your student! You are so quick to support, help anywhere, and tackle any challenge that comes your way! I am so thankful you are on my team!*

*-Hannah Clark*

*Julie Koch, Ella Nuese, Kelly Verwers - Thank you for always being so collaborative with your student and his needs! He has the perfect people helping him be successful! I love that I can count on your three to support him and encourage him to do his best! Thank you for also support his breaks! I have loved seeing him so happy!*

*-Hannah Clark*