

Staff Commendations

April 2025

I would like to recognize Sam Peters, our Librarian. This is her first year, and she has been nothing short of AMAZING!!!!!! She is great with the kids and has been killing it! I have also developed a great friendship with her and she makes me smile every time I see her. She is always willing to help step into a classroom when we are short staffed. She was also my saving grace with the yearbook. If it wasn't for her help the yearbook would not have turned out as awesome as it did. Keep up the amazing work Ms. Peters!!!!!!

-London Erdman

I would like to give a huge shout out to Brent Buttjer! Brent always goes out of his way to make sure all of our sporting events go as smoothly as possible. He's always got a smile on his face and makes people feel so welcome. We appreciate all your hard work and you will be missed so much by this DCG family!

-Steph Madsen

I would like to commend Olivia Whitlow. Olivia has gone above and beyond creating accommodations for the student she works with in order to help her understand the key science concepts for our science units. She has looked over the 5th grade science standards in order to help her create materials that would help her student grasp the concepts being taught. She takes excellent notes throughout our classes to use as a reference when creating resources to assist her student. I would like to thank her for always going the extra mile to help her student achieve right along with her peers.

-Christin Grant

I would like to congratulate Zach Lester on finishing his first two years of teaching! He rocked it!

-Sarah Hinrichs

I would like to thank Deputy Walters and Deputy Loutzenhiser for all their work they put into the Reunification Drill. We could not have gotten those drills done without their help!

-Sarah Hinrichs

For Dan James:

It is with great admiration that I commend Dan James for his exceptional contributions to our school community. Beyond being a phenomenal educator, Dan embodies the principle of leaving things better than he found them—a philosophy he not only shares with the groups he works with but also demonstrates in his daily actions.

Dan consistently goes above and beyond, often in ways that remain unnoticed by many. For instance, he takes it upon himself to clean and organize the staff workroom without being asked, ensuring that this shared space remains functional and welcoming for everyone. He selflessly steps in to address tasks others might overlook, showing a level of care and commitment that makes our school a better place to work and learn.

Dan's actions are a reflection of his character and his unwavering dedication to improving not only the lives of his students but also the environment for his colleagues. His contributions remind us all of the importance of taking initiative and leading by example.

Thank you, Dan, for your extraordinary efforts and for inspiring all of us to leave things better than we found them.

-Cody Charles

Joanna Hammond: Thank you so much for all of your caring and helpful information when it comes to problem solving with students. Also, your kindness overflows toward the staff as well. You are amazing to work with.

-Gena Pierce

Mary Deahr: Your assistance is greatly appreciated with all of my students. Your smile helps students start and continue their day in a positive manner. I love working with you.

-Gena Pierce

April Heitland: Thank you for your guidance and support in all things school. I enjoy being able to stop in and get my questions answered immediately. You are so efficient and helpful when it comes to quick solutions.

-Gena Pierce

Sarah Irlmeier: Your morning welcome and checking on me throughout the day is very positive and helpful in keeping a smile on everyone's face. I appreciate your helpful nature and your friendship. You are an amazing teacher and person.

-Gena Pierce

Michelle Mickle: I enjoy working with you. You have great ideas in your toolbox and I love trying new ideas. We make a great team.

-Gena Pierce

Thanks to Dr. Carenza and Dr. Callahan for sharing with our students around bullying and harassment. The students were very engaged, asked great questions, and learned a lot!
-Patty Morris

Maddie Maddock--the Art Show was phenomenal! So much work, but oh so fun. Love hearing the students' excitement with the addition of the glow room. You always find ways to make it something new each year. Very well done and continually busy all night with so many families and extended families coming to see the artwork of our students.
-Patty Morris

Lisa Maifeld--the Music Concerts were so good! The students knew their roles, knew their songs, and you always add some fun actions that just make it engaging and fun to watch. Thanks for all the behind the scenes that you do to make that performance a special night for the students and their families. It is always packed!
-Patty Morris

Amy Cory, I really appreciate you giving your time to help our students at South Prairie see an artist in action at our Art Show. I love how as a fellow art teacher, you support another building and another teacher in their efforts to promote art. I saw students and parents really enjoying the pottery demonstration. Thank you!!
-Patty Morris

Kristina Miller and Melissa Campbell do a lot of extra that we don't even know about to make sure we have our safety plans up to date and are prepared for emergencies. I appreciate the work they do to represent us at the district level and then communicate our needs as well as let our staff know what we need to do better in the world of keeping our students safe.
-Patty Morris

Elyse Webb- thank you for ALL your support and encouragement down here in Kindergarten! We are so grateful for you! Whether we are meeting to discuss ways we can push kids to the next level in academics or come up with strategies to support behavior needs, you never hesitate to dive into the discussion and problem solve. THANK YOU!
-SP Kinder Team

Julie Pitman, thank you for the constant support and ongoing discussion with our student this year! I appreciate our conversations and all your help with extra materials needed to help him succeed.
-Katherine Southmayd

Jana Arment- For always going above and beyond for keeping the students safe on the bus, and showing them how much you care! Jana thank you for always being a positive role model for the students and staff! I appreciate you!

-Hannah Klatt

Mary Schaeffer has been a phenomenal substitute teammate! I have appreciated all that she has shared with the North Ridge students and staff. Her expertise and wisdom will be missed! Thank you for all that you have done to keep our students growing!

-Ann Mensing

I want to give a HUGE thank you to all SP associates for standing up and standing out this school year!! You were all there to support, love, and teach our kiddos. We could not have done it without you!! Thank you so very much!!!

-Julie Parnau

Thank you to Paige Carl for being supportive and collaborative. You have made it an easier transition working with your kiddos. Your patience and kindness is an inspiration.

-Julie Parnau

Thank you to my amazing team, [Jenny Rants](#), Julie Pitman, [Kristina Miller](#), [Camily Deitrick](#), and [Natalie Rolow](#) for making this school year another amazing experience. You are all so supportive and kind which makes our team work more seamlessly. I appreciate each of you and what skills you bring to the table.

-Julie Parnau

I would like to thank Courtney Anderson for welcoming me into her classroom as I completed observation hours with her at Heritage the last few months! Courtney, I appreciate your time, expertise and hospitality! I hope I am able to collaborate with you again in the future!

-Addreonna Tucker

I would like to recognize Whitney Boaz! She has been the best addition to our Heritage Family. She goes above and beyond with her planning and communicating with teachers. The kids look forward to every new skill, game, and celebration you put together. Thank you for all your hard work, positive energy, and dedication you put in every. single. Day!!

-Kendra Shuckahosee

I cannot say how grateful I am to our AEA team, Kim Alex, Emily Reppe, Libby Blazeovich, Kristen Rosenbeck, and Tiffany Goetz for all your hard work and dedication. It is with their support that we are able to help our students grow academically, socially and emotionally. You are truly the dream team. Thank you for ALL that you do!!

-Julie Parnau

Patty Morris: I wanted to express my heartfelt appreciation to Patty Morris for her dedication in helping me strive to become a better educator. Her leadership, kindness, and constant support makes a significant difference in the lives of our students, teachers, and families. I am so lucky to be a part of the South Prairie family and it is all thanks to Patty for taking a chance on me.

-Paige Carl

S.P Kindergarten Team- Katherine Southmayd, Kylie Brown, Stephanie Schultes, Esthela Perez: I just want to take a moment to recognize the incredible heart, energy, and dedication these ladies had when it came to welcoming me to their team. Their kindness, patience and creativity make such a difference—not only in the lives of our students, but also in the way our team works together every day. They consistently go above and beyond to make learning meaningful and joyful for all of our students and the unwavering support and positivity makes you so proud to be a part of such an amazing team. Thank you for everything you have done for me this year!

-Paige Carl

Julie Parnau: I have had the pleasure of working closely with Julie over the past couple of months and she is nothing short of amazing! Her level of commitment, patience and compassion towards her students is truly inspiring. I am so lucky to have gotten to know her this past year.

-Paige Carl

Heather Caron: I just wanted to take a moment to thank Heather for the incredible impact she has made on my students this year. Her hard work and dedication goes far beyond teaching reading skills. She helps the students build confidence, foster a love for learning, and shows them that they are capable of achieving great things.

-Paige Carl

Kelle Andrews: I am so lucky to have gotten to know Kellee this past year because she is such an amazing educator. The growth that I have seen in my students is a reflection of her dedication, expertise and the positive relationship that she has built with them over the past year. We are so lucky to have you as part of our team at South Prairie!

-Paige Carl

Travis Donahue - Thank you so much for everything. It has been amazing working with you this year and I am so grateful I had this opportunity. Thank you for having my back no matter what the situation, it is so appreciated. Our family thanks you for making this year a great year!!

-Amanda Rosemeyer

I would like to thank Officer Chris Reha for being a Guest Speaker in Speech Class during their Panel Discussion on Health. Officer Reha's 16 years in Law Enforcement educated the students on the trials and tribulations of making good and bad choices and also the new revisions to certain laws.

-Jane Altman

*As I end my 35 years of education, I would like to thank all the teachers who taught my own children - Emma and AJ - you have impacted them more than you will ever know. Special call out to the Fine Arts Instructors who brought a love of creativity in them - Mrs. Ihde, Mr. Britt, Mrs. Steger, Mr. Mohlis, Mrs. Cassel, Mrs. Augustine, Mrs. Frett, Mrs. Duncan, and Mrs. Busch. To the **high school staff** - It has been a privilege to work alongside you. You are a true inspiration and a shining example of what dedicated teachers should be.*

-Jane Altman

Thank you to Sara Sonius for coming to North Ridge and administering needed assessments for some of our students!

-April Heitland

Thank you to Gena Pierce for always supporting our students and their families.

-April Heitland

Thank you to the North Ridge PTO for everything they did for the staff during teacher appreciation week!

-April Heitland

Thank you to Erin Bryant for always keeping everything organized and for always doing it with a smile on her face.

-April Heitland

Thank you to Nurse Steph for always keeping our students safe! You always help in any situation.

-April Heitland

It has been a joy to watch Ann Kurth tackle her first year as a 3rd grade teacher! She worked alongside her teammates to plan and deliver quality instruction, and she handed out a lot of hugs to students throughout the year. Thanks for being your BEST each day, Ann!

-Diann Williamson

Whitney Boaz continues to be a bright light at Heritage! She is energetic, a supportive teammate, and an all around FANTASTIC teacher! Thank you Whitney for sharing your BEST with us each day!

-Diann Williamson

Bailey Kenneally joined our team in January as a new special education teacher. She has jumped right in with students and staff - you wouldn't know this is her first year! Thank you, Bailey, for choosing Heritage as your home!

-Diann Williamson

Jodi Canton has been a great addition to the Heritage lunch staff this spring. She is kind, caring and communicative! I look forward to working with you next year!

-Diann Williamson

Laura VerHuel - Thank you for your leadership and service to the students of Heritage for the past four years! We will definitely miss you, but we wish you the best as you move on to new adventures.

-Diann Williamson

We would like to thank our principal Travis Donahue for the collaboration and hard work he has done in his role as principal. He has pushed us to be our best and has helped our staff make a difference for students every day. We know that he will continue to do great things in our district and he makes us PROUD to be at DCG High School.

-Jolie Morgan and Lindsay Kasperbauer

I would like to give a huge shout out to DCG High School Special Education Teacher, Sara Sonius, for graciously agreeing to administer special education assessments in one of our elementary schools this spring. Her specialized skills and her willingness to help out an elementary colleague in our Special Education Department is much appreciated! Thank you, Sara!

-Roxanne Cumings

Thanks a ton to our Director of Technology, Steven Hopper! Of course, Of course, I'm impressed with his technology expertise and I also appreciate his approachability and kindness in providing tech support across the district! We're fortunate to have Steven on our team at DCG!

-Roxanne Cumings

Lisa Shaffer- Thank you so much for all you did while I was gone the past couple of weeks from printing and organizing my Guidance lessons, checking in on the students I work with, and making sure everything was running smoothly. I appreciate you!!

-Courtney Anderson