



## A LEGACY OF LOVE FOR JAZZY AND MISTY

On a snowy, icy day in November 2014, the Waconia community was shaken by a devastating car accident that claimed the lives of 34-year-old Misty Petschl and her six-year-old daughter, Jazmine.

In the years since, friends and family have found meaningful ways to honor the memory of Misty and “Jazzy,” as she was affectionately known—including Heather Anton, a teacher at Waconia Public Schools and Southview Elementary School.

Anton was Jazzy’s first-grade teacher back in 2014 and described her as having a “smiley and spunky personality” and someone who loved the color purple and rainbows.

“I became really close with that class and many of the families because of everything we went through together,” Anton said. “We decided that spring that we wanted to do something for Jazzy’s classmates to remember Jazzy and Misty as the first grade year came to a close.”

From that desire to do something meaningful, Anton started a tradition of inviting families in her class to volunteer at Feed My Starving Children, the nonprofit organization that has volunteers pack meals that are then sent around the world to feed children in need.

“It was just such a good experience because you’re doing something to help other kids and other people, and we were also doing it in Jazzy and Misty’s memory,” Anton said. “Then it just became something we continued to do every year.”

Each year since the 2014-15 school year, Anton has invited her former and current students and their families to take part in the Feed My Starving Children event. With Waconia being the tight-knit community that it is, the event grew year after year. This past Saturday morning, around 100 volunteers gathered to honor Jazzy and Misty Petschl. The room buzzed with energy as volunteers of all ages,

many in purple shirts, worked side by side to scoop, seal, and pack meals with care. By morning’s end, more than 32,000 meals for children around the world had been prepared.

For Jeff Petschl, Jazzy’s father and Misty’s husband, amidst his grief after the accident, he said he developed a fear that his loved ones would be forgotten. The annual Feed My Starving Children event helped to put that fear aside.

“Heather made a decision to take the love she had for our little girl and turn it into something bigger than any of us,” he said. “And year after year, for twelve years now, she has shown up, organized, rallied people together, and refused to let that love fade. Twelve years is not a small thing. That is 12 years of dedication, 12 years of showing up, and 12 years of choosing Jazzy and we are forever grateful. There are no words big enough for what that has meant to our family.”

Jazzy would be a senior at Waconia High School this year, and the classmates she shared that first-grade classroom with are now preparing to graduate and begin the next chapter of their lives. With that milestone in mind, Anton felt this spring offered a meaningful moment to bring the Feed My Starving Children tradition to a close.

“Even though this has been an amazing thing, it felt like this was a good time to have some closure,” Anton said. “Some families might continue to go on their own, but as Jazzy’s teacher and with her classmates graduating, this felt like the right time to bring this chapter to a close—while still carrying her memory forward in all the ways it’s touched our lives. Thank you so much to all the families that have been part of this special tradition over the last 12 years.”

While the tradition may be coming to a close, Petschl said the impact Anton has made will never fade for their family.



Misty Petschl and her daughter, Jazmine



Heather Anton (second from the right) and several of her former students

“Heather is an amazing person,” Petschl said. “She really is just genuine and a wonderful soul and she’s been a really good friend to us. I can’t say enough good things about her and how her love for those girls just brought everyone together.”

After 12 years, the impact of that simple decision to turn grief into action continues to ripple far beyond a single classroom. Petschl also shared a message for the students and families who have been part of the event over the years.

“To each of you who gave your time today — you didn’t have to be here. You chose to be. You chose to pack meals for children on the other side of the world who will never know your name, but whose lives will be touched by your hands. Jazzy had the biggest heart of any six year old I have ever known. She would have absolutely loved knowing that her memory brought all of you into the same room to feed kids who were hungry. I truly believe she does know,” he said. “Twelve years. Thousands and thousands of meals. All because one little girl named Jazzy was loved. Thank you for keeping her memory alive in the most beautiful way possible. Thank you for being here. And thank you for being exactly the kind of people that remind the rest of us that goodness is real.”



Nearly 100 volunteers gathered this year to pack meals in memory of Misty and Jazzy Petschl

## DISTRICT ADJUSTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BOUNDARIES FOR VICTORIA FAMILIES

At its February 23 Regular Meeting, the School Board approved minor changes to the District’s elementary school boundaries that will reassign a portion of the district’s easternmost boundary—including the Lakebridge neighborhood in Victoria and areas around Piersons Lake in Laketown Township—from Southview Elementary to Laketown Elementary.

The goals of this change include balancing class sizes across the district’s three elementary schools, stabilizing staffing, and improving geographic and transportation efficiency.

Enrollment projections show that without a minor boundary adjustment, enrollment at Laketown would fall approximately 90 students below that of Southview and Bayview Elementary Schools by the 2030-31 school year.

Transition planning will allow current families impacted by the change to either remain at Southview with transportation guaranteed for one additional year or begin attending Laketown in the fall of 2026. Incoming kindergarten families without older siblings will start at Laketown in the Fall of 2026.

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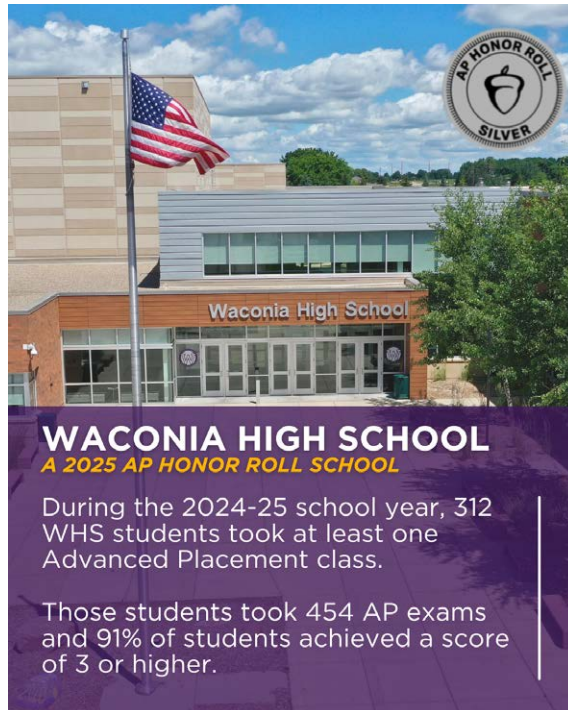
## WHS NAMED TO AP HONOR ROLL FOR SECOND STRAIGHT YEAR

Waconia High School has once again been named an Advanced Placement Honor Roll School by College Board, achieving Silver status for the 2024-25 school year.

The AP School Honor Roll recognizes schools whose AP programs are delivering results for students while broadening participation. Schools earn this recognition based on criteria that reflect a commitment to increasing college-going culture, providing opportunities for students to earn college credit, and maximizing college readiness.

During the 2024-25 school year, 312 Waconia High School students took at least one Advanced Placement class. Those students took 454 AP exams in the spring, and 91% of those students achieved a score of 3 or higher. This Spring, WHS students are expected to take more than 530 AP exams.

Waconia High School currently offers 12 different Advanced Placement courses, along with a host of other on-campus concurrent enrollment opportunities that allow students to potentially earn college credit while still in high school.



## POLAR PLUNGE RAISES \$64,468 FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS MINNESOTA AND DISTRICT UNIFIED PROGRAMS

On a beautiful, warm February 14, our ISD 110 community showed up in a big way—raising an incredible \$64,468 to support a cause close to our hearts. Funds raised from the Polar Plunge go directly to support Special Olympics Minnesota and our District's Unified Programs, helping create inclusive opportunities for students of all abilities.

Leading the charge was the outstanding team from Waconia Middle School, which raised \$22,409. A special shoutout to staff member Amanda Phenix, who raised an amazing \$3,612, the highest individual donation total this year.

Thank you to everyone who donated, plunged, cheered, and supported this event. Your generosity truly makes a difference!



## THIRTY WHS STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN DECA STATE CONFERENCE

Thirty students from Waconia HS participated in the annual Minnesota DECA State Career Development Conference in Minneapolis, March 1-3.

During the school year, 6,500 Minnesota DECA members take part in the organization's competitive events program, allowing them to compete in over 70 events focused in the areas of entrepreneurship, finance, hospitality, marketing and other related fields. The competitions are designed to simulate real life business scenarios and test students' academic understanding and skills development.

After qualifying earlier this year, district winners put their talents to the test during the State Career Development Conference. Senior Caitlyn Miller participated in the Hospitality and Tourism Professional Selling event and performed at the highest level, punching her ticket to international competition.

Sophomores Quinn Swanson and Mae Kerfoot will also be traveling to Atlanta, GA, this April to participate and compete in a retail leadership academy through the high school store, the Wildcat Warehouse.



With more than 24,000 top students from around the world at the International Career Development Conference, it is the pinnacle of DECA competition.

*ABOUT MINNESOTA DECA: DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management. DECA enhances the preparation for college and careers by providing co-curricular programs that integrate into classroom instruction, apply learning, connect to business and promote competition. The Minnesota High School Association is part of a larger organization comprised 315,000+ members from all 50 United States, the District of Columbia, Canada, China, Germany, Guam, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Spain.*



## A SEASON OF FINE ARTS EXCELLENCE



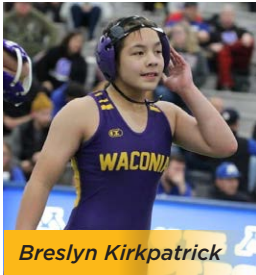
## WINTER SPORTS SEASON DELIVERS A NUMBER OF MEMORABLE MOMENTS

From standout state-qualifying performances to a number of impressive individual milestones, Waconia High School student-athletes made their mark throughout an exciting winter season. Our Wildcats showcased dedication, resilience, and pride across every program. Don't forget to follow the Waconia High School Activities Instagram account (@waconiawildcats1) for the latest news and updates on all things athletics and activities. Here are just a few highlights from the winter season:



Ian Olson

The wrestling program sent nine individuals—seven boys and two girls—to this year's state tournament. On the boys' side, senior **Ian Olson** placed 3rd at 121 pounds. On the girls' side, eighth grader **Breslyn Kirkpatrick** placed 3rd at 106 pounds, while sophomore **Bentlie Jackson** placed 5th at 170 pounds. Other state qualifiers included **Will Katherman**, **Beckett Marsh**, **Cooper Koosmann**, **Blake Miller**, **Jacob Ess**, and **Sawyer Nemitz**.



Breslyn Kirkpatrick

The boys and girls basketball teams celebrated a number of individual milestones this season. Both **Addison Bryfczynski** and **Audrey Brown** recorded their 1,000th career points, while **Emma Hanson** set a new school record for career assists. Bryfczynski, Brown and Hanson were all named All-Conference, while **Josie Van Vooren** and **Hailey Eggers** were named All-



Michael Sower

Conference Honorable Mention. The team was ranked in the top 10 of the state rankings for much of the season and finished with a record of 19-9.

For the boys, **Will Kirsch** topped 2,000 career points and became the boys program's all-time leading scorer. Kirsch finished his high school career with 2,565 points. The team finished the season with a record of 17-10.

The boys swimming & diving team won the Metro West Conference championship for the third year in a row and had a number of individuals and relays qualify for the State Meet. Senior **Sam Swanson** placed sixth in the 200-yard individual medley and seventh in the 100-yard freestyle. Senior **Henry Kleve** took 12th place in both the 100-yard freestyle and 200-yard freestyle. Junior **Michael Sower** took 15th place in the 100-yard butterfly.

Kleve, Sower, Swanson and sophomore **Maitrey Gulati** combined to take seventh place in the 400-yard freestyle relay. Kleve, Sower, Swanson and senior **Brady Jamison** combined to take 10th place in the 200-yard freestyle relay.

The Lakettes Dance Team concluded its competitive season by placing 8th in Varsity Kick and 9th in

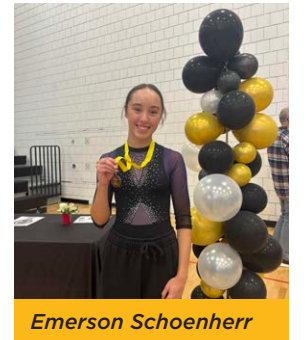
Varsity Jazz at the Section 2AAA Meet on January 31. **Avery Hunter** was named All-Conference, while **Liv Gieseke** and **Ava Piller** were named All-Conference Honorable Mention.

The boys hockey team finished the season with a record of 11-11-5. **Devon Stifter** (10 goals, 9 assists) was named All-Conference. **Maguire Knorr** (6 goals, 12 assists) and goaltender **Marek Wozniak** (2.49 GAA, .916 save percentage) were named All-Conference Honorable Mention.

The girls hockey team set a new program record for number of wins in a season and finished with a record of 12-14-1. **Becca Dhaene** (25 goals, 9 assists) and **Kate Koschinska** (5 goals, 19 assists) were named All-Conference. **Taylan Kamrath** (8 goals, 12 assists) and goaltender **Elle Baggenstoss** (3.09 GAA, .893 save percentage) were named All-Conference Honorable Mention.

Freshman **Ryker Ballard** participated on the district's new Nordic Skiing co-op with Chaska and Chanhassen high schools. Ballard was named All-Conference Honorable Mention this season.

Junior **Emerson Schoenherr** qualified for the State Gymnastics Meet in the Floor Exercise after placing fourth in the event at the Section 2AA Meet with a score of 9.225. Schoenherr and **Brooke Geehan** were both named All-Conference at the conclusion of the season.



Emerson Schoenherr



## MAX MCENELLY CLAIMS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

We couldn't be more proud of Waconia High School alumnus and current University of Minnesota redshirt sophomore Max McEnelly, who claimed the national wrestling championship at 184 pounds on March 21 with a 4-3 decision over Penn State's Rocco Welsh.

Max was a four-time state champion at Waconia High School and a Wildcat through and through—known for his relentless work ethic, toughness, and leadership on and off the mat. Today, he's reached the pinnacle of college wrestling, and the entire Waconia community is celebrating alongside him.

Congratulations, Max—we can't wait to see what's next!

## SENIOR AUDREY BROWN NAMED 2026 ATHENA AWARD WINNER

Waconia High School senior Audrey Brown is the recipient of the school's 2026 Athena Award. Sponsored by the Minneapolis Athena Awards Committee, the Athena Award is a unique recognition program designed exclusively for female high school seniors. Selection of the outstanding female athlete from each school is based on excellence in individual sports or for participation and accomplishments in team sports. Students who excel in athletic activities, who show leadership qualities, and who are model citizens are eligible for the award.

Brown is a three-sport athlete (volleyball, basketball, track & field) who has earned a total 10 varsity letters, three all-conference awards, and is a captain of all three sports. This past basketball season, Brown recorded her 1,000th career point and was named All-State Honorable



Mention while helping lead the Wildcats to a 19-9 record. She has also been named Academic All-State for both volleyball and basketball.

Outside of varsity athletics, Brown is involved in Waconia High School's LINK Crew and National Honor Society (NHS). She also has a history of community service and volunteer work through NHS and various youth athletic associations.

Brown is planning to attend either the University of Minnesota or the University of Wisconsin-Madison and major in Biomedical Engineering and Spanish.

Brown and 54 other Athena Award winners will be recognized at the Minneapolis Athena Awards Banquet on Friday, May 1 at the Earle Brown Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center.

## UNIFIED BASKETBALL BRINGS THE ENERGY

Our annual Unified Basketball Tournament is always a favorite, and this year was no exception. The energy in the building was absolutely electric as students, staff, and fans came together to celebrate teamwork, inclusion, and pure joy for the game.

Special shout out to Waconia Unified Sports Advisor Kari Klein for making it all come together for our students!

Unified Sports through Special Olympics remind us that when we compete together, we all win.



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News and Updates from Waconia Public Schools

SPRING 2026



## MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PREPARE FOR SPRING THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

Waconia Public Schools will bring the stage to life this spring with exciting theatre productions at both the middle and high school levels, showcasing the talent, creativity, and dedication of student performers.

At Waconia High School, students will present *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of William Shakespeare's most beloved comedies. In this show, a feuding fairy King and Queen cross paths with four runaway lovers and a troupe of actors trying to rehearse a play. Chaos ensues. The magical royal couple meddles, leading to love triangles, mistaken identities and transformations. Performances will take place Thursday, May 7 at 7 p.m.; Friday, May 8 at 7 p.m.; Saturday, May 9 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, May 10 at 2 p.m.



Earlier in the season, Waconia Middle School students will take audiences on an epic adventure with *The Lightning Thief: The Percy Jackson Musical*, based on the best-selling novel by Rick Riordan. As the half-blood son of a Greek god, Percy Jackson has newly-discovered powers he can't control, a destiny he doesn't want, and a mythology textbook's worth of monsters on his trail. He must travel to the Underworld and back; solve the riddle of the Oracle, which warns him of betrayal by a friend; and come to terms with the father who abandoned him. Performances will be held April 23-25 in the Waconia Middle School Auditorium, with shows on Thursday and Friday at 7 p.m., and Saturday at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Community members are encouraged to attend and support these outstanding student productions as they take the stage this spring.



## 2025 AUDIT REVEALS IMPROVED FINANCIAL STABILITY

The District's Fiscal Year 2025 audit results were presented by Director of Finance and Operations Pam Carman and Troy Gabler, CPA, from CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP at the December 8, 2025 school board meeting.

The District received a clean audit report, and the findings affirmed that it is continuing to make steady, expected progress in strengthening its financial position. The District closed the 2025 fiscal year with an unassigned general fund balance of \$3.165 million, aligning with projections and reflecting its ongoing commitment to trust, transparency, and strong financial stewardship. Notably, this progress reflects a significant turnaround from Fiscal Year 2023, when the District reported a negative \$6.1 million fund balance.

The District also received an upgrade from Moody's in its most recent credit opinion, improving its rating to Baa1. This continues a positive trajectory following the District's 2025 upgrade from Baa3 to Baa2, demonstrating sustained improvement in the District's financial condition and governance practices.

A credit upgrade from Moody's indicates that an organization is viewed as more financially stable and less risky. It typically leads to lower borrowing costs, stronger credibility, and greater flexibility to invest in future priorities.



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## SERVICE DOG VISIT INSPIRES STUDENTS

Wildcat Preschool students in Ms. Dawn's classroom had a chance to meet Ms. Shelby and her service dog McNabb on March 4. Students were full of inquisitive questions about McNabb's story and how he helps Ms. Shelby navigate her daily activities.

## SPEECH TEAM HAVING SUCCESSFUL SEASON

The Waconia High School Speech Team placed third out of 13 schools in the team sweepstakes of the Jordan High School Valentine's Invitational on Saturday, February 14.

The team had three individuals take first place in their respective events including Chase Fontanna in Extemporaneous Speaking, Elizabeth Degen in Prose Reading, and Elizabeth Eldred in Informative Speaking.



## FIFTH GRADERS REEL IN FUN

48 degrees and sunny made for another successful 5th grade ice fishing field trip on February 13 on Lake Waconia! The fish were biting, the smiles were big, and our students had an unforgettable hands-on learning experience out on the ice.

A huge thank you to our WHS Conservation Club, advisors Wayne Trapp and Michael Jensen, and our incredible community partners who make this tradition possible each year: In Towne Marina, Carver County Sheriff's Office, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Waconia Fire Department, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

