

# DISTRICT BULLETIN

A World-Class Community of Learners



## Best Place To Start Your Educational Journey

How Fridley Preschool is providing the community with quality education for our youngest scholars *see page 4*



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- DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS
- OPENING WORKSHOP 2018-19 +
- STAFF RECOGNITION

FALL  
2018



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The Fridley Public Schools District Bulletin is published three times a year and is mailed to every home in the Fridley School District. Past issues are available online at [www.fridley.k12.mn.us](http://www.fridley.k12.mn.us)

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A World-Class Community of Learners

## FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

International Baccalaureate World Schools

DISTRICT BULLETIN

FALL 2018

### SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Kim Hiel

### SCHOOL BOARD

Mary Kay Delvo - Chair  
Chris Riddle - Vice Chair  
Kim Sampson - Treasurer  
Donna Prewedo - Clerk  
Carol Thornton - Director  
Avonna Starck - Director

### SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

**Fridley High School**  
Principal: Patty Hand  
Assistant Principal: Kelly McConville

**Fridley Area Learning Center**  
Principal: Dr. Jason Bodey

**Fridley Middle School**  
Principal: Amy Cochran  
Assistant Principal:  
Dr. Danielle Peterson

**Hayes Elementary School**  
Principal: John Piotraschke

**R. L. Stevenson Elementary School**  
Principal: Daryl Vossler

### DISTRICT OFFICES

Activities: 763-502-5606  
Buildings/Grounds: 763-502-5008  
Business & Finance: 763-502-5004  
Communications: 763-502-5020  
Community Education: 763-502-5100  
Educational Services: 763-502-5009  
Equity: 763-502-5006  
Enrollment: 763-502-5081  
Human Resources: 763-502-5013  
Nutritional Services: 763-502-5021  
Special Education: 763-502-5025  
Technology: 763-502-5032  
Transportation: 763-502-5026  
IB (DP): 763-502-5062  
IB (MYP): 763-502-5036  
IB (PYP) Hayes: 763-502-5228  
IB (PYP) Stevenson: 763-502-5317  
IB (PYP) Preschool: 763-502-5117



FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER



Four months into her new position as superintendent of Fridley Public Schools, Dr. Kim Hiel continues to build relationships across the school district. Hiel believes strongly that it is important to foster strong partnerships which will create more opportunities for students, staff, families and community. She recently shared some of her reflections on her first few months since the school year began.

### Making Connections

While Dr. Hiel acknowledges that she is becoming more familiar with Fridley's processes and practices, there is still a lot to learn about the district. "Attending different community organizations meetings such as the Rotary and Lions Club have been a great learning experience that affirm the role the school district plays in the community," said Hiel.

She is proud of the connections she is making with students, staff, parents and community members, that have helped deepen her understanding of the history and traditions that have made Fridley the educational institution that it is. "It is clear that from the City of Fridley to the school district, tradition and relationship plays a strong part and I need to ensure that that legacy of partnership continues to flourish," said Hiel.

"We also have to ensure that the community understands that we want to continue to make them proud of our schools," she added.

Hiel enjoys visiting schools, meeting staff and interacting with students. "I am here to listen, so it makes me happy that staff and students feel comfortable speaking with me," she said.

As a leader, Hiel said it is important to her that staff understands that she knows and recognizes how hard-working they are. "My job is to support our staff as they provide students with the best skills and the best learning possible, and through any stress that may come their way," she said.

[fridley.k12.mn.us](http://fridley.k12.mn.us)

Students also recognize her when she visits their schools. They often stop to say hello, ask questions, share some ideas and even ask for advice. Hiel has spoken to a few classes at Fridley High School where she shared her journey that led her to become Fridley's superintendent.

"Our students are what gets me up in the morning," said Hiel. "Their presence reminds me every day why we are here and who we serve." She added that her goal is to connect with all students and help inspire them to be the best they can be so they can reach their dreams.

### Fridley's journey to the best place to learn best place to work

Hiel has been working closely with the Fridley School Board as they develop their 3 year strategic plan. The priorities articulated in the Board's plan will be incorporated into the district's 3 year operational plan of becoming the best place to learn for students and families, and the best place to work for staff.

"There is a lot of brilliance going on in Fridley," said Hiel, adding that Fridley has already laid the grounds on where it wants to go and what it wants to do. "So in order for us to become the best place to learn and the best place to work, we need to ensure that all staff understands our mission, vision, and our priority work for the next three years," she said.

Hiel said that an understanding of the consistency, and connection among all sites, programs and departments can build stronger coherence through all levels in the district.

"Communication is also very important to connect with staff and our families on the district's priority work and what the rest of the district is doing, so that we are all better able to share with our community and be ambassadors for our district, schools and programs," Hiel said.

FRIDLEY SCHOOL BOARD



(Back row, l-r) Mary Kay Delvo, Chris Riddle, Carol Thornton. (Front row, l-r) Donna Prewedo, Avonna Starck, Kim Sampson

### SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS:

Fridley School Board meetings are typically held on the third Tuesday of each month, with a schedule as follows: 5:30 PM Work Session; 7:00 PM Public Forum; 7:30 PM Business Meeting

Please note: Beginning in January 2019, school board meetings will be held at the Fridley Community Center, 6081 7th Street NE, Fridley. All meetings are open to the public.

### stay connected:



Did You Know that community members can sign up for our bi-monthly e-newsletter?

Visit [www.fridley.k12.mn.us](http://www.fridley.k12.mn.us) and navigate to the Be Informed tab and click on Publications. You will find a link to subscribe!



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Fridley Preschool 2017-18 graduation ceremony



“As soon as she started to attend Fridley Preschool, I could just see her light up, and I know her whole future will be bright.”

SAFIYO AHMED  
FRIDLEY PRESCHOOL PARENT  
SPEAKING ABOUT DAUGHTER LEBIN

FRIDLEY PRESCHOOL

# The Best Place To Begin Your Educational Journey

How Fridley Preschool is preparing our youngest students for success

Brimming with confidence, excitement and all-around kindergarten-readiness, Fridley preschoolers are ready to take on the world. The youngest scholars in our *World Class Community of Learners*, Fridley Preschool 3- and 4-year-old students are set with a foundation for success.

The program, now in its third year located at the Fridley Community Center, currently serves over 200 students in 3- and 4-year-old AM and PM sections.

Currently, Fridley Preschool is in the official candidate process of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB-PYP). There is an intensive application and implementation process to become an authorized IB World School. Although Fridley Preschool is on its way to IB World School authorization, current curriculum is already written with an IB focus. From the very beginning of their educational journey, students are developing their academic, social and emotional wellbeing while focusing on international-mindedness and independent learning. Through transdisciplinary themes and focus on instilling the IB Learner Profile values, students become self-reflective learners, with the ability to make connections with the skills that they develop.

“It’s amazing to see where our students are

at the beginning of the year and compare their growth on graduation day,” said Jessica Row (Ms. Jessica), a teacher in Fridley’s 4-year-old preschool program. “But what’s really amazing is that they can recognize their own growth and articulate their skills. I’ve heard my students say ‘wow, at the beginning of the year, I could not spell my name. Now, I can spell a lot of words!’ I love that they can recognize that by themselves.”

**“I think the biggest difference is that they can articulate big, meaningful words, and they know what they mean. They are also asking some really deep questions, that’s part of being inquirers in our classroom and taking responsibility for your own learning.”**

JESSICA ROW  
FRIDLEY PRESCHOOL TEACHER

In the classroom, preschool teachers focus on one of 10 IB Learner Profile values every few weeks. The IB Learner Profile values include: *inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, risk-takers, balanced and reflective.* Ms. Jess-

sica, who previously taught at a preschool outside the district, has noticed a difference in her 4-year-old students when comparing growth and effectiveness of curriculum.

“I think the biggest difference is that they can articulate big, meaningful words, and they know what they mean,” Ms. Jessica said, referring to the IB values. “They are also asking some really deep questions, that’s part of being inquirers in our classroom and taking responsibility for your own learning.”

“One of my 4-year-olds said he was a risk-taker when he went to get a flu shot,” said Fridley Preschool teacher Elizabeth Schweitzer (Ms. Liz). “There are so many instances when our students are using the language at home. It’s awesome how they’re sharing what they learn at school with their families.”

Research shows that preschool students learn most effectively through a play-based, inquiry-led approach. At Fridley Preschool, the curriculum focuses on six IB transdisciplinary units of inquiry. The 3-year-old program uses themes: *How The World Works* and *Where We Are In Place And Time*, while the 4-year-old program focuses on themes: *Who We Are, How We Express Ourselves, How We Organize Ourselves, and Sharing The Planet.* These themes guide ad-

ministration and staff to develop an effective program of inquiry. Through this framework, students are investigative, ask their own questions, and use their imaginations to learn.

As an example, when students study *Who We Are* in Ms. Liz’s classroom, they bring in pictures of themselves as babies.

“We’ll discuss things like what we could do as babies, and what we couldn’t do,” said Ms. Liz. “Then we’ll talk about what we can do now that we’re older as preschoolers. We’ll also discuss what we think we’ll be able to do in the future, like our parents. You’d be surprised at how many 4-year-olds want to run the dryer or the dishwasher!”

One of Ms. Jessica’s favorite units, *Sharing The Planet*, typically resonates well with students, as they begin to realize how their actions affect the world around them.

“It’s all about how we can do our part to help the Earth,” said Ms. Jessica. “We’ll go outside with garbage bags and gloves and pick up trash, and that’s one of the actions that parents often start seeing their children do at home.”

## What Parents Think

Parent testimonials affirm outstanding teachers, a safe and nurturing environment, and cultural diversity among students as reasons for their exceptional Fridley Preschool experience. Additionally, parents agree that the structure and schedule of the school daily routine immensely prepared their children for kindergarten.

“We’re so happy that we began our daughter’s schooling with this preschool program,” said Rachel Winter, mother to Lily Winter who completed the preschool program in 2018. “If we had missed this opportunity, being in full-day kindergarten would have been a much harder transition.”

Rachel said going through the free, 4-year-old program was incredibly beneficial to Lily. The program gave her daughter a chance to make social connections and develop a solid academic foundation to build on.

“Even how simplistic her art and drawings were at the beginning compared to the end,” said Rachel. “She has such a thirst for learning and she’s really cre-

ative, so Fridley Preschool was such a great opportunity to let that blossom and grow,” said Rachel.

For Safiyo and daughter Lebin, the Fridley Preschool experience was transformational. When Lebin began the 3-year-old Preschool program, she was timid and shy.

“There were certain words she could not pronounce, so she would be shy and not talk to the teachers or other children,” said Safiyo. “But her teacher, Ms. Liz, was able to get on her level and understand what she was saying. She would have her talk more in front of the class and share her ideas. I can honestly say the best thing she took away from Ms. Liz’s class was confidence.”

She remembers Lebin often coming home from preschool, repeating a chant that she learned in Ms. Liz’s class. The chant, which begins each day in Ms. Liz’s class, goes: *I am beautiful. I am strong and I look amazing. I am smart and capable - what I do is great! I like who I am. I am lovable and powerful!*

“The chant brought tears to my eyes, seeing this confidence built up in my

*continued on page 6*



Safiyo Ahmed and daughter Lebin Jama, who attended 4-year-old Preschool during the 2017-18 school year



From left to right: Jessica Row (Ms. Jessica), Lily Winter, and mother Rachel Winter. Lily attended 4-year-old preschool during the 2017-18 school year.

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daughter,” Safiyo said. “This experience meant everything to her. As soon as she started to attend school there, I could just see her light up, and I know her whole future will be bright.”

Parents Crysta and David Hinson said they were excited for Fridley Preschool because of the free program, as well as free daily transportation. Not only did this add a convenience factor for the family, the transition into kindergarten has been a breeze.

“Following a routine and a schedule is so beneficial to kids at this age,” said David. Sawyer, the Hinson’s son and now a current kindergartener at Hayes Elementary School, graduated from the Fridley Preschool program last year. “He’s had two full years of schooling prior to kindergarten, and he walked into kindergarten completely prepared,” he said.

Crysta added Sawyer was eager to come to school every day. “He would ask us to go to school all the time - to see his friends and his teachers,” she said. “It’s obvious that the staff care so much about the students. They are so genuinely happy to see them when they walk in the door.”



“There are so many instances when our students are using the [IB Learner Profile] language at home. It’s awesome how they’re sharing what they learn at school with their families.”

LIZ SCHWEITZER  
FRIDLEY PRESCHOOL TEACHER

According to Crysta and David, Sawyer greatly enjoyed learning about nature and the environment in preschool. “He would even put mandates down at home about what we could do and what we couldn’t do about straws, recycling and wasting energy,” said David. “He was really taking the stewardship of the planet and the things he was learning to heart and that was really awesome to see.”

All parents agreed - Fridley Preschool has readily prepared their students for kindergarten and the next steps ahead. With dynamic classroom instruction, enriching lessons, and caring and compassionate teachers, the program has become a prime choice for many parents and provides the district’s youngest learners with a valuable first school experience.

This past summer, the Fridley Community Center went through some physical and structural changes to further develop a school culture and environment at Fridley Preschool. The final phase of the \$27 million bond referendum, passed by the Fridley community in 2015, added an additional secure entry point to the building on the preschool classroom-side. The program also added a school psychologist and social worker to support preschool families.

“It’s obvious that the staff care so much about the students. They are so genuinely happy to see them when they walk in the door.”

CRYSTA HINSON  
FRIDLEY PRESCHOOL PARENT

Crysta and David Hinson and son Sawyer who attended 4-yearold Fridley Preschool during the 2017-18 school year.

# BACK TO SCHOOL



Fridley Public Schools welcomed back nearly **3,000 students** when schools opened across the district for the **2018-19** school year.



On September 4, classes began for grades K-4 at Hayes and R.L. Stevenson Elementary Schools. Fridley Middle School, Fridley High School and the Fridley Moore Lake Area Learning Center held Orientation Day for all new students in their schools, which included middle school 5th grade students and high school 9th grade students. Students toured the schools; participated in activities; learned about International Baccalaureate Programme offerings, credit requirements, support services and more. All students throughout the district were back in school on September 5.

Students weren’t the only ones who enjoyed a first-day experience; this was also Fridley Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Kim Hiel’s first chance to see students in action. Dr. Hiel began her role as Superintendent on July 1 and was eager to visit all buildings to welcome and connect with students as they returned to classrooms on the first day of school.

“It was fantastic to see all the excitement among our students, teachers and staff,” Dr. Hiel said of the first days of school at Fridley. “It’s all so exciting and new when we come back, there is such an energy about it. That’s one of the beautiful things about education.”

She added that it was great to see Fridley staff on the ball - getting things done, knowing what to do and how to do it. “There’s nothing we can’t address or problem-solve when we do it together. It was great to see this great community connection firsthand - a family connection,” said Dr. Hiel.

welcome back,  
**Fridley families!**





FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
**BACK TO SCHOOL RESOURCE FAIR**

St. Phillips Church

Fridley Public Schools hosted its annual Back to School Community Resource Fair on August 25, 2018. A record-breaking 550 backpacks with school supplies were donated and available for Fridley students. Over 20 district programs and community organizations were also on hand to share resources and information with attendees.

“We are so excited to be able to provide this outreach service to our community and this much needed resource to our families,” said Family and Cultural Liaison Aloda Sims, who organizes the event each year.

Sims said the purpose of the event is to set all students up for success as the new school year begins. “We are partnering with the whole community to make sure that our kids are ready and excited and definitely putting that great foot forward to start the school year off right,” said Sims.

**550**  
BACKPACKS!



The Fridley Link Crew is a team of Fridley High School juniors and seniors who mentor freshmen throughout the school year. The Link Crew hosts Freshman Orientation Day which is filled with activities to allow for an easier transition into Fridley High School. Pictured from left to right, Jhordyn Chalmers, Jamia Johnson, Coco Nolen, Entesar Adem, Pamela Gilmore and Safia Hussein.



Superintendent Dr. Kim Hiel visited each school in the Fridley School District during the first days of school on September 4 & 5. Pictured is Dr. Hiel with Mrs. Erichsrud's 4th grade class at R.L. Stevenson Elementary School.

**OUR STUDENTS**

**National Honor Society**



The new inductees are (bottom row, l to r) Joshua Brandt, Adam Johnson, Connor McCoy, Eli Paton and Josiah Johnson; (middle row, l to r) Zoha Hassan, Isabelle Olivera, Anna Yang, Yangchen Namgyal, Alexis Thao, Stefany Martinez-Perez, Asanti Ahmed and PaChee Yang; (top row, l to r) Eshwaq Mohamed, Baobai Xiong, Alayna Norgren, Hannah Bosak, Nadira Hussein and Tonia Gargar. Not pictured: Malina Om

Twenty Fridley High School students became the newest members of the National Honor Society (NHS) when they were inducted into the school's chapter of the organization on October 8, 2018. NHS serves to honor students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. To be eligible for membership, a student must have a cumulative grade point average of at least a 3.4. The Vernon C. Knutson Chapter at Fridley High School is open to juniors and seniors through an application process in the fall. Qualified candidates are then inducted, where they will serve their school and community through various activities throughout the year.

**FHS senior Emily Rice named International Key Club President; Club earns 16th Diamond Level Distinction**



From left to right: Dan Roff (Activities Director for Fridley Public Schools), Mary Bowen (Key Club Advisor), Emily Rice (Key Club International President and Fridley High School senior), Katie Sneider (Key Club Advisor), and Greg Stowers (Key Club International Director)

Earlier this summer, Fridley High School senior Emily Rice was elected International President of Key Club International at the program's annual convention in Chicago. The role oversees more than 264,000 members from 5,008 clubs in 38 countries around the world. Key Club is a student-led organization which focuses on serving the community and building leadership skills.

The Fridley Key Club also achieved the rank of Distinguished Club-Diamond Level for the 16th straight year. To attain this honor, the Key Club partners with the Fridley Kiwanis group to raise awareness and donations for various nonprofits and charities. The Fridley club is the only club in the Minnesota-Dakotas District to achieve this designation that puts them in the top one percent of clubs. On September 12, 2018, the Director of Key Club International Greg Stowers visited FHS to meet with Rice and the prestigious group of students. He joined Rice in presenting a banner to Activities Director Dan Roff, proclaiming the high school as the home club of the International President.

FRIDLEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
**MENTOR AND CONNECT WITH**  
FRIDLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Fridley High School 9th grade students had the chance to take on a mentorship role with Fridley Middle School students on September 21-26,



2018 during their Health and Physical Education classes. During these class periods, high school students visited the middle school to connect with 7th and 8th grade students by leading them in team-building activities, conversations about making good choices, and advice on various topics. Although the schools are close in proximity, there can be a slight disconnect for incoming freshmen. To anticipate this, offering mentorship opportunities for 9th grade students to connect with middle school students can help ease the transition as they take the leap into the high school. The students created a four-day written plan to mentor and share information with the younger students.



# HOME COMING 2018

THE FRIDLEY TIGERS DEFEATED THE MINNEAPOLIS WASHBURN MILLERS

**48-13**

Fridley Public Schools celebrated its homecoming week from Oct. 1-5. The Fridley High School student council organized a number of activities and dress-up days for students to participate in throughout the week. On Friday October 5, the week concluded with a pep fest and coronation, which crowned seniors Steven Nandkumar and Safia Hussein as homecoming king and queen. That evening, the Fridley Tigers varsity football team defeated the Minneapolis Washburn Millers 48-13.

## GET READY PROGRAM AT FRIDLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Fridley Middle School (FMS) students had the opportunity to participate in a number of activities centered around post-secondary options and goals to “get ready” for their futures. Research shows that the earlier students begin to plan for their futures, the more likely they are to attend college and attain a college degree.

Get Ready, a new program at FMS, is a federally-funded college and career readiness program administered through the Minnesota Office of Higher Education. The program aims to increase the number of students who are graduating from high school, participating in post-secondary education and successfully transitioning into a career pathway. Get Ready will provide a post-secondary pathways curriculum, post-secondary pathways counseling, and field experience opportunities for 6-8th grade students. The Get Ready program includes a new position at FMS, Get Ready Pathways Coordinator Kim Choyke, who works directly with students in the building on a daily basis and is leading the implementation of the program.

September 24-28 was National GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) Week. During the week, FMS students in grades 6-8 enjoyed activities which included College Pathways Jeopardy, posting on a “Dream Wall” and taking photos in the “Walking Photo Booth.”



8th grade students Savannah Yang and Amayramy Ruiz Barrios in the college “Walking Photo Booth.”



## COLOR RUN PROVIDES FUNDRAISING FUN AT HAYES ELEMENTARY

All Hayes Elementary School students participated in the inaugural Hayes Color Run on September 28, 2018. Each grade-level took a turn running through an obstacle course which surrounded the playground and ended at the school’s hockey rink. Giggling and squealing, students braced themselves and raced ahead through the brilliant hues. At the end, students were covered from head to toe with the colorful powders made from cornstarch, a safe and nontoxic food substance. This was Hayes’ first Color Run. All proceeds from the fundraiser will help support students through field trips, assemblies, and other fun and educational activities to be held throughout the school year.

## R.L. STEVENSON STUDENTS ENJOY FUN RUN FUNDRAISER



Stevenson Elementary students participated in a Fun Run fundraiser on October 31, 2018. During the school day, each grade-level took a turn to run laps, collecting a Lego block to represent each lap. Families pledged to donate a certain dollar amount per each lap that their child completed. The fundraiser was held by the Stevenson Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) to raise money to benefit Stevenson students. The funds will support various initiatives including field trips, family-centered events and special projects.

CONGRATULATIONS TONI CRAFT!

## Director of Community Education to retire



Director of Community Education Toni Craft will be retiring from Fridley Public Schools in December 2018. Pictured is Craft (center) with Community Education staff (from left to right) Valerie Anderson, Maggie Chandler, Kristi Sabby, Craft, Stephen Keeler, Karin Beckstrand, Jonele Jensen, Dan Wold, and Sally Leone

After 21 dedicated years with Fridley Public Schools, Director of Community Education Toni Craft is retiring in December 2018. Craft's first involvement in the school district was through volunteer work at Hayes Elementary School and Fridley Middle School. The fall of 1997, Craft became the Adult Enrichment and Facilities Coordinator in the district's Community Education program. After 10 years in that role, she became Director of Community Education in 2007. Through implementation of new ideas, numerous construction projects, and increased families who have entered the district through Community Ed. programs, Craft is appreciative and thankful for the career she has had with the district.

As Director of Community Education, Craft has been involved in many outside organizations including Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club, the Fridley Schools Foundation, the Alexandria House Board of Directors, among other roles in the community.

Throughout her career in Fridley Community Education, there have been many changes, both physically and operationally, to adjust to the needs of the Fridley

community. When Craft first began her role, Community Ed. only offered school-aged childcare. Since then, childcare has expanded to preschool, infant and toddler childcare. Additionally, the Fridley Community Ed. program recently took ownership of the Senior Program from the City of Fridley in summer 2018. This allows the district's Community Ed. program to serve all ages of the Fridley community.

The development of Fridley Community Theater is also a highlight of Craft's time at Fridley, which produced its 9th summer show this past July. Fridley Community Theater has expanded from summer productions to Fridley Community Youth Theater for students to participate in during the summer, as well as Fridley Community Dinner Theater in the winter.

Another highlight for Craft is the relationships that she has developed during her time at Fridley Public Schools. "I really have been so very lucky to have a staff that are the highest quality folks that you could ever imagine," she said. "Being in Community Ed. also gave me the opportunity to work with nearly every facet of our district. I appreciate the size of our district and the

ability to develop meaningful relationships with many people."

Craft said it has been a pleasure to work with many colleagues who have a passion for their work.

"Everyone here brings such great expertise, passion and commitment to their individual program and work that they do," said Craft. "It's been inspiring to work with people that have these qualities and I think it really strengthens our ability to serve our families and community."

Not only will Craft miss the Fridley staff, but she will miss the daily interactions she has with families in the school district.

"Everyday, we see parents drop off and pick up their kids in our childcare programs. You get to develop great relationships with the families that come here," said Craft. She added that with some families, she has known their children since they were infants.

Craft has enjoyed living directly in the community that she works in. "I've always appreciated living and working in this community, and although sometimes you feel like you never take off your hat, I've enjoyed it. I feel that it's given me a different sort of commitment to my work because I'm directly part of the community that I care so deeply for."

It's no coincidence that Fridley Public Schools was part of the reason that the Crafts first decided to move to Fridley. Craft

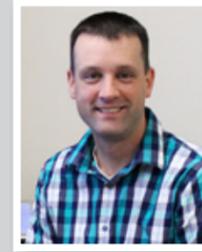
"Everyone here brings such **great expertise, passion and commitment** to their individual program and work that they do, It's been **inspiring** to work with people that have these qualities and I think it really **strengthens our ability** to serve our families and community."

- TONI CRAFT

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## Director of Business & Finance to leave FPS in December

Fridley Public Schools will soon bid farewell to its long term and well-known finance director Matthew Hammer. Hammer, who has accepted a position with Ehlers Inc., will leave the district on December 12, 2018. His decision to take on this new role is mostly family-driven to allow for more flexibility. Hammer and his wife Tiffany, have two children, Mikael, who will be 4 in December, and Brynlea, 2.



Hammer has worked at Fridley Public Schools for the past 10 years, beginning as an Accounting Supervisor in 2008. In 2013, Hammer was promoted to Director of Business and Finance, a position that oversees the finance, buildings and grounds, food service, technology, enrollment and transportation departments.

Hammer said one of the biggest highlights of his career was working on the 2015 Fridley Public Schools referendum, which received over 70 percent of community support. Through the passage of the referendum, Fridley Public Schools has now completed three phases of updates to infrastructure, technology and maintenance.

Fridley superintendent Dr. Kim Hiel said she wishes Hammer the best as he takes on this new opportunity.

"Matthew has served the school district for more than 10 years with dedication, integrity and utmost professionalism," said Dr. Hiel. "We thank him for his hard work in guiding the development and growth of the finance office and increasing the efficiency of the district's business and operations department. Our entire district will miss him greatly."

The district thanks Hammer for his years of service to Fridley Public Schools and wishes him the best in his new endeavor!

from on page 12

and her young family relocated to Fridley in 1986 from North Minneapolis, in part because of its proximity to the metro, as well as the strong reputation of the school district. Craft's three children all attended Fridley schools: Bailey (Class of 2003), Quincy (Class of 2005), and Noah (Class of 2007).

"All our kids attended K-12 here, and they all had wonderful experiences. They had great opportunities here, both academically and extracurriculars," said Craft.

As Craft readies to hang up her director's hat in December, she said she is looking forward to joining her husband, Dennis, in retirement. Dennis Craft retired from

Fridley Public Schools as the Director of Buildings and Grounds in summer 2017. She is also looking forward to having time to spend with her 2-year-old granddaughter Emerson, as well as time to read, exercise and travel.

"I am so appreciative of the opportunity I've had to work with such a great staff and develop relationships with everyone," said Craft. "I trust that the great work that we've done will continue. I want to give a big thanks and appreciation for giving me the opportunity to do the work."

The district thanks Craft for her years of service to Fridley Public Schools and wishes her best of luck in her retirement!

FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Opening Workshop 2018-19



Fridley Public Schools welcomed teachers and staff back for the 2018-19 school year during the annual Opening Workshop on August 27, 2018.

In her first address to members of Fridley staff, Fridley Public Schools new superintendent Dr. Kim Hiel, was dynamic and engaging as she introduced herself to the Fridley school community. She energized the crowd as she shared information about herself, her leadership style, as well as her vision of Fridley as the "Best Place to Learn, Best Place to Work." Hiel acknowledged Fridley staff for their hard work and said that there are many positive things happening in Fridley schools and the school community.

"One of our main goals is to always create a better world. We want to make a difference in the time that we have spent. There are not many people that spend the years that you do to impact children's lives and I thank you for that," said Hiel.

Hiel reiterated that her goal is to support staff in accomplishing their goals. "Through consistency, connection and coherence, we will align our mission, vision, and School Board priorities for improvement into a strategic plan and road map for success," said Hiel.

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“The more that we have consistency between departments, between buildings, we will spend less time and we won’t double our work. We need to connect as a group, connect as humans. We will have fun and respect each other as humans. Our human connection will also help us work better together and connect all the different aspects of our work. Consistency and coherence will help us understand the ‘why’ of our work. Coherence is teamwork. We’re all one – we are Fridley. And working together as one, we will make sure that Fridley is the best place to learn and the best place to work,” said Dr. Hiel.



Superintendent Dr. Kim Hiel welcoming Fridley Public Schools staff back at the 2018-19 Opening Workshop on August 27.



FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## 25 years of service recipients

An annual tradition at the Opening Workshops, Fridley Public Schools recognized staff members who have dedicated 25 years of their careers in the district. Congratulations to Debbie Janssen, Jonele Jensen and Char Kroger - *we thank you for 25 monumental years!*



**DEBBIE JANSSEN**  
HAYES ELEMENTARY

Debbie Janssen has taught kindergarten for 25 years at Hayes Elementary. According to Hayes Principal John Piotraschke, Debbie is a very dedicated and hard-working educator who cares deeply about the families and students that she serves. “She has many skills and talents that help her to be an outstanding educator,” Piotraschke said. “She is kind, caring, and principled in her work. She is always very self-directed and committed. Her abiding commitment to children, families and their stability is evident in the way that she interacts with them.” Congratulations, Debbie, and thank you for 25 years of service!



**JONELE JENSEN**  
FCC

Jonele Jensen has been the Community Education Director’s secretary at the Fridley Community Center (FCC) for the past 25 years. According to Community Ed. Director Toni Craft, Jonele is a valued team member and a resource to both staff at FCC and the public. “Jonele goes the extra mile to make sure those who come to FCC get their needs met. She is quick with numbers and detail-oriented with budget and accounting data,” said Craft. “Jonele is respectful and kind to customers at FCC, and always makes those who walk in the door feel welcome.” Congratulations, Jonele, and thank you for 25 years of service!



**CHAR KROGER**  
FCC

Char Kroger, a Fridley alumna, began her career with Fridley Public Schools 25 years ago as a cook at Fridley High School. She spent 11 years there before transferring to Stevenson to serve as Cook Manager in 2004. After 14 years in that role, Char was hired as the health assistant at Stevenson. Char’s co-workers would describe her as hard-working, detail-oriented, and a lot of fun to be around. According to Principal Daryl Vossler, Char was an excellent asset to the Stevenson team. For the 2018-19 school year, Char began working at the Fridley Community Center as the Health Assistant for the Pre-K program. Congratulations, Char, and thank you for 25 years of service!

## 2017-18 TEACHERS OF EXCELLENCE



Fridley Public Schools is proud to announce the 2017-2018 Teachers of Excellence. Five teachers, who represent each of the district’s schools (including an Area Learning Center/Fridley Community Center group), were recognized at the annual staff Opening Workshop held Monday, August 27, 2018. Each of the teachers selected are representative of all excellent teachers who work hard every day to deliver high quality education to all students enrolled at Fridley Public Schools.

**ANDREW HAAHEIM**  
FRIDLEY HIGH SCHOOL



The 2017-18 Fridley High School Teacher of Excellence is Andrew Haaheim. According to Fridley High School Principal Patty Hand, Andrew constantly goes above and beyond to assist others whenever help is needed. “He is excellent at student engagement, pushing them to always do their best and hold them accountable,” Hand said. Andrew has also taken on a building leadership role in supporting the work of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Learning, driving the staff toward deep understanding of the pedagogy. Additionally, Andrew is an Instructional Leader, advisor of Improv Club, helps run the Fridley Fine Arts Festival and works in staff development on a regular basis. Andrew is always willing to put in the effort to ensure students are finding success.

**MIKE KOZAREK**  
STEVENSON ELEMENTARY



The 2017-18 Stevenson Elementary School Teacher of Excellence is Mike Kozarek. Mike has been a valued staff member at Stevenson for 16 years, teaching 4th grade and serving as an instructional leader for four years. According to Stevenson Principal Daryl Vossler, Mike continuously goes above and beyond in many aspects of his job. “Mike has been an integral part to strengthening our school in a number of ways inside and outside the classroom,” he said. His students love the humor and fun that he brings to the classroom everyday. His colleagues appreciate his positive attitude and hard work he puts in to making Stevenson Elementary the best it can be.

**NICOLE ALLEN**  
FRIDLEY COMMUNITY CENTER



The 2017-18 Area Learning Center/Fridley Community Center Teacher of Excellence is Nicole Allen. Nicole is the district’s deaf/hard of hearing teacher and works on the Early Childhood Special Education team. She works hard to provide early intervention services that help support growth and development and prepare all students for kindergarten and beyond.

According to Preschool & ALC Principal Jason Bodey, Nicole always prioritizes students and their families. “She goes above and beyond to meet the needs of all her students, and she does so with a smile, great care and compassion for all,” he said.

**KARI REITER**  
FRIDLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL



The 2017-18 Teacher of Excellence is Kari Reiter. Kari goes above and beyond in many ways and is an immeasurable support system for every teacher at Fridley Middle School. She has served as the International Baccalaureate Math Leader, coaches varsity sports, has led many staff development sessions, presented at the IB of Americas Conference, and builds dynamic relationships with students and families. According to Fridley Middle School Principal Amy Cochran, Kari comes to work every day with an upbeat and positive attitude. “She is always willing to help any staff member for any reason and is known as the teacher who ensures everyone is involved and participates,” said Cochran. Kari has started the new school year in a new role as the district’s International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Coordinator.

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MARGO ROTHENBACHER  
HAYES ELEMENTARY



The 2017-18 Hayes Elementary School Teacher of Excellence is Margo Rothenbacher. According to Hayes Principal John

Piotraschke, Margo is committed to building self-efficacy in students. "Whether it is working with kids one on one, in small groups, or in response to emotional or social needs - her goal is to help everyone become better and to build their skill set." Margo, who serves as the school counselor, aims to teach all students interdependence so they can always make logical, character-based decisions that better the entire world. Piotraschke says, "Margo is responsive and positive and is often the one who says 'I can' or 'I will' when asked to volunteer or complete a task."

"She has positive, nurturing, honest and constructive relationships with many Hayes students," he said. Piotraschke added that Margo is able to understand and support students on an individual level and her commitment has an incredible impact on her ability to work on needs and build long term solutions.



**Lori Andler**  
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board

Fridley Public Schools Employee of the Year Lori Andler with her two sons. Pictured from left to right: Ethan, Lori, and Aidan Andler

Congratulations to Lori Andler, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board, who was honored with the 2017-2018 Employee of the Year award during the district's Opening Workshop held on August 27, 2018.

Lori Andler is the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board of Fridley Public Schools, a role she has held since May 2015. According to her co-workers, Lori is the unsung hero of a multitude of events and activities; a person whose work and professionalism serves as the catalyst for the many teams that comprise the district's administration. As the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, she is relied on heavily by many in administration. Additionally, Lori has been a crucial asset to the work of the Fridley Schools Foundation, organizing events like the Walk-A-Thon, the inaugural Black and Gold Gala, and Distinguished Alumni events.

Former Superintendent Peggy Flathmann, who worked with Lori for three years, said Lori has developed an unmatched and rich understanding of the needs of the district.

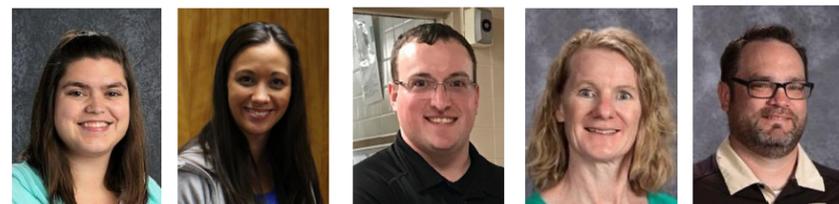
"She brings so many incredible skills to the position," said Flathmann. "We are so lucky to have her at Fridley Public Schools."

According to Superintendent Dr. Kim Hiel, Lori continuously goes the extra mile to ensure the success of the district's goals and needs.

"Lori has raised the standard of excellence for the district and its school communities. She is the go-to for everyone who has a question," said Hiel. "She is always up to the challenge and is an outstanding asset to our district."

Congratulations Employee of the Year, Lori Andler! The district thanks you for all that you do for the students and staff of Fridley Public Schools.

2017-18 FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



September: **Lindsey Crawford**, School Age Care Program Manager; **Krysta Landry**, Payroll Specialist; November: **Casey Nelson**, Head Custodian at Hayes; December: **Andrea Baker**, Finance Specialist; January: **Lance Bailey**, Paraprofessional



February: **Lori Andler**, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board; March: **Daryl Gehlbach**, Paraprofessional; April: **Jill Fite**, Paraprofessional; May: **Sue Baker**, FHS Kitchen Manager; June: **Nancy Thole**, Paraprofessional

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



R.L. Stevenson Elementary receives donation from local business Minco

On September 7, 2018, R.L. Stevenson Elementary received a kind donation from local business Minco, an international company with its headquarters based in Fridley. The donation included school supplies and materials to use in the classroom, as well as over \$1,000 to purchase additional supplies.

Minco provides engineering solutions for thermal, temperature sensing and control and flex circuit technologies for a variety of industry sectors. This is the second year that Minco has donated to support students at Fridley Public Schools.

"We are grateful for the generosity that Minco employees have shown our students and our school," said Stevenson Principal Daryl Vossler. "It's great to start our school year with this wonderful community partnership."

Get Your Paws Moving Walk



The rain couldn't stop the community from coming out to support our students at the second annual "Get Your Paws Moving" Walk fundraiser on September 19, 2018. Over 70 staff, students and community members participated in the walk, as well as 30 students in the district's Community Education Tiger Club Childcare program. Additionally, 20 student volunteers from the Fridley High School cheerleading team, National Honor Society and Fridley Key Club came out to cheer on the crowd as they walked.

The Fridley Schools Foundation's mission is to open doors to enhance educational opportunities of students within the Fridley schools community. Thanks to generous donations, the Foundation is able to provide scholarships to graduating seniors, as well as teacher innovation grants for field trips, school supplies, technology items and other classroom opportunities.

"It was great to see the community and schools come together to support the efforts of the Fridley Schools Foundation," said Foundation President Renee VanGorp. "We are grateful for our partnership with the Fridley Lions Club, our community and school staff for donating to this great cause. Thank you to everyone who made this possible - Go Tigers!"

FRIDLEY LIONS CLUB DONATES TO FPS ELEMENTARY TEACHERS



The Fridley Lions Club continued the tradition of donating \$100 Target gift cards to every elementary school teacher in the school district on August 27, 2018. The gift cards will help Fridley Public Schools teachers purchase classroom supplies for the coming school year. Over the past five years, the Lions Club has donated over \$25,000 to our elementary teachers.



Top photo: Hayes Elementary classroom teachers Bottom photo: Stevenson Elementary classroom teachers

# THE DICTIONARY PROJECT

Every fall season for the past decade, members of the Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club have put dictionaries in the hands of third graders at both Stevenson and Hayes Elementary schools.

## Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club donates dictionaries

Each third grade student received their own copy of "A Student's Dictionary" on September 26, 2018, books that were generously donated by the club. One of Rotary's six areas of focus is to support education and literacy. Each year, the Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club participates in the Dictionary Project, which is a project sponsored by many Rotary Clubs around the nation. The Dictionary Project is a nonprofit that is committed to assisting all students to become good writers, active readers and creative thinkers by providing students a gift of their own personal dictionary.

Superintendent Dr. Kim Hiel, who is a member of the Fridley-Columbia Heights Rotary Club, distributed the books with rotarians Gordon Backlund, Craig Malm, John Niewald, Tim Blank, Bob Tholkes, and Roy Goslin.



## FHS, ALC students benefit from mentoring opportunity with local professionals

Through an e-mentorship program with Cummins Inc., business students at Fridley High School (FHS) are connecting with local professionals to learn career-ready skills. Cummins, a manufacturing plant in Fridley, are partnered with FHS students in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB-DP) business class and career exploration class, as well as Fridley Moore Lake Area Learning Center (ALC) students. This partnership allows students to learn how to improve their communication and networking skills, and create meaningful working relationships with business professionals. Students have been communicating with their mentors since the beginning of the school year on advice on choosing a college, career exploration, building a resume, and more. On October 23, 2018, FHS and ALC students had the opportunity to meet their mentors in person during a "working lunch" at the high school. Fridley Public Schools' partnership with Cummins has supported hundreds of students in many ways over the years. This e-mentorship partnership first began in 2010 with the Fridley High School Transition program. Since 2017, the relationship has expanded to include FHS business classes and ALC students.



FHS senior Jamia Johnson (center) with Cummins Inc. employees Amber Cederholm (left) and Kjell Gordon



## FRIDLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Distinguished Alumni & Circle of Excellence Awards

Fridley Public Schools held its ninth annual Distinguished Alumni and Circle of Excellence Awards on October 26, 2018. The purpose of the Distinguished Alumni Awards is to honor Fridley High School graduates who have distinguished themselves in their chosen careers and service to their communities. The event also serves as an opportunity for current students to connect with the past. The presence and accomplishments of the distinguished Fridley alumni allow students to envision what is possible in life after Fridley High School. **Read on to learn about this year's honorees.**



### Dr. Kenneth Bruder

CLASS OF 1975



Dr. Kenneth Bruder, from the Class of 1975, was involved in sports and the arts while a student at Fridley High School. He was on the basketball team, participated in drama and was in both Chamber and Pops Choirs. Bruder said he particularly enjoyed choir, both because of Dave Ryan, the director, and because it allowed him to spend time with his friend, Kim Christenson, who later became his wife.

It was between his junior and senior years that Bruder was diagnosed with cancer. Because of the major surgery and radiation therapy, he was very ill during his senior year. With his faith, however, he found strength and became determined to persevere in his dream of becoming a surgeon.

Following graduation from Fridley High School, Bruder attended Gustavus Adolphus College, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree. From there, he un-

dertook graduate studies in biochemistry at the University of Iowa. He received his medical degree from Oral Roberts University's School of Medicine in Tulsa, Oklahoma, followed by a general surgery residency at the University Medical Center in Omaha, Nebraska. From 1990 to 2002, Bruder served the United States in the Army Reserves Medical Corp.

Bruder first practiced as a general surgeon in Mankato, Minnesota in 1992. In 1994, the Bruder family moved to Neenah, Wisconsin. He continues to provide comprehensive general surgical services, with an interest in vascular, endocrine and advanced laparoscopic surgery in nearby Appleton. He is also specially trained to perform robotic surgery and specializes in cancer services and thoracic surgery. He is board certified by the American Board of Surgery and is a Fellow in the American College of Surgeons.

Bruder has worked with and trained other doctors in Nigeria, Panama and Macedonia. He also hosted two surgeons from Macedonia at his home so they could receive additional training in the United

States. He has participated in non-medical missions in Mexico and Costa Rica.

An example of Bruder's compassion was shown when a patient who had just received surgery was going to be alone for Christmas, recovering in the hospital. Bruder brought his own family to the hospital to sing carols to the patient on Christmas Day, a 100-year old woman.

Bruder shies away from attention to his awards and accolades. He prefers to focus on his family, church activities and working with doctors in poverty-stricken countries.

Today's students are encouraged by Bruder to never give up on their dreams, just as he never gave up on himself when he suffered illness in high school. He says, "Be prepared to put in the hard work that it takes to accomplish your dreams. Make sure in the mist of that hard work, you find time for fun and friendship."

Bruder and Kim have been married 39 years and are the proud parents of Josiah, Kendra and Jonah. Between their children

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FHS senior Lee Knutson and Dr. Kendall Heitzman



FHS senior Walter Nordin and Joseph Bue



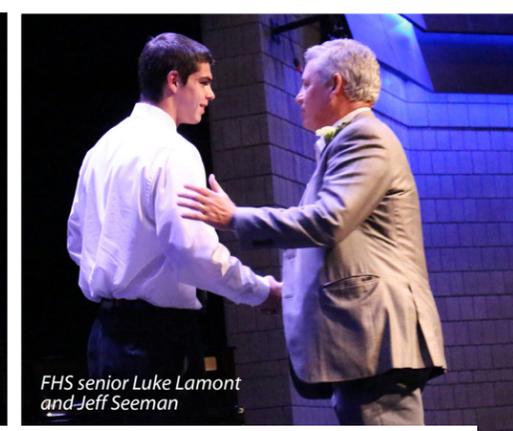
FHS senior Harrison Blum and Matt Ehling



FHS senior Nadia Hawkins and Allison Johnson Heist



FHS senior Salmah Youngmark and Dr. Kenneth Bruder



FHS senior Luke Lamont and Jeff Seeman

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and their respective spouses, the Bruders have five grandchildren: Brenton, Jeremy, Aubrey, Sophie, and Hailie.

Bruder is grateful for the supportive and accepting environment of the faculty and classmates at Fridley. He feels the instruction, particularly in math and sciences, prepared him well for his degree in chemistry from Gustavus Adolphus, leading to his path as a doctor.

## Joseph Bue

CLASS OF 1999



Joseph Bue, from the Class of 1999, was very involved at Fridley High School during his years there. He was a member of National Honor Society, played basketball his freshman year, and was a captain of both the football and baseball teams. His senior year, he was voted most valuable player on the football team and made All Conference.

After graduating, Bue attended the University of Wisconsin - River Falls, where he earned a bachelor's degree in secondary mathematics education. He received his master's in education from Saint Mary's University, and an education specialist certificate in principalship from St. Thomas University.

Bue returned to Fridley High School in 2004 as a math teacher, working alongside many of the same teachers who mentored him. He also took up the role of coach and he worked with students on the football and baseball teams he once captained. While at Fridley, he was one of the first staff members trained for the International Baccalaureate Programme.

In 2008, Bue was welcomed at Roseville Area High School as its new math teacher. During his tenure as a teacher, he also taught English Learner Sheltered Content Mathematics and was an AVID Elective teacher. Bue received additional training in restorative justice and culturally responsive curriculum. In 2013, Fox 9 News presented him with their Top Teacher Award.

This past June, Bue became the Associate Principal at Roseville Area Middle School. While that occupies a good amount of his time, he also serves as an equity coach and professional learning community lead. He has trained fellow educators in culturally responsive curriculum, AVID, technology integration and instructional strategies. Bue teaches mathematics to Urban Learners-Community Faculty at Metropolitan State's College of Urban Education.

He says the thing he enjoys most about his career in education is working with young people. His goal as a principal is to motivate as well as educate. He hopes to inspire and coach students and fellow educators to improve their current skills to meet their highest potential.

Regarding Fridley High School, Bue shares that it was a great place to grow up because it had all the opportunities of a suburban school, but with a small town feel. He felt connected to his teachers and knew all his classmates, and enjoyed a deep sense of community within and outside of the school walls. His favorite subject was, of course, math, and his favorite teacher was David Loo, English teacher.

Bue married his wife, Jill, in 2005. They have two children: son Troy, who is ten-years old, and daughter Anneke, who is eight.

Bue advises current students to get involved in your school, find ways to connect with staff, students and activities. He believes that this will make the students' formative years more enjoyable and productive.

## Matt Ehling

CLASS OF 1989



Matt Ehling has been a producer of television documentaries for over two decades. He began his training both in the high school theater's light booth and working for Fridley Cable Access Channel 33.

Following graduation, Ehling received a bachelor's of arts degree from Metropolitan State University. He set out on an illustrious career that has taken him throughout North America, the Virgin Islands and Cuba.

Ehling's television work has been seen on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). His work has explored diverse life experiences, ranging from police ride alongs with the Baltimore homicide unit, to witnessing the aftermath of 9/11. He has covered a variety of notable events, such as presidential primaries and national political conventions.

Ehling has written both news and opinion pieces since 2007, covering topics from President Obama to the digital culture and its future on American privacy. His writings have also appeared in the Pioneer Press and Twin Cities Daily Planet. He is a frequent panel guest on television and radio stations, and at film festivals. Ehling has served as a guest lecturer on film production for institutions such as the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, University of St. Thomas, the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Community and Technical College, where he has also served as an adjunct faculty member.

Since 2013, Ehling has been a partner and treasurer of Twelve Plus Media, a communications company based out of Saint

Paul, whose clients include TPT Television, Medtronic, Xcel Energy, the University of Minnesota and the National Geographic Channel.

Based on his career, Ehling has devoted several years of volunteer work toward research, litigation and nonpartisan policy advocacy. His goal is government transparency and accountability. He has had the fortune of working with individuals and lawmakers from across the political spectrum on freedom of information laws, search and seizure policy, surveillance policy, oversight of government spending, and related issues. This work has taken various forms, including deep engagement with open records requests, open records lawsuits involving state and federal agencies, and advocacy at the Minnesota Legislature.

Ehling has been a part of both civil and religious organizations in Saint Paul - from St. Paul Neighborhood Network to Central Presbyterian Church - to help improve community life in the east metro through volunteer activities and charitable work.

In 2012, Ehling was recognized with the coveted John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award. The award is given to individuals and groups who demonstrate, through expression and action, commitment to the idea that a popular and democratic government can never realize the aspirations of the founding fathers without the participation of an informed electorate.

Ehling and his wife, Cheri, have been married for 17 years. They are the proud parents of 12-year-old son Joe.

Looking back on where it began, Ehling recalls his favorites teachers as Duane Georgias, who taught English, and Gary Zehnder, theater director. He views high school as a formative period when a person's understanding of the world is just beginning to solidify.

He advises current Fridley students that a critical trait for success in life is dedication

to a cause, tempered by caution and self-examination. According to Ehling, these may appear to be at cross-purposes, but their co-existence is essential. He says, "Being a zealous advocate for what you want to see happen in the world is necessary to achieving it. Pursuing your goals while watching for one's own errors and faults is necessary to avoid collateral consequences."

## Dr. Kendall Heitzman

CLASS OF 1991



Dr. Kendall Heitzman has built an impressive career based on his world travels and exploration of other cultures.

Heitzman had grown up in awe of the big theater presentations on the stage of Fridley High School. But by the time he got there, he was doing quick costume changes to play various roles in Little Shop of Horrors because there weren't enough people to play all the parts. During his senior year, he wrote the winter one-act play that was staged.

Heitzman attended the University of Minnesota - Morris, and then Northwestern University, where he earned a bachelor of science in speech for a double-major degree in theater and English. At Johns Hopkins University, he earned a master of arts from The Writing Seminars. Heitzman took a master's in comparative literature from Dartmouth College before going on to Yale University, where he earned a PhD in East Asian Languages and Literatures.

Over the years, Heitzman has enjoyed teaching and researching at a number of colleges, including Carleton and Macalester in Minnesota, and Nihon and Waseda Universities in Japan. He started learning

Japanese when he was 26, and has lived in Japan for about 8 years. Along the way, Heitzman worked on staff at the Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival and studied kyogen theater. He is one of the very few foreigners who has been given the chance to perform on the stage of the National Noh Theatre.

At the University of Iowa, Heitzman teaches Japanese literature, film, theater, and translation. Since arriving at the university in 2012, he has been able to bring Japanese novelists, poets, artists, filmmakers, and translators to campus. His students often translate the work of contemporary Japanese writers who stop by the class to answer questions about their stories and perform bilingual readings of the work on campus with the students.

Heitzman researches postwar Japanese literature and film, with a particular interest in how World War II is remembered in Japan. He has written articles on contemporary women writers, Japanese travel TV, and parallel-world stories, and has published translations of stories by a number of writers who have come to Iowa City in the last few years. He is currently working on a book about the postwar writer Yasuo-ka Shotaro, to be published by Vanderbilt University Press.

He has fond memories of participating in marching band, where he was drum major his senior year. He thought the pep band should play more than just football and basketball games, so they showed up at swim meets and other unlikely places. His favorite Fridley memory is of Ms. Sievers bringing her giant pet turtle to Kendall's kindergarten class.

Heitzman met his wife, Yuri, through mutual friends in a small town in Japan they both happened to be visiting at the same time. Their son, Kaoru, is five years old

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and loves to play the piano, draw, sing, and dance.

Heitzman tells today's students it is a great thing that Fridley is a more diverse place than it was when he was in the district. "You are fortunate to be able to spend your days with so many different kinds of people with different experiences and different stories to tell," he said. "The rewards of spending your time with different kinds of people are innumerable."

## Allison Johnson Heist

CLASS OF 2003



Allison Johnson Heist, of Fridley High School's Class of 2003, was active in a number of activities that benefited others while a student: National

Honor Society, Student Council and Key Club. In addition, she was on the swim team.

Johnson Heist graduated from the University of St. Thomas with a bachelor's degree in Justice and Peace Studies in 2007. She took part in a Metro Urban Studies Term at the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs. In addition, Johnson Heist participated in a semester study-abroad program focused on Sustainable Development and Social Change in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. She is currently working toward a master's in Leadership for Social Transformation from the United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities.

Her experiences led her to work as a community organizer around issues of justice in immigration and housing at the local and national level. Johnson Heist served as campaign manager for Sojourners in Washington, D.C., advocating for just and compassionate reform of our broken immigration system. She led efforts to raise awareness of the issue of housing instability and homelessness as a congregational partnership organizer for Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative. While at Beacon, she worked alongside faith communities to build support and raise public and private resources to create the first affordable housing development for homeless youth in Edina, called 66 West, which supports



The 1985 Fridley High School Baseball Coach John Freitag introduced the team at the ninth annual Distinguished Alumni & Circle of Excellence Awards Ceremony.

39 young adults in Hennepin County with housing, supportive services, job coaching and life skills.

Today, she is the Senior Program Officer at Headwaters Foundation for Justice. Johnson Heist enjoys making a tangible difference in her community. Every day, she connects with people about their values and talks about how to financially support organizations that are invested in a more equitable and just Minnesota. A few examples include coaching non-profit leaders to be more powerful and effective or facilitating conversations about how to tackle the major injustices that affect our state, such as the lack of affordable housing and persistent racial disparities.

Staying true to her commitment to serving others, Johnson Heist is a board member for Resource Generation, Exodus Lending and Trinity Apartments. She has been involved as a Racial Justice Facilitator at the YWCA of Minneapolis and as a Ron McKinley Philanthropy Fellow with the Minnesota Council on Foundations. She also held a community faculty position with the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs.

Reflecting on her time at Fridley High School, Johnson Heist said she had many

opportunities to develop as a young leader. Her passion for making the world a better place was encouraged by teachers and administrators, and she was challenged in and outside the classroom to think critically and to engage with others across lines of difference. She learned her voice mattered and that she could play a role in shaping the future for others if she stepped into her own power. Johnson Heist says Fridley High School taught her the value of community and belonging, which is something she carries into her work and life today.

Her favorite memories of Fridley High School were Homecoming Weeks, including the parades, Powder Puff games, spirit days, football games, and Homecoming dances. Her favorite teacher was Ms. Rintala.

Johnson Heist is married to Kevin Heist, and they reside in Minneapolis.

Johnson Heist's advice for current Fridley students is, "Don't be afraid to try something new! Now is the best time to experiment and get out of your comfort zone. Take that art class or join a new sport or club this year. Challenge yourself to do something that seems a little scary. You'll be better for it!"

## Jeff Seeman

CLASS OF 1981



Jeff Seeman, from the Class of 1981, was a noted athlete, participating in varsity football and golf. Perhaps inspired by his own

father, Jerry Seeman, who officiated over the National Football League (NFL) gridiron from 1975-2001, he decided to take on officiating roles when he was a junior at Fridley High School. He began with the men's basketball league games at the middle school, where the teachers would play the Fridley Police Department.

Seeman attended the University of Minnesota, where he earned a bachelor's degree in accounting in 1985. He would then begin over 32 years in the financial services industry.

In 1990, missing the action of the field, Seeman began officiating junior college football games. From there, he moved onto working Division 2, then Division 1, match ups. By 1999, he had worked his way into the Big Ten for three seasons.

fridley.k12.mn.us

## 1985 Fridley High School Baseball Team



The 1985 Baseball Team was selected for the Fridley Circle of Excellence because they exemplify the Fridley Activities Mission "...to inspire and develop excellence." Perseverance, teamwork, commitment, and passion were some of the character values embodied by this team. They used a season of ups and downs as building blocks to catch fire in the post season and capture the hearts of not only their classmates, but the whole Fridley community. Beginning in 1985, Fridley joined the North Suburban Conference and the strength of this conference schedule prepared them for postseason play. Fridley ran off a series of victories in the post season to finish their magical season as the 1985 MSHSL State Baseball Class AA Runner-up.

It was in 2002 that Seeman was invited to join the NFL officiating staff. In the NFL, he has worked in 12 post season assignments, including Super Bowls 44 and 51. He now also works with newer officials to train and develop them, much as his dad did when he began.

The fall of 2018 marks the beginning of his 17th season, all while still holding on to his main career as a financial advisor. He says his work as an investment advisor mirrors football; the financial markets are new and different every single day. As a line judge in the NFL, every play in every game is unique.

Looking back at his days growing up in Fridley, Seeman recalls Mr. Loo's energy, enthusiasm and humor as meaningful to him. He cites the quality of Fridley education, explaining that of his eight closest friends, only four went to college. The other four have had every bit of success without college based on the schooling they received here.

Seeman and his wife, Colleen, married in 2009 and reside in Chaska. They both can be found frequenting area golf courses, including championship wins at Hazeltine in July of this year.

To today's students, Seeman says face-to-face interaction skills will impact your tra-

jectory in the long term of your career. He says "Don't send a text from your office cubicle - go see the person down the hall. So much of communication is lost in texting words versus the inflection of your voice."

At the ceremony, Fridley High School seniors introduced each distinguished alumn, sharing stories about their time in the Fridley school district and beyond. Attendees also enjoyed a dinner in the cafeteria, served by members of the Fridley High School Vernon C. Knutson's Chapter of the National Honor Society. The opportunity allowed the current students to sit, eat and have conversations with their predecessors, now returning as Distinguished Alumni.

To date, the district has proudly honored and recognized more than 80 Fridley High School graduates with the Distinguished Alumni and Circle of Excellence Awards. To learn more, please visit the district's website at [www.fridley.k12.mn.us](http://www.fridley.k12.mn.us).





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# Fridley Senior Program pays tribute to veterans

The Fridley Community Education Senior Program paid tribute to the servicemembers in the community at the annual Veterans Day Program on November 9, 2018. Over 100 seniors and community members gathered in the Fridley Community Center to honor veterans who have made sacrifices to protect our country. The program, which has continued for over 25 years, serves as an important reminder to recognize and honor servicemembers.

The program's keynote speaker was historian Johannes Allert, whose presentation titled "Remembering and Honoring the Fallen of the Great War," gave an overview of the men and women of the early 20th Century who served and sacrificed during and after the Great War. He outlined the many numismatics, grave sites, dedications and various City and County memorials that pay tribute to servicemen and women throughout Minnesota.

Following the ceremony, community members enjoyed a luncheon, donated by the Fridley American Legion Auxiliary 303. The Fridley Women of Today, a local community group, volunteered to serve the meal.



Fridley American Legion Auxiliary 303



Fridley Women of Today



Fridley Legion 303 Color Guard retire the colors at the annual Veterans Day Program at the Fridley Community Center.



Lifelong Learning: Opportunities for All Ages