



# Grants Awarded to School Projects



High schoolers in the AMPED class give a thumbs-up for computer purchases made through the 2023 Grants program.

Each year the Marion Foundation Grant Program provides teachers and staff an opportunity to apply for grant-funding to support projects that benefit students in the Marion Independent School District. More than \$35,000 in grants was awarded in April through this program.

Grants are made possible by the generous contributions the Foundation receives throughout the year from individuals and businesses. Funding also comes from donor-designated endowed educational funds. Additional contributions to these educational funds are encouraged and may be made at any time and in any amount.

For more information about grants or educational funds, please contact Michele Walstrom, Marion Foundation Executive Director.

*(List of grants, continued on page 4)*

# “Last Call” for Wall of Support!

The Foundation’s Wall of Support pays tribute with more than 600 memorials, honorariums and achievement highlights. It is located in the school district’s administrative office wing on the south side of the high school. The Wall and adjacent MISD history displays are a favorite stopping point for reunion groups and those attending school board meeting.

**After December 2024, the last engraving of bricks will be scheduled and the Wall of Support will be completed.**

Engraving includes up to three lines of text with 15 letters and spaces per line. Red bricks are available for \$300 each and gold bricks for \$1,000 each.

Visit [marion-foundation.org/wall-of-support](http://marion-foundation.org/wall-of-support) to get started, or call the office at 319-377-4691 x1110.



**Supporting education for the benefit of Marion Independent School District students, schools and the greater community.**

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# Foundation Welcomes New Staff



Michele Walstrom joined the Marion Independent School Foundation & Alumni Association as Executive Director this spring, filling the role vacated by Elisabeth Kissling.

Even though her start date was April 1, having Walstrom join the Foundation has been no April Fool's Day joke!

"Michele has been a positive asset to our office. She is great at streamlining systems and efficiencies in the Foundation office. She works collaboratively and we need that with all of our projects and fundraisers we have planned", said Zhen E Rammelsberg, Alumni Relations Director.

Walstrom is not a native to Marion but her son Graham was enrolled in the Marion Home School Assistance Program for his eighth grade year. The Walstrom family lives in the College Community School District but after meeting with several home-school programs they chose the Marion one.

"We had such a positive experience with the Marion Home School Program," says Michele. "I was interested in being part of this organization because I know that Marion is an excellent school district."

After graduating from Syracuse University and earning her MPA from Drake University, the majority of Walstrom's career has been spent managing corporate foundations and community

relations programs in and around the Des Moines area. She has also provided consultation to small- and medium-sized businesses on their charitable contributions' programs. Additionally, Walstrom worked for the Iowa Council of Foundations for several years coordinating services for Community Foundations throughout the state.

Walstrom commented on how impressed she is by the level of commitment and dedication by the Foundation Board, as well as the enthusiasm staff and administration have toward the success of students in the district. "I'm looking forward to planning for the future of the Foundation and our continued growth and support of the school district and students," she says.

**Michele's experiences and insights will help the Foundation evolve as we continue our support of Marion schools and students. We look forward to her connecting with our outstanding alumni, school staff and greater Marion community.**

Doreen Zumwalt  
Foundation president

A graduate of Cedar Rapids Washington High School, Walstrom lives in Cedar Rapids with her husband Dean and their son Graham who will be a freshman at ISU this fall. Their daughter Haley has just completed her junior year at UW-Madison. The family also has two dogs: a West Highland White Terrier, Sally and a Black Labrador, Gigi.

When asked how Walstrom deals with stress, she answered that she loves taking walks. "I find that exercising and being in nature is a great way to clear your head and to gain a better perspective."

Contact Michele Walstrom by emailing [mwalstrom@marion-isd.org](mailto:mwalstrom@marion-isd.org) or calling the Foundation office at 319-377-4691 x1110. Her office hours are Monday through Thursday 8 am to 4 pm.

## SEND US YOUR EMAIL!

Beginning this fall, we will only be emailing news and other Foundation communications. **Make sure your email is in our database!** Simply fill out the "Update Your Info" form at [marion-foundation.org/alumni](http://marion-foundation.org/alumni)

# Class Reunions!

If you graduated in a year ending in 4 or 9, it's time for a reunion!

There are already several MHS classes that will be getting together during the Summer and Fall and have connected with Zhen E. Rammelsberg, Alumni Relations Director, to discuss their plans. Some activities that are popular during reunions are school and stadium tours, participating in the Foundation Golf Classic, or being recognized at home football games.

**2024 Foundation Golf Classic**

Sept 27

**2024 Football Home Games**

Aug 30

Sept 6

Sept 27

Oct 11 (Homecoming)

Oct 25

» An up-to-date list of reunion details and contacts for each class can be found at [Marion-Foundation.org/class-reunions](http://Marion-Foundation.org/class-reunions)

» To help reunion coordinators, please be sure to update your contact information at [marion-foundation.org/alumni](http://marion-foundation.org/alumni)

» If you are planning a class reunion and haven't spoken with Zhen E, please contact her at [zrammelsberg@marion-isd.org](mailto:zrammelsberg@marion-isd.org)



Class Officer David James and classmate Bob VanderLinden stand next to their 1963 class plaque during a school tour for their 60<sup>th</sup> class reunion.



**Friday, September 27**  
**Gardner Golf Course**  
**10 a.m. Shotgun**

**Registration Opens in Mid-June**

[marion-foundation.org/golf-classic](http://marion-foundation.org/golf-classic)

- or call -

**(319) 377-4691 x1110**

\$500 Team Registration

\$350 Hole Sponsor

\$800 Hole Sponsor & Foursome

**Registration Includes:**

- Early access to the driving range
- 18 holes of best shot golf with cart
- Breakfast starting at 9am
- Box lunch and drink tickets
- Raffle drawings
- Prizes awarded to 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Championship Flight, Second Flight and Senior Flight
- Prizes for Closest to the Pin, Longest Drive and Pro Challenge
- Lots of good fun with friends, neighbors and fellow Marion alum

## Coffee in the Clubhouse

**New This Year – an informal gathering of MHS class members from the 1950s!**

- 1950
- 1951
- 1952
- 1953
- 1954
- 1955
- 1956
- 1957
- 1958
- 1959

Golfers and non-golfers are all welcome. Enjoy a light breakfast and coffee at tables in the clubhouse beginning at 9 a.m.

No registration is required. Even if you're not from a MHS 1950-1959 class, you are welcome to join the fun.

***(“Grants” continued from page 1)***

**S & C Sound System**

***Marion High School***

Replacement for the current sound system for the Strength & Conditioning Program.

**Small Group Knowledge Books**

***Longfellow Elementary***

Sets of books that can be used by students that are at benchmark on second grade reading skills that go along with knowledge units.

**Sponsorship for Take Charge**

***Marion High School***

***Vernon Middle School***

Take Charge is a substance abuse prevention program that has been serving all buildings in the Marion district, except Marion Home School, for over 25 years. High school students involved in the program lead meetings at Vernon Middle School and provide presentations on substance abuse for grades first through eighth.

**Books for Classroom Libraries**

***Parkview Elementary***

Books for the school libraries at the newly built Parkview Elementary to start their collections.

The Marion Foundation has provided several grants over the years in support of literacy initiatives in the District. These grants are helping to boost English and language arts student proficiency levels District wide.



Vernon Middle School math students gather with their principal Phil Cochran and teacher Sara Lange as they are notified of receiving a Marion Grant in spring 2024.

**Building Thinking Classrooms with Whiteboards**

***Vernon Middle School***

Replacement of the fifth grade Math team whiteboards for student usage and collaboration.

**MHS Green Bandana**

***Marion Independent School District***

The Green Bandana Project is a mental health awareness and suicide prevention program at Vernon Middle School and Marion High School.

**Parkview Preschool Preparation**

***Parkview Elementary***

Funds will be used to purchase learning materials that coincide with the units in early literacy program.

**Vibraphone**

***Marion High School***

***Vernon Middle School***

Replacement for the current vibraphone that is used at both MHS and VMS.

**High School Books**

***Marion High School***

Books for the high school library for curricular use and for free reading that will enhance and update the current collection.

**Accessories for iPads for**

***Sixth Grade Math***

***Vernon Middle School***

Styli and iPad cases for the iPads used for sixth grade math.

**Fifth Grade Headphones**

***Vernon Middle School***

Headphones for six different fifth grade core classroom at Vernon Middle School.



## Best Wishes to Nicole



After three years working for the Foundation as our Administrative Assistant, we will be bidding goodbye to Nicole Kirpes on May 31, 2024. Kirpes and her husband Carl are having their first baby in mid-June, and she has made the decision to not return after the baby arrives.

“Nicole will be greatly missed,” said Zhen E Rammelsberg. “She has kept the office running smoothly and knows where to locate any information in a second. We will miss her, but wish her all the best in her new role as a parent.”

If you would like to send well wishes to Nicole you may email her at [nkirpes@marion-isd.org](mailto:nkirpes@marion-isd.org) or stop by the office. (Any notes arriving after May 31 will be forwarded to her.)

## Back-To-School Event Set for August 8

**Start School Right** began in 2015 to support families-in-need with back-to-school items. A volunteer committee made up of Foundation staff, board members, teachers, administrators and community members plans and hosts this event in early August each year.



Families must pre-register by July 4, indicating the items their students need – school supplies, backpacks, clothing, hygiene items, tennis shoes, breakfast foods and more! Items will then be picked up by families at Starry during the in-person event on August 8 from 5-7 pm. Also available during this time will be a community resource fair, dental and vision screenings, and a meal provided by Hy-Vee.

Volunteers are needed to help inventory and organize donations as well as distribute items at the event. Please, email Michele Walstrom at [mwalstrom@marion-isd.org](mailto:mwalstrom@marion-isd.org) or Michelle Wilson at [mwilson@marion-isd.org](mailto:mwilson@marion-isd.org) if you'd like more information about volunteer opportunities.

If you are a student or family that would like to participate in this program, please check your inbox for an email from the school district with registration information that was distributed in early May.

Many thanks to our local partners and sponsors including Marion Cares, Iowa Giving Crew, Hills Bank, Quinn Storage and Target.



Volunteers help serve food and beverages during the FASTWorks year-end picnic.

## FASTWorks® Spring Picnic

Families and Schools Together Works (FASTWorks), offers monthly family engagement events at each of the four MISD K-8 schools. These events are offered in-person at the students' schools, and both an activity and a meal are provided. FASTWorks events connect parents and students to each other, school staff and important community resources. Participation in the program has increased substantially this school year (321 participants) over last year (212 participants).

A collaborative team of parents and staff, led by MISD social worker Michelle Wilson, held the FASTWorks end-of-the-year picnic this spring. The event had the largest turnout ever and utilized all three Thomas Park shelters for the 47 families or 187 registered attendees. “The weather was beautiful and the people who attended had a great time,” said Michelle Wilson.

A generous grant through the **Marion Foundation** from **Green State Credit Union** provides food and activities for the picnic event and throughout the school year.



Iowa Giving Crew members stopped by the Foundation's April board meeting to present a check for \$5,000 to the Start School Right program. Iowa Giving Crew was formed in 2017 by a group of friends who have worked to raise and direct funds to those in need throughout the Cedar Rapids/Marion area.



## 2024 Marion Graduates Receive \$117,216 in Scholarship Awards

At the annual Senior Awards Night on May 8, the Marion School Foundation awarded scholarships totaling \$117,216 to graduating students. Each scholarship has unique requirements and eligibility as designated by the fund donors. Students submit an application for consideration in the winter and a committee works to match applicants to the awards. In addition to the new awards, 10 graduates from the last few

years who received renewable scholarships will be submitting their applications for renewal. In total, including this year's senior awards and renewal scholarships, the Foundation will distribute nearly \$140,000 in educational assistance.

Read more about our generous scholarship donors and those they honor at [marion-foundation.org/scholarships](https://marion-foundation.org/scholarships).

### **Cahalan Memorial Scholarship**

Malakai Kinney

### **Darrell & Dorothy (Merritt '59) Fisher Scholarship**

Natalee Hartman  
Corey Robertson  
Makenna Zachman

### **Dennis "Barney" Trout Scholarship**

Jacob Walker

### **Denny Burgess Memorial Scholarship**

Malakai Kinney  
Braydon Kriegel  
Adam Rose

### **Dr. Robert Thurness Memorial Scholarship**

Mya Chamberlin

### **Duane Ockenfels Memorial Scholarship**

Maggie Churchill

### **George, Gladys and Ruth Drips Endowed Scholarship**

Hannah Andreasen  
Lawson Berndt  
Alexis Clay  
Kinley Claypool  
Brandon Cole  
Cooper Cook

Penelope Conklin

Jordan Fischer

Logan Frye

Jasper Hancox

Jenna Heinricy

Mallory Heinricy

Zach Houy

Ashley Lantz

Donald Long

Natalie McAllister

Dylan McNulty

Lauren Moenk

Lydia Moore

Faith Perry

Isabella Peyton-Pitner

Rylie Schutz

Austin Sellers

Alyssa Sternhagen

Mila Van Weelden

Natalia Vorobtsov

### **Henry "Harry" Carson Endowed Scholarship**

Abigail Heald

### **Jason "Jay" White Memorial Scholarship**

Lawson Berndt

### **Jeff Rehnstrom Memorial Scholarship**

Hunter Horak

### **Jim & Teresa Conklin Soccer Scholarship**

Penelope Conklin

### **John Scarborough Miller Memorial Scholarship**

Sydney Andresen

Joseph Beachel

Tayten Broell

Ezekial Calhoun

Kadia Cole

Hunter Dirks

Marcos Doolin

Emily Dunne

Trey Franck

Kira Ginther

Kasia Hahn

Blake Hines

Hunter Horak

Braydon Kriegel

Lantanna LaKose

Agave Meyer

Annabelle Moon

Aubrey Olsen

Kendall Orozco

Genevieve Scott

Wesley Smith

Tiberius Walker

### **John Schlotterback Business Scholarship**

Megan Gearhart

### **Justin Turner Memorial Scholarship**

Madison Gustafson

Zach Houy

Ashley Lantz

### **Kelly Grishaber Memorial Scholarship**

Kelsey Ehrmann

### **Lowell Morgan Service & Character Scholarship**

Nathan Bingham

Logan Frye

Ethan Hernandez

Braydon Kriegel

Adam Rose

### **Marion Firefighters Association Scholarship**

Emily Dunne

### **Michelle Fluckiger Niles Memorial Scholarship**

Madalyn Fortmann

### **Mike McGrew Memorial Scholarship**

Agave Meyer

### **Morgan (Kelley) Blomme Memorial Scholarship**

Sydney Andresen

### **Morris F. Neighbor Memorial Scholarship**

Madison Gustafson

Sophia Paulsen

Emalee Urquidez

### **Ratliff/Ames Scholarships**

Lantanna LaKose

Thomas Louzek

Annabelle Moon

Aubrey Olsen

### **Rebecca Paulson Memorial Scholarship**

Karma Frazier

### **Ruth S. Henderson Memorial Scholarship**

Zach Sloan

### **Todd Little Memorial Scholarship**

Jasper Hancox

### **Veda Pollock Moore Scholarship**

Coda Johnson

Kianna Mabikulu

Chloe Pilcher

### **West Family Scholarships**

Kalli Hubbard

Hannah Neuville



## Dave Messerli Celebrates 50 Years Coaching Marion Boys Golf

If you spend any time with Dave Messerli, you quickly learn that this is a man who knows a LOT of Marion school history. This makes sense, since he began working in the Marion Independent School District in the early 1970s. But what makes Messerli's tenure

even more impressive is that this year he is celebrating 50 years of coaching Marion Boys Golf.

Therefore, it is apropos that this year's boys golf team won a sectional team title, and placed second at Districts for its first State berth since 2006! And while the team's appearance at State didn't end the way they hoped, Coach Messerli still had a positive spin on the outcome. "We placed sixth out of nine teams at State this year... it was odd because of the weather. I'm sure if it hadn't been for the weather... we would have won... but I'm sure all of the teams thought that!" joked Messerli with a signature twinkle in his eye and grin.

Messerli began teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade language arts and 8<sup>th</sup> grade social studies at Vernon Jr. High School for three years. While at Vernon he started coaching High School boys golf as well as assistant coaching Jr High wrestling and Jr High track. Then he moved to the high school to teach American history, sociology, geography and government. He also coached varsity wrestling for 19 years and became the head football coach in 1981, a role he stayed in for 18 years. Messerli retired from teaching in 2015 but continued to substitute teach and coach the golf team.

When asked what has kept him continuing to coach golf, Messerli says, "You go out to the golf courses today and you see kids you have coached and they come up to you and say that they still use techniques I have taught them. That makes you feel pretty good." Messerli continues, "Golf parents are the best and golf kids are the best kids. I call them kids because to me they are still kids because I am NOT a kid. It's been fun and I love it."

Messerli is in his second term as a Marion Independent School Foundation Board Trustee and he values the work of the



Excerpt on Mr. Messerli from an article about new high school teachers published in an edition of the Marion High School student newspaper, *The Vox*.

Foundation and his contribution. "Once I retired from teaching, I wanted to give back in some way... whether I do a little or a lot I feel like I am giving back." Messerli serves as co-chair of the Golf Planning Committee which coordinates the annual Marion Foundation Golf Classic.

Although, Messerli is not a Marion graduate, he wishes he had been because of his love and devotion to the District. His father, John Messerli, was the Superintendent of Marion Schools during the years Dave was in elementary and Jr. High School.

When he was in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades the family lived in Waukesha, WI. They returned to Cedar Rapids for Messerli's senior year and he graduated with Kennedy High School's class of 1968.

Messerli lives in Marion with his wife Jill, who is a retired Spanish teacher and girls golf coach. Their sons Matthew, Pete and Ben all played on the Marion golf team with their dad as their coach. Son Pete is a teacher at Marion High School and coach of the Marion boys basketball team.



Marion Foundation staff recently had the pleasure of meeting with Jessica Pleggenkuhle from New Leader Manufacturing Company. She presented us with a grant for \$1000. New Leader Manufacturing loves supporting welding and other trades-based learning.



Hills Bank presented a check from their Classroom Cash program before the Foundation's May board meeting. The District has earned \$20,749 since the program began in July 2004.

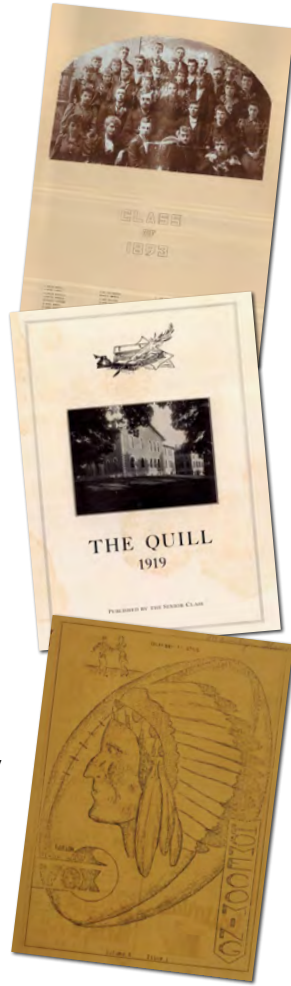
# Take a Stroll Through Our Digital Archives

Marion Independent School Foundation & Alumni Association is home to a variety of artifacts spanning the long history of Marion Schools. In fact, the 1879 Marion Alumni Association was the first such Alumni Association registered in the state of Iowa!

Beginning in 2022, with support from an Iowa Historic Preservation Grant from Linn County Historical Society and the Historical Resource Development Program, the Foundation digitized their copies of the Marion High School yearbook, *The Quill*, some student newspapers such as *The Vox*, some early class composites, and a few other documents we have in our archives. The items date from 1893 to 2021.

The Foundation hopes to periodically add to this digital archive.

To view the archive, visit [marion-foundation.org/archives](http://marion-foundation.org/archives)



Your generous donations will help support additional projects like the ones you've read about in this newsletter, and enhance education district-wide for Marion students.

# Quick Construction Updates

From the April 24th District Newsletter

**Parkview Elementary**, located at 125 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, remains on schedule to open for students to start the 2024-25 school year in August. The building will be home to four sections each of grades Kindergarten, first and second, as well as two classrooms for pre-kindergarten with full- and half-day options.

As students and staff previously at **Starry Elementary** will move to Parkview, the Starry site will be part of long-range planning for continued District use. A number of current and anticipated space and programming needs, many of which are specific to Marion High School, have been discussed. Nothing has been finalized and limitations in current funding will be restrictive of any larger-scale renovations at this time.

A winter completion date is still on schedule for the District's new **Auditorium**. The facility will have seating for 760 patrons and handicapped accessibility. In addition to performances, the auditorium will also be useful for rehearsals of student groups, freeing up gymnasium space.

# Does your employer have a Matching Gift Program?

Employee match programs are a benefit that many companies offer to encourage and reward giving among their staff. Think of this as free money that you are able to direct to your favorite non-profit organization.

We hope you will consider making a donation to the Marion School Foundation, and if you do, please check with your Human Resources department to find out if your company will match your gift. It's the easiest way to double your investment in Marion Schools!

## Thanks for Your Support!

Name \_\_\_\_\_ MHS Grad Year \_\_\_\_\_

Company/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

### Enclosed is my donation to the Marion Foundation:

- General Donation
- Marion Grants
- Scholarships
- Start School Right
- In Honor/Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

**Total contribution \$** \_\_\_\_\_ **Thank You!**

- My employer \_\_\_\_\_ offers a matching gift program
- Please contact me about planned giving

Marion School Foundation, 777 S 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Marion, IA 52302  
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