



JULY 1, 2024 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS, RECORD-SETTING MILESTONES

The 2024-2025 year was filled with many memorable moments and record-setting milestones!



Goodview Kindergarten apple orchard trip

An incredible **77 grants were awarded** to projects and programs at Winona Area Public Schools, including two \$5,000 Dare to Dream awards, and two \$250 Payroll Deduction grants. Learn more as you browse this newsletter!

A record **\$155,000 was raised** through the Foundation's annual fundraiser, this time benefitting the WAPS Music Department. Read more about the **"Music For All"** campaign on Page 3.

**Jenny Baertsch** completed her first year as Executive Director of the Foundation. She's our **first permanent full-time** Director, and her passion and leadership are already apparent. If you haven't had a chance to meet Jenny, please reach out.

The Foundation for WAPS is an independent, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization established in 1991. In order to continue creating moments and milestones, **we need generous donors who support public education in Winona.** Donations are the most critical component to the success of the Foundation and our support of WAPS. Thank you for helping to fulfill our mission of enriching and expanding educational opportunities for our students.

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## VISIT US ONLINE!

Connect with us!



Information about the Foundation for Winona Area Public Schools, our mission, Board of Directors, grants, and alumni connections can be found on our website at:

[www.FoundationWAPS.org](http://www.FoundationWAPS.org)

Also, a LINK FOR ONLINE DONATIONS is available for gifts in honor or memory of a special person, program, or event.



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

**77**

grants were awarded, totaling **\$69,000** to WAPS projects & programs

**64%**

of total grants went to **educational trips** for students

**\$155,000**

raised for **"Music For All"** fundraiser

**394**

registrations for the Donut Dash 4K Run/Walk & Mini Donut Kids Run

**500**

**Bloedow's donuts** consumed at the Donut Dash

**10**

student winners earned **\$1,400** from **Haake Poetry Contest**

**\$5,000**

Dare to Dream grant awarded to **WSHS Media Arts**

**\$5,000**

Dare to Dream grant awarded to **WSHS Project Podcast**

**32**

senior **scholarships totaling \$50,000** awarded from funds at the Foundation

**113**

poems entered in the Haake Poetry Contest, 63 from WMS & 50 from WSHS

**2**

**Payroll Deduction grants** of \$250 for percussion equipment & electronic books

**116**

WAPS staff members **donated over \$17,000** through Payroll Deduction


The Foundation for WAPS Board of Directors would like to extend its deepest gratitude for your generosity and kind support. Your help has made all of the special programs, projects, and field trips listed in this newsletter possible.

FOUNDATION FOR WAPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS...INCOMING & OUTGOING


The Foundation for WAPS Board of Directors is a group of 18 volunteers from all walks of life, including business professionals, parents, educators, even a high school student representative! All provide valuable support, direction, time, and resources to advance the Foundation's mission.

While it's hard to say goodbye to three outstanding and dedicated Board Members who have completed their terms, we're thrilled to welcome the enthusiasm, ideas, and energy of two new Board Members for 2025-2026!


OUTGOING



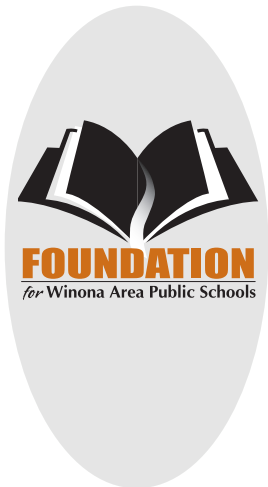
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Brooke Cherny  
Student  
Representative,  
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Kris Lynch  
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Mayo Clinic  
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INCOMING



Sally Olson  
At-Large,  
Fastenal



Brian Sisson  
At-Large,  
Saint Mary's  
University

WAPS STAFF PAYROLL DEDUCTION PARTICIPANTS 2024-2025

WAPS staff members spent the 2024-25 year working hard for our students. Not only did they meet the students' educational, social, and emotional needs, they also continued to keep the students in mind by **personally donating to the Foundation for Winona Area Public Schools** through our Payroll Deduction program. Their support provided **over \$17,000** for our students' education. We remain humbled by these gifts and grand support. **Thank you to:**

Lora Aeliot	John Casper	Lizz Hall	Gretchen Johnson-Derbyshire	Sundra Menton	Tommy Sawyer	Amy Trytten
Gloria Alatorre	Emily Cassellius	Amy Halverson	Gina Johnson	Audrey Mercier	Barrie Schank	Denise Van Etten
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Kimberly Brist	Katrina Glick	Casey Indra	Samantha McCormick	Laurie Rogers	Jacqueline Stevens	
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PAYROLL DEDUCTION AWARDS

Each year, the Foundation awards two \$250 grants from a pool of Winona Area Public Schools staff members who generously donate to the Foundation through payroll deduction. The awards are used to further the Foundation's mission of enriching and enhancing educational opportunities in WAPS.

This year's grant winners were **Paula Braaten and Kimberly Christensen!** Paula, the 5th & 6th Grade Band Teacher at WMS, used her \$250 grant to purchase much-needed **percussion equipment for WMS**, including crash cymbals and a trap table. Kimberly, a Special Education Teacher at Winona Middle School, used her grant award to purchase **audiobooks and Wonderbooks** for her classroom.





## 2nd Annual Donut Dash 4K Run/Walk and Mini Donut 1K Kids Run at Winona Senior High School on May 10, 2025



## 'Music For All' Raises \$155,000 for WAPS MUSIC DEPARTMENT



A grand total of \$155,000 was raised for the Music Department at Winona Area Public Schools from the Foundation's 2025 "Music For All" fundraiser!

The fundraiser advanced the "Music For All" fund, held at the Foundation for WAPS, to support the ongoing needs of the WAPS K-12 Music Department. Using the fund, WAPS will purchase new acoustical shell systems for the auditoriums at both Winona Middle School and Winona Senior High School. Both venues support music education and performances for all students in District 861, as well as the events and activities of many community groups.

In our "Music For All" effort, the Foundation held two fundraising events on May 10. The day began with the 2nd annual Donut Dash Run/Walk, and that same evening, supporters gathered for the 13th annual Dinner & Auction. Further fundraising came from community partnership events, personal

and business donations, as well as grant awards including \$10,000 from the Elizabeth Callendar King Foundation and \$10,000 from the Winona Foundation.

The "Music For All" planning team included Event Chair Graci Palubicki, Auction Co-Chairs Terri Roemer and Lisa Hawkinson, and numerous event volunteers. A special thank you goes to our "Music For All" Lead Sponsors, Merchants Bank and WNB Financial.





## GENERAL FUND DONORS

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Jim & Jenny Baertsch	Marcy Faircloth & Caylan Larson	Nathan Morris
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Luke & Brenda Merchlewitz  
Midtown Foods  
Mulligan's Pub  
QDOBA of Winona  
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## DONATIONS TO SPECIAL PROGRAMS & FUNDS

### **Bob Johnson Instrument Rental Fund**

Howie & Betsy Tobak

### **Bruce Reeck Athletic Fund**

Tim & Kim Firstbrook

### **Distance Running Fund**

Anonymous

### **Jefferson Elementary School**

Marcy Faircloth & Caylan Larson

### **Girls Basketball**

Val & Mary Jo Stiever

### **Miller Mentoring**

Altra Federal Credit Union  
Brennan Ashton  
Amber Barnard  
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Fastenal  
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Rachel Vogel  
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### **Miller Mentoring Summer Program**

Miller Scrap & Disposal

### **SLIPA**

El Patron Mexican Grill & Cantina  
Marcy Faircloth & Caylan Larson  
Fraternal Order of Eagles #1243  
Goodview Activity Group  
QDOBA of Winona

### **Special Athletic Competition**

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### **Winhawk Dance Fund**

Anonymous

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Winona Health  
Winona Heating & Ventilating  
Winona Lions Club  
WNB Financial  
Jason & Kristina Wright

### **WSHS Business/Economics Dept.**

Helen Imm Trust Fund

### **WSHS Touchdown Club**

WAPS Touchdown Club

## EVENT 2025 SPONSORS

### **\$6,000 Lead Sponsor**

Merchants Bank  
WNB Financial

### **\$3,000 Event Sponsor**

WinCraft by Fanatics

### **\$1,500 Corporate Sponsor**

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Miller Scrap & Disposal  
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RTP Company  
Russell & Associates  
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Winona Education Association  
WKM Properties

## EVENT 2025 DONATIONS

### **\$10,000 Friend**

Elizabeth Callender King  
Foundation  
Winona Foundation

### **\$7,600 Friend**

Jeff & Marcy Van Fossen

### **\$5,000-\$6,000 Friend**

Judy Davis  
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WAPS Music Department

### **\$50-\$99 Friend**

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Barbara Beeman

### **\$50-\$99 Friend cont'd**

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### **Jessica's Graduation**

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CodaBow  
Coffee Camper  
Commonweal Theatre  
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Cone Chiropractic  
Coron Family Chiropractic  
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Goodview Activity Group

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Iron Craft  
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Dawn Lueck  
Kris Lynch  
Stacey Matthees  
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Shelley & John Milek  
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Minnesota Lynx  
Minnesota Marine Art Museum  
Minnesota Orchestra  
Minnesota Vikings  
Minnesota Zoo  
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Lynnea Pfohl & Joseph Cynor  
Pillbox Bat Company  
Pinhawk Club  
Pizza Ranch  
Pozanc Trucking & Landscaping  
QDOBA Mexican Eats  
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River City Wellness & IV  
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RTP Company  
Saint Mary's University Athletics  
Taylor Sanchez & Dawson Wardwell  
Sapori Di Sicilia  
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Winona Sandwich Company  
Winona State Football  
Winona State Outdoor Education  
Winona Symphony Orchestra  
Winona Tour Boat  
WKM Properties  
WSHS Industrial Technology  
WSU Foundation  
Susan & Brian Zeller  
Fred Ziegler

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### **Class of 1974 Winhawk Spirit Memorial Scholarship**

Alan Heaser  
Timothy & Nancy Volkart O'Malley  
WSHS Class of 1974 Scholarship Fund

### **Fly Like an Eagle WSHS AVID Scholarship**

Fraternal Order of Eagles #1243

### **Mark Steffes Memorial Scholarship**

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MiEnergy

### **Miller Mentoring Scholarship – It Takes Two**

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### **Tim Speltz Light the Lamp Scholarship**

Tim Speltz Light the Lamp Foundation

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Derek & Cathryn Espy  
Larry & Rita Forbes  
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Richard & Amy Jo Moe  
John & Debbie Nielsen  
Todd & Elizabeth Paulson  
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Port 507 Bar  
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### **Xcel Energy Scholarship**

Xcel Energy

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Jon Lica  
Eugene Thiele  
Dr. Richard Tristano

## Leave A Legacy THROUGH THE FOUNDATION'S LOWELL NELSON SOCIETY

The Foundation's planned giving program, the Lowell Nelson Society, was named in honor of the service and leadership of Superintendent Lowell Nelson who served the District from 1959-1973. Society members generously perpetuate their support of public education beyond their lifetimes.

Membership is accorded to those who leave a legacy to the Foundation by naming it as a beneficiary in their wills or other estate plans, insurance policies, qualified pension plans, or through charitable trusts, bargain sales, or other charitable arrangements. The Foundation urges donors to consult with their financial advisors when considering a planned gift.

Current members of the Lowell Nelson Society are listed below. We hope you'll consider joining those who are leaving a lasting legacy that will benefit WAPS students for generations to come.

### **SOCIETY MEMBERS INCLUDE:**

Judy Bodway	Harland & Pauline Knight*	Herbert B. & Anne B. Polachek*
John & Susan Eddy	Ruth Kottschade*	Jim & Nancy Reynolds
Mark Godsey	Tom & Leone Mauszycki	Barbara Schilling*
Gayle Goetzman-Stolpa	Luke & Brenda Merchlewitz	Chuck & Judy Shepard
Norma Grausnick*	Roger* & Ramona Metz	Sharon Suchla*
Jim & Shannon* Hanzel	John & Shelley Milek	Rita Sullivan*
Donna Helble*	Arvid & Gay Mortensen	Linda A. Wood
Susan Hoffe*	LaVerne & Jolienne Olson	Pete* & Joyce Woodworth
Neva King*	Don & Linda Olson	(*deceased)



# GRANT DOLLARS IN ACTION

## 2024-2025 APPROVED GRANT AWARDS

The Foundation awards monthly grants to enrich and expand educational opportunities in Winona Area Public Schools. This year, 77 grants totaling \$69,000 were approved and awarded, helping to support important programs and projects that would otherwise not be available through normal District resources.



### GOODVIEW ELEMENTARY

2nd Grade to Eagle Center

3rd & 4th Grade to Holiday Celebration of the Arts

3rd & 4th Grade to Minnesota Marine Art Museum

4th Grade to Physics Force Event

4th Grade to Science Museum

4th Grade to WSO Children's Concert

GREEN Reading Program

Kindergarten to Apple Orchard

Kindergarten to Children's Museum

Positive Greetings at the Door Morning Bins

Whitewater Field Trip for Buddies

Yoto for 1st Grade



Goodview GREEN Reading program

### JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY

1st Grade to Children's Museum

2nd Grade to Lake Park

4th Grade to Whitewater

4th Grade to WSO Children's Concert

Kindergarten to Apple Orchard

Rios Culture Night Performance

Social Emotional Learning Rescue Kit

### W-K ELEMENTARY

1st Grade to Whitewater

2nd Grade to Camp Wenonah

2nd Grade to Holiday Celebration of the Arts

2nd Grade to Lake Park

3rd Grade to Prairie Island

4th Grade Fishing at Lake Winona

4th Grade to WSO Children's Concert

Boundless Field Trip

### WINONA AREA LEARNING CENTER

Pinhawk Club

Teen Literature/Social Studies Collaborative Project

WALC Gives Back

WALC to Range & Alley

WALC to Whitewater



WALC Gives Back service project

### WINONA MIDDLE SCHOOL

5th Grade to Minnesota Zoo

6th Grade to WCHS Cemetery Walk

6th Grade to Eagle Bluff Bussing

7th Grade to Guthrie

AVID Twins College Prep Day

DEEDs to Eagle Bluff

Evolve Minnesota Twins Day

Hawk Hour 5th Grade Read Aloud

Little Science Library

Payroll Deduction – Percussion Equipment

Payroll Deduction – Wonderbooks & Audiobooks

Rolling Whiteboards for Collaboration

Science in Action to Lake Park

Science in Action to Whitewater

Skatetime

Speech Therapy Update

Wonderbooks Collection in the Library

Yard Dice



WMS Science in Action class at Whitewater State Park

### WINONA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

American Government to State Capitol

AP Biology to Whitewater

AP World History to Minneapolis Institute of Art

Art to Minnesota Marine Art Museum 1

Art to Minnesota Marine Art Museum 2

Big 9 Music Festival Transportation

Dare to Dream – Media Arts

Dare to Dream – Project Podcast

Concert Choir Mini-Trip

FFA National Convention

FFA State Convention

Floriculture Corsages & Boutonnieres

Hands on Learning in Anatomy & Physiology

Independent Living Bowls & Buffets

Mayo Clinic High School Career Fest

NHS Supplies for Misato Visitors

School Store Addition

Senior Art Show

Signs of Suicide

Spanish 4 Children's Books

Wellness Supplies for Nutrition

WSHS Orchestra to Orchestra Hall

WSU STEM Day



WSHS Floriculture class corsages & boutonnieres

### WINONA AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Cultural Liaison for

American Indian

Education Programming

Parade of Graduates

Special Athletic

Competition Supplies



# FOUNDATION NEWS & NOTES

## Haake Poetry CONTEST

### WINONA MIDDLE SCHOOL

- 1st – \$200 – Lilia Blahnik  
*Delicate Silence*
- 1st – \$200 – Swin Schul  
*Judgment Dreams*
- 2nd – \$100 – Addie Hansen  
*Thunder*
- 2nd – \$100 – Jonathan Spalding  
*Saturday*
- 2nd – \$100 – Nora Pollock –  
*I Sit in my Chair at School*

### WINONA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

- 1st – \$200 – Ashiiyah Alexander  
*Lockdown Lullabies*
- 1st – \$200 – Marina Narvaez  
*The Tragedy of the Foreign Man*
- 2nd – \$100 – Morwyn Johnson  
*Nostalgia*
- 2nd – \$100 – Jacob Sheridan  
*Ode to the Wind*
- 2nd – \$100 – Xitlali Martinez Carbajal  
*Questioning My Dreams*

In 2025, the Foundation celebrated 10 student winners of our annual Haake Poetry Contest.

A total of 113 poems were entered in the contest, with 63 from WMS and 50 from WSHS. All entries were assigned a code and student names were removed for the judging process. Judges included Winona community members Eileen Dahlin, Ken McCullough, and Marcia Ratliff.

In 2008, Dr. Paul Haake initiated a fund with the Foundation for WAPS in memory of his father, Arnold, who was known for his love of poetry during his years at WSHS. The purpose of the fund was to support an annual poetry contest for WMS and WSHS students. Paul was a 1950 WSHS graduate who retained a strong bond to his hometown, giving generously to Winona's educational institutions. He earned a BA and PhD from Harvard and went on to become a distinguished research chemist and educator at Wesleyan University and UCLA.



Haake Poetry judges



Winona Middle School Haake Poetry winners



Winona Senior High School Haake Poetry winners

## 'DARE TO DREAM' GRANT AWARDS

In fall 2024, the Foundation's Board of Directors announced two winners of \$5,000 "DARE TO DREAM" GRANT AWARDS:

**Steven Gilbertson**  
and  
**Tanya Corcoran**

The awards supported upgrades to podcasting and media arts equipment at Winona Senior High School.

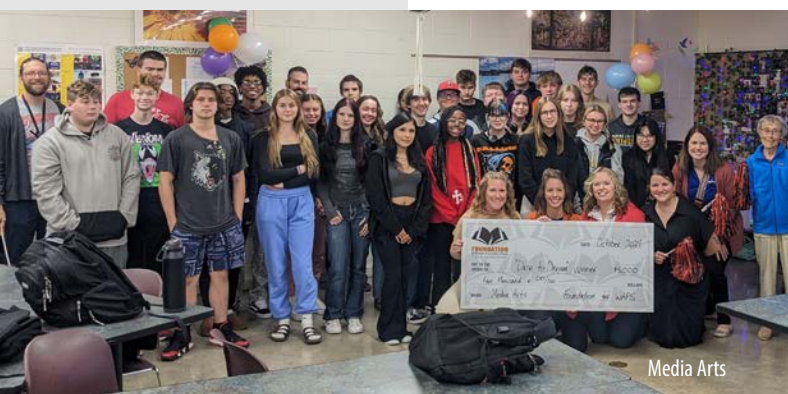
Each year, the Foundation supports innovation and creativity by offering WAPS employees the opportunity to apply for one \$5,000 "Dare to Dream" grant. Applicants don't need to follow the Foundation's normal grant guidelines, but the funded project must benefit WAPS students. Thanks to a generous gift from Fastenal, a second "Dare to Dream" grant was awarded.

A Social Studies teacher, Steven Gilbertson and the students in his "Current History" 9th-12th Grade elective course record weekly podcasts on topics covered in class, but the task is challenging with only one podcast station available. The addition of two soundproofed stations with upgraded equipment and microphones allows all Social Studies classes the opportunity to podcast, as well as other school departments such as Arts, English, and World Language.

"Podcasting is a medium that most of our world now communicates and listens through," Gilbertson said. "This grant allows students to work collaboratively and improve their speaking and listening skills while still learning the course content. It makes for a genuine and fun experience with students immersing themselves in a different learning technique."

Tanya Corcoran teaches Art at WSHS, including the "Graphic & Digital Design" 9th-12th Grade elective course. With increased student interest, additional sections were added to accommodate 192 students, but equipment is limited. Adding eight Canon® DSLR cameras, 33 subscriptions to the Procreate® Dreams app, headphones, backdrops, memory cards, and other miscellaneous equipment allows more students the opportunity to learn and progress digital skills.

"The Graphic & Digital Design students are highly engaged and learn many new skills, some of which may end up being their future career," Corcoran said. "Popularity of the course continues to increase, especially now that Winona Middle School students have the opportunity to take Media Arts classes. This award offers our students enhanced digital learning."

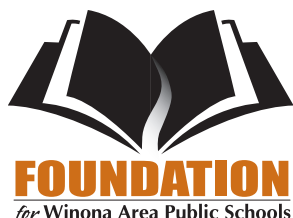


Media Arts



Project Podcast

INVESTING IN **TODAY'S** STUDENTS FOR **TOMORROW'S** FUTURE.



1570 Homer Road  
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507-494-1004

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*~ ~ Monthly Messages ~ ~*

[www.FoundationWAPS.org](http://www.FoundationWAPS.org)

*Next Year's Event*  
**May 9, 2026**

For more information, contact the Foundation at:  
[Support@FoundationWAPS.org](mailto:Support@FoundationWAPS.org) or 507-494-1004

Donations can be made online at [www.FoundationWAPS.org](http://www.FoundationWAPS.org),  
in person at our office at **Winona Middle School**, or by mail to:  
**1570 Homer Road, Winona MN 55987**. Gifts are frequently made  
in honor or in memory of a special person or event.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

The single purpose of the Foundation is to  
enrich and expand educational opportunities  
in Winona Area Public Schools.

## OUR MISSION

**FOUNDATION**  
for Winona Area Public Schools



Community and alumni support has been invaluable to  
the many projects that have benefited our students.  
If you or a family member are a WSHS alumni,  
please use the online form found at:  
[www.FoundationWAPS.org/alumni](http://www.FoundationWAPS.org/alumni)  
to update your contact information.

## COMMUNITY & ALUMNI SUPPORT