

2022 Valleydictorian

SENIOR SEARCH

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BILLINGS GAZETTE
COMMUNICATIONS



SEE THIS YEAR'S \$5,000 WINNER

FORGING THEIR OWN FUTURE



ANOTHER SCHOOL YEAR IS COMING TO AN END. For our 2022 seniors, this also marks the beginning of a new chapter of life. While some graduates go on to pursue a degree from a traditional college or university, others decide to continue their education through trade school, industry certification, or apprenticeship. Post grad success can take many forms. For this reason, Valley Credit Union wanted to help students who are not typically eligible for scholarships and financial aid awarded to those attending a 4-year program.

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, Valley Credit Union and The Billings Gazette have featured 32 seniors chosen from local area high schools. These students, nominated by a teacher, counselor, or principal, have shown a clear career path for their future in the form of an industry certification, technical associate degree, city college, trade school, or apprenticeship. And, as the school year comes to an end, Valley has awarded one \$5,000 grant to a deserving student.

Students shared with us their inspirations, their career goals, and their plans following high school. From interior design to

welding, our featured seniors show much potential in their future endeavors across a wide variety of industries. Valley is honored to play a part in helping financially support a driven student in the field of their choice. The future is very bright for our Class of 2022 graduates!

Valley Credit Union is proud to be involved in many community sponsorships, especially ones supporting Billings' youth. Most recently, Valley Credit Union presented The Hive — a contest for local high school entrepreneurs to pitch their business ideas, awarding \$5,000 to 1st place to help get their business going. Valley also continues our commitment to the Billings area kids with a \$15,000 title sponsorship of the Billings All High School graduation celebrations following the graduation ceremonies.

Congratulations to each and every one of our 32 Valleydictorian featured students as you get ready to graduate and embark on your next journey. Thank you to all high school faculty for your nominations and to the graduates for sharing with us your interests, your goals, and your stories.

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CONGRATULATIONS JENNA STROBEL

2022 *Valleydictorian* 🎓 \$5000 Winner



Jenna Strobel poses for a picture with a check for \$5,000 from Valley Credit Union at the Billings Career Center on Friday, May 13, 2022. Strobel was selected from over 70 nominated students and 32 finalists to be named the class of 2022 Valleydictorian. Along with the title she received a \$5,000 check from Valley Credit Union to further her education. Strobel plans to attend Gallatin College to study interior design. Also pictured above are her mother Karyn Strobel, brother Nathan Strobel, Billings Career Center teacher Luci Wollschlager, and Brandon Scala & Matt Macrow from Valley Credit Union.

Ashlyn Alden



SHERIDAN
HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? My plans after high school is to go straight to college to become a dental hygienist or something in the medical field.

What is your favorite class in school & why? My favorite class in school

would have to be my art class. I get to express myself through art and the environment is comforting.

Who inspires you and why? My grandmother inspires me the most. She pushes me to be a better person and thrive to be the person I want to be when I am older. My grandmother is the biggest role model I've had growing up.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I enjoy the outdoors, going camping, hiking, swimming and being around people I love.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Graduating from college would make me feel most successful in my career or getting the job I desire to have after I graduate from college.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? If I won the grant, I would put it toward the tuition of my college so I am able to get a degree in dental hygiene.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? If I was stranded on a desert and could only bring three things, those three things would be some sort of knife, a lighter, a map. I would bring these things so that I am able to use the knife to get food, the lighter to make fire, and the map to know where I'm going.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? Never judge anyone because you don't know what they have gone through or how their home life is.

Emily Merry Lee Anderson



BILLINGS SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school?

My plans after high school is to attend Rituals, beauty school, and take my profession towards cosmetology. Eventually building up to me opening up my very own salon.

What is your favorite class in school and why? English is my favorite class in school. This is because I love writing and creating opinions, especially listening and comparing mine to others.

Who inspires you and why? My older sister Kandace inspires me because her attitude is incomparable to any other person. She has taught me to fight for my beliefs and to work hard if I want something.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I enjoy working at Kid Kounty Child Development Center. The children are incredible and I love after their hard day of playing, fixing their hair nicely and cleaning them up before they go home to their families.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? I would feel successful to finish my schooling, rent a booth, and start building up my client list with people who love and appreciate my work and feel comfortable with my techniques.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I will use it towards my education to become a skilled cosmetologist.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? I would bring a lighter to start fires for cooking, heat, and light. Also, I would bring antibiotics in case of infections, and pot to boil water in after filtering it or in making meals.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? "If it's man's world, I wanna be king." - Lilith Czar.

Sage Blain



SKYVIEW HIGH
SCHOOL / CAREER
CENTER

What are your plans after high school? To pursue my passion in the automotive field.

What is your favorite class in school & why? Automotive or Welding. Welding is probably my favorite class because I

will be able to use the information I learned in the automotive field.

Who inspires you and why? My grandmother inspires me to be the greatest person I can be and to work hard and be successful.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I love going outdoors, working on vehicles and working hard at whatever I do.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Getting certified and have people come to me to work on their vehicles which would be complimentary.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I will use this money for tuition and tools for the automotive career path at Butte Highlands.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? I would bring food, water and my mindset for success. The food and water would keep me alive so I can push forward to success. I would need my mindset for success because it would push me to keep going and conquer the difficult things.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share?

Personally, I tell myself I can do anything I want to and I know I can make a great life for myself because I am a hard worker. I know that I will succeed and be amazing because my grandmother tells me so.



Jaxson Brandt



BILLINGS WEST HIGH

What are your plans after high school?

As of now I personally have no set plans for after high school. But I do have a few of interests in mind. I am very interested in all types of construction. My most favorite type of construction is seeing a home built from start to

finish. I have also thought about getting my Realtors license. Having that I feel like it will open many more doors for me and overall more opportunities. I have also considered possibly attending a two year college, to be able to continue playing baseball at the college level and majoring in either business or a specific trade.

What is your favorite class in school and why? My favorite class in school is marketing with Mr. Minton. He is the coolest teacher I have ever had, from making it so easy to learn marketing for a business and being able to build a good relationship with him from sharing the same interests in the outdoors, sharing pictures and stories to one another.

Who inspires you and why? Many people inspire me every day by learning a new way to do something, or a more efficient way to do something, or just how to be a better person every day. The one person one stands out to me the most is Greg McCall at McCall Homes. I am inspired by the way him and his family and friends have grown their business to be very successful and well respect throughout the community.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school?

Some things I enjoy doing outside of school is snowboarding with friends or some weekends snowboarding by myself just to relax and enjoy the mountains.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? For me to feel successful in my work or career after high school would probably be owning my own business. I would feel very successful knowing that my business is well respected and well known throughout the community. I will know I have been successful when I can control my own schedule to take snowboarding trips or camping trips to where ever and when ever I want.

Makayla Brooks



BILLINGS WEST HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school?

My plans are to attend beauty school here in Billings. After I complete my hours, I want to specialize in wedding hair and make up. It feels so important to me that every woman feels beautiful on her big day.

What is your favorite class in school & why? Painting class. I love coming up with creative concepts and paint motifs like the moon or fashion dresses. It also gives me a sense of calming and the colors are so fun to mix.

Who inspires you and why? My favorite singer Lzzy Hale from Halestorm. With her female led rock band, she has taught me that anything is possible with your imagination.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school?

I enjoy reading books. It's a great past time and lets me really visualize and seek inspiration for colors or for painting whether on a canvas or on a face.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school?

What would make me successful is being able to work on different people during my school time. I want to have as many different people to practice on. I want to work with a variety of skin tones and hair types.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals?

I will use the grant to help me reach my goal by using it towards the cosmetology kit I need to work and practice.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why?

Lighter - to be able to start an S.O.S. fire in order to get help. Water purifier - Humans need water to survive. A Sarah J. Maas book - I need to be able to keep myself occupied and I would much like to read her writing over and over again.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share?

"You will not yield," Sarah J. Maas.



Sarah Cochran



BILLINGS WEST HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school?

I plan on going to the Salish Kootenai College for two years and studying tribal law and governance, and then transferring to the University of Montana for law school. But I am still trying to figure out if I

should minor in music or something involving writing. Afterwards, I plan on becoming a lawyer and help Indigenous people.

What is your favorite class in school and why? Music has always had a special place in my heart, so I would have to go with choir as well as government. I just started my college government class and I find it absolutely interesting since I'm going into law. Choir is just an accepting place to be, and I appreciate every one of my classmates, as well as my amazing teacher that I have known for three years.

Who inspires you and why? I honestly have two people who have inspired me. My best friend since kindergarten and my grandma. They both are such kind people that who work hard no matter what life has thrown at them. Yes, they have had their bad days, but who doesn't? Big goals are what they are known for as well as their contagious smiles and warm hearts. Perseverance and integrity flowed through my grandma and flows through my friend.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school?

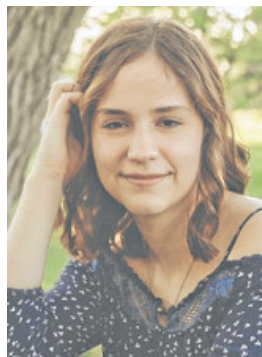
I play guitar and hang out with my friends when we need to get away. I have a little dog who has my whole heart, who I come home to every single day and she makes me feel like nothing bad happened during the day. Movies have a huge place in my family's heart and if I could watch the Lion King or anything horror every day, I certainly would. A little bit of physical activity here and there of course.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school?

In order to make me feel successful, I would just want to know that I helped someone whether it may seem like a small issue. Although it may look like a small issue, it may be a huge one for that person. I strive to make people feel better about themselves and feel better throughout life and I hope that is what I do in the future.



Taelyn Combs



BILLINGS WEST
HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? After high school I hope to pursue a career in the medical field. My college of choice is Rocky Mountain College because of the smaller school setting that provides more one-on-one learning.

What is your favorite class in school & why? My favorite class in high school is my CNA class. Every day we're learning something new about the detailed care of the residents and patients. It's a wonderful, hands-on, and amazing experience for someone like me.

Who inspires you and why? My older sister is my biggest idol and inspires me the most. She's such a good person and she has such a kind heart. Every day she strives to work harder and be better. She is someone that everyone should strive to be.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Outside of school I enjoy hanging with friends, I enjoy going to work and making money, I enjoy hanging out with my sister and cooking for her, and I enjoy hiking and being outside on the cool, crisp fall mornings.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? I have always had a goal of purchasing my own house by the time I reach 25 years old. If I achieve that goal I would feel extremely successful and content with my life so far.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? My 24-year-old sister is my legal guardian and through all the help from Child Protective Services, college is still going a burden to pay for. So this grant would be more than helpful for me and my college education.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? I would take a lounge chair, some tanning lotion, and an endless supply of sweet tea. If I was unlucky enough to get stranded on a dessert island I would take advantage of the free vacation.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? You are confined only by the walls you build yourself.

Colter Joe Dyekman



BILLINGS WEST
HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? To become an electrician.

What is your favorite class in school and why? Genocide, because we learn a lot of new information, expand knowledge on historical events we already have previous knowledge

about, and Mr. Stanton makes the class enjoyable.

Who inspires you and why? My mom, because after my dad was killed, she has made many sacrifices for me and my sister. She also has helped us and continues to strive for the best of both of us.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Hanging out with friends, spending time in the outdoors fishing and hunting and hiking and, in the winter, snowboarding.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Having great co-workers and being able to get along and form friendships.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? Pay for tools and equipment needed for my job, and help pay for the next classes needed to become a journeyman.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? A firestarter to keep warm and be able to cook, a pot of some kind to cook and boil water in, and a fishing rod to catch fish.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? Quitcherbitchen.



Kassidee Eoff



REED POINT
HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? My plan for after high school is to attend an online college for an associate's degree in baking and pastry arts.

What is your favorite class in school & why? My favorite class in school are my two culinary arts

classes because cooking and baking are my favorite things to do.

Who inspires you and why? The Pioneer Woman because she is the perfect example of the housewife that I eventually desire to be. She makes all her meals from scratch if she can, and she is always happy and she is the woman I want to be.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Baking and cake decorating, and cleaning and organizing my room.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Getting my associate's degree and starting my own cake business or bakery.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I will put the grant money towards paying for my associate's degree, which will kick-start my career.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? A way to filter water because water is vital, a knife so I could cut trees and branches to use for tools as well as prepare foods, and a fire source whether it be a lighter or a striker so I could prepare meals as well as keep myself warm.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? "If you're gonna be dumb, you gotta be tough." – Roger Alan Wade.





Theodore Garza



BILLINGS WEST HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? To get a job in the trades, save up money to move out of my family's apartment. To become an independent adult, then buy a house where I can have a family of my own someday.

What is your favorite class in school & why? My construction class. It is hands on, and I have learned so much from that class than anything else in school it feels like. I know how to frame, drywall, and roof a house. And I've already earned my OSHA-10 certification card.

Who inspires you and why? My culinary teacher Mrs. Gay. She is a high school teacher with a second job and she has health problems. She is a hard worker and kind to everyone of her students. She can be mean when she has to.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Brazilian ju-jitsu with my brother. Chilling at home in my room playing video games, listening to music and watching YouTube.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Being able to plumb a house by myself. Getting my plumber's license. One day buying a house and it needs to be fixed up a little. That I can do all that work by myself, and not having to pay extra money for someone else to do the work.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? To buy tools and equipment or more education, so I can excel in the plumbing industry or construction. I would like to become a jack of all trades.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? Spear, hammock and magnesium fire starter. The spear can be used as a knife but also to get your food, like fish. The hammock to not sleep on the cold, hard ground. The magnesium fire starter to make fires to keep warm and cook my food.

Liberty Graham



BRIDGER HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? College.

What is your favorite class in school and why? Band because I love the creative freedom to just express my emotions.

Who inspires you and why? My grandma inspires me because she is the most

hard working person I know and I want to be like her when I get older.

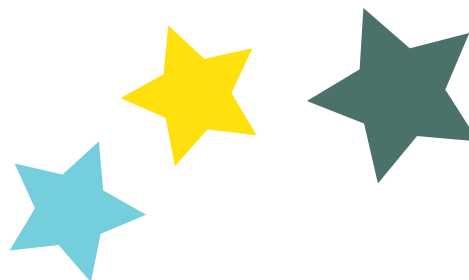
What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I enjoy riding motorcycles, working on cars and shooting guns.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Being recognized in the news or by high up people in that career field.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I would use that money to go to college and get my degree so I can accomplish getting my dream job.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? I would bring shelter, fire starter and a weapon so I could have shelter, cook and kill for food and boil water for clean drinking.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? Be better, do better; if not for yourself, then for others.



Tyler Harakal



BILLINGS CAREER CENTER

What are your plans after high school? Because of my internship opportunity with Build Montana, I hope to become a heavy equipment operator and earn my CDL certification, then someday manage my own construction company.

What is your favorite

class in school and why? Both my construction classes and my Build Montana internship. I get to be outside and work with my hands in both classes. Seeing the progress of the Career Center House gives me a feeling of accomplishment, and it's cool to see my skills improve when operating the heavy equipment.

Who inspires you and why? My mom. She never gives up on me. And she's a very strong woman because she manages to remain sane when getting picked on as the only female in our household.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Mostly the outdoors. No matter the activity (fishing, ranching, etc.) I like to be able to see the sky, taking deep breaths in & out allowing me to let everything go, releasing all of my stress.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Seeing the building projects that I work on come together, then going home at the end of the day to all of the things I dreamed about having as a kid (a nice home, big pickup truck, being financially stable).

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? Paying for my CDL, then investing in the tools I need for working on a construction site.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? A pot so I can make the water safe to drink as well as cook my food in, a flare gun to call for help, and a machete for safety, hunting, and gathering.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? Keep it up! You can do it!



Keaton Heller



REED POINT HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? I plan to go to a trade school to earn an associates degree with a welding permit. I hope to start my own fabrication company after I complete my studies.

What is your favorite class in school & why? Shop is

my favorite class because I am a very hands-on person, and I love to work. I enjoy finishing the projects I start in shop class.

Who inspires you and why? The people who inspire me the most would be my grandparents. They have been there for me when my parents could not be, teaching me to be a hard-working, loyal, honest, and humble young man.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school?

I enjoy fencing on my own, because I get to fix something with my hands and it gives me a sort of accomplishment when I am done that nothing else could give me.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Finishing projects that I would be tasked with completing.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I would spend it wisely, such as for paying for my student costs (i.e. food and books). This will help me pay for college which makes it easier to reach my goal of owning my own company one day.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? A pot for water, a machete, and a fire starter. All of these are the most important objects for survival. They will allow me to obtain food, stay warm, and heat/sanitize my drinking water.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share?
"Tomorrow is promised to no one." - Walter Payton



Schelbe Jo



BILLINGS WEST HIGH

What are your plans after high school? Attend MSU Billings.

What is your favorite class in school and why? My favorite class art. I like using my creative skills.

Who inspires you and why? My mom. She is always there for me.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Working at Sam's club.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Being able to help children.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I would put it to use for my college education.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? My dog Zoie, so I would have someone to cuddle with. Paper and pen so I could journal my every day events.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share?
If you can dream it, you can do it.



Colin Kapsner



SENIOR HIGH

What are your plans after high school? Attend City College to study computer programming.

What is your favorite class in school & why? My web page class at the career center.

Who inspires you and why? My English Teacher Mrs. Morales inspires me

because of her optimistic outlook on life.

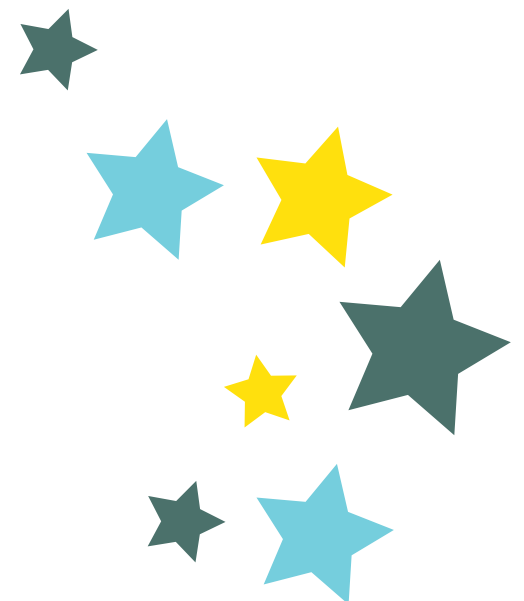
What are some things you enjoy outside of school? My Intro to Programming class at MSUB.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Having a job I can enjoy from home.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I will spend it on my tuition to decrease the chance of taking on any debt.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? A ship, a crew, and a GPS.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? Work so hard you never have to introduce yourself again.



Tobias Lettas



HUNTLEY PROJECT HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? I plan to obtain an apprenticeship to be an electrician.

What is your favorite class in school and why? My favorite class in school is shop class because it gives you a lot of useful skills that you can use in the

workforce.

Who inspires you and why? The people who inspire me are my parents and my teachers because they always push me to reach my full potential even when I sometimes don't see it.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I enjoy being outdoors, hunting, fishing, and hanging out with my friends.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Reaching my end goal of becoming a journeyman, and making good money so that I can support myself and be a productive member of society.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I will use the money to put towards the cost of my schooling needs for my apprenticeship.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? My dog for company, a hatchet, and a weather-proof tent.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? I don't have one.

Azael Lopez-Widdicombe



SKYVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? To take as many college classes as possible to learn more about what I want to do in the future. I also plan on being an insurance agent during college; to pursue this, I started an internship at JM Insurance. The

internship teaches me a lot about customer service, and how to manage multiple projects or "quotes" at a time. These soft skills will benefit me in the future because the office is incredibly organized. The tricks I'm taught so I can easily learn, take notes, pass messages, communicate with people, be productive with multiple tasks, investigate why rate changes happen, file new/existing business, etc. There are also some hard skills the internship teaches me, like how to remarket insurance quotes, how to set up and pursue marketing trips, how to utilize office tools for maximum organization, how to recognize and document important information, and more beneficial insurance tricks.

What is your favorite class in school and why? My favorite class in school is Western Civilization. The class offers so much knowledge on the atrocities of what humans can do and informs me about how and why borders/countries exist today and why humans do what they do today regarding technology, military, conflicts, poverty, revolution, etc. Today we learned why Hitler did what he did to the Jewish/other stigmatized groups and how Europe was affected by the Holocaust. My favorite topic in the class was learning about how WWI affected the world, and how it exposed every nation of how horrendous war could be. In my opinion, WWI snapped people into reality, and made war seem less exciting than people made it seem.

Who inspires you and why? My mom inspires me tremendously. No matter what she goes through, she manages to get her priorities done and ensures the best outcome happens for everyone. Although she can be strict sometimes, she is hardheaded and stubborn, which inspires me since she doesn't let people walk all over her.

Cameron Lorenz



BILLINGS CAREER CENTER

What are your plans after high school? I am attending Sheridan College in the fall to earn a certificate in Machine Tool Technology. After college, I will return to full-time employment at TKI CNC where I have been employed throughout high school.

Utilizing my training, I can make an impact within our manufacturing company.

What is your favorite class in school and why? Most definitely the hands-on classes I have taken at the Career Center, specifically welding & machining. I enjoy the hands-on learning opportunities in these classes because 90% of our class time is spent in the shop giving students a visual for a finished product. There may be some trial & error, but this is how I learn best to excel toward perfection progressing throughout the learning process. I am able to continue to improve my skills by doing, as well as teach myself to do new things.

Who inspires you and why? My grandfather, Ed Lorenz, is my inspiration. He instills many qualities within me, most importantly he shows me that hard work & dedication can lead to many rewards. He is a very determined man, who worked hard to equate our family name and business to our strong work ethic. It's this strong work ethic that leads me to work toward my career path outside of the family business. Grandpa supports me in this endeavor and inspires me to work hard to succeed in the machining & manufacturing industry.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I enjoy riding my dirt bike as often as I can. I began riding when I was 2, and have since followed in my dad's footsteps to compete at professional hill climbing events. Not only do I enjoy riding & competing, but the environment allows me the opportunity to spend the weekend with my family, hanging out with friends, and meeting cool people. When riding, I can clear my mind and focus only on the climb, which I find to be a tremendous stress reliever!

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? I've worked at TKI CNC throughout high school. Working in this environment helped me determine that I enjoy machining & manufacturing.



Caleb Mark



HARDIN HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? I plan to attend Montana Tech, or Colorado School of Mines.

What is your favorite class in school and why? Calculus because it is mentally stimulating and teaches me to think in different ways.

Who inspires you and why?

I am inspired by the many physicists and chemists who made groundbreaking discoveries with limited technology because it inspires me to think of what's possible with modern technology.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school?

Outside of school and school sponsored athletics, I enjoy reading, 3-D printing, and playing Minecraft.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? The only way I would feel successful in life is knowing that I made a difference. The size of the impact doesn't matter. I would feel as successful knowing that I helped one person live a better life versus finding a cure for cancer.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I would use the money to help pay for my education.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? I would bring a blanket to construct a simple shelter with and keep warm, a plastic water bottle that I could use to distill water with, and a helicopter so that I could leave if I needed to because this question didn't say I couldn't.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share?

My personal motto is "pursue excellence in everything" because when I find myself doing something I don't necessarily enjoy, it helps me continue to be my best.



Cade McAllister



LAUREL HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? To attend the University of Montana for a degree in operating heavy equipment and machinery.

What is your favorite class in school and why? Big Brothers Big Sisters because I get to help kids and be a role model for

them.

Who inspires you and why? My dad Craig McAllister because he showed me what it takes to support a family, how to love and care for people, and how to have fun during your free time.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school?

Hunt, fish, hang out with friends, and spend time with my family.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Doing what I love and being able to support my future family.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I would put the money towards my college tuition.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what would they be and why?

I would bring a fishing pole so I would be able to fish for food. I would also bring pots and pans so I could boil water and cook my fish, and I would bring a knife to be able to cut my food up and cut things down.



Wyatt Petersen



POWELL HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? I plan on serving a two-year mission for my church after I graduate. When I return from my mission I will continue working with my dad's construction business until I am ready to start my own construction business.

What is your favorite class in school & why? My favorite class is my work experience class. I really enjoy this class because I get the opportunity to learn more about construction and better my skills so I am more prepared to start my own construction business. I get two hours every day to leave the school grounds and work for my dad at one of his construction sites.

Who inspires you and why? My dad inspires me because he was able to go from not being very well-known and not being super successful to being one of the most well-known and successful contractors in the Powell area.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Outside of school I enjoy working on my own projects or helping on my dad's construction sites.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? If I was able to be one of the most well-known contractors in the Powell area and also be financially stable, I would feel successful.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? If I was to win the grant, I would use this money to help pay for my welding, excavator/forklift operating, CDL, HVAC, and electrical certifications and the classes necessary at Northwest College.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? I would bring a water filtration device so I am able to stay hydrated, a signaling mirror to signal someone passing by the island on a boat or a plane, and I would want a knife to use as a tool to make hunting weapons or to build a shelter.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share?

If you work hard enough to achieve your dreams, eventually you will achieve them.



Laney Richey



BELFRY HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? My plans after high school is to go to college and become a Special Education Teacher because I, myself, have a learning disability and have dealt with it all through school. I know what it is like to struggle in the classroom

and feel like you don't belong there. I want to help students navigate the bumps in their education like my teachers did for me. I think with my background, I will be a great resource for others just like myself.

What is your favorite class in school & why? My favorite class is Integrated Sciences, which is a class that doesn't just deal with one type of science, but multiple. We learn about all different types of things in that class from anatomy to how the brain works. I find anything that has to do with how the brain works to be interesting and I love trying to figure out the way the brain works together. Science is also the one subject that makes the most sense to my own brain, so it's something that comes easy for me.

Who inspires you and why? My grandpa inspires me. My grandpa is a retired Navy Seal chief that has raised seven kids, including me, who he now raised all on his own. He has taught me some life lessons. The biggest one is being kind to everyone that you meet. He works so hard and he always has a smile on his face and is kind to everyone, and that is something I admire about him. My grandpa and I have inside jokes that no one understands and we have a great relationship even with the age gap. He can be stubborn, but even that has taught me a lesson to stand your ground of what you believe in.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I enjoy being active. Some of my school activities are speech and drama and volleyball. I also enjoy spending time with my grandpa and my dog. Jamming out to music in my room and dancing like nobody's watching is another favorite pastime of mine. I watch old western movies with my grandpa or he and I sit at the dinner table and laugh at the dog for doing something funny, or my grandpa laughs at me while I practice my speech pieces just for him.

Edward Schilf



CAREER CENTER

What are your plans after high school? I am going to Montana Tech for Mining Engineering.

What is your favorite class in school and why? History is my favorite class because I find it really interesting.

Who inspires you and why? My little sisters inspire me to work hard and be a good

role model for them.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I really love working on cars and in my spare time, I play the bass.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? If I finally didn't have to worry about money all the time and no longer living paycheck to paycheck.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? It would help to not have to take out loans for tuition and room and board since I will be paying for college entirely on my own.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? Hot sauce because it will make anything edible, clean dry socks, and a ham radio.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? Be the change you want to see in the world.



Brandon Simonsen



BILLINGS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? After high school I plan to attend Billings City College to pursue a degree in Diesel Technology.

What is your favorite class in school & why? My favorite class in school is Automotive Engines 2

because it supports the direction I would like to pursue for my future degree. I also enjoy it because it is hands on and I actually get to do some physical work and learning.

Who inspires you and why? My dad has a friend named Tom Zimmer. Tom owns his own Diesel auto shop called Tri-State Truck & Equipment. One time he took me on a tour of his shop and he chatted with me about career options. He talked about what he did at his shop and also possible ways for me to get to that point because he knew diesel mechanics were my area of interest. He helped me figure out what my schooling options were and he is the one that gave me the idea of attending Billings City College. He helped me see a path to the career that I was interested in.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Outside of school I enjoy skiing, hiking, riding bicycles, and most things outdoors. I feel more relaxed in an outdoor environment than being cooped up in a house and like to see all there is to see in the world around me.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Once I begin my career as a Diesel Mechanic, I will feel successful when I am able to complete a repair on my own without the support of others.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? My goal is to earn a degree in Diesel Technology and I would use the \$5,000 to help pay my tuition toward that degree. Having a summer job is important, however I feel like having a full time job during college could be stressful, and some extra money could help me to not struggle as much financially during the school year.



Jenna Strobel



BILLINGS SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? I have been accepted and plan to attend Gallatin College in Bozeman, Montana for an Associate's Degree in Interior Design. After the two years to obtain that degree, I would like to potentially pursue

education in business management and marketing.

What is your favorite class in school and why? In my junior year, I had the opportunity to take a College Intro to Interior Design class through the Billings Career Center. A year-long class, it combined the basics of design and drafting with the experience of designing and building an actual house. This was my favorite in-school class of my high school career. Since August, I have spent my afternoons as an intern at Pierce Flooring and Cabinet Design. This internship is the best part of my day, and of my four years of high school. For school credit, I have had the opportunity to explore my potential future, gain workplace experience, and create so many friendships. Through Pierce, I have learned exponentially more than I would ever have learned in a classroom. It has made me more excited about my future than any class ever could.

Who inspires you and why? Two people that inspire me are a couple who created a nonprofit to serve women who have come out of human trafficking. Through the HER Campaign, this couple has been able to help women become healthy, independent, and purposeful. I am inspired because these two, upon discovering a need, devoted their lives to the people they serve. I would like to do the same. There are many people in need, but only a few who are willing to give up their own comfort and opportunity to help. I would like to do more than make things pretty. I want to do it for a purpose. For one person, that reason may be healing and stability, for another, beauty and belonging. Reasons can change. Purpose does not. These same values are expressed so clearly in this couple; this is why they inspire me.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I enjoy music in all forms. Though I had to quit my music classes in school, I continue to sing in extracurricular events, play cello and piano, and learn new instruments.

Madeline F. Thompson



BILLINGS SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? There was a slight miscommunication; I don't have my pilot license yet, but I am about three months from gaining it. After I have gained it, I am going to get my Teaching Certification for Aviation, start teaching students,

and will begin my journey towards working for ATC: Air Traffic Control. I don't plan on going to college because it is an expense I can't afford and don't need it to complete my career goals. I believe that every day is a lesson in life and I am excited to learn in the workplace, on my own and in the sky.

What is your favorite class in school and why? I love my art and music classes. I believe that art, in any format, is not only the highest form of expression but the greatest communication tool in human history. We connect ideas, express emotions and tell stories through art and music. They are the connectors of cultures. I am very proud to be a representative of this ideal. Not only does music demand dedication but also requires a sense of "group work". We have a saying: one band - one sound, and it demands community effort. I love being independent yet so intertwined with my fellow peers.

Who inspires you and why? My dad inspires me every day. He wasn't the top of his graduating class, didn't attend college, dealt with an absent father and his mother's disability yet owns his own business. He has worked hard every single day of his life and has fought long and hard to give my sister and I a better future. He also is our plumber, electrician and owns/manages rental property. He built our deck in the backyard, taught me to drive and has been one of my biggest supporters. No matter how he feels, physically or mentally, he perseveres. I admire his tenacity, respect, morality and general demeanor. My dad is my hero and I wouldn't be who I am without him.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? I enjoy flying and learning about Montana history. I love history and Montana has one of the richest and most diverse history in the western states.

JoHanna Tomash



POWELL
HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? Once I graduate from Powell High School in May 2022, I will be attending Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne, Wyoming where I have been accepted into the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program.

What is your favorite class in school and why? I have come to love learning about history. I have been in both a world history as well as U.S. history class. I enjoyed learning about the past, the experiences that were had, and the mistakes that were made. Going from day to day, I have come to love seeing how my generation is making history in various ways, which I have loved getting to be a part of, and hopefully share my experience with future generations. In addition, I have also enjoyed my CTE classes. I have taken an Exploration to Healthcare Occupations class where I was able to research sonography, and interview current sonographers in my area. During this class, I gained field experience in sonography from being able to sign up for observation hours at one of the local imaging places.

Who inspires you and why? Since a young age, my grandpa Mike Frazier, has inspired me in several ways. From the age of 14, he has worked on an oil rig where he worked his way up to a consultant. He had all of the odds against him when he dropped out of school and started working. He showed me that no matter where you start in life, there is always room to improve yourself and your habits. I have enjoyed getting to listen to all of his stories about life, including the mistakes he made working on a rig, as well as the story of how my grandma and him met. In my short time on Earth, he has taught me many lessons from managing money, to patching water tanks, as well as fixing hitch systems on our horse trailers. My grandpa has always supported me in everything I do, and I know that without his help and support, I wouldn't be the person I am today.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? When I am not attending school, I enjoy various pursuits including competing in the rodeo event barrel racing. I enjoy traveling to various states with my parents to compete on the horses I trained.



Miles Torno



BILLINGS CAREER CENTER

What are your plans after high school? My plan is to move to Gillette, Wyoming two weeks after I graduate to attend Western Welding Academy. I plan to complete the six month program Professional Pipe Welding Course which will provide an educational foundation for my career as

a pipe welder.

What is your favorite class in school and why? My favorite class in school is welding because it provides me access to gaining the knowledge and skills needed in a welding career. The professional welding equipment expanded my knowledge and interests. Mr. Audet and Mr. Wagner provided a learning environment where I can explore my skills and learn from trial and error. I learn from hands-on experience and taking this class motivates me to come to school and do well in all my classes.

Who inspires you and why? My dad inspires me the most because over the years he has taught me the importance of a strong work ethic, how to deal with disappointments in life, and learning to adapt to when life just doesn't go your way, which is often the case. He has been through many tough times including financial issues, and injury and throughout all of it he has kept his head up and has always done everything he can for his kids and shown me how to always fight for your family.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Outside of school I spend most of my time working and spending time with my girlfriend and family. I try to work as much as I can and that includes working two jobs until 8:30 most nights of the week. When I get a day off I prefer to spend my free time with my girlfriend and her family as I try to build a better relationship with them. On Sundays I attend a family dinner with my family where everyone is there and we just spend the night around and with each other.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? I would feel successful if I am happy with my job. However my main goal is to be able to provide for my family and give them not only the things they need but the things they want. I would also consider myself successful when I reach the point where I am financially free.

Caden Vannatta



BILLINGS WEST HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? My plans after high school are to attend Montana State University Billings and earn a degree in finance. I also am taking real estate courses to get my license by July and hope to begin working for NAI business properties.

What is your favorite class in school and why?

My favorite class in high school was marketing and business law due to the interest that I had developed in the class and the works of business. My dad had always worked in some form of marketing so it was like second nature to me.

Who inspires you and why? My older brother Tyler inspires me more than anyone I know. He is a genius. Although him and I are very different and quite frankly polar opposites, it works. Tyler is very driven and book smart, he is strict on himself and knows so much.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school?

When I am outside of school, I enjoy spending time with friends. Whether it is outside skiing or boating, or watching Step Brothers at night. I also enjoy traveling with my family and going to new places.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Something that would make me feel successful in my career is developing a level of comfort in my life, both financially and physically. Doing things I want to do when I want to do them and being able to help others out with money or experiences. I also would love to be able to set my own schedule one day.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? If I won the \$5,000, I would use it to reach my goal by paying for more real estate courses. I eventually would invest more into my own brand and start building a business.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? If I were stranded on an island, I would bring a water purifier, a bow with arrows, and a raft. I think these three things are very practical, but also provide a level of comfort for being on an island.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? Don't let it consume you.

Parker Werholz



BILLINGS WEST HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? To start my apprenticeship at Mountain Electric of Billings. Taking this accelerated program will motivate me to finish my textbooks quickly and hopefully give me a good head start. After my apprenticeship, I would love to purchase some rental

properties by investing in real estate.

What is your favorite class in school & why? My favorite class is at the Career Center of Billings. Electrical 1-2 / electronics 1-2 has given me a great idea on what being an electrician is about. My favorite part is wiring the Career Center house along with my classmates.

Who inspires you and why? Mr. Tolton, a teacher from Career Center electrical/electronic class is a big inspiration for me. He has many former students that are now Journeyman electricians. Mr. Tolton suggests great ideas for his students' careers and helps give them the best opportunities they can get.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? My main hobby is snowboarding on the weekends. I've only snowboarded for three years now, but I improve little by little every year. Also, I enjoy working part-time as a Scheels' associate and love the people I work with.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? I would feel successful as soon as I complete my journeyman test and finish my apprenticeship. Also the ability to do all of my work on my own and be trusted to work alone.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I would put the money towards the Northern Acceleration program and pay off my semester/book fees. Any extra money I have would go towards tools.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? A knife, a fishing net and a huge box of matches.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? Never give up.

Justin Wiegand



CODY HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? My plans for after high school are to attend PIMA Medical Institute in Colorado Springs to obtain an Associate's Degree to become a Veterinarian Technician. After obtaining my degree, I plan on becoming certified to work in a zoo.

What is your favorite class in school and why? My favorite class in school would have to be chemistry. While the course is difficult and it pushes me to work harder, I extremely enjoy the content of the course.

Who inspires you and why? The person who inspires me the most would probably be my father. He carries the weight of maintaining an entire restaurant, family, and personal life on his shoulders every day. At all times there are a million things running through his head, yet he never forgets to be kind to those around him.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Throughout my life, I have been an avid actor and I love participating in any and all kinds of theater.

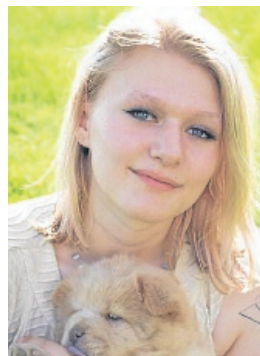
What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? What would make me feel successful in my career would be to bring aide to any animal in need of help that could save generations of animals.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? I have wanted to be a Veterinarian Technician for as long as I can remember and your grant would help me turn that dream into a reality.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? The first thing I would bring would be a camera to document my journey. The second thing I would bring would be a desalination water filter. The last thing I would bring would be a bow so that I would be able to hunt and have sustenance; I would make the arrows out of materials on the island.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? "nil mortalibus ardui est" - which translates to nothing is impossible for humankind.

Jocelyn Wolcott



LAUREL HIGH SCHOOL

What are your plans after high school? Going to college in Washington and studying Astrophysics and Veterinarian.

What is your favorite class in school & why? Physics. It's something I've always loved. Science was an interest of mine since I

was little and physics seemed to reach beyond that. It expanded my interest even more.

Who inspires you and why? Rachel Hill (Big Brothers Big Sisters teacher). She is always there when I need advice or help. She's definitely more of a cool aunt to me than a teacher.

What are some things you enjoy outside of school? Gaming with my amazing friends, fishing, riding horses, and playing with my many animals.

What would make you feel successful in your career/work after school? Finding the right people to help me on my path there.

If you win the \$5,000 grant, how will you use the money to help you reach your goals? Make college tuition a little cheaper, or even getting to college in the first place.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring three things, what three things would you bring and why? "How to Survive on a Desert Island" by Jim Pope, telescope, spear. I would bring the book because sometimes in life, you have no clue what to do, a telescope to look at the stars in a non-polluted area, and the spear for basic survival.

Do you have personal motto or inspirational saying that motivates you that you would like to share? "Words are, in my not-so-humble opinion, our most inexhaustible source of magic. Capable of both inflicting injury, and remedying it." - Albus Dumbledore

Editor's note: Because of space limitations, many of the insightful and informative responses from the Valleydictorians were shortened for the print publication. The full responses appear with their profiles online at <https://rb.gy/gsj04a>

Congratulations seniors!

FROM ALL OF US AT THE
BILLINGS GAZETTE



**CONGRATULATIONS
CLASS OF 2022!**



**Congratulations
Class of 2022!**

**We wish you the best
in your future endeavors!**

**16 CONVENIENT LOCATIONS
ACROSS MONTANA**



CONGRATS SENIORS



VALLEY CREDIT UNION IS THRILLED TO CELEBRATE OUR 32 FEATURED VALEDICTORIAN STUDENTS AND \$5,000 GRANT RECIPIENT AS THEY START THEIR NEXT CHAPTER OF LIFE.

Valley Credit Union congratulates our featured seniors on all their achievements and successes that have brought them to where they are today. With lots of drive and motivation, these students show so much potential in their respective career paths following graduation. Graduates, thank you for sharing your many ambitions with us and for letting us showcase your inspiring futures throughout the year. We look forward to seeing all of the great things you will accomplish. Congratulations Class of 2022!



valleyfcu.com

NOMINATED SENIORS

Ashlyn Alden
Emily Merry Lee Anderson
Sage Marie Blain
Jaxson Brandt
Makayla Brooks
Sarah Cochran
Taelyn Combs
Colter Dyekman
Kassidee Eoff
Theodore Garza
Liberty Graham
Tyler Harakal
Keaton Heller
Schelbe Jo
Colin Kapsner
Tobias Lettas
Azael Lopez-Widdicombe
Cameron Lorenz
Caleb Mark
Cade McAllister
Wyatt Petersen
Laney Richey
Edward Zeus Schilf
Brandon Simonsen
Jenna Strobel
Madeline F. Thompson
JoHanna Grace Tomash
Miles Torno
Caden Vannatta
Parker Werholz
Justin Wiegand
Jocelyn Wolcott

\$5,000 GRANT RECIPIENT

Jenna Strobel



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