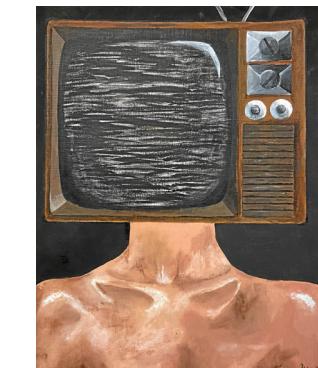
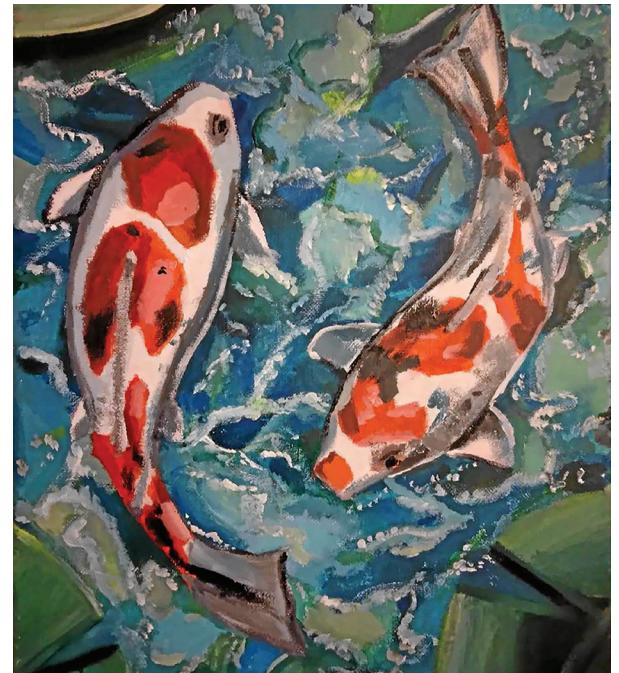


RAVALLI REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED MAY 25, 2024





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PUBLISHED MAY 25, 2024





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**Congrats Class
of 2024!**



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Class of 2024

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Cover Artwork

Clockwise from top left:

1. Florence senior Tyler Brett paints an insect mural at The Butterfly House in Missoula in honor of Florence's Byron Webber.
2. Sculpture by Corvallis High School senior Kai Knight.
3. Painting by Corvallis High School senior Kayla Gibson-Anderson.
4. Painting by Hamilton senior Emily Rau, acrylic, watercolor with shattered glass overlay.
5. 3-D art by Stevensville senior Cali Shepherd.
6. Painting by Hamilton senior Lavana Wetzel, acrylic on canvas paper.
7. Painting by Stevensville senior Selwyn Hackett.
8. Painting by Stevensville senior Joy Pettijon.
9. Untitled drawing by Hamilton senior Ayda Griffin, pencil on paper.

Class of 2024 Graduation

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ravallirepublic.com

Graduating students names and lists
of scholarships and awards are provided by schools



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'Luck of the Draw'
Scholarship**

\$1,000 scholarship winners

Wyatt Miles	Tas Smith
Jon Post	Levi Narum
Emily Rau	Malia Gunterman
Shiloh Lampi	Kaitlyn Blatter
Trapper Oster	Quinn Skaggs
Derek Criddle	Kadence Fisher

\$500 scholarship winners

Cara McGrath	Cameron Whitley
Jack Needles	Catherine Varner
Selwyn Hackett	Katelyn Pope

Ravalli Electric Co-op



Corvallis High School Class of 2024

Top seniors, graduates and scholarships

Valedictorians:

Laurie Davidson – Activities: Track, cross country, student council, Interact Club, National Honor Society, seminary, orchestra.

Plans after graduation: Attend College of Southern Idaho to study biology and run cross country, track.

Emelia Schairer – Activities: FFA chapter president, student body vice president, 4-H camp counselor, 4-H, Interact Club, National Honor Society, Certified Nursing Assistant.

Plans after graduation: Attend Montana State University on pre-med track.

Elsa Miller – Activities: Student Body President, National Honor Society, Interact Club, Rotary International Secretary, orchestra, 4-H Secretary, soccer team captain, skiing.

Plans after graduation: Attend Yale University to study history and philosophy.

Salutatorian: Ryan Hutchison – Activities: Soccer, basketball, tennis, Interact Club, National Honors Society.

Plans after graduation: Attend Linfield University to study biology and play soccer.

Corvallis High School Graduating Class of 2024

Alanna Auch
Lloyd Augustine
Emma Bay, Stock Farm
Greater Ravalli
Foundation Scholarship
Constance Beavers
Milana Bestor
Kaitlyn Blatter
Bennett Boelman,
Stock Farm Greater

Ravalli Foundation
Scholarship, Montana
State University
Premier Scholarship
Samuel Bohenek
Celia Bohrman, Carroll
College Presidential
Scholarship, Carroll
College Montana
Advantage Award,
Carroll College Campus
Visit Grant
Summer Bohrman
Dylan Brawley
Miles Brondum
Meredith Buhler, Stock
Farm Greater Ravalli
Foundation Scholarship
Abigail Buoy
Craig Campbell
Natalie Campbell
Emma Cashell, Kenyon
College Need Based
Grant, Kenyon College
Merit President's
Scholarship
Derek Criddle
Justiz Daricek-Johnson
Laurie Davidson
(Valedictorian)
Elliana Davis
Landon Davis
Brooklyn Dowd, Corvallis
High School Faculty
Group Scholarship
Christian DuBose
Rilee Edwards
Adilynn Ellis
Sabrina Fawcett
Fiona Fay
Kai Ferraro, Stock
Farm Greater Ravalli
Foundation Scholarship
Tucker Freeman
Kacee French
Kaden Gentry
Kayla Gibson-Andersen
Rylan Gladden
Fox Goodrich
Ryan Grannis
Jadyn Greenwood,
Community Health
Alliance Scholarship
Jack Hanssen, Coast
Guard Academy Full
Appointment, Stock
Farm Greater Ravalli
Foundation Scholarship
Dixie Herbert
Quinessa Herbert
Cole Herminghaus

Finnian Hickey
Ahren Hinderaker
Jamisyn Hixon
Damian Hoehne
Caden Holt
Ethan Huls
Jake Humphrey
Ryan Hutchison
(Salutatorian)
Katie Jackson, Stock
Farm Greater Ravalli
Foundation Scholarship,
Montana State University
Premier Scholarship,
Burger King Scholars
Award, Stockman Bank
Next Gen Scholarship
Brecklyn Jessop
Christopher Jessop
Connor Jessop
Ericka Jessop
Landon Johansen
Elijah Johnson
Conagher Kane
Corbin Kirkland
Kai Knight, Stock
Farm Greater
Ravalli Foundation
Scholarship, Montana
University System
STEM/Healthcare
Scholarship
Jackson Landon
Cole Leavitt
Mattrick Leonard
Jeremy Lewis
Olivia Lewis, Montana
State University
Athletic Scholarship,
Montana State
University Academic
Scholarship
Blake McCarty
Isabella McClare
Kailabe McCready
Elsie Meadows
Gabriel Merrick
Wyatt Miles, University
of Providence Athletic
Scholarship, Stock
Farm Greater Ravalli
Foundation Scholarship
Elsa Miller (Valedictorian)
Yale University
Institutional Grant
Sylvia Miller
Caenaan Moe
Madison Montgomery
Brandon Mosbrucker
Jack Needles, American
Legion Corvallis Post

91 Jack Pfau Memorial
Scholarship
Tanner Nissen
James Nordentstrom,
Stock Farm Greater
Ravalli Foundation
Scholarship
Rhiannon O'Connell
Chase Opat
Rylee Owens, Montana
State University
Premier Scholarship
Emily Parmenter
Andrew Pintok, Montana
State University
Premier Scholarship
David Ponce
Dillen Potter
Vivian Potter
Dakota Powell
Kiana Rainey
Jared Reynoso
Levi Reynoso
Russell Reynoso
Nathan Rusk
Emelia Schairer
(Valedictorian),
University of Miami
President's Scholarship,
Montana State
University Presidential
Scholarship, Northern
Arizona University
WUE Excellence
Scholarship,
Northern Arizona
University Founders
Gold Scholarship,
Stock Farm Greater
Ravalli Foundation
Scholarship, Montana
University System
Honor Scholarship,
Montana State

University Premier
Scholarship, University
of Montana Academic
Achievement
Stock Farm Greater
Ravalli Foundation
University System
STEM/Healthcare
Scholarship,
Community Health
Alliance Scholarship,
Youth Serve Montana
Scholarship, Bitterroot
Valley Elks Lodge
Scholarship, Montana
FFA Foundation Leave a
Legacy Scholarship
Tristin Simmons
Laila Smart, Stock
Farm Greater Ravalli
Foundation Scholarship,
Corvallis High School
Faculty Group Scholarship
Cole Smith
Tas Smith, Knox College
Scholarship, Whitworth
University Scholarship,
The College of St.
Scholastica Benedictine
Scholarship, University
of Puget Sound
Scholarship, Mid
America Nazarene
University Scholarship,
Whitworth University
Campus Housing Grant,
Knox College Land of
Lincoln Award, Northern
Arizona University
Founders Blue Tuition
Scholarship, Montana
State University
Premier Scholarship,
University of Montana
Academic Achievement

Scholarship, Montana
State University
Northern Eldora
McBride Endowed
Scholarship, Montana
State University
Northern Olive & Elmer
Sanborn Scholarship,
American Legion
Corvallis Post 91
Jack Pfau Memorial
Scholarship, Corvallis
High School Faculty
Group Scholarship
Calen Smyth
Caden Stephens,
Isaac Stoker, Dickinson
State University
Football Scholarship,
Dickinson State
University Track
Scholarship
Katelin Sytsma
Danner Therrien
Catherine Varner, Corvallis
High School Faculty
Group Scholarship
Azalia Velasco-Coombes
Jayde Venema
Alan Watt
Jasmine Webber
Lawren Weidow
Ivy White
Lael White
Seth White
Cameron Whiteley,
American Legion
Corvallis Post 91
Jack Pfau Memorial
Scholarship
Addelyn Williams
Isabelle Williams
Mya Zeiler
Andrew Zito

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Corvallis High School senior spotlight: Abigail Buoy

MICHELLE MCCONNAHA
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@ravallirepublic.com

Corvallis High School has chosen to highlight Abigail Buoy.

Principal Cammie Knapp said Buoy is active in her education and development.

"She has worked as one of our representatives on the Bitterroot Health Junior Board of Directors, participated in our American Legion contest and received funds for her essay, and participated in community service this year with our school calendar," Knapp said.

Buoy has attended Corvallis schools since kindergarten, for 13 years, mostly with the same classmates.

"It's really funny because sometimes people move and come back years later and it is fun to re-connect," Buoy said. "Not everyone stays but a lot of them do, so I'm really close to a lot of kids in my grade. I love the people here. I'm



MICHELLE MCCONNAHA, RAVALLI REPUBLIC

Abigail Buoy has attended Corvallis schools for 13 years and plans on going into a nursing career.

close with the teachers and they do a lot to help us out. Here everyone looks out for each other and wants to help each other."

Buoy played soccer for all four

years of high school, is in Interact and is president of the National Honor Society. She said she enjoys Interact and NHS because they are community outreach and

service organizations.

"In high school everyone is busy, but it is nice to have a time reserved to help people," Buoy said. "It's nice to be involved with others and help them. It is a scheduled time, once a month, that is not time for you but for someone else."

Her favorite subjects are English and science. She plans on going to Montana State University to further her education.

"I'm going into nursing and my plan is to become a certified registered nurse anesthetist," Buoy said. "I want to go into nursing because I like helping people, but the anesthesia part is more of being in the surgery part rather than helping people get out of bed. I just think that would be super-interesting."

Buoy takes the CHS online healthcare occupations class offered as part of the pathway program. It is an overview of healthcare occupations and details all

that goes into working with patients.

"It has been super-cool and showed all the different pathways you can do," Buoy said. "It has helped me narrow down my career. They also show you all the parts and pieces that make the hospital work. We go to the hospital once a month and do in-person work. We are starting our CNA [Certified Nursing Assistant] training right now, which will be helpful for the future."

She said she chose MSU because she likes Bozeman, MSU received a boost in funding and the nursing program accepts everyone with a B average.

"It is super-cool because the other schools said they had a 19% acceptance rate, but this will get me into nursing program guaranteed, right away," Buoy said. "I have to go to school after college to get my anesthetist degree, so it just made sense to go there."

OH, THE PLACES YOU WILL GO... CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



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Darby High School senior spotlight: Sierra Reed

MICHELLE MCCONNAHA

michelle.mcconnaha@ravallirepublic.com

Darby High School has chosen to highlight graduating senior Sierra Reed.

Reed has attended school in Darby since preschool, experiencing ups and downs along the way. Through her own grit, determination and personal resilience, she is now second in her class.

Reed said she loves Darby school.

"It's a tight community, it is small, and the teachers stay the same for the most part," Reed said. "I TA [Teacher Assistant] in the elementary school and the teachers remember me. It is like a family. The teachers know everybody, and you get a lot of one-on-one help. It's nice."

Her favorite subjects are English and science. She has joined almost every club at DHS and competed in volleyball, basketball and track.

Last year she started participating in the DHS SkillsUSA team.

"It is a job skills program that you get to compete in, which is really fun," Reed said. "I won and now I get to go to nationals in Atlanta at the end of June. I did Chapter Display and Pin Design. At nationals everyone swaps pins and it is competitive."

Her design is in the shape of a belt buckle to represent Montana. It has a mining pick and shovel, trees, mountains and teepees.

"The teepees represent the Native American culture," Reed said. "They symbolize camp which means permanent and that it is home for everybody. I'm Native American on my mom's side."

DHS Counselor Kurt Kohn said Reed is a pretty special young lady."

"She has done wonderful things and has had some challenges but is a real success story for us," Kohn said.

Reed moved to Darby around age 3 after her parents separated and she lived with her dad and grandmother.

"My dad didn't know how to do my hair, but I'd bring a brush and hair ties to preschool," Reed said. "The teachers taught me how to dress, got me lip gloss and jewelry. It made me feel like I had a ton of moms everywhere I went. My dad worked a lot, so my friends' parents would cheer me on at games and assemblies. Growing up, I had people to support me here."

Her family divided even more, and she and her brother were the only ones together.

"I started getting depressed in sixth grade," Reed said. "I stopped going to



MICHELLE MCCONNAHA, RAVALLI REPUBLIC

Sierra Reed plans to attend Vermont State Johnson on an academic scholarship to study psychology and early childhood development. She will also compete in college volleyball and track.

school for a while and was just crying."

For several years she was behind in her classes and said eighth grade was the hardest.

"I would come to school but was a wreck," Reed said. "I was angry."

After a series of setbacks, she received counseling that helped her see the positive side of personal effort.

"I wanted to get better grades, strive and learn," Reed said. "I started being happier. I would stand up straight and have my hair done every morning. I realized I missed track and realized I didn't want to do that again."

She said she still struggles every day but has learned coping skills.

"When I realize depression is starting, I spend less time in my room and more time with my family," she said. "I understand my cycle and can cope with it. Life is easier, I know what to do. Now that I've been through it, I want to work with kids and help them."

Kohn said Reed has had a "tremendous journey."

"Sierra has matured, and other students gravitate to her for a listening ear," Kohn said. "Sierra has a reputation in our school of kindness, compassion toward others and helping others. It has become truly special for our school to watch Sierra's journey and see where she came from and where she is now. She gives hope to others, has goals,

is loving life and having extreme success."

Kohn said Reed takes rigorous classes and is a recipient of the Greater Ravalli Scholarship.

After graduation Reed plans to attend college and study psychology and early childhood development.

"I want to work with adolescents and help them," she said. "I am going to Vermont State Johnson to study and will compete in volleyball and track. All the offers I got for volleyball were on the east coast and Vermont was the prettiest one I saw. Everyone talks to each other and knows each other. And 75% of all the students do sports so everyone intermingles with each other, which is nice. It's like Darby."

Darby High School Class of 2024



PROVIDED PHOTO

Darby High School Class of 2024
Valedictorian Abigail Converse.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Darby High School Class of 2024
Salutatorian Sierra Reed.

Top seniors, graduates
and scholarships

Valedictorian: Abigail Converse – Activities: Skills USA, Interact Club, student leadership, volleyball, softball, track and field, Model United Nations, Science Olympiad.

Plans after graduation: Attend Montana State University Billings to study nursing.

Salutatorian: Sierra Reed – Activities: Student leadership, Skills USA, volleyball, basketball, track and field, Science Olympiad, yearbook, Interact Club, Model United Nations, Greenhouse Club, Santa Shop, teachers aide, community clean up, Cowboy Ball.

Plans after graduation: Attend Vermont State Johnson to study psychology and early child development.

Top Seniors: Kadence Fisher, Austin Ward, Clay Rouse, Alonso Rojelio.

Darby High School Graduating Class of 2024

Carlos Alonso, Montana	Aava Nelson
STEM/Healthcare	Gavin Polson
Scholarship, Stock	Peyton Rall
Farm Greater Ravalli	Bradley Reasor
Foundation Scholarship,	Sierra Reed, Stock
MSU Premier, Hilman	Farm Greater Ravalli
Scholar MSU, Horatio	Foundation Scholarship,
Alger	Vermont State Johnson
Aryana Beall	Academic, Griffin
Kimberlie Berry	Family Scholarship,
Abigail Converse, Stock	Honor Roll, National
Farm Greater Ravalli	Qualifier SkillsUSA, All
Foundation Scholarship	Conference Volleyball,
Payton Ehmann	Tiger Award, Grit
Florentina Erkinger	Award
Kadence Fisher, Stock	Alonso Rojelio
farm Greater Ravalli	Clay Rouse, Savannah
Foundation Scholarship	College of Arts and
Devyn Hundley	Design, Darby Schools
Emma Luedcke	Excellence Foundation
Janai Malachi	Austin Ward

Congratulations to all the Valley Graduates!

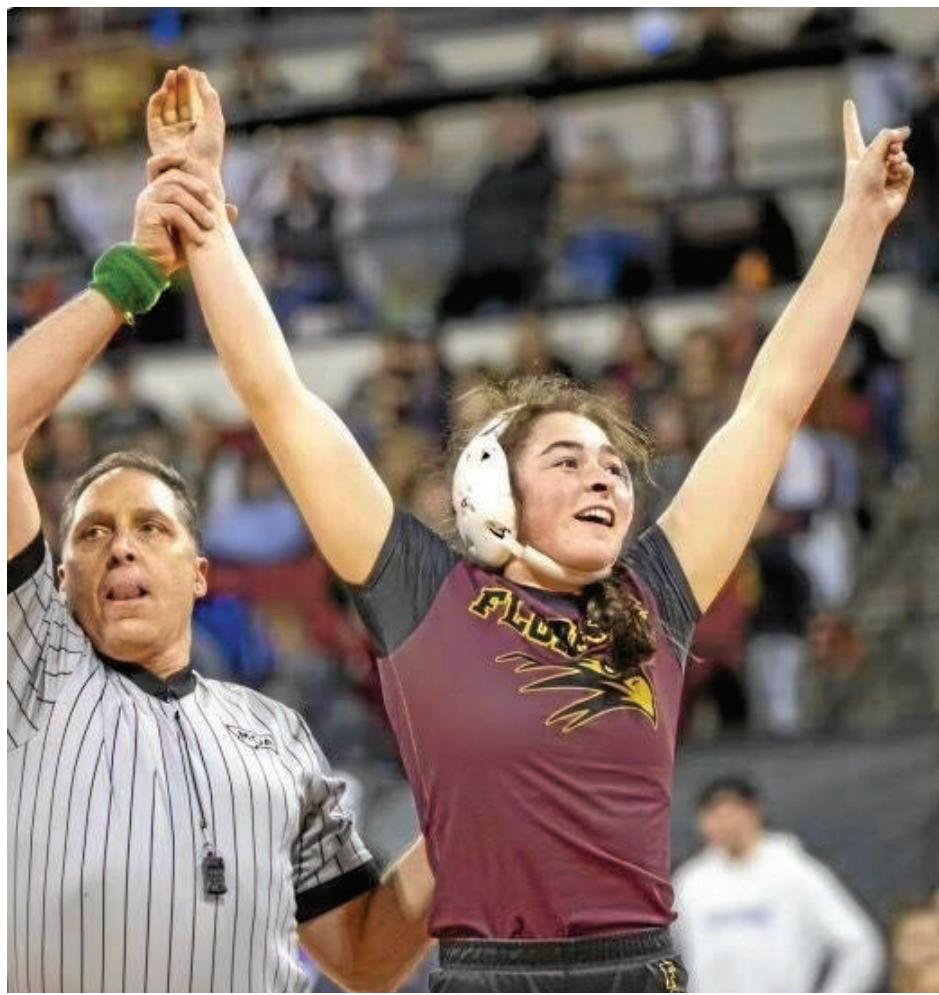
"Whatever you choose for a career path,
remember the struggles along the way are only
meant to shape you for your purpose."

-Chadwick Boseman

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PROVIDED PHOTO

Florence-Carlton High School senior Hailey Sutton is a state champion wrestler.



MICHELLE MCCONNAHA, RAVALLI REPUBLIC

Florence-Carlton High School Senior Hailey Sutton is a state champion wrestler with a goal of becoming a large animal veterinarian.

Florence-Carlton senior spotlight: Hailey Sutton

MICHELLE MCCONNAHA

micelle.mcconnaha@ravallirepublic.com

Florence-Carlton High School has chosen to highlight graduating senior Hailey Sutton.

Principal Scott March said Sutton always works hard and always has a smile on her face.

"We really love your passion," March said. "You're always bringing in your brother and always have a positive attitude."

He said Sutton is involved in a lot of activities — she is a state champion wrestler, participates in FFA and 4-H and plays right field on the softball team.

Sutton said she moved to Florence and started attending school there her sixth-grade year. Her favorite subject is English.

"I like writing and reading, and my English teachers have been really great," she said.

Sutton said the best part of attending FCHS is the small size.

"I feel like it is more community-based, especially the sports programs that have a family atmosphere," she said. "Everybody knows everybody, and we are all supportive of each other. Our senior class is definitely a tight-knit group, and we get along with each other really well. I've been with the same kids since sixth grade and most of them have been together since kindergarten — for 13 years."

For her career Sutton said she plans to go into veterinary science for large animals. She currently has goats, sheep, horses, dogs and cats.

"I just love animals," Sutton said. "In 4-H I show sheep, goats and horses all through the summer. I'm passionate about taking care of animals and being around them and a veterinary science career will allow me to do that."

She is undecided about where she will complete her studies.

"I'm still getting offers for wrestling, I want to get the right fit for me," Sutton said. "Wrestling is so rewarding. You get out what you put in. At the end of the day, you're the only one to blame if something goes bad or if something goes good. It just depends on how hard you work and how bad you want it."

Sutton said her dad is the wrestling coach and she has been on the FCHS wrestling team for two and a half years.

"You have to be driven and hard-working," she said. "You see the results that you get from putting all this work in. My dad got me into it and has been so supportive. My team has been supportive too. Even though it is an individual sport — the team atmosphere has just been so connected. We're all there for each other, helping each other out."

She said being a wrestling state champion is wonderful.

"It's nice to know that all my hard work paid off," Sutton said. "I've been working hard and I'm glad I accomplished my goal. You have to be determined, focused, eat healthy and work out. You have to stay disciplined during tournaments. You have your goal, and you have to stay disciplined."

"I'm passionate about taking care of animals and being around them, and a veterinary science career will allow me to do that."

Hailey Sutton, graduating senior at Florence-Carlton High School

Florence-Carlton High School Class of 2024

Top seniors, graduates and scholarships

Valedictorians:

Ethan Alexander — Activities: football, golf, basketball.

Plans after graduation: Attend Montana Tech to study civil engineering.

Olivia Coulter — Activities: Volleyball, basketball, softball, National Honor Society, Florence Chronicle Editor in Chief, FCHS Student Council.

Plans after graduation: Attend Gonzaga University.

Harrison Shepp — Activities: Basketball, track, football, National Honors Society.

Plans after graduation: Attend Carroll College to study biology, pre-med course and play football.

Quinn Skaggs — Activities: volleyball, basketball, softball, track and field, National Honor Society.

Plans after graduation: Attend Montana Technological University, Butte.

Hailey Sutton — Activities: Basketball, wrestling, softball, National Honor Society, 4-H.

Plans after graduation: College (undecided).

Salutatorian:

Jon Post — Activities: Wrestling, soccer, golf.

Plans after graduation: Serve a two-year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and then attend Utah State University to study engineering and/or law.



MICHELLE MCCONNAHA, RAVALLI REPUBLIC

Florence-Carlton High School Salutatorian Jon Post (left) sits with FCHS Valedictorians Ethan Alexander, Harrison Shepp, Olivia Coulter, Hailey Sutton and Quinn Skaggs.

Florence-Carlton High School Graduating Class of 2024

Tyler Abbott
Ethan Alexander, Oredigger
Athletic Scholarship,
Oredigger Merit Scholarship,
Howard Schmid Memorial
Scholarship, Clearwater
Credit Union Scholarship
Riley Allen
Gracie Appelhans
Clayton Bean
Angela Bovee
Tyler Brett
Lance Burrows
Olivia Coulter, Oredigger
Elite Scholarship, Montana
Premier Scholarship,
Gonzaga Academic
Excellence Scholarship

Lilian Crawford
Dryse Davey
Alexis Ekstedt
Tyler Ferris
Cole Fray-Parmantier
Joseph Geiser
Connor Hanneman
Bailey Hartman
Gabriel Hartsell-Miller
Jaiden Haugland
Andrew Heffner
Andrew Horsens
Devon Huff
Benjamin Kivela
Nataley Koerner
Heidi Lambson
Conner McBride
Johnna McKnight
Arie McLaughlin

Alexa McLean
Ian Miller
Quintan Monaco
Levi Narum
Kinlee Narum
Naysa Oller
Marshall Ondrasek
Trapper Oster
Ava Piper
Ethan Porter
Jon Post, University of
Tennessee Knoxville Vols
Scholarship, Utah State
University—Non-Resident
Presidential Scholarship
Samuel Prescott
Cohen Riley
Jacob Roth
Harrison Shepp

Gracie Simms
Quinn Skaggs, Montana
University System STEM
and Health Care scholarship,
Montana Tech Merit
scholarship
Mason Snell
Kian Straub
Autumn Sutton
Hailey Sutton, Stock Farm
Greater Ravalli Foundation
Scholarship
Anders Tollefson
Emily Turbitt
Hayden Warriner
Dakota Williams
Seth Wilson
Keannah Wooden

Hamilton High School Class of 2024

Top seniors, graduates and scholarships

Valedictorians:

Keana Patman – Activities: Symphonic and jazz bands, Academic WorldQuest
Plans after graduation: Attend the University of Montana

Alexis Treece – Activities: Dance, National Honor Society
Plans after graduation: Attend the University of Montana to pursue a degree in physical therapy

Christina Fulkerson – Activities: Theater, choir and National Honor Society, arts and photography, owner of Chris's Photography

Plans after graduation: Pursuing full time entrepreneurship

Andrew Purcell – Activities: Tennis, soccer, cross country
Plans after graduation: Attend the Air Force Academy and major in aerospace engineering

Mya Winkler – Activities: Sports, club, choirs
Plans after graduation: Attend Montana State University

Alex Koch – Activities: Team captain for soccer, track and field
Plans after graduation: Attend community college, obtain EMT license and become a flight paramedic

Emma Hollingsworth – Activities: Golf, tennis, National Honor Society, Key Club, Spurs
Plans after graduation: Attend the University of Colorado Boulder to study engineering

Gwendolyn Wolfe – Activities: Soccer, tennis, band, student council senior class president, National Honor Society president
Plans after graduation: Attend the University of Utah to study biochemistry on the pre-pharmacy track

Natalie Hawkes – Activities: Musicals, tennis, Bronc Spirit
Plans after graduation: Attend Utah State University to study occupational therapy, obtain private pilot's license

Salutatorian: Kristen Jessop – Activities: Choir, National Honors Society, Key Club, internship with the Hamilton Downtown Association, tennis, Spanish
Plans after graduation: Attend Utah State University to pursue degree in event program management

Hamilton High School Graduating Class of 2024

Aiden Alexander	Carlotta Giaquinto	Gabriel Pedraza
Benjamin Alexander	Tyler Gillette	Miles Peratis
Sarah Anderson	Mya Girard	Anniyah Pheil
Roman Arduini	Keiran Gonzalez	Jordan Philbrook
Jorja Aspell	Jordan Graves	Jade Pickford
Francesco Baruffini	Ayda Griffin, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship	Emmalene Pierce
Tyson Bauder	Daggon Griggs	Dain Post
Clayton Beall	Makenna Gundersen	Andrew Purcell, AF Academy
Haylee Beall	Jalysa Haacke	James Rall
Drumund Beck	Harley Hanson	Ralph Liam
Thomas Bender	Logan Harrison	Emily Rau, Kim and Patrick Sutherland Memorial Scholarship, Rhino Roofing Scholarship
Micah Bingham	Natalie Hawkes, Utah State Legacy Scholarship, Utah State Scholars	Ingrid Reginatto
Rachel Bogrett	Callie Hill	Andrew Ricklefs
Avery Bonnes, Montana University System STEM/Healthcare Scholarship, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship	Blake Hoerner	Caleb Root
Vins Bos	Emma Hollingsworth	Riley Rosenberger
Kailey Broad	Christopher Hopcroft	Julia Seifert
Brooklyn Brown	August Hughes	Zola Shankland
Andrew Burrows	Miles Hughes	Ava Shortridge, STEM/Healthcare Scholarship, MUS Honor Scholarship, College Board/Big Future
Joshua Canavan	Faith Hurst	Trent Sisson
Dylan Casterson	Andrei Ilagan Kent	Logan Smith
Jesse Chandler	Elijah Jackson	Jaylyne Solis
Tegan Chapman, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship	Malachi Jackson	Sean Sollinger
Ryanne Child	Wren Jensen	Jaxon Spencer, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship
Gabriele Cicero	Ayslin Jessop	Hunter Stewart
Aiden Clark	Jackson Jessop	Matthew Szymanski
Matthew Clifton	Kristen Jessop	Louis Tipton
Conner Cochrane	Tyana Jessop	Tabatha Townsend
Cierra Cole, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship	Steren Jezequel	Alexis Treece, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship
Rayann Collar	Talon Johnson	Micah Turney
Hannah Condos	Gabriel Judy	Anna Twardoski, MUS Honor Scholarship, STEM/Healthcare Scholarship
Taylee Conley, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship	Alexis Kaul, Boise State—WUE Scholarship, ASU Scholarship, MSU Scholarship	Crystal Van Sickle
Zoey Connelly	Wyatt Knox-Stamper	Micah Van Sickle, Lions Club Scholarship
Madison Cornelison	Alexander Koch	Jesse Villigan
Dominick Corte's-Machado	Tristan Koerner	Philippe Vitse
Jasmine Cymbala, Army ROTC—Carroll College	Lucas Lant, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship	Lavana Wetzel
Kiara Daughtry	Trevor Lewis	Mya Winkler, MUS Honor Scholarship, STEM/Healthcare Scholarship, Reach Higher Montana Stick with Scholarship, Naval Academy Athletic Association, Sequoia Scholarship, PLU Academic Scholarship, NW College Academic Scholarship, Seton Hall University Scholarship, Montana Premier Scholarship, Senior Preview Day, Music Talent Award, Pacific University Academic Scholarship
Cayden Davis	Sebastian Loeper	Gwendolyn Wolfe
Wyatt DeLong, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship	Adam Loveless	Eva Ziegler
Toby DeMoss	Madison Martin	Reegen Zolotuhina, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship
Cole Dickemore	Taylor McCarthy	
Doney Cesper	Haylee McKern	
Conner Ekin	Eva McLaren	
Giuseppe Eldridge	Samantha Miles	
Tayton Erving	Carter Morgan	
Madilynn Evenson	Aaron Navarro, Stock Farm Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship	
Macy Flood	Madalyn Nelson	
Andrew Frederick	Kylie Nuttall	
Asher Frost	Matthew Ochoa	
Christina Fulkerson	Brody Oliver, STEM/Healthcare Scholarship, MSU Academic Scholarship, MSU Treasure State	
Antonio Garcia	Chasity Orpilla	
Samantha Geroy, Army ROTC—Carroll College	Carson Partney	
	Keana Patman	

Hamilton High School senior spotlight: Gwendolyn Wolfe

MICHELLE MCCONNAHA
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Hamilton High School has chosen to highlight graduating senior Gwendolyn Wolfe.

She has attended Hamilton Schools since kindergarten and said the school system is great.

"I love all the people here," Wolfe said. "I love my friends and have great teachers. I feel like it has shaped me to be who I am. My teachers have taught me not only subject areas but also life lessons."

She said one of the big lessons is that she is a "big procrastinator" and works hard to get her work completed when it is assigned.

"After attending school here, I feel ready to be on my own," Wolfe said. "I like all my subjects and am drawn to who teaches them. I've taken all four years of math just because Mr. Fett is such a great



MICHELLE MCCONNAHA, RAVALLI REPUBLIC

Gwendolyn "Gwen" Wolfe is Hamilton High School's Spotlight Senior.

teacher. I learn math easily from him, so I find it a fun class to take. I like English and have always had good English teachers."

Wolfe is senior class president and part of student council.

"I took the Leadership Class and did my bone marrow regis-

tration drive," she said. "It turned out great. I got 20 in-person swabs and a lot of people signed up online and had swab kits shipped to their house. I'm super happy with how it turned out. I hope to continue that in college where I think it will be more successful due to the age restrictions."

Wolfe is also president of the National Honor Society.

"This year we coordinated with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which is an organization that will give kids, from 0 to 5, a book every month until they turn five," she said. "Reading is super important. We also teamed up with Key Club and cleaned the highway up Skalkaho and picked up a lot of trash. We did a pet food and supply drive for the Bitter Root Humane Association."

Wolfe said her family is her

motivation to do volunteer work.

"My grandma and my mom have made super big impacts on the community of Hamilton, and I want to do my part as well," she said.

Wolfe is planning to attend the University of Utah and study biochemistry on a pre-pharmacy track.

"I was accepted into their honors college where 70% of them get accepted into their top choice of grad school," she said. "I feel like it is a good place for me to go."

Principal Marlin Lewis said that Wolfe has been involved and engaged at HHS.

"She is the senior class and National Honor Society president as well a four year participant in soccer, tennis and band," he said. "Gwen will be missed at HHS, and I wish her the best at Utah State University."

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said the horse.
"Why?" asked the boy.



"You get up and carry on."

The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse by Charlie Mackesy

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COST OF COLLEGE | Q&A

Funding your future

Here's what to know about student loans



ALEX BRANDON, ASSOCIATED PRESS

ADRIANA MORGAN | Associated Press

If you're heading to college or thinking about where you'd like to apply, you're probably considering funding options.

According to the Federal Reserve, 30% of all U.S. adults said they incurred at least some debt for their education. Borrowers owe a collective \$1.77 trillion in student loan debt, including federal and private loans.

"Borrowing is almost at the point where it's a requirement," said Dana Kelly of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

It's beneficial to have an idea of what professional field you want to pursue, calculate how much you need to borrow and understand interest.

Where and when do I start?

Apply for federal student loans through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, for the 2024-25 school year to help determine if you qualify for federal or state financial aid. You'll fill out the application each year.

Cathy Mueller, executive director of Mapping Your Future, a nonprofit that helps people navigate higher education, recommends exhausting every possible funding option to reduce the amount you need to borrow. For scholarships, check out the College Board's scholarship search directory.

Mueller recommends that you estimate the amount you will need to borrow for your entire college career and be realistic about what you will be able to pay back. The Debt/Salary wizard from Mapping Your Future is an interactive calculator that can help.

Check your state's deadline to apply for

state financial aid. Aid is first-come, first-served, so apply as soon as you can.

For private student loans, lenders require proof of enrollment, so experts recommend you apply a couple months before your tuition is due.

What's the difference between federal and private loans?

Federal student loans are backed by the government and private loans come from banks, credit unions or other private institutions.

In general, federal student loans offer lower interest rates and more opportunities for affordable repayment plans. They also require you to complete an entrance counseling course.

Kelly recommends that students try to use only federal student loans.

Private loans come with a different set of requisites and application process.

What are subsidized and unsubsidized loans?

There are several different federal student loan options: direct subsidized loans, direct unsubsidized loans, direct PLUS loans and direct consolidation loans.

Subsidized loans have their interest covered by the government and are granted to students with demonstrated financial need while they're in school at least half-time, for six months after graduation and if they qualify for deferment, which allows someone to temporarily stop making payments. Students are responsible for paying the interest on unsubsidized loans.

What should I know about interest rates?

Student loans must be paid back with interest — additional money you pay for borrowing.

The interest depends on your type of loan and when it was made available. If your loan is disbursed on or after July 1, 2023, but before July 1, 2024, you will have a fixed interest rate of 5.5%.

Mueller recommends paying some of the interest each year.

"You're not required to make those interest-only payments," she said. "But if you do, you're saving yourself money in the long run."



For more personal finance advice, point your phone camera at this code, then tap the link for thepennywise.com. **NEWSVU**

What should I do before I sign?

Before you accept your student loan offer, make sure you understand the details, said Betsy Mayotte, president of The Institute of Student Loan Advisors. Those include when interest accrues, if it is capitalized and if there are any late fees. She also recommends speaking with a financial aid counselor at your university or elsewhere. Kelly said good questions to ask include:

1 If I get this amount of a loan as a freshman, is that rate going to be flat over my four years? Or do you anticipate that I'm going to need to borrow more each year?

2 Does my opportunity for scholarships go up so the amount I need to borrow can come down?

Many resources are available; you can visit the Federal Student Aid website or reach out to your college's financial aid office or community or nonprofit organizations.

What if I get more than I need?

Mueller recommends you return money you don't need. To do so, contact your school's financial aid office.

PERSONAL FINANCE | CELEBRATIONS



Surviving graduation season

Juggling parties, gifts? Ditch stress with these ideas for every budget

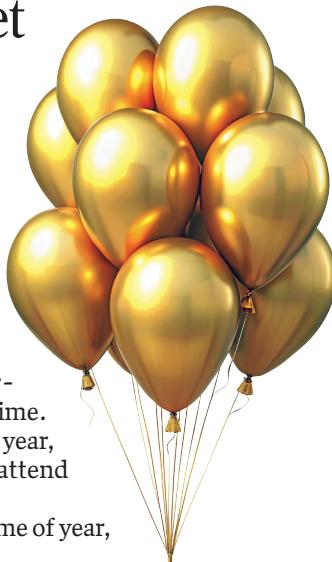
BURL GILYARD | Star Tribune

Graduation season is a time of celebrating accomplishments and extending best wishes for life's next chapter, but it can also be a time of stress when juggling party planning and gift decisions.

In the National Retail Federation's annual graduation gift survey from last year, feedback from more than 8,400 consumers found people expected to spend an average of \$116.19 for graduation gifts, with 52% planning to give cash instead of shopping for an item. And for those hosting instead of attending grad festivities, organizing a celebration could involve a lot of money and time.

Even if your own family doesn't have any graduates this year, it's likely you will have at least one graduation party to attend this season for a family member, friend or neighbor.

If you need help figuring out how to survive this busy time of year, here's some expert advice to follow:



For those attending

Graduation parties might be largely informal, but there is still some etiquette to keep in mind, said Lizzie Post, co-president of the Vermont-based Emily Post Institute. Post is a great-great-granddaughter of Emily Post, who published the book "Etiquette" in 1922.

Despite any social pressure you might feel about buying a gift, Post said it's not obligatory.

Post said it's become a trend for graduation party hosts to push "money apps" like Venmo for gifts, but she maintains: "It's really rude." Cash itself remains a perfectly acceptable gift, even if it has disappeared from many corners of society.

After the event, Post said you should expect a handwritten thank-you note from the graduate if you gave a gift (not just a text or email).

If cash or a check doesn't feel right for you, but you still want to give the grad in your life some token, a Google search can show dozens of vetted options via lists from various publications. Forbes Vetted published its "55 Best Graduation Gifts In 2024" in March. Many ideas were less than \$100.

If invited to a fancy restaurant for the party, you should make an effort to dress appropriately, Post said, so your clothes fit the occasion. But in many cases — like the ever-popular driveway buffet or park picnic — going casual works just fine.

For those hosting

Advance planning is essential if you're trying to hold an event-style graduation party, event planner Kat Minks said. Minks said the ideal time for mailing invitations is in March or April for parties held in June or July. So mark your calendars if you have a graduate in 2025. If you're just starting now, evites are a quicker route, or you could have a party later in the summer to avoid some of the rush.

For some, a do-it-yourself party is the best option. Check local shops for DIY party supplies such as banners, balloons, decor, confetti, guest books, card boxes and more.

Justin Alexander, general manager of Litin's Party Value in Minneapolis, said people tend to underestimate how many people will show up to the party, so he recommends shopping early and planning ahead. The store's most popular items, he said, have the graduation year "2024" emblazoned on them, while the second-most popular items feature the various school colors.

Prices will vary depending on how many supplies you buy, but \$2.50 to \$3.50 per guest is a reasonable estimate. An event planner could also take on some of the stress, for a fee.

Food trucks have emerged in recent years as an increasingly popular option for graduation parties, but if that seems like too much, many stores offer a range of party trays for sandwiches, veggies, fruits and more. Popular restaurants also have catering packages. For example, Chipotle has premade burrito boxes and build-your-own setups for \$8.75 a person.

Some grads might not want just afternoon conversation and Bluetooth-speaker music, so explore a gathering at an entertainment venue.

Reserving a picnic shelter at a local park and supplying your own lawn games or heading to a lake beach for water sports are some other lower-cost options.

Whether you're going to a celebration or putting it on, the one aspect to keep in mind is the graduates themselves. Make sure whatever gift you give, food you serve or party you plan suits the grad's personality.

If the student is going to acting school, rent a screen to show recordings of his school performances. If your grad loves popcorn, serve all of her favorite kinds at the party.

Make the event special and unique so it will remain a cherished memory for years to come.

Hamilton Christian Academy spotlights three

MICHELLE MCCONNAHA

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Hamilton Christian Academy has three graduates this year.

Olivie Crosier, Taisia Matveev and Grace Thomas said the private Christian school has helped them see life with an eye on the prize of glorifying God and walking in His ways.

Olivie Crosier attended three years and said she appreciates the educators at Hamilton Christian Academy.

"We have great teachers," she said. "All of our teachers care very much about us. They are very much one-on-one a lot of the time with students."

She fondly recalled using a modified game of Jeopardy to help memorize materials in Bible class and said she enjoyed the "egg drop" challenge in science class.

"Our principal [Matt Zwicker] got on the roof and dropped the eggs off," Crosier said. "We had to build a contraption to help the egg not crack in its shell. It was really fun and challenging."

Last year, she was vice-president of student council.

Crosier is currently working on her certified medical assistant license and plans to attend the University of Montana for an applied sciences degree and certification in culinary arts and hospitality services.

Taisia Matveev has attended HCA for six years and she said history is often her favorite subject, depending on the educator.

She said she appreciates HCA for building her faith.

"Coming here definitely helped my faith expand and I've really enjoyed coming here," Matveev said. "My faith was expanded by chapel once a week and just having more of a good influence here."

She plays the flute, sings and was president of student council.

She is planning on taking a gap year to go to Oregon, live with her family and work while she decides on her future.

Grace Thomas attended for nine years and said Hamilton Christian Academy has had a positive impact on her life.



MICHELLE MCCONNAHA, RAVALLI REPUBLIC

Olivie Crosier, Taisia Matveev and Grace Thomas are graduating from Hamilton Christian Academy with fond memories of their time in the school that helped them expand and deepen their faith.

"I like HCA because you can cultivate your walk with Christ," she said. "You can develop your faith more. You can talk to each other, relate more and share experiences. The teachers are great here too."

She is also taking a gap year after graduation.

"I want to know what God has planned for me and what he wants me to do with my

life," Thomas said. "I just want a year off after school without the pressure of classes and deadlines to figure out what to do."

She hopes to be a coffee barista and a ranch hand while she's pondering the future.

Chrisi Kelly, HCA Lead for grades 7-12 and History teacher for grades 9-12, said she values the three graduates.

"They are amazing, self-starters and just want to do well and succeed," Kelly said. "They are powerhouses in their own lives – in and out of school. It is fun to see how they have bonded – friendships have grown. Individually they are powerhouses and together they are a fierce force for good. They are stellar humans and I'm super proud. I have been blessed to see them grow."

"Coming here definitely helped my faith expand and I've really enjoyed coming here."

Taisia Matveev, graduating senior at Hamilton Christian Academy

2024 Bitterroot Valley homeschool graduates

ELEANORE GUSAAS
PHOTOGRAPHY

SHAILYN ROSE PHOTOGRAPHY



PROVIDED PHOTO



SHAILYN ROSE PHOTOGRAPHY



PROVIDED PHOTO

Serena Riehl –
 Activities: Soccer, art,
 cosmetology, piano.

Timothy Harrington
 – Activities:
 Construction, Airsoft,
 football, ultimate
 frisbee, World War II
 tanks, hunting, travel.

Genesis Lopez –
 Graduating with
 Honors: excelled math,
 AP classes, music/
 vocals, reading.

Peter Harrington –
 Activities: Soccer,
 ultimate, philosophy,
 page at the MT Senate.

Lukas West – Activities:
 Classical piano, martial
 arts, Scouts.
 Plans after graduation:
 Attend University of
 Montana to study radio
 technology.



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Write the next chapter

Experts share tips for high school graduates who are undecided about their paths

KATHLEEN FURORE
Tribune Content Agency

Graduation season is fast approaching, and while many high school seniors have plans in place for life post-high school, others aren't sure what their next step will be.

"Sadly, many of our kids today are just not adequately prepared to make informed, confident decisions about what they want to do after high school," says Jean Eddy, president and CEO of education nonprofit American Student Assistance.

"More than 65% of students feel they would have benefited from more career exploration in middle or high school, ... and only 47% of respondents who identified as members of Generation Z said they had enough information to decide what pathway was best for them after high school," Eddy says.

The good news?

"We know from research that the views of employers, prospective employees as well as policymakers are evolving rapidly regarding non-degree pathways," Eddy adds.

Krystal Hicks, founder of the career counseling practice JobTalk LLC, echoes Eddy.

"Higher education and trade schools have also evolved, and there is no longer pressure from institutions to roll right into one after high school," Hicks says.

Here, career experts offer their advice to soon-to-graduate students who aren't sure what the next year or so will hold.



Try not to compare yourself with your friends. "One of the biggest mistakes I see young people – and their parents – make is to force themselves into college when they're not ready or interested. It can make for an expensive mistake," says Krystal Hicks, founder of the career counseling practice JobTalk LLC.

1 Don't compare yourself to others

"Try not to fall victim to the comparison syndrome with your friends who seemingly 'have it all figured out,'" Hicks stresses. "One of the biggest mistakes I see young people – and their parents – make is to try and force themselves into college when they're not ready or interested. It can make for an expensive mistake."

2 Talk with a guidance counselor

"Each high school will have access to career path resources," says Stacie Garlieb, president of Successful Impressions LLC, who teaches career search skills. "This is a great first step for someone who isn't sure what direction to go."

3 Take a gap year

This can range from participating in national service programs like AmeriCorps' City Year or NCCC to taking a job to "gain job skills and training in a place that feels

interesting to you," Hicks says. "I've seen recent grads work hospitality, administrative and food/customer service jobs for a year after graduation and then get promoted into other internal functions of the business shortly after. There is a ton of value to afford yourself the time and opportunity to explore different jobs and build your skills."

4 Think about trade school or apprenticeship programs

"If you don't want to continue sitting in a classroom setting, possibly consider trade schools or apprenticeship programs where you can get certifications in specialized fields," Garlieb suggests.

Athena Kan, CEO of Dreambound, a company that helps people to find and pay for vocational

training programs, also recommends exploring options in the trades. "Trades jobs offer a unique opportunity for people to get started in a high-paying job quickly, working without a college degree and instead getting trained in just a few months," Kan explains, noting the trades include industries such as HVAC, IT and health care, to name a few.

5 Consider community college

"Community college is affordable and often free; you can also transfer college credits, figure out what you want to do and save money," Kan says.

Explore jobs that offer educational benefits. Hicks and Kan note that many employers now offer tuition reimbursement. "Imagine chipping away at a bachelor's degree or trade program at your own pace and eventually graduating without any student loan debt," Hicks says.

"Some will even pair you with an adviser who can help coach you to get into the right school and program for you," Kan adds.

Advice for younger students

For students not on the cusp of entering post-high school life, Jean Eddy, president and CEO of education nonprofit American Student Assistance, offers these tips:

Explore careers early, starting in middle school.

"Seek out free student-directed, digital-first learning experiences beyond the classroom, such as American Student Assistance's Futurescape, a mobile-first experience that enables career exploration aligned with teens' interests."

Access work-based learning opportunities in high school.

These can include in-person or virtual paid internships, job-shadowing, micro-internships and pre-apprenticeships, Eddy says. "Students should test and 'try on' as much as they can, in order to learn about all viable postsecondary education and career pathways, including non-degree options." ExpandOpportunities.org is one resource on non-degree pathways that Eddy recommends.

6 Check out career websites

Katie Schwartz, the founder of Business Speech Improvement, which provides coaching and communication resources, suggests checking out the "remarkable website" nccareers.org for guidance.

"It offers free online testing and a chance to learn more about many careers," Schwartz says.

Kathleen Furore is a Chicago-based writer and editor. You can email her your career questions at kfurore@yahoo.com.

Congratulations Bitterroot Valley Graduates!



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Stevensville High School Class of 2024

Top seniors, graduates and scholarships

Valedictorian: Malia Gunterman — Activities: Speech and Debate, DECA, Academic World Quest, National Honor Society, Stevensville Community Foundation, intern at the Montana World Affairs Council.

Plans after graduation: Attend Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

Salutatorian: Dawsyn Brewer — Activities: Soccer, rugby, Big Jacket mentorship program, National Honors Society, Key Club, student council, DECA.

Plans after graduation: Attend Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo to study biology, pre-med track.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Stevensville High School Class of 2024
Valedictorian Malia Gunterman.



PROVIDED PHOTO

Stevensville High School Class of 2024 Salutatorian
Dawsyn Brewer.

Stevensville High School Graduating Class of 2024

Jason Agostino	Amelia Hardin	Zachary Sannar, Stock Farm
Isaac Alford	Dooley Hidas	Greater Ravalli Scholarship
Damian Amezcue	Alison Hill	Cheyenne Sannar, Stock Farm
Tanna Bailey, Montana State	Gustav Hunter	Greater Ravalli Scholarship,
University Premier Scholarship,	Bryce Johnson	Reach Higher Montana, MUS
Montana State University	Keenan Johnson	Honor Scholarship, MUS STEM
Treasure State Scholarship,	Kamryn Jones	Scholarship, Rhino Roofing
Stock Farm Greater Ravalli	Regina Jones	Scholarship
Scholarship, MUS STEM	Clayton King	Serenity Scott
Scholarship	Savannah Kostecki	Nya Seibert
Lanaya Bean	Shilo Lampi	Cali Shepherd
Dawsyn Brewer	Gunnar Larson	Drake Springer
Christopher Cassone	Matthew Liedtka	Holly St. Germain, University
Rylyn Christopher	Alayna Mauler	of Providence Athletic
Hayden Cirincione	Sidney McCasland	Scholarship
Clayten Cochran	Cara McGrath, Stock Farm Greater	Andrew Stewart
Talon Colman	Ravalli Scholarship, Reach	Bryan Strozyk, Montana
Charles Cook	Higher Montana, Bitterroot	University System STEM
Aven Daniels	Quilters Guild	Scholarship
Maddy Davids	Gabrielle Mize	Chase Summers
Brody Deason	Brooklyn Moore	Noah Tan
Danika Felton	Thia Morinville	Chloe Taylor
Brogan Gard	Landon Nelson	Jedidiah Tschida
Shane Gingerich	Dylan Nittler	William Van Tassel
Ignacio Gomez	Drew Novak	Haley Wandler, Eagles Vocational
Malia Gunterman, Montana	Maya Peretto	Trade School Scholarship
Electric Cooperatives	Alexia Perez	Leann Wandler
Association (MECA) Memorial	Joy Pettijohn	Bradley Webster
Scholarship	Zachary Polanski	Zoe Wedel-Corwin, Montana
Morgan Gunther, University	Katelyn Pope	State University Premier
of Montana Academic	Erik Potter	Scholarship
Scholarship, Stock Farm	Cambree Praast	Colvin Whitehair
Greater Ravalli Scholarship	Quinn Rahl, Montana University	Sylus Wilton
Selwyn Hackett, MSU Premier	System STEM Scholarship	Harrison Yaskus
Scholarship, Stock Farm	Jaden Rhodda	
Greater Ravalli Scholarship,	Colby Richards	
MUS STEM Scholarship, Elks	Jessica Ryhal	
Foundation, FFA Alumni		

Alternative Learning Center Graduates

Kamryn Brewer
Aliviana Casida
Hannah Chadwick-Strause
Aydin Chernault
Hana Cotton
Ryan Crotto
Cole Davis
Zaya Elion
Tyson Hawkinson
Marcus Kehs
Ara Masar
Gillian Webster



Stevensville High School senior spotlight: Gunnar Larson

MICHELLE MCCONNAHA

michelle.mcconnaha@ravallirepublic.com

Stevensville High School has chosen to highlight graduating senior Gunnar Larson.

SHS Principal Eric Larson said Gunnar is an “absolute relation.”

“As principals I think our kids get ripped off a little bit, but I asked around and the counselor recommended Gunnar,” he said. “I agree. I’m not going to keep him out of it just because he is my son. He is high achieving in his studies, a two-sport athlete and he coaches a second-grade team of flag football.”

Gunnar Larson was the recipient of the “Number Zero Legacy” at SHS.

“It’s like Griz number 37 but it is our own, number zero for outstanding leadership,” Principal Larson said. “His whole career he’s been the quiet leader and when he does say something everybody listens. He’s always doing the right thing, even when nobody is looking. He is kind to everyone, keeps his nose to the grindstone and gets it done.”

Principal Larson said that with straight A’s Gunnar was coveted by many schools, had scholarship opportunities, and offers to play college football. But he is realistic and has other plans.



MICHELLE MCCONNAHA, RAVALLI REPUBLIC

“Quiet leader” Gunnar Larson is the Stevensville High School spotlight senior.

“He said, ‘Dad, I don’t want to waste anyone’s time or money if I don’t know what I want to do,’” Larson said. “He was just hired by the United States Forest Service and will be fighting fire out of the West Fork Ranger Station.

We graduate June 1; he goes to work June 4. He’s going to start an adventure and see if the Forest Service is what he wants to do.”

Gunner Larson attended Stevensville schools from fourth grade and was involved in wrestling, football, two years of FFA and club sports.

“My favorite part of SHS is that I’ve seen the remodel get done,” he said. “It was awesome. “My grade went through all the construction changes and now it is great. I’d argue that it is one of the nicest schools in the valley because everything is new. I love the environment.”

As for favorite classes, Gunner selected the physical education classes offered at SHS.

“I love the physical education department including weightlifting and motion classes,” Gunner said. “Mr. William teaches that. We also got a big weight room. His weightlifting classes are probably my favorite because they are in such a great environment that he puts on for us.”

Larson’s future plans include wildland fire fighting.

“I’m on a crew at the West Fork Ranger Station and start two days after graduation,” he said. “I’ll be there for the summer and see what it’s like, maybe helicopter crews. I got drawn to it because it is outdoors and federal jobs are cool with benefits.”



Good Luck Bitterroot Valley Graduates!

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Victor High School senior spotlight:

Taylor McKinley-Whitcomb

MICHELLE MCCONNAHA

michelle.mcconnaha@ravallirepublic.com

Victor High School has chosen to highlight graduating senior Taylor McKinley-Whitcomb.

She has attended Victor schools for 13 years and is the president of the senior class, the Student Council, National Honor Society and FFA.

McKinley-Whitcomb said the school is great because of its size.

"We are such a small school we are like a family here," she said. "You are a family — your friends are your family; the teachers are your family. We are one big family. The community is like a family too."

McKinley-Whitcomb participated in volleyball and basketball and was selected for the All-Conference team this year for volleyball. And, of course, she was team captain of both sports. She had back surgery and didn't get to complete the basketball season and will not pursue volleyball in college.

As for her leadership qualities, McKinley-Whitcomb is humble.

"I've always been told I am a leader," she said. "I just like to step up. I enjoy having kids look up to me, especially younger kids in FFA. It is heartwarming."

She enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking and camping.

"Just everything outdoors — I love the outdoors," she said.

For her favorite classes she selected chemistry and agriculture.

"I'm going to nursing school, so I like chemistry," McKinley-Whitcomb said. "Any Ag class because I'm super involved in FFA. My favorite teacher is Mrs. Worthington. I love her. I definitely think having her classes keeps me involved. I also really like Superintendent Woodard. She has changed this school around a lot."

McKinley-Whitcomb plans to go to Montana Tech in Butte for four years to attend nursing school. She has already started her career path by working at Bitterroot Health in Hamilton as a "patient sitter," and assisting nurses and certified nursing assistants (CNAs).

She described being a "patient sitter" as just being present and helping by caring.

"I sit with suicidal patients, mental patients and older patients who just can't be



MICHELLE MCCONNAHA, RAVALLI REPUBLIC

Taylor McKinley-Whitcomb has attended Victor schools for 13 years and is the president of the senior class, the Student Council, National Honor Society and FFA.

by themselves," McKinley-Whitcomb said. "I'm just assisting them in a lot of things, making sure they aren't getting out of bed and not pulling things out of their arms."

McKinley-Whitcomb said nursing is a calling that she's heard all her life.

"Growing up in hospitals all my life, I've had numerous surgeries and been around doctors," she said. "They make an impact on you and also on your family. Doctors and nurses are the role models of the world. I strive to be a leader and change the world. To me, nurses care but don't expect anything in return. That's okay. I would love to change a person's

life. I cannot wait to be a nurse."

She hopes to return to Bitterroot Health as an RN when her studies are complete.

"The valley feels like home," McKinley-Whitcomb said. "I'm a homebody and everyone feels like family. We're so welcoming. I hope to return and make an impact on my community because this community has shaped me. I want to show that I care and love my soon to be patients."

She is the middle of five children, has three dogs and said her grandmother, Debbie Clarke, is her best friend.

McKinley-Whitcomb is also working towards her pilot's license.

"I started that when I was 15 but quit for a while when my dad died," she said. "I just started back up. I can't wait to change the world. I think I definitely chose the right path for myself."

Victor Librarian Amber Lynch said, "Taylor McKinley is the student and superhuman that the world only experiences on occasion."

"She is the girl who has already made such a positive impact on her school, valley and state," Lynch said. "She will now share that positive impact with a greater part of the world. Taylor carries hope, poise and kindness for her generation."

Victor High School Class of 2024

Top seniors,
graduates and
scholarships

Valedictorian: Daniel Crosbie — Activities: Football, FFA, skiing.

Plans after graduation:
Attend Montana State University to study psychology.

Salutatorian: Alec Rowlan — Activities: Bitterroot Valley Rugby Club, football, basketball.

Plans after graduation: Marine Corps Boot Camp, Military Police schooling, attend Montana State University to study psychology, Marine Corps active duty and officer training program.

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Jose Aguilar Pettit
Sadie Allred
Josiah Berk
Daniel Crosbie (Valedictorian)
Russell Drewien
Spencer Gabbard
Kayleen Jessop
Justin Jewell
Isabella Joanis
Price Johnson
Alyce Lyman
Taylor McKinley-Whitcomb, The Stock Farm
Greater Ravalli Foundation Scholarship, Montana
Tech Lance Scholars Program, Scholars Edge
Scholarship

Desirae Neider
Henrique Nunes
Alec Rowlan (Salutatorian), tuition assistance
from the U.S. Marine Corps, Greater Ravalli
Stock Farm Scholarship, 2024 Horatio Alger
Scholarship, MSU first generation and premier
scholarship
Haylie Tolley
Aidan Wilkes



PROVIDED PHOTO
Victor High School
Valedictorian Daniel Crosbie.



PROVIDED PHOTO
Victor High School Salutatorian
Alex Rowlan.



PROVIDED PHOTO
Taylor McKinley

Class of 2024

Congratulations Graduates!

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There's one scholarship in each community where we have a Farmers State Bank. That's nine total awards.

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Corvallis High School

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Harrison Shepp
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