



Warrior

NEWS

January 2023
Newsletter

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January 2023

Dear Warriors,

Happy New Year - 2023! This year has special significance in the Ernstmeyer home. Our youngest daughter Jordan is a Lincoln Lutheran senior and will graduate this May as a member of the Class of 2023. It feels surreal to imagine how much different it will be next fall not having one of my own kids on campus after 12 years of getting to come to “work” each day knowing my family is benefiting from this wonderful ministry.

Our school theme this year is “Anchored in Christ” based on Hebrews 6:19 where we read “we have this hope as an anchor for the soul.” Jesus is our hope. He is our “constant” in life. In both good times and challenges our spiritual focus can falter causing us to drift towards the wrong path. Jesus provides an essential reference point to pull us back to the security of His guidance.

With so much turmoil in the world around us, we are blessed to tether the learning and educational experience at Lincoln Lutheran to Jesus as our true anchor. Helping students to wrestle with and make choices filtered through Scripture truly matters. I think this is more important today than ever. As a parent, knowing my daughters have been nurtured in this way at Lincoln Lutheran brings peace as they begin “adulthood” in the world today. I know they are prepared. I know it won’t always be easy. However, I know they are held to an immovable anchor in Jesus who will never fail them.

Thank you for your continued support of this ministry and for lifting our students and staff up in your prayers!

God’s Richest Blessings in 2023 and beyond!



Scott Ernstmeyer, Ed.S.
Executive Director-LLSA & LEF
LLJHS - Class of 1989

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2023

3/24 28th Annual Blue and Gold

May 2022

5/21 Graduation

5/24 Give to Lincoln Day

ADMINISTRATION

Scott Ernstmeyer, Executive Director

Shelia Psencik, Principal

Joel Brase, Assistant Principal and Activities Director

Julie Frederick, Guidance Director

Benjamin Smith, Director of Enrollment

MISSION

Equip young people to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ by providing an excellent, Christ-centered education.

VISION

Lincoln Lutheran will be known as a welcoming Christian community that provides students with a Christ-centered education through dynamic programs, dedicated professional staff and an environment conducive to learning in order to develop prepared and responsible servants in God’s world.

TAGLINE

Lincoln Lutheran - Christ-centered Learning for Life

2022–2023 THEME VERSE

“Anchored in Christ”

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul.”

– Hebrews 6:19

Warrior News is published for Lincoln Lutheran alumni and friends. For additional copies, or to notify us of address changes or personal updates contact us at 402-467-5404 or development@incolnlutheran.org

Senior Spotlight



I have been beyond blessed to be able to call myself a “Lincoln Lutheran Warrior” for the last seven years. In all honestly, the Lincoln Lutheran community is so much more than just a school, but rather, a family made up of excellent teachers, staff, and faculty who serve

every day to challenge their students academically and mentor them spiritually.

Thanks to the rigorous course programming and diverse extracurriculars, all founded with Christ as the Cornerstone, I can emphatically say that Lincoln Lutheran has shaped me into who I am today. As I look forward to starting my next chapter at Dordt University in the fall, I’m sure that I will continue to be grateful for all that Lincoln Lutheran has taught me. ~ Hannah Vander Top



My time here at Lincoln Lutheran has been a real blessing to me. Some of the things that have made it great have been being able to be involved in so many things, the amazing teachers, and being around my friends in a Christian environment. The supportive environment combined

with Christ centered learning makes it so easy to be grateful for everything here.

I plan to go into the nursing field and become a cardiac nurse. I will take my work ethic and the traits that these teachers have instilled in me to be successful in the world. I will also take my faith that has been strengthened here in this place and put that into practice in all times when I am not here in this place. ~ Bo Claridge

As I reflected on my past seven years at Lincoln Lutheran, it did not take long for me to realize how blessed I have been to have the opportunity to attend this school. I am so thankful for this school, its activities, its opportunities, and what it stands



for. I have loved knowing each one of my classmates and teachers. I truly feel like I am recognized for who I am, rather than just being a “number.” I have also enjoyed the activities in which I have participated. Each activity that I have been involved in has a great atmosphere of coaches and teammates

who care about your success, both in that activity and life. Additionally, I have recently come to appreciate the blessing of a faith-centered education. My faith would be no where near as strong as it is today without the Christ-centered atmosphere at Lincoln Lutheran. This school is truly a shining light in a dark world that prepares students for life.

After graduation, I plan to continue my education and follow a Pre-Nursing track. Eventually, I would like to attend nursing school and one day become a Nurse Practitioner. I am currently undecided on where I will attend college next year, but I feel very prepared for the next chapter because of my faith and the amazing education that I have received. ~ Brady Franzen



I would describe my time at Lincoln Lutheran as good but challenging. I was challenged in all aspects of school to help me succeed and to help prepare me for later in life. I have made so many friends in both the court/track and in the classroom. Lincoln Lutheran has taught me lots about responsibility

and time management as a student athlete which is something I am very grateful for.

I will be attending St. Cloud State University to play collegiate volleyball as well as studying biology. I will take what I’ve learned about time management, communication, teamwork, and dedication to my college with me. I feel completely prepared and ready for what college might throw at me because of what Lincoln Lutheran has taught me.

~ Abby Wachal

Alumni News

2022 Distinguished Alumni Award - Dawn Cooksey



Dawn Cooksey attended Lincoln Lutheran from 1977 to 1979. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of Nebraska Omaha, a Masters of Arts in Gifted Education from the University of Nebraska Kearney and completed Colloquy studies from Concordia University, Nebraska.

Today, Dawn is the Director of Admissions for Concordia Lutheran Schools of Omaha, where she enrolls over 100 new students each year. In addition to admissions, Dawn wears many hats at school. For example, she serves on the PR, Marketing and Communications team, she's the Congregation and Community liaison, Yearbook Advisor, Quiz Bowl coach, and Student Ambassador Advisor.

Dawn's roots in education and her journey to Director of Admissions at Concordia Lutheran Schools started in the classroom. She taught 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade at Mount Calvary Lutheran School in Omaha, as well as 3rd grade at Omaha Public Schools. She spent two years in Ohio; one as a computer teacher for CompuQuest Educational Services and one as a third grade teacher for Cleveland Public Schools. She served as a technology coordinator and teacher for Shepard of the Hills Christian School in Littleton, Colorado and a Gifted Education Teacher for Sioux Falls Public Schools. Next, she served at Christ Community Lutheran School in Kirkwood, Missouri as a 6th grade teacher and also implemented a school-wide gifted education program there called Destination Imagination.

And Lincoln Lutheran is not the only organization to bestow accolades on Dawn! She's also a Target Teacher Scholarship winner and a Disney Teacher of the Year Nominee.

Dawn and her husband Rob have 3 children, Anna, Sarah and Aaron and two granddaughters, Maya and Zoe.

As Dawn looks back at her years as a Warrior, she said, "My experience at Lincoln Lutheran provided for me the best possible foundation for faith, education, and lasting friendships that I still build upon over 40 years later. It would not have been possible for me to have any better preparation for my future than what was provided for me in the hallways at LLJHS."

Mark your calendars - August 4, 2023

Alumni Gathering

Honoring the following classes:

Junior High Class of 1973 - 50 years
Junior High Class of 1983 - 40 years
Junior High Class of 1993 - 30 years
High School Class of 2003 - 20 years
High School Class of 2013 - 10 years

Alumni News

2022 Distinguished Young Alumni Award - Margaret Ingerslew Lange



Lieutenant Colonel Margaret Ingerslew Lange attended Lincoln Lutheran from 1997-2001. She then attended Concordia University in Seward where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration and Chemistry. She attended Officer Training School and was commissioned into the United States Air Force in 2008 where she serves as an evaluator and instructor Weapon Systems Officer on the B-52 and B-1. She continued her education in 2014 with a Master of Organizational Management from Brandman University in Irvine, CA. In 2020, while stationed at Maxwell Air Force Base near Montgomery, Alabama, she completed the Joint All Domain Strategist program and the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies through Air University. There, she earned a Master of Military Operational Art and Science in 2021 and a Master of Philosophy in Military Strategy in 2022.

Today, Lt Col Margaret Ingerslew Lange is employed by the United States Air Force as the Deputy Director of the Deputy Commander Action Group at Offutt Air Force Base. She is responsible for aiding the Deputy Commander to enact Commander initiatives, conduct targeted research, and synthesize inputs across the staff for Deputy Commander special projects at United States Strategic Command. Prior to this assignment, she served as the Executive Officer to the Commander, United States Air Force Central Command. She previously held positions at the Wing and Squadron levels, serving as Director, Commander's Action Group, Assistant Director of Operations, Wing Executive Officer, and Flight Commander.

Margaret and her husband Seth have three children, Andersen, Madeline, and Scarlet. They've served their communities as youth group leaders, Sunday school teachers, as well as board members for United Way, Dollars for Scholars, and Junior Achievement. But they are most passionate about coaching various sports teams.

As she looks back at her time as a Warrior, she fondly recalls band and choir tours, state music competitions, and the senior class trip. Her most favorite memories are the car trips to and from school with her friend Chelsea, who is still her friend going on 35 years.

Margaret believes that the educational foundation she received at Lincoln Lutheran enabled her to thrive through the rigor of college, military training and education, as well as graduate studies. The advice she has for today's Warriors is to be true to yourself, know your worth, and guard your beliefs and core values.

Lincoln Lutheran Impacting the World!

2,410 Lincoln Lutheran alumni
living in **48** states
and at least **6** countries

New Lincoln Lutheran Programs

35 Ten



Introducing 35TEN! This new student band provides music at weekly Chapel and special LL events like Grandparents Day. “Music is such a big part of worship,” says choral instructor Bethany Zeckzer. “Having a group of students that want to be leaders in this way is such a blessing.” Brady Franzen, senior, plays guitar in the new band: “I joined because it was a unique opportunity to make music and praise God while doing it.”

The students chose the name 35TEN based on the Bible verse Isaiah 35:10: “They will enter Zion with singing and everlasting joy will crown their heads.”



Mental Health Services on Campus



“The research can’t be ignored,” says Principal Sheila Psencik. According to data from the CDC, 44 percent of high school students said they felt persistently sad or depressed in the past year. A UNICEF study showed the alarming statistic that 73 percent of students who felt unmotivated and pessimistic about the future said they felt they **SHOULD** ask for help with those feelings, but only 33 percent actually did.

“At Lincoln Lutheran, we want to educate students about their mental health,” says Psencik. “Our teachers and administration do a great job of being available to students, but we also recognize that young people would benefit from the opportunity to receive services from a trained practitioner.”

Mrs. Psencik contracted with GracePoint Institute for Relational Health, located within the University Lutheran Chapel located on UNL campus, to provide weekly, on-site counseling services for Lincoln Lutheran students at no cost. “The goal of the program is to provide our students a safe, easily-accessible place to ask for professional help and receive Christ-centered care and counsel,” says Psencik. The program started in September 2022 and has been well-received.

Therapist Hannah Neihardt, MS, PLMHP, NCC, has a private office at Lincoln Lutheran where she meets with students every Thursday. She specializes in individual counseling with adolescents and young adults who are dealing with anxiety, depression, trauma and relational issues.

Hannah, a Warrior alum, says that working with teens and young adults is her passion. “I hope to give students a positive experience of counseling to remove any stigma or misconceptions about pursuing mental health care whenever they need it - now and in their futures.”

Rising Scholars

Now more than ever, parents are wanting their child to have the type of learning experience that Lincoln Lutheran provides. One that aligns with a Christian worldview and that offers superior academics, while also nurturing their child’s social, emotional, and spiritual intelligence at the same time. In some cases, the **only** obstacle holding families back is the cost of tuition. Thus...Rising Scholars was created. It is a first-of-its-kind, full ride and partial scholarship program for students new to Lincoln Lutheran. The application process was open September through December, and the response was impressive! In-person interviews were conducted with every applicant during January, and recipients will be announced in February.



New Lincoln Lutheran Programs

Discover Lincoln Lutheran Night - New and Improved!

Discover Lincoln Lutheran Night is an annual event for prospective parents to learn about Lincoln Lutheran. Traditionally, only parents attended to hear information-laden presentations from faculty and staff. This year, the event was recreated to include students and parents in a format that was interactive, informative and fun! New features included:

- A hot chocolate bar with time for prospective students to mingle and converse with current Student Ambassadors
- Personal testimony from this year's Distinguished Young Alumni, Margaret Ingerslew
- A Question and Answer with a panel of current parents
- A Faculty Fair where teachers created their own stations with activities that range from karaoke to a live bearded dragon!



ZAP ~ A New Academic Accountability Program



"Failure to complete assignments can be a significant obstacle to a student's academic success," says Principal Sheila Psencik. "A single zero can dramatically damage a student's academic status." Therefore, ZAP was created to help hold the students accountable. ZAP is an acronym for:

ZEROS AREN'T PERMITTED

If a student does not turn in their assignment, they receive a ZAP notice from their teacher and their parents are notified that they have been "zapped." Students report to the ZAP room immediately after school to complete the missing assignment before they leave for the day.

"The goal of the ZAP program is to provide academic support, promote good study habits, encourage responsibility, and instill work habits that will serve students well in college and the workplace. We want our students to have the skills to be successful in the future," says Principal Psencik.

New Mentoring Program

“Every middle school child should have someone in their corner,” says Sean Wieting, 6th grade teacher and newly appointed high school football coach at Lincoln Lutheran Middle and High School, “and that’s why Warrior Walk was created.”

It is typical for middle school students to have a dip in confidence and an increase in sullenness as they navigate this transitional phase. They are faced with different routines, shifts in old friendships, formation of new friendships and finding where they “fit” in a new environment with new people.

As a long-time mentor with Tom Osborne’s TEAMMATES program, Wieting had seen the positive impact of mentoring and decided, “we need to do a similar program here so that every middle school student has an older Warrior to walk with.”

But where does one even begin this type of undertaking? Wieting took his idea to the school’s **Community Outreach Leadership Team**, aka COLT, to get the ball rolling. The purpose of COLT is to find and implement ways to serve others, a core value at Lincoln Lutheran.

Wieting and his fellow 6th grade teacher Brooklyn Schulte, along with the seven Lincoln Lutheran students on COLT, worked together to launch a small pilot program during the ‘21-’22 school year. “We matched nine middle school students with nine high school students,” says Wieting. “It was wildly successful. Not only did it help the middle school students, but the high school mentors also reaped benefits.”

Here are some quotes from the high school mentors who participated in the pilot program:

“When I look at my weekly schedule and see mentoring on Thursdays, it brightens my day. I’m not the most outgoing person, so mentoring has helped me with starting conversations and learning to talk to others.” ~Trenton, Sophomore

“Even though some kids might not look like they need someone, they really do. Mentoring has made me think more about what other people might be going through.” ~Cole, Senior

I love what mentoring has done for me! I have built a friendship with my younger mentee that I am so glad to have! I am beyond happy to be part of this program. ~Abby, Senior

I want to be the friend to my mentee that I would have liked to have when I was her age.” ~Bre, Senior

With the success of the pilot program, it was decided that ‘22-’23 would be the year that every 7th and 8th grade student at Lincoln Lutheran would be matched with a mentor - 107 middle schoolers to be exact. Wieting needed at least that many students from the sophomore through senior classes to volunteer to be mentors. He confesses he was nervous there wouldn’t be enough. Instead, he was amazed when received 117 “yeses” out of 123 students, which is **95 percent** of that section of the student body.



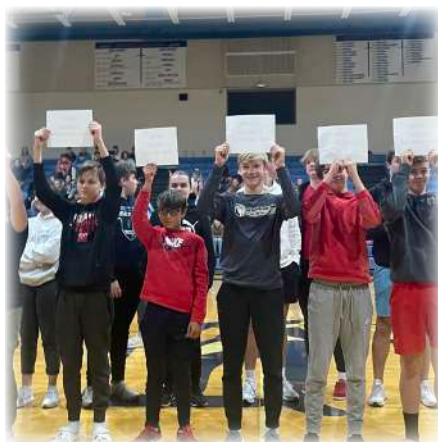
New Mentoring Program

From there, the high school volunteers received mentor training in communication, trust, emotional intelligence and relationship building. A match committee analyzed pairing information from the students to ensure they were matched with someone who had similar interests.

Then, December 8 was Match Day. Finally, after months of anticipation, students gathered in the gym. Mentees lined up facing outward. Mentors lined up behind them. On the count of 3, the mentees would turn around and meet their mentor. Immediately, students were hugging and high-fiving and getting to know one another.

Mentors meet with their mentees every week during a teacher supervised period of the school day. They are free to choose whatever they want to do together. Some choose board games, art projects, shooting hoops or they can just hang out and talk if they prefer.

“I am so proud of this program and the group effort from the Community Outreach Leadership Team to get it off the ground. To me, it represents what it really means to be a Warrior,” says Wieting. “A Warrior is not just our school mascot. It means more than that. Being a true Warrior means serving others, and that’s what students are doing in this program. They serve by listening. They serve by just being there.”



Celebrations



Congratulations to senior **Seth Stowell** on receiving a Letter of Commendation from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. This prestigious award is based on the results of the PSAT taken during the fall of 11th grade. Out of the approximately 1.5 million students that participated in the test process, only 50,000 (3.3%) received recognition for their achievement.

SMITH MAKES NEBRASKA ALL STATE BAND.... AGAIN! Sophia Smith made the Nebraska All State band for the second year in a row. She was selected as one of the top clarinetists in the state through a rigorous audition process and got the chance to perform at the Lied Center for the Arts.



Abby Wachal was named one of the Lincoln Journal Star's 2022 Super-State volleyball players, a group featuring both heavy hitters and finesse, the best of the best from Nebraska high school volleyball this year.

A PERFECT SEASON AND STATE VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONS! The Warrior volleyball team completed the season **undefeated**, 40-0, claim-

ing the state championship for the **SECOND YEAR IN A ROW!** Not only are the Warriors back-to-back state champions, but also winners of three of the last four Class C-2 titles.



The **Warrior One Act Play Cast and Crew** finished 3rd at the district contest. Individual acting awards were given to Clara Admiral, Thomas Cosgrove, Mikaela Crable, Harper Davis, Edysen Dolezal, Alex Halverson, Gavin Loewe, Natalie Meyer, Leah Stueber, Quinn Trutna, Hannah Vander Top, and Hannah Wertz.



Mikaela Crable and Autumn Veen were recognized by Lt. Governor Foley and Deputy Commissioner Brian Halstad at the Nebraska State Capital for being National Champions in the SkillsUSA Robotics: Urban Search and Rescue competition.



Music teacher **Bethany Zeckzer** was recognized by Concordia University Chicago as the recipient of the Richard Hillert Award in Student Composition. She's going to be recognized again for the same work at the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians conference in Philadelphia this July.

Lutheran Education Foundation

BLUE AND GOLD - March 24, 2023

Plans are underway for the 28th annual Blue and Gold Gala at the Embassy! This year's theme is Embark on the Journey.

We would like your help. Do you have ideas or donations for the Live and Silent auctions? **Give us a call!**

Purchase tickets online at
<https://handbid.app.link/LEF-2023>
or call 402-467-5404 to reserve your tickets.



THRIVENT CHOICE

Lincoln Lutheran has been receiving Thrivent Choice funds since September 2010. It is an easy way for eligible Thrivent Financial members to designate funds to a charity of their choice.

thrivent

**2022 funds must be designated
by March 31, 2023**

Make sure to take advantage of designating your funds to the charity of your choice.

Eligible members must designate funds by logging into their account at www.thrivent.com or calling Thrivent Financial at 800-847-4836.

Did you know Thrivent members can do two Thrivent Action Team projects each year? Give us a call at 402-467-5404 if you would like to use an Action Team project for Lincoln Lutheran.

LEGACY SOCIETY

79 members

\$1,596,460.81

received from 31 members
called home to be with the Lord

\$5,113,500

future planned gifts from 47 members

EMBARK CAMPAIGN

The Embark campaign is our current campaign focused on current campus, scholarships, retiring current debt, support for teachers and down payment for land.

The Embark campaign started July 1, 2021 and will go through June 30, 2025.

Current status:

Goal - \$4,000,000

Funds raised - \$2,913,881.88

Number of donors participating - 317

GIVE TO LINCOLN DAY

Give to Lincoln Day is a day of online giving for charities sponsored by the Lincoln Community Foundation.

Last year was our largest in three areas:

- * Funds raised - nearly \$165,000
- * Match monies earned - over \$10,000
- * Number of donors participating - 127

Lutheran Education Foundation finished 5th out of 479 participating charities in amount raised.

Give to Lincoln Day 2023 is May 24, 2023!



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WARRIOR NEWS

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