

Local Schools



[TOP](#)

Tyler Stevenson Receives Lion's Club Scholarship

JUNE 01ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Tyler Stevenson Receives Lion's Club Scholarship

Dexter, Missouri - The Dexter Lions Club presented Tyler Stevenson with a \$1,000 scholarship recently.

Tyler Stevenson is the son of Kay Stevenson and Keith Stevenson.

He has been a member of the Dexter Bearcats Football team all four years of his high school career. he has also played tennis all four years. Tyler is a member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes, DECA, Rotary Interact, and Dexter Honor Society. He was a 2nd team All-Conference football team selection in 2014 and ESPN SEMO Gatorade Player of the Week in 2015. He was also a member of the 2014 Academic All-State Football Team.

His future plans are to attend Harding University and major in Engineering.

The Dexter Lions Club raises money annually with their Golf Tournament (slated for July 15, 2017), a Waffle Day and they sell Funnel Cakes at the Stoddard County Fair in September.

Shown in the photo are Kay Stevenson, Kevin Bishop, Lion's Club Representative, Tyler Stevenson and Keith Stevenson.

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[TOP](#)

Kindergarten Students Earn Awards

JUNE 01ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Kindergarten Students Earn Awards

Dexter, Missouri - Southwest Elementary honors Demi Richman, John Parker, Jozalen Shepherd, Mason Spencer, and Stella Fees with the Positive Office Referral certificate.

This award is presented to students who consistently show the 3R's RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, and READY TO LEARN at Southwest Elementary in Dexter.

Demi Richman is in the kindergarten classroom of Mr. Eldreth. "Demi is a great kid and a good behavior example to her classmates. She always shows the 3Rs."

John Parker is in the kindergarten classroom of Mrs. Chrisitan. "John is always showing the 3Rs and continues to be a great role model and leader every day. He is always helpful to others."

Jozalen Shepherd is in the kindergarten classroom of Mr. Eldreth. "Jozalyn always shows the 3Rs and is a great positive behavior model for her peers."

Mason Spencer is in the kindergarten classroom of Mr. Eldreth. "Mason is a great student and is a positive role model for his peers. He is always showing the 3Rs."

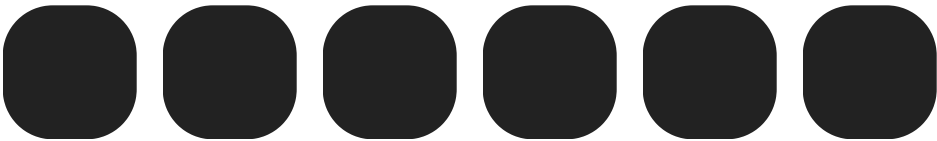
Stella Fees is in the kindergarten classroom of Mrs. Christian. "Stella is always showing the 3Rs and setting a great example every day!"

Shown in the photo are from left to right back row: Demi Richman, John Parker and Jozalyn Shepherd; front row: Mason Spencer and Stella Fees.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Students at Bloomfield Make a Difference

MAY 31ST 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Students at Bloomfield Make a Difference

Bloomfield, Missouri - Students and staff at Bloomfield observed Make a Difference Day on May 23rd by performing a variety of civic projects in the community. the day focused on providing service learning projects for students in the Bloomfield School District.

Toni Hill, Superintendent of Bloomfield School District, reached out to the community to identify service activities. The students did a variety of activities from cleaning up the city park, and visiting the nursing home to picking up trash along Prairie Street as well as washed cars. Students even cleaned out the school buses. They also got their hands dirty performing some landscaping at the local nursing home, Assembly of God Church, First Baptist Church and the Welcome to Bloomfield sign on Hwy 25.

Other students made decorations for the nursing home, played board games with the residents, made cards for the Children's Home, cleaned up the school campus, and made home-made dog treats for the animal shelter.

"We, as a district, feel that it is important to teach our students to give without expecting anything in return. The art of serving is a life lesson we want to instill in each of our students," commented Toni Hill.

Shown in the photo from left to right are Ethan Thatcher, History Teacher Taylor Fields, Shawn Robey, Nathan Thatcher, and Collin Wilson.

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Dexter High School Graduates 134 Students

MAY 29TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Dexter High School Graduates 134 Students

Dexter, Missouri - The Class of 2016 graduated on Friday, May 13th at the Bearcat Event Center marking the beginning of the next chapter for more than 130 students.

Dexter High School Choir sang, "Lean on Me" with several seniors performing solos. They also sang "I'll Always Remember You" both songs directed by Jamie Sepulvado.

Mitch Wood, Superintendent, introduced this years Salutatorian and Valedictorian.

Delaney Pullen was named the Class of 2016 Salutatorian with a GPA of 4.3402. She is the daughter of Alex and Lori Pullen.

She opened her speech by thanking her amazing teachers that her class has had over the past thirteen years.

"Without your help and guidance, or without you passing your knowledge to us we would not be where we are today." She also thanked her parents.

She mentioned that she did not get the opportunity to know each and every one of the graduating Class of 2016 and she regretted that; however some of them she knew too well.

Delaney talked about how proud she was of living in such a small town of Dexter. "I have realized just how proud I am to call this place home. My hope for each of you is that you are able to recognize how lucky we all are to be Bearcats and to hold onto that wherever life takes you. While you may never return to Dexter, I encourage you all to one day strive to give back in some way to the community that has given so much to each of us."

"I do not think any of us are peaking tonight," Pullen continued." I believe each of us is destined to do something amazing and there are far greater things out there for us than what we are leaving behind."

"We will take away the friendships and the memories that have made us who we are over the past 13 years."

Delaney plans are to attend the University of Mississippi and major in Biology and then attend Optometry School.

She ended her speech with a humorous comment," God gave us all two ends – one to think with and the other to sit on. Your success depends on which end you use more. Heads you win and tails you lose!"

Julia Hahn, who will attend the University of Alabama, was named the Class of 2016 Valedictorian.

She graduated with a GPA of 4.4081 and is the daughter of Brad and Melissa Hahn of Dexter. She plans to major in Chemical and Biological Engineering with a tract in Pre-Medicine.

Julie stated that the number one fear in America is public speaking and for working hard for four years to become Valedictorian she was forced to write a speech during finals week and speak in front of a few thousand people at her graduation. The audience and her classmates chuckled.

She thanked God for His endless love and the many blessings He has given her. She thanked her classmate and friend Delaney on her excellent academic career and the countless hours she spent studying with her in Calculus. She also thanked her teachers and her parents for their support and encouragement throughout the years.

Julia said, "If I could summarize this night in one quote, it would be 'How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.' Although saying goodbye is never easy, it is even more difficult when you must part ways with people you have spent your entire childhood and teenage years with."

She noted that our community had experienced in the past couple of weeks a few tragedies and that your whole world can be turned upside down in the blink of an eye. There will be times when you feel like you are at the top of the world and others when you feel like you have hit an all time low. She then shared a few things she had learned in her 18 years on this earth.

1. ***Live in the Moment*** – "Each day, each moment, each breath we take, is a gift that we must take advantage of so I challenge you to be spontaneous, live intentionally and with passion, try new things, and most importantly stop waiting for tomorrow. Infuse your life with action!"
2. ***Don't be a "kinda" Person*** – "If you "kinda" want something, then you will "kinda" get the results you want. Don't let your dreams hide away in your mind. Commit to them with everything you have."
3. ***Be Somebody Who Makes Everybody Feel Like a Somebody*** – "Look around you. Each person in this room is dealing with something you know absolutely nothing about. Pave your own path, maintain relationships with others, and always, always be kind. Let people know how much they are loved. Give a voice to the voiceless, be an inspiration to those around you. Remember where you came from and pay it forward."

With those words of wisdom to the Class of 2016 and to the parents, grandparents, family and friends she asked each to join her in prayer to our Heavenly Father.

"Thank you for giving us lifelong friends and memories that we will cherish forever. Thank you for blessing us with such amazing teachers and parents who have supported us and prepared us for the next step in our lives. We ask that you continue to guide us and look over us as we begin this new journey. We know the road ahead is a challenging one, but, Lord, we trust the plans you have for us. I ask these things in Jesus name, Amen."

"I congratulate the Dexter High School Class of 2016 and wish you all the best of luck in your future endeavors."

Dan Pollock, Principal of Dexter High School asked as he read their name those students who were awarded scholarships to stand. He also recognized those who were joining the military, Top 10% of the class, and the Dexter Honor Society members.

The Class of 2016 chose as their class color – platinum, their class song as "Another Brick in the Wall" by Pink Floyd and their class motto as "If we cannot find the road to success. We will make one!" Student Body President was Kerigan Brady.

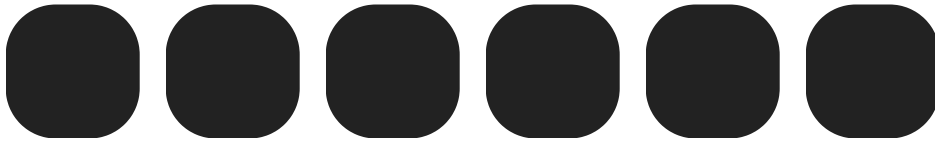
Rick Williams, President of the Dexter R-XI Board of Education, read the acceptance of the class and then presented the diplomas as each student walked across the stage to receive their diploma from Kevin Bishop. Mitch Wood gave closing remarks.

Shown in the photo are (left) Julia Hahn, Valedictorian, (right) Delaney Pullen, Salutatorian.

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[Go to post](#)



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[TOP](#)

Nearly 300 Graduate from Poplar Bluff High School

MAY 29TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Nearly 300 Graduate from Poplar Bluff High School

Poplar Bluff, Missouri - The commencement ceremony on Thursday, May 12, at the Black River Coliseum marked endings and new beginnings on multiple fronts.

First and foremost, 298 students graduated from the Poplar Bluff High School Class of 2016, joining more than 22,000 alumni before them.

Class president Elizabeth Bottorff said the milestone was akin to the conclusion of a book, but challenged her classmates to author an even better sequel. “Go write your own book and make it a best-seller,” she said, earlier advising: “Take everything one page at a time and cherish every word.”

Christian Cmehil-Warn, who will attend the University of Missouri in Columbia, was named this year’s salutatorian. He talked about his struggle to choose a career path, but said with a little hard work and a clearly defined goal, anything is possible. “You’ve got a whole life ahead of you,” he said. “Make what you want of it.”

The valedictorian honor went to Jackson Rideout, who has been accepted at Washington University in St. Louis. He discussed how graduating from high school means more than just a slip of paper, the experience has shaped their lives up until this point. The past four years has also taught him that everything is not black and white. “See the gray, the unknown, the other side, and appreciate it,” he said.

A special tribute was made to the surviving family of the late Kaitlyn Pullam, who has been memorialized with a new scholarship, which went to Mikayla Ursery for exemplifying Kaitlyn’s ideals and attitude. Nearly \$2.5 million in college scholarships was awarded to the graduating seniors altogether, according to Principal Mike Kiehne.

Another close to a chapter, it was pointed out by outgoing Superintendent Chris Hon in his welcoming speech, was that this class would be the last to graduate from 1300 Victory Lane. The city manager Mark Massingham, who was in attendance to watch his son walk, observed the momentous occasion in a Facebook post.

“Having a conversation today with David Johnson, Gary Melton and Ralph Stucker and realized the Class of 1966—which included my brother Terry Massingham and David and Gary—was the first class to graduate from the new high school. My son Landon and Ralph’s son Aaron will graduate this year—50 years later—and they will be the last class to graduate from this high school.”

Senior High and the Middle School are in the process of swapping locations under the historic buildings plan approved by voters, which will add more than 200,000 square feet of classroom space across campus while utilizing existing property. The new state-of-the-art facilities will be open for the 2016/17 school year.

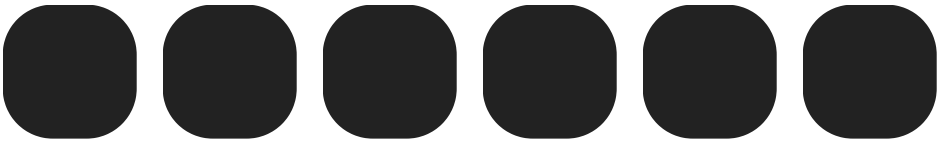
Shown in the photo are school officials seated in the background, top student Jackson Rideout delivers a graduation speech to his classmates.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Coordinator, Poplar Bluff R-I School District.

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