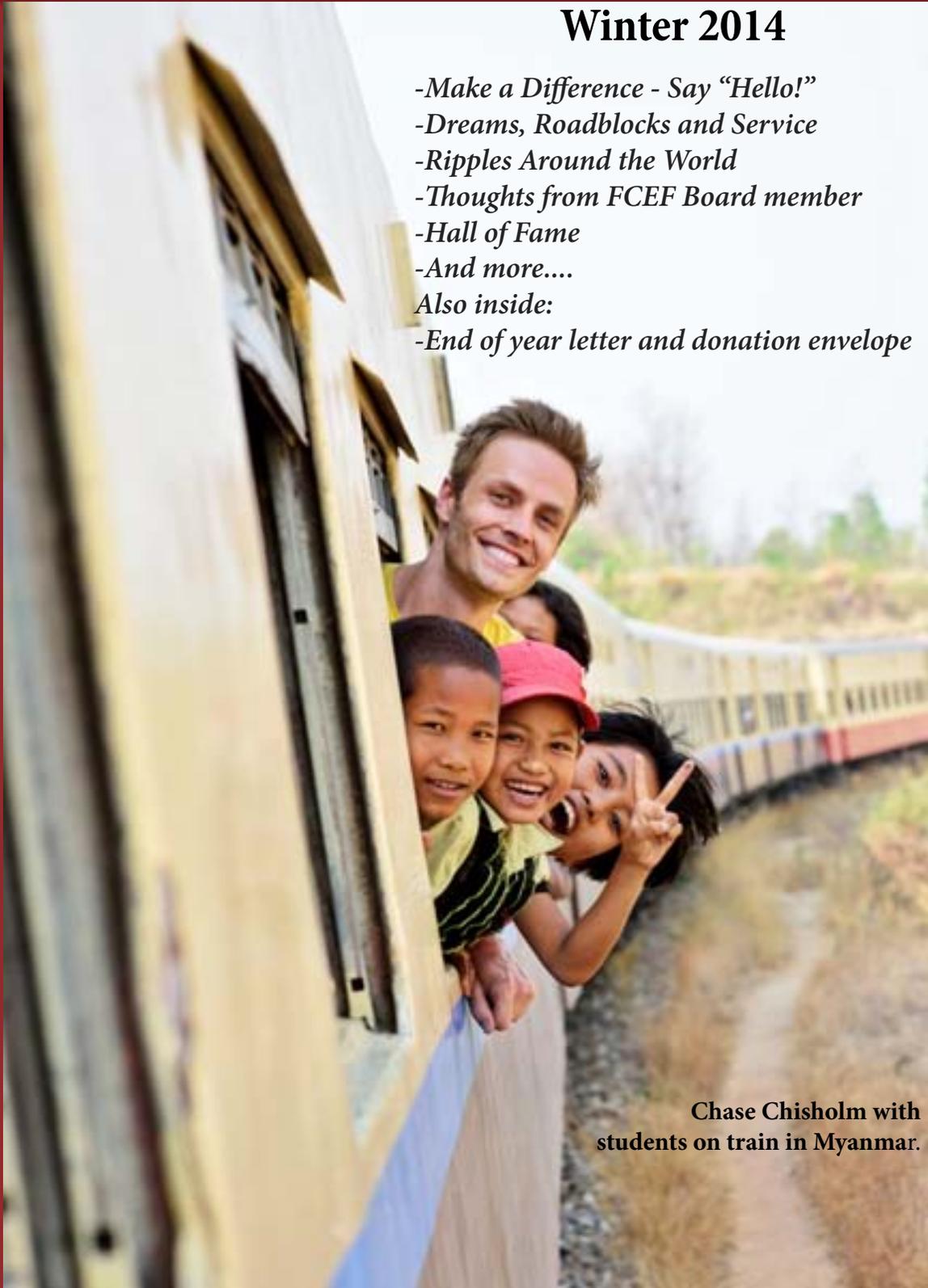


# ALUMNI Dream Catcher

## Winter 2014

- Make a Difference - Say "Hello!"*
  - Dreams, Roadblocks and Service*
  - Ripples Around the World*
  - Thoughts from FCEF Board member*
  - Hall of Fame*
  - And more....*
- Also inside:
- End of year letter and donation envelope*



Chase Chisholm with students on train in Myanmar.

## Letter from the President

Raymond M. Beebe

As the year draws to a close, we want to extend our very best wishes for a wonderful holiday season. We are so appreciative of the support many of you have provided this past year. It was a very successful year but I will not focus on those details as I believe most of you are regular readers of the Dream Catcher and you have followed our significant progress.

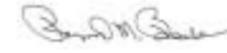
Rather, I want to tell you why it is so critical that we have your support now and explain why foundations like ours which provide support to college-bound young people are truly critical for our nation. You are all familiar with the term "The American Dream." One definition I like is: "Life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability and achievement regardless of social class or circumstances of birth." My friends we are in a very critical time when private support for our young people is essential if we are to keep The American Dream alive. The day when you could work your way through college is long gone. Since 2000, the cost of college (tuition and fees) has increased more than 5% annually above the rate of inflation. Students graduate with a median debt level of \$57,600. This debt burden combined with the difficulty in qualifying for a loan has resulted in homeownership levels dropping for the under 35 group from 42% in 2007 to 36.8% currently and this trend is likely to continue. Many parents are struggling themselves with one study showing that 33% plan to contribute less than \$5,000 for the entirety of their son's or daughter's college education. State support for higher education has decreased substantially with no change of direction likely.

I want you to believe that in the true spirit of Christmas there is joy in giving. Let me tell you about the joy my wife and I are experiencing through endowing a scholarship which we will award for the third time next May. We did not "spend" money to create this scholarship but rather we "invested" it in the Forest City School District's most valuable asset, its wonderful young people. That, my friends, is a very good investment and one that we will enhance in the years ahead. It is such a joy to "connect" with our recipients and watch them prepare for a career they will love and a life where they will indeed "make a difference." We could have waited to start this process through our estate plan but it truly is a joy to see our "investment" flourish while we are still here. In our last Dream Catcher we reported on the reception held last May in Ames where one of our most generous donors, Bill Fox, Class of 1940, was feted by recipients of his scholarship. There were tears of joy in Mr. Fox's eyes and well as the eyes of many of the recipients. Mr. Fox was overwhelmed and proud that he had been able to "pay it forward" and create this wonderful legacy.

As we approach year-end and you consider charitable giving, let me suggest that an investment in our wonderful young people deserves to be at the top of your list. Please also consider endowing a scholarship. What greater legacy can you leave?

While we are pleased with the growth of the foundation we realize that substantially more growth is needed to adequately serve our wonderful young people. Through my position with the foundation I have been privileged to become acquainted with a number of our young people and I could tell you story after story about them that would warm your heart. They are truly amazing! The need is RIGHT NOW! Please invest in our most valuable asset---our young people. I can assure you that you will look back and say: "I did the right thing!"

Sincerely,



Raymond M. Beebe  
President

### Give to Forest City Education Foundation

Consider making a gift to  
Forest City Education Foundation. By donating you  
are contributing to scholarship and educational  
opportunities provided to Forest City students.

There are several ways you can donate:

#### *Fund a scholarship*

A minimum of \$300 per year will fund a scholarship.  
You can name this scholarship in honor or memory of  
a loved one. The scholarship will be awarded at Senior  
Awards Night in May. The donor will be invited back to  
present the award.

#### *Donate to the*

**Forest City Education Foundation General Fund**  
This helps to fund publications, alumni events,  
Academic Banquet and John Baylor ACT Test  
Preparation Course.

#### *Endow a Scholarship*

We ask the minimum to endow a scholarship is  
\$20,000 (to be paid within 5 years). You can name  
this scholarship in honor or memory of a loved one.  
The scholarship will be awarded Senior Awards Night  
in May. The donor will be invited back to present the  
award. This will ensure a scholarship for  
years to come.

Checks can be sent to:  
Forest City Education Foundation  
PO Box 270  
Forest City, IA 50436

## Make a Difference - Say Hello!

by Julie DeVries



Paul Jefson, Forest City High School alum, longtime Forest City resident and custodian for the school district, retired from his duties in October after being the "go to guy" for over 30 years. Paul graduated in 1965, "It was me and the boys" said Paul, referring to his classmates Terry Branstad and Doug Book. "At one point, Terry Branstad was Governor, Doug Book, Chief of Police, and I was Mayor of Forest City. Kay Sorenson, another classmate was on the City Council."

After graduation, Paul attended the State College of Iowa, which changed its name to the University of Northern Iowa sometime during the three years he was there. After his third year at UNI, Paul was drafted into the Army and went into the military for two years being stationed in many different locations such as Texas, Arizona, Georgia and the island of Okinawa during the Vietnam War. During his military years, his assignment required him to work every weekend therefore, he was given three days off during the middle of the week. Paul used that time to get his private pilot's license, something he says he doesn't use anymore.

After being discharged from the military, Paul was registered to go back to UNI but during the summer a neighbor man came over and asked him if he was interested in farming. So he bought a farm and never went back to school. Paul farmed for 12-13 years and, unfortunately, he was one of the casualties of the '80's, "when a lot of people lost their farms." Paul remembers, "I had three kids and a fourth one on the way and lost everything. I packed up my family and moved to Forest City because houses in town were a reasonable price. I started with nothing when I began farming and 13 years later, I still had nothing but a lot of hard work to look back on."

During the 1970's, Paul gave of his time to the Forest City School Board, serving for nine years as well as on the AEA Board for two years. "The new high school was built during the time I was on the school board. That was a rewarding process to watch happen."

In April, 1984, Paul started working at the school as the day custodian at the elementary building. He worked there for eight years and then became the grounds supervisor before taking the position of maintenance director after Roger Schaefer retired. During the early years of working for the school district he also served Forest City as the mayor. Paul shares, "I served as mayor for ten years and made the choice to not run again after that amount of time because I believe in term limits. Sometimes it takes as much courage to end something as it does to start something."

Paul worked for the school district for over three decades and

he says looking back on those years, "There are so many things that stick out in my mind. Some of most rewarding things have happened since I've retired. I was in a grocery store in Mason City the other day and a high school student came up and said 'hi.'" He goes on to say, "Very few students didn't know me and with officiating high school basketball for 35 years, I think I can thankfully say most students liked me."

Paul shared one story with me, with tears in his eyes, "One year, I was invited to a high school graduation party and for the life of me I couldn't place the student. One day, after we received the invitation the foster mother called my wife and told her 'If it wouldn't have been for Paul, my foster daughter wouldn't have made it through school.'" He expressed how he believes it's so important to never look past a person "I didn't even know that girl's name but I said 'hi' to her every day and it made a difference."

One can imagine that during the past 30 years Paul has seen many changes take place as well as being involved with numerous projects. Paul can be credited for planting the trees all over the school grounds. There are 400 evergreens that now grow beautifully behind the schools and Paul planted each and every one of them, digging all the holes himself. He recalls many interesting projects, "Everything from building the visitor bleachers on the football field, to the wind turbine, the balcony in the auditorium - just a lot of every day stuff. It was important to be sensitive to where all the needs were." During the winter months, Paul spent countless hours, his day beginning while the rest of us were tucked snuggly in bed, clearing away the snow so everyone could get into school. That was just one of those things that seemed to magically get done to make school a safe and welcoming place to learn.

Since retiring Paul has stayed busy helping to restore a barn at his daughter, Angie's house. He is also looking forward to spending more time with his children and his wife of 43 years, Karen. "She has been so understanding with all my involvement and all the things I've done that I wouldn't have been able to without her support." Paul and Karen have four children and eight grandchildren and they both look forward to being able to travel more to see the ones that live farther away.

It was obvious as I talked with Paul that he has such a passion for children and that isn't something that will go away simply because he's retired. "Still if I drive by an elementary school playground and see kids out there playing it just tugs at my heartstrings. Every day is a challenge for some kids. Do everything you can to say hello to them on a regular basis."

Looking forward Paul shares "I hope in general I can help people if they need help and maybe spend a little bit more time watching the sunset instead of racing every minute to get things done before it does." He also said one day when he was at Mayo Clinic he read a quote on the wall, "At the end of my life, I want the chapter on the things I wish I had done to be a very short one.' That's something he's tried to live by, "I want to have done everything I've ever wanted to do and not have any regrets." Enjoy your well-deserved retirement, Paul.

## Dreams, Roadblocks and Service

by Julie DeVries

When Chaldon Wooge was 5 years old, he remembers lying on his back out in the yard, watching planes fly overhead. He was intrigued by the flight patterns that went over Forest City and would watch for hours dreaming of the day he could fly a plane. That little boy grew up, joined the US Navy and has been serving our country for over 15 years.

Chaldon is a 1994 graduate of Forest City High School. When his dream of going to a service academy was crushed, Chaldon went to Waldorf College for one year and then enrolled at Iowa State University in the ROTC program. Chaldon was commissioned as a Navy officer in December 1998. He then went to flight school in Corpus Christi, Texas for a year and a half to earn his “wings of gold”.



In the years since leaving Iowa, Chaldon has been located primarily in the Pacific Northwest and Maryland. During his time at the Naval Research Lab in Patuxent River, MD, he was involved with a project that partnered with the United States Geological Survey to fly over Afghanistan. Data analyzed from this project found Afghanistan to be rich in natural resources that could be mined and developed to help the impoverished nation flourish.

While stationed in Everett, WA, Chaldon served as a Catapult/ Arresting Gear Officer on the USS Abraham Lincoln... commonly known as the “shooter.” This position serves as the last safety check prior to an aircraft taking off or landing on the aircraft carrier. Working on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier is one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. On the flight deck, it is loud, crowded and the whole atmosphere is often referred to as “controlled chaos”. Jets are catapulted into the air while simultaneously landing or taxiing to their parking locations. Even a little mistake can result in an accident. Dangers are everywhere on the flight deck so the job of the catapult and arresting gear officer is one that requires perfect physical and mental condition.



*Flying the State of Iowa flag in Sangin, Afghanistan.*

Since March 2013, Chaldon has served as an AFPAK (Afghanistan-Pakistan) Hand. He just finished with his first AFPAK Hand deployment serving as an Advisor/Mentor in Sangin District, Helmand Province. An AFPAK Hand is committed to more than 40 months with the program, which includes training and deployments. Their job is to advise Afghan leaders and commanders throughout the levels of governance so knowledge of the language and workings of their government is essential.

Once Chaldon was assigned to the AFPAK Hands program, he was sent to Columbia SC to Army training, “learning Army stuff”. He was trained in a week-long cultural awareness class followed by a week-long counter-terrorism class, “learning how to get yourself out of tense situations,” Chaldon said. He then went through a concealed weapons course – learning to be quick, fast, and accurate. The next step was 20 weeks of language training, “basically two years compressed into 20 weeks.” In these classes, he learned Pashto, which is the primary language spoken in the southern part of Afghanistan. The training to become an AFPAK Hand was, approximately, 6 months.

The AFPAK Hands program was begun in 2009 by Adm. Mike Mullen, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to establish a cohort of experts that specialize in the complexities of Afghanistan and Pakistan language and culture. Chaldon described the AFPAK HANDS members as “diplomats with guns and cultural experts.” Chaldon said, “The purpose is to become friends and help them come to a better understanding of each other to fix problems. I was an advisor and mentor to the District Governor and at this stage of the campaign, I was giving them information as how to run their government more effectively/ efficiently and keep their government working for the people by finding out what the public needs or wants.”



*Chaldon Wooge - “Shooter” - both pictures*

He was first located in Sangin District, which is a hot bed for the Taliban. “I was there for 7 months at a small operating base. I went with my interpreter and worked with the Sangin government to advise them how to solve their current or possible future issues within their communities. For instance, during one of their meetings, they discussed with the power director “how to get more reliable electricity to their area.”

Chaldon’s first deployment was for 11 months, returning home this past September. The vision with AFPAK Hands is to be “in theater” (Afghanistan) for 10-12 months and then out of theater (back home) to decompress for a year and then begin the 6 month training to go back to Afghanistan. He has chosen to do a “quick turn-around” and will begin his training this October to return to Afghanistan in May 2015 for another 11-12 months.



*Chaldon with his linguist in Afghanistan*

Chaldon has fond memories of living in Forest City and going to Forest City High School. He was active in school participating in both football and track. Chaldon’s grandpa Gayland and father, Gaylord, both graduated from Forest City so one thing he mentioned was “It was hard to get away with stuff because everybody knew my dad. He always encouraged me to do my best.”

Chaldon offers great advice to students, “Don’t get frustrated and keep trying. If you hit a roadblock, find a way to get through it, under it or over it. I tried three years in a row to get into a service academy but I had to figure out a different route and ultimately, the results were the same. Look for different avenues to be successful and you will.”

Looking ahead to the future, his immediate goal is to finish up his 20 years in the military. Then he would like to go to one of the airlines and be a pilot. Remembering back to when he was that little five-year old boy watching the planes fly overhead; he still has the same dream of seeing the world from above. A final thought, “People are the same all the world over – there is a small fraction of people that tend to muck it up for everyone else. Be one of those people that go out and make it a better place.”

Chaldon and his wife, Linda, live in Maryland with their children. Thank you, Chaldon Wooge for serving our country.

## Thoughts from Board Member

Alice Lewellen

When I was teaching, Senior Awards Night was one of my favorite events. As the busy graduation week began, it was exhilarating to see deserving students walk across the stage, and shake hands or hug the benefactor of their award. When FCHS established a Dollars for Scholars chapter, Awards Night was even more exciting with a larger number of scholarships with a higher dollar amount awarded each year.



*Mike and Alice Lewellen*

As a mother of two FCHS graduates, I was thankful for the scholarship money that our children received. When I retired I was asked to join the Forest City Education Foundation Board and it was a perfect fit for me. Devoting some of my newly acquired free time to continuing to help young people forward their education was a goal I have enjoyed working toward.

The last few years have been exciting for the Board. The establishment of the Academic Awards Banquet has been a highlight for me, especially when the main speakers have been FCHS graduates and I have been able to hear more about their life journeys after leaving high school. Watching the dollar amount grow for scholarships is extremely rewarding as college costs keep rising. As a Board we are trying to keep up with the pace of that. I enjoy being in contact with former students as well as other alumni of FCHS through writing for our newsletter.

Supporting the scholarship that my daughter and son-in-law have established in honor of our granddaughter who was born too early is certainly dear to my heart.

I encourage anyone who is interested in the education of our youth to consider establishing a scholarship in memory of a loved one or in honor of a profession that one would like to see a student enter one day. Nothing is more rewarding than seeing the results of the seeds that we are planting in Forest City for our young people!

**Forest City Education Foundation board members** volunteer their time and talents. Thank you, Alice, for serving on the board for many years and for giving of yourself for the students of Forest City High School and the mission of the Foundation.

## Twists and Turns On The Path of Life by Alice Lewellen

The best advice that Ben Anderson received when he was in high school was “knowing what you want to be isn’t nearly as important as knowing who you want to be”. Ben’s journey since high school has been full of twists and turns which have even surprised Ben.

Those of us who knew Ben Anderson in high school, knew he was a multi-talented young man. His most noticeable talent was music. Hearing Ben sing was always a pleasure. It was also evident that he was an excellent student. After graduating from FCHS in 1994, Ben attended Wartburg College majoring in Biology/PreMed and was a four year member of the Wartburg choir. Ben graduated from college in 1998 and even though he had been accepted at the University of Iowa’s College of Medicine, he knew by his senior year at Wartburg he wanted to pursue making a living through music. In 1999, he moved to Nashville, Tennessee to explore that option.



Ben Anderson and his family

Ben says that his arrival in Nashville was just like a scene from a stereotypical country music song arriving with his pickup truck, a couple of suitcases, and a guitar. His first job in Nashville was selling frozen steaks, chicken and seafood door to door. At the same time, he was knocking on every studio door he could find, handing his vocal demo to anyone who would take it. In a couple of months he was singing demos for songwriters and recording background vocals for other inspiring artists. Eventually Ben was able to make a living touring, performing, and recording with a Christian vocal group and eventually an aspiring country band. From 1999-2005, he traveled extensively as a full time musician performing throughout the United States producing upward of 120 shows annually.

In 2000, Ben married Erin Aakre who was a Waldorf College Alum whom he met when she was working at MBT in Forest City. When Ben and Erin decided to start a family, Ben chose to leave the music career behind even though he was truly thankful for the experiences as an entertainer. It was time for something different, but he was not sure what that something different should be. First Ben took a volunteer position at his church (Christ Church Nashville). Later he became a part time staffer in Children’s Ministry. No one was more surprised at this turn of events than Ben himself. As Ben says, “I have come to know God delights in orchestrating such mysterious twists and turns along the paths we tread in this life, especially if they ultimately lead us much closer to Him”.

Over the next eight years, Ben’s ministerial experience grew to include working with children, youth and their families, men’s ministry, worship and fine arts ministry, administrative

leadership and also extensive teaching in a variety of contexts within the local congregation. Following his pastoral ordination, Ben continued to serve Christ Church in teaching ministry completing a M.A. in Biblical studies from Trevecca Nazarene and a M. Div from Vanderbilt Divinity School, Vanderbilt University.

In 2014, Ben accepted his current role as Associate/Executive Pastor with Christ Life Community Church in Smyrna, TN. “I am honored and blessed to serve this non-denominational church community”. Ben also is an adjunct professor at Tevecca Nazarene University teaching Ethics and Biblical Perspectives and World View.

Ben has been married to Erin for 14 years. She is the Head of School Assistant at Harding Academy in Nashville. They have two children. Dylan is eight and Luke is five. They are expecting child number three in April.

Ben is thankful for having been born and raised in the Midwest especially Forest City and even though he has lived in the South for a number of years, he will always be a Midwesterner at heart. As a teen, Ben felt tremendously supported, encouraged and valued by adults of all ages in all kinds of settings from teachers, coaches and administrators at FCHS, supervisors at Bill’s, city leaders, business people and clergy and church members. “Everywhere I turned I felt known and loved”.

Ben’s advice to students graduating is to never stop learning. “No matter where you go from FCHS developing a passion for learning and growing is an absolute necessity. Even in rural America the fact we are living in an ever more global society is undeniable. A willingness to learn more about and from those with differing life experiences and cultural backgrounds is imperative”.

Reading about Ben’s journey clearly shows that he has been following his own advice!



## Hall of Fame

Donna Johnson and Ray Beebe were inducted into the Forest City Education Hall of Fame in August. Donna worked for 10 years as the high school secretary and Ray serves as the President of the Forest City Education Foundation. Both said they were honored and humbled to receive the recognition.

Donna started working at the Forest City High School in the spring of 1975. The basketball team had just qualified for the state tournament for the first time in many years so she quickly became familiar with her duties of managing the schools athletic fund. She shared, “In those days, we didn’t have computers and had to write everything by hand.”

Donna enjoyed working with the people and students at the school saying “It was an interesting place to work and one that keeps you connected to people in the community”.

Ray Beebe has a passion for seeing young people succeed. Since retiring, Ray has stayed busy mentoring and working with students as well as serving on both the Waldorf College Lutheran Foundation and Forest City Education Foundation boards as well as numerous other organizations. Ray chuckles, “Joan often comments that she sees me less now than she did when I was working.”

His vision is to see the Foundation continue to grow the scholarship funds available. Ray and his wife, Joan, have lead by example creating a yearly scholarship for a Forest City graduate. Beebe said, “We have outstanding young people at Forest City High School and creating a scholarship is the greatest legacy you can leave.”

## HOBY

The Forest City Education Foundation sent six students from Forest City High School Iowa’s Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership Conference. Amanda Wilson, Sr., returned as a junior facilitator. Juniors-Sarri Happel, Stewart Yi, Emily Koch, Carrie Brcka all were first year attendees. Hannah May, Sr., returned also returned as a junior facilitator.



## A 4,000 Mile adventure Bike Ride Across the U.S.

By Sam Jefson (2007 FCHS) Forest City Summit

Forest City’s Jeff Robson dipped the back wheel of his bicycle in the Atlantic Ocean on June 1 and his front wheel in the Pacific Ocean on August 9. In between, the sophomore at Iowa State University, rode his bicycle 4,000 miles from Baltimore to San Francisco to raise money for the Ulman 4K cancer fund. His ride was dedicated to his aunt Danielle Gilbert who died during the ride after a four-year battle with colon cancer. In addition to riding for his aunt, Robson raised more than \$6,000 for cancer research. As a group, his teammates collectively raised \$1.1 million.



Robson had many good days during the trip, but the day he and his teammates climbed Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain National Park was his favorite. Robson was the first one in his group to the top of the highest continuously paved highway in the United States reaching an elevation of 12,183 feet. “It was definitely my favorite day,” Robson said. “We had an awesome climb and once I reached the top, I was thinking it’s all downhill from here.”

Another highlight of the trip occurred on July 1, when Robson was in Salina, Kansas. He duct taped an American flag to his bike and rode with the 3 x 5 flag the rest of the way to San Francisco. In Utah, a man saw Robson’s bike with the flag from across the street and had to come meet him. The instance was just one of many to lift the bike rider’s spirits. “People would yell, ‘USA and Go America.’ Robson said. “It was really encouraging.”

“A past 4K rider told me that what you are doing now is real life and go back to your world and make it like this,” Robson said. “I want to make the most out of what I am doing in the future whether it’s school or working.”

Jeff Robson is a 2012 graduate and is studying engineering at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa.

## Ripples Around the World

Introduction by Julie DeVries, Article by Chase Chisholm, Class of 2002

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” – a quote from Mother Teresa.

In communicating with Chase Chisholm, my thoughts go immediately to ripples on the water



when I learn of the many different things he's done, places he's lived and lives he's touched. Chase graduated

from Forest City High School in 2002 and Waldorf College in 2005 with majors in communications and electronic media. Chase has embarked on an interesting journey since leaving Forest City and the unique road he has traveled since graduating from FCHS and Waldorf College is one that few have taken. The ripple effect he has created is far-reaching and ongoing.

I've known Chase for many years. He and I have been a part of several of the same mission trips and I've had the opportunity to see first hand his passion for travel and most importantly in making a difference in the lives of others. Chase has the gift of communication, which includes a tremendous flair for writing therefore, the remainder of this article will be words that were penned by Chase, himself. Thank you, Chase, for sharing a bit of your life's journey, thus far, with us.

Words by Chase.....

I've always enjoyed working with youth, and really loved spending a few summers as a camp counselor at Flathead Lutheran Bible Camp (FLBC) in Montana, as well as traveling for a year on an International Youth Encounter ministry team following my graduation from Waldorf College.

However, I didn't consider pursuing teaching as a career until I taught as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guyana, South America (2008-2010). The students I got to work with at Open Doors Center for Persons with Disabilities, in Georgetown, were incredible. Their dedication to overcome challenges life presented them with was inspiring. I learned so much, and truly experienced how rewarding teaching could be.

It wasn't long after I returned to the United States to work as a Peace Corps Recruiter with the Chicago Regional Office that I realized my calling is to live and teach abroad. I packed up about a year later, and moved to South Korea to be a Guest English Teacher (GET) through the English Program in Korea (EPIK). I learned about opportunities to teach English in Korea through Greenheart Travel, an organization based in Chicago.

My two years as a GET in South Korea were incredible. I taught over 800 students every week at a large elementary school about an hour and half outside of Seoul. I worked alongside three awesome Korean co-teachers, and got to become part of a culture I knew very little about before diving right in. I consider Korea a home, but another opportunity



Chase with students in Georgetown, Guyana

through Greenheart Travel beckoned me to leave for a more challenging placement in Yangon, Myanmar. I've been working as a GET at Myanmar Noble College for about a year.

In my opinion, it's best to be flexible and have no

preference in country or region when applying to volunteer or work abroad. Not knowing where you're going to end up is thrilling to me, albeit a bit scary. Peace Corps places qualified candidates based on skillset and greatest need. The agency felt my abilities would best be used in Guyana, so I had no choice in where I was assigned to go. I trusted, went, and loved every bit of my life there.

Although I had more of a say when venturing to South Korea, I didn't know where I'd be placed to teach once in the country. However, where I ended up teaching in Korea proved to be a perfect fit for me.

Deciding to come to Myanmar was completely out of nowhere. I just saw the opportunity and grabbed it before knowing anything about the country I could write a book about now. I'm glad I came, and wouldn't change any of the past decisions I've made to get to where I am today.

At the same time as instructing English in Yangon, I've served as a Teach Abroad and Travel Correspondent for Greenheart Travel. Not only have I gotten to teach full-time in Myanmar, I've also been able to do something else I'm very passionate about. I've documented and shared the experience through my travel blog, photos and videos.

The past year I've spent in Yangon has been one of the most difficult years of my life. But, I knew coming to Myanmar from South Korea would be a hard transition. It seems we grow best when taken out of our comfort zones, and I'm thankful for what I've gone through to develop into a much stronger, more flexible and understanding person than before.

International exposure has changed my perspective in profound ways. I no longer look at the world through thick lenses. Traveling, living, volunteering and/or working abroad has taken away layers of stereotypes and generalizations I may have had before being exposed to life outside of the

bubble I was in. Understanding how others live and the challenges they face (based entirely on circumstance) is extremely important for surviving in our rapidly changing world. The cultural differences I've encountered have made me more in tune with myself—based off where I came from, and my own upbringing in Forest City. And I've come to the realization humans have similar dreams and desires, everywhere.

I'm extremely grateful to have grown up in Forest City, and to have been educated through the Forest City Community School District, as well as Waldorf College. I gained a very solid, wholesome foundation to prepare me for everything I've had the chance to do since leaving about eight years ago.



Chase teaching a class in Korea.

I have so many good memories of teachers in Forest City. Many of them set a perfect example for me to live up to as an educator. Ms. Agre taught me how to read when I really struggled. Mr. Olson used to make me laugh so much. I loved when Mrs. Boock would read stories. Mrs. Mekelburg was so kind. Mrs. Pruisner used to let me stay after school to work on

extra art projects. Mrs. Bakke made cooking fun, and even took some of my senior portraits. Mr. Bertelsen was hilarious, and so passionate about the drama department. Mrs. Lewellen was like a second mother. The list goes on and on.

If you're interested in learning more about what it's like to work overseas, please join my journey: [www.joinchase.org](http://www.joinchase.org). It may steer your life off course a bit, but the opportunity to teach in another country is life changing at any point. It doesn't matter how old you are.

Also, be sure to check out Greenheart Travel's website for more information about teaching abroad: [www.greenhearttravel.org](http://www.greenhearttravel.org).

What's ahead for me? I plan to either stay in Myanmar for another year, head back to South Korea to teach, or work as a Peace Corps Recruiter with the Chicago Regional Office again.

# Thank You For Your Support

Either by contributing to a scholarship, fundraiser, or simply a general donation, these people have helped Forest City students in the last year.

Brent and Robin Aberg\*  
 Sally Agre\*  
 Dave and Sheryl Albertson  
 Jim and Lorraine Amelsberg  
 Forest City American Legion  
 Forest City American Legion Aux.  
 Alan and Karen Anderson  
 Chad and Stacy Anderson  
 David Anderson  
 Mark Anderson  
 Murray Anderson\*  
 Jackie Armstrong\*  
 Jerry Armstrong  
 Dave\*\* and Arlene Arndt  
 Ken and Val Baker\*  
 Steve and Anne Bakke  
 Raymond\*\* and Joan Beebe  
 Brandon and Emily Beenken\*  
 Susie Hilmer Belding  
 Family/Friends of Jeremy Benson  
 Scott Bertelsen\*  
 Marla Betz\*  
 Bill's Family Foods  
 Tom Blomme\*  
 Gerald and Mary Jo Boman  
 Paul and Gail Boock\*  
 Boyken Family  
 Dennis and Martha Branstad  
 Forest City Breakfast Lions  
 Randy and Tracy Broesder\*  
 Jay Brooker  
 Kathleen Brooker  
 Steve Brooker  
 Tom and Carol Brooker  
 Valerie Brooker/Melvin Duncan  
 Heather Brown\*  
 Marsha Brunsvold\*  
 Dustin and Laila Buck  
 Andrew and Keila Buffington  
 Brad and Stephanie Buffington  
 Kevin and Michelle Bunger\*  
 Dennis and Rosie Busta  
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 James D. Carson  
 John and Nita Carson  
 Cindy Carter\*\*  
 Gary Charlson  
 Chasing the Sun Memorial Fund  
 Steve and Lynne Church\*  
 Class of 1949  
 Class of 1953  
 Class of 1988  
 Class of 2002  
 Rebecca Counts\*

Marlin Cromwell  
 David and Janet Dahl  
 Tony Dahle  
 David\*\* and Sandy Damm  
 Josh Damm  
 Dan and Sheila Davis  
 DeKalb  
 M. Virginia Del Rasario  
 Rick and Julie DeVries  
 Pam DeWaard\*  
 Zach and Tami Dillavou\*  
 Julie Duncan\*  
 Leo Durant  
 Ryan and Tori Eastvold\*  
 Jeri Edel\*  
 Mark and Tammy Egesdal\*  
 David and Deanna Ennen  
 Melissa Erdman\*  
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 John and Marlene Faircloth  
 Farm and City Insurance  
 Doug and Kristi Feldman  
 Daris and Rhonda Finer  
 Forest City High School FFA  
 FCHS Student Council  
 Forest City Farmers Coop  
 Forest City Summit  
 Bill C. Fox  
 Mr. and Mrs. Jim Fox  
 Mark and Carolyn Frakes  
 Douglas Gibbs  
 Denny and Beth Gilbertson  
 Donna Gilbertson  
 James and Karen Gilbertson  
 Mark and Rita\*\* Gilbertson  
 Waldon Groves Estate  
 Rick and Amy Grunhovd\*  
 Josi Gunderson  
 Tim Halvorsen  
 Natalie Hammer  
 Daryl and Cindy Hanna\*  
 Ken and Joan Hansen  
 Mark A. Hanson  
 Hanson Foundation  
 Ron and Kris Happel\*  
 Erica Harms\*  
 Mason and Kelli Harms  
 Paul Harrington  
 Emd Hefte  
 Don\*\* and Kristin Heidemann  
 Daryl Heimer\*  
 Tracy Helgeson\*  
 Nancy Helm  
 Adam and Trista\*\* Helm

Corey and Cheryl Herrick\*  
 Lee and Linda Hinkley  
 HMR Supplies  
 Pat Hobbs  
 Chris Holland  
 Hormel Foods  
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 Adam\*\* and Trichelle Jackson  
 Scott Jackson\*  
 Jerry and Colleen Jacobs\*  
 Kirk and Julie Jefson\*  
 Denny and Kathy Jerome\*  
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 DeWayne and Donna Johnson  
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 Ralph and Sheryl Johnson  
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 Michael and Kate Jordal  
 Ken Kasper\*  
 Paul and Julie Kauffmann\*  
 Brian and Julie Keely  
 Glenda Keough\*  
 David\*\* and Sue Kingland  
 KIOW Radio  
 Mary Lou Kleveland  
 Bruce and Marcia Kluver  
 Arlene Knapper  
 Maria T. Knode  
 Brian and Carmen Knudtson  
 Stephanie Koch  
 Ken and Cindy Korth  
 Mike and Carolyn Korth  
 Daryl and Tammy Krieger  
 Cathy Kruse\*  
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 Julie Langerud\*  
 Ron and Joan Langerud  
 Dan and Kim Langfald  
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 Darwin\*\* and Cindi Lehmann\*  
 David and Betty Jo Levad  
 Michael and Alice\*\* Lewellen  
 Jeff and Deena Lewison  
 Ron\*\* and Hope Lichtsinn  
 Cari Lillquist\*  
 Kristin Linder\*  
 Barbara Lovick  
 Diane Lovick  
 Steve\*\* and Pat\*\* Lovik  
 Nicole Lovik-Blaser  
 Gary and Barb Ludwig

Nate Ludwig  
 Zach Lundgren  
 Todd and Sherri Lunning\*  
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 MBT Bank  
 Kathryn McHan  
 Jen McQuown\*  
 Paul Megginis, John Megginis II  
 Amy Meinecke  
 Dan Sarasio-Meyer\*  
 Dusty Meyn\*  
 Shawn Miller\* \*\*  
 Tim and Julie Missal  
 Kim Mollenhauer\*  
 Paul and Jane Nagy\*  
 Jim Narveson  
 Steve Nelson  
 Thomas and Pat Nessa  
 Harlan and Deborah Nyhus\*  
 Mike and Jeanine O'Rourke  
 Betty Olson  
 Bob and Kathy Olson  
 Deborah A. Olson  
 Jesse and Melanie Olson  
 Kathleen Olson\*  
 Shawn and Kari Olson\*  
 Steve and Nancy Olson  
 Willie and Kelly Parks\*  
 Tom and Ava Pauley\*  
 Robert and Dona Paulson  
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 Pepsi Company  
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Greg and Julie Pollard  
 Duane\*\* and Tami Polsdofor  
 Tamara Price\*  
 Randy\*\* and Lorie Pruisner  
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 Chad and Kristine Reece\*  
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 Michael Rollefson  
 Kathy Rollefson  
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 Richard Rovang/Ann Wolff  
 Roger and Mary Schaefer  
 Paul and Mona Schmidt  
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 Jared Schnebly  
 Russell and Ilene Schnebly  
 Wayne and Sharon Sesker  
 Chuck and Susie Skogerboe  
 Jeff and Liz Smith\*\*  
 Mike and Linda Smith  
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 Don and Claire Snyder  
 Jack and Betty Soderling  
 Jason and Emily Sopko\*  
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 Steve and Nikki Staudt\*  
 Orly Stoll  
 Carolyn Strait  
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 Merna Torkelson  
 Phuoc Van and Nga Thi Truong  
 TSB Bank  
 Joel Twedt  
 Carol J. Tweeten  
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 Mike and Pott VanAuken  
 Carl and Sandra Wagner\*  
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 Dana and Rae Yost\*\*  
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## How to Support the Forest City Education Foundation

### Ways to Give

Planned Giving  
 Annual Gifts  
 Honorary & Memorial Securities  
 Real or Personal Property Bequests  
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 Donations for Educational Supplies and Equipment  
 Testamentary Trusts  
 Special Gifts  
 Class Reunions & Groups

### Programs

Scholarships  
 John Baylor Test Prep  
 Academic Banquet  
 HOBY Leadership Conference

### How to Give

Send checks to:  
 Forest City  
 Education Foundation  
 PO Box 270  
 Forest City, IA 50436

Online:  
[www.forestcityeducation.org](http://www.forestcityeducation.org)

**Forest City Education Foundation**  
**145 South Clark Street- PO Box 270**  
**Forest City, IA 50436**

The Forest City Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender equity, socio-economic status, or disability in its educational programs, services or employment practices.

Students, parents of students, applicants for employment and employees of the Forest City Community Schools shall have the right to file a formal complaint alleging non-compliance with equity regulations.

Inquiries concerning application of this statement should be addressed to:

Dave Cunningham, Equity Coordinator, 1405 West I Street, Forest City, Iowa 50436, Telephone (641) 585-2670 or

Zach Dillavou, Equity Coordinator, 216 West School Street, Forest City, Iowa 50436, Telephone (641) 585-4772.

## **Bob and Kathy Olson Give Back To The Community They Love!** **by Julie DeVries**

Bob and Kathy Olson aren't Forest City High School alumni but have lived in Forest City since 1972, raised their family here and consider Forest City their hometown. Their children, Angie and Shawn graduated from Forest City High School, now are both married and each have two children. Education is something that is not only valued by their family, it is something their family firmly believes in and both their daughter and daughter-in-law are teachers

Coming from rather poor families growing up, Bob and Kathy realize how difficult it is to be able to afford to go to college. "Student loan debt is such a burden to young adults when they graduate from college. We wanted to give something back." Kathy goes on to say, "Forest City is a great place to raise a family, the school system is great and we love calling this community home."

The Bob and Kathy Olson Family \$2,500 Scholarships will be awarded in May 2015 to two deserving seniors. Seniors will be eligible for these scholarships by filling out the Forest City Education Foundation Scholarship application. Bob expressed "Our youth are our future and this is a way we can help ensure that future is a bright one. We are happy to be able to do something like this for the students of Forest City."



***Would you like to start a scholarship in your family's name or in memory or honor of someone you love?  
It's very easy! Contact Julie DeVries, Director, at Forest City Education Foundation to set it up: 641.585.2323.  
We ask that your scholarship is a minimum of \$300. Payments can be made over time.***