

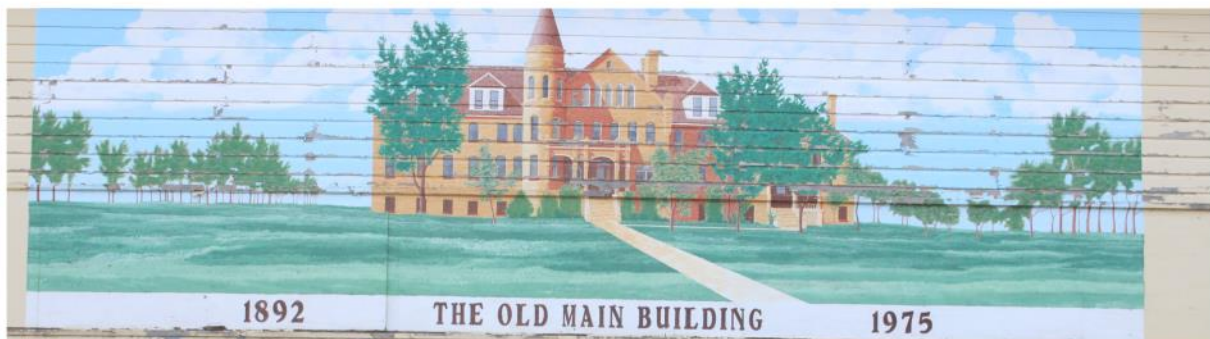
North Dakota School for the Deaf Resource Center

A School Without Walls

BANNER

2024-2025

Volume 135



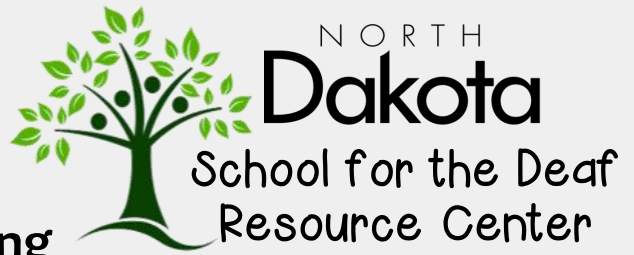
Deaf Awareness Week 2024



Looking back with pride; Looking forward with confidence.



The North Dakota School for the Deaf is a division of
the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction,
Kirsten Baesler, State Superintendent.



Our Vision:

To support individuals with hearing differences in achieving their dreams.

Our Mission:

To educate and serve all individuals with hearing differences from birth through senior citizenship.

Our Purpose:

To serve as a statewide education and resource center to provide advocacy, leadership, and expertise in the field of Deaf Education and for those with hearing loss.

Our Beliefs: All students are **ABLE!**

Acquire and learn language and communication in English and in ASL.

Become lifelong learners through hands-on experiences using all senses.

Lead and advocate for themselves and others.

Express their identity as learners who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deafblind.



Superintendent's Summary

The 2024-2025 school year was a whirlwind of students and staff coming and going. From the first moment when students arrived on campus back in August 2024 up until the last day of school when the last family left, there was movement and a feeling of urgency that we didn't have enough time to do all the things that needed to be done. There was so much learning that happened and so much more we wanted to learn. While the students learned, we made progress on our 2023-2027 strategic plan. Here are some of the things we accomplished.

- The Administration Department continued to work on our policies to keep them compliant with state and federal laws. This is always a work in progress.
- The Business Office worked to streamline our budget reports for easier understanding for department and program managers. This is a work in progress.
- The Facilities Department made lots of progress in updating a system to track maintenance requests and keep our campus beautiful and functioning with efficiency.
- The Education Program participated in Fairview Learning professional development learning how to incorporate reading strategies such as multiple meaning words and intentionally teaching vocabulary into our instruction.
- All our Education, Residential staff and many of the Outreach staff completed the Conscious Discipline training. This training reminds adults to be calm and in control of their emotions to help students learn self-regulation skills to stay in their executive functioning brains to solve problems.
- The Residential Program provided a home-away-from-home environment with lots of fun and educational opportunities. They started meeting with Deaf professionals in various jobs to educate our students on their future possibilities.
- The PIP/School-Aged Outreach Program continued partnering with our Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) program and Early Intervention Part C programs.
- The Adult Hearing Outreach Program continued to update their presentation to first responders in working with Deaf adults. They also served hundreds of adults with hearing loss.
- The Technology Department performed a security assessment to update our camera systems on campus. The funding was included in our 2025-2027 appropriations from the legislatures.
- NDSD/RC had great partnerships and opportunities with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to provide professional development to staff and interpreters who work with deaf, hard of hearing, and deafblind children across the state.

I often walk the halls of the school looking at the senior portraits, the awards, and the dedications in the Hall of Fame. So many times, I have wished for the pictures to share their stories, like a hologram or Harry Potter style. On July 10-13, 2025, the North Dakota School for the Deaf celebrated its 135th Anniversary and Alumni Reunion. The event was full of language, laughter, love, and memories; celebrations of friendships old and new; and opportunities to remember and celebrate those who have passed. We had 120-130 people visit throughout the weekend! As everyone left, I now walk the halls and the Hall of Fame and I see many of the conversations that happened during this weekend. The walls and pictures do, indeed, now show me some of their stories. So blessed!

Enjoy this edition of the **Banner**, I am so proud of every person, adults and students, who work and learn here. I am humbled and honored to be part of our Bulldog Family!

Peace Always and Wishing You Well,

Donna E. Sorensen

2024-2025 NDSD/RC Employees

Donna Sorensen, Superintendent

Education

Wendy Palmer*
Kim Shereck
Linda Koth
Kale Smith
Nicole McIvor
Jessica Fibelstad
Carrie Moen, para
Patty Grohs, para
Wendy Henry, para
Susie Peterson, para
Kaitlyn Halvorson, para/interpreter

Communications

Jeanne Johnson
Turi Leiphon
Cindy Mays
Kayla Perez
Renae Bitner
Lindsey Solberg-Herbel
Tammy Derrick

Residential

Scott Henry*
Stephanie Crowell-Goeser
Corene Dockter
Krysten Williams
William Smith
David Lundy
Rhonda Juntunen
Rhiannon Houle

Business Office

Diane Frelich*
Shayla Ebertz
Shelly Laverdure

Adult Outreach

Kristen Vetter*
Kathy Frelich
Dawn Sauvageau
Karen Zinke

Health Services

Tracy Hoeltl*
Lisa Elverud

Technology

Kerry Olson-Rysavy*

Facilities/Custodial

Chris Eckes*
Jerry Allery
Timber Schwab
Erik Hoeltl
Doug Anvik
Zach Longie
Cindy Lee
Brian Morken
Cory Morstad
Ashley Bokn

Food Service

Chris Eckes*
Tate Cichos
Emily Anderson
Karen Maloney
Katrina Wickware

Outreach

Nicole Swartwout*
Linda Ehlers
Tami Iszler
Denise Marback
Ashley Martin
Lana Zimbelman
Jodi Scheeler

Transportation

Arvin Carlson
Scott Elvrum
Dan Trump
Gordy Shipley
Matt Moen

Lifeguard

Darwin Brokke

**Department Leader*

Welcome New Staff



Kaitlyn Halvorson
Paraeducator
Interpreter



Susie Peterson
Paraeducator



Ashley Bokn
Custodian



Rhonda Juntunen
Dorm Night Watch



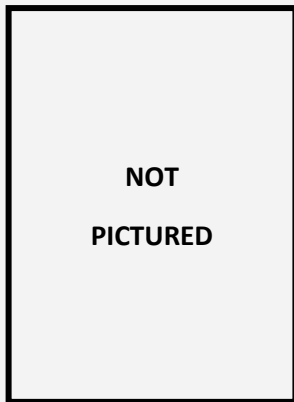
David Lundy
Dorm Counselor



Zach Longie
Maintenance



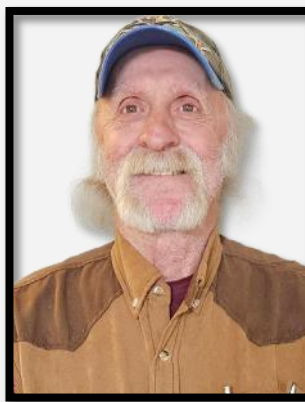
Doug Anvik
Maintenance



Rhianon Houle
Dorm Night Watch



Matt Moen
Driver



Gordy Shipley
Driver



Cory Morstad
Maintenance

WE OUR TEACHERS!

Left to Right

Mrs. Palmer-Middle/High School

Mrs. Shereck-Middle School

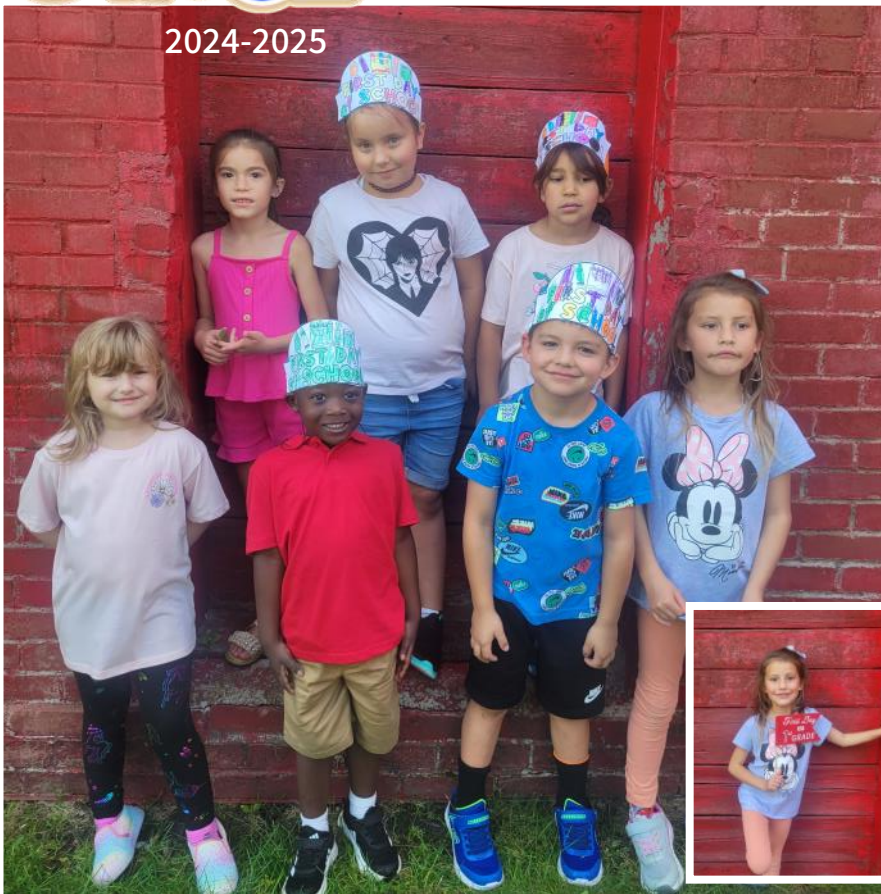
Mr. Smith-Pre-School/Kindergarten

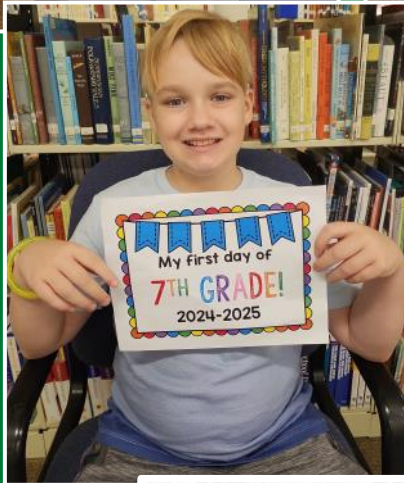
Mrs. McIvor-Middle School

Mrs. Koth-Elementary



2024-2025





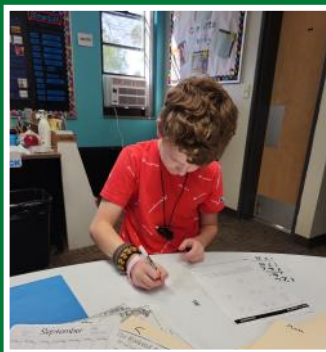
Shoot for the moon
today, because even if
you miss, you'll land
among the stars.
Les Brown





DLHS Students
attended a portion
of their day in
Mrs. Palmer's classroom.

LOOK at what we're learning

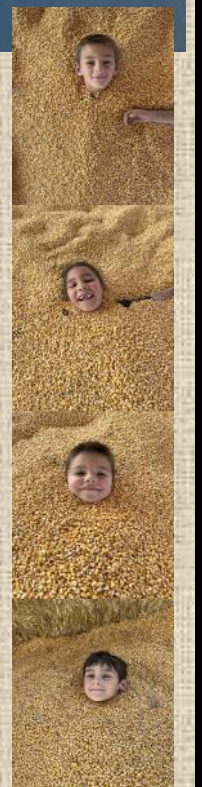


FIRE PREVENTION WEEK



The Devils Lake Fire Department visited NDSD to talk about fire prevention week and show off their fire truck. Students got to see all of the tools, compartments, and technology inside and outside of the truck. They even showed off the truck's lights and sirens. Thank you to Jeremy and Ryder for coming to NDSD.







Hands-on ART

with Cindy



We are fortunate to have contracted audiological services with Brady Ness, Audiologist at Sanford Medical Center in Bismarck. His expertise in supporting our students is greatly valued and appreciated. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge Brady as a wonderful co-worker whose dedication and positive attitude is a great addition to our NDSD/RC team. Thanks Brady, for all you do!



AUDIOLOGIST
improving lives one decibel at a time







All Aboard For
the 100th
Day Of School!



Happy Valentine's Day

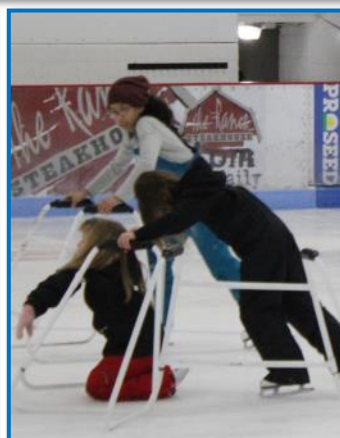
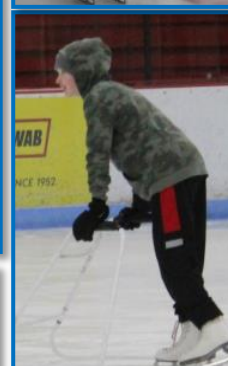
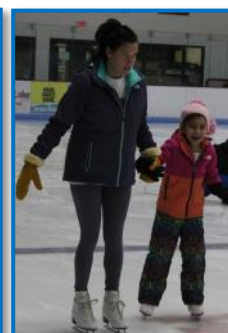




The PreK-1st graders welcomed a special guest, Nancy Trottier, a recently retired NDSD Teacher Technician who came to read the book 'If You Give A Mouse A Cookie'.

The children were thrilled. After she finished reading the book, all enjoyed some delicious cookies. It was wonderful to see Nancy.

We enjoyed skating at the Burdick Arena.



Library Lines

"You can find magic wherever you look. Sit back and relax, all you need is a book!" - Dr. Seuss

Greetings from the NDS Library,

Thank you to the students for making this another great year. Most of the students read **three times over** the 18 books required for the Governor Award certificate. The top three books of the year were: *Smile* by Raina Telgemeier, all of the books from the unicorn section, and the Babysitters Club graphic novels. Part of this year's plan was to add lots of new books featuring Deaf/HH characters. Now we have a shelf full of fun, colorful, imaginative, and informative stories. Some were even written or co-written by kids.

Our middle schoolers completed two novel studies that were both about middle school, *Holes* and *Freak the Mighty*. Reading as a group really helped us relate to the characters and their stories. We also started a new annual bookmark contest and all 6 of them entered. The winning design was a cartoon about how dinosaurs treat books. I can't wait to see what students come up with next year.



Winner of the Bookmark Contest



For our Halloween party; unicorns, princesses, soldiers, superheroes, zombies and a scary skeleton showed up. We read the book *At the Old Haunted House*. Then students found all the creepy creatures in the story.



Taylor Swift said, "Books train your imagination to think big." All kids need to have some time to read, whether it's a picture book or even words in a video game. There is nothing like the powerful imagination of a child.

Jessica the Librarian
Keep Reading!

Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss

This year, the theme for our Dr. Seuss party was *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*. Did you know that there are almost fifty wacky creatures in that story? There's even one creature from North Dakota (called an Iota).



Lucky winner of an amazing quilt made by Nurse Lisa.

Student



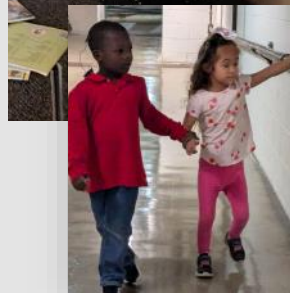
Visiting furry friends at the cat shelter



Life



Just having FUN



Flashlight Reading



Parent-Infant and School-Age

The North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center Parent-Infant and School-Age Outreach Department continues to provide services to families and schools with children impacted by hearing loss.

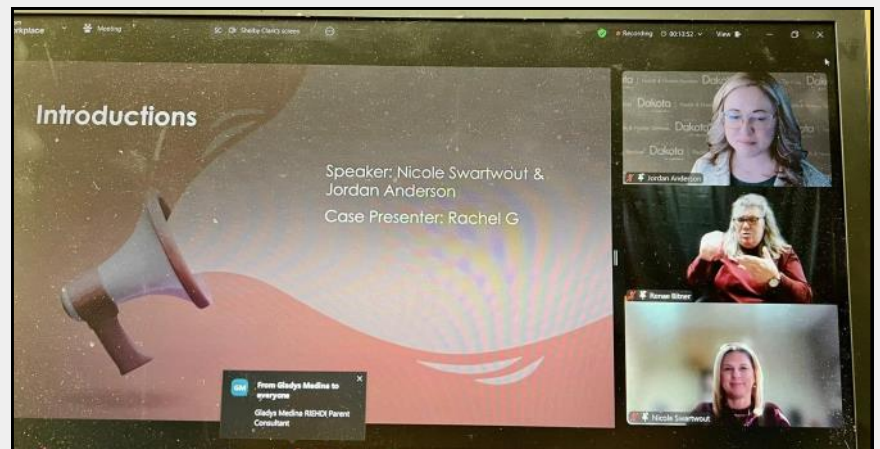
This year was packed with educating the public and agencies in the state about the services we provide. Partnering with Jordan Anderson, liaison to North Dakota's Part C (Early Intervention) programs, presentations were given across the state to Developmental Disability Program Managers and Early Interventionists. Information was shared on the similarities and differences of the early intervention and the parent-infant programs on how to refer to each other. We also presented at the North Dakota Early Childhood Conferences. We hosted tables at several conferences throughout the year.

Our department sponsored regular yearly events such as the Regional Pumpkin Patch Family Days, Virtual Santa, Growing Up Deaf and Hard of Hearing virtual meetings and Family Engagement event called Family Understanding and Networking (F.U.N.).

We offer a variety of sign classes to meet needs around the state and we continued the Deaf Mentor Program.



The Parent-Infant and School-Age Outreach Department, left to right, Denise Marback, Lana Zimbleman, Tami Iszler, Nicole Swartwout, Linda Ehlers, Ashley Martin and Jodi Scheeler.



Jordan Anderson, liaison to North Dakota's Part C (Early Intervention) programs, presented with Nicole Swartwout across the state to Developmental Disability Program Managers and Early Interventionists.



We had several opportunities to have resource tables at many conferences.



Left to right, Ashley Martin, Jodi Scheeler, Lana Zimbleman, Tami Iszler and Nicole Swartwout presented at the North Dakota Early Childhood Conference in Bismarck.

Outreach Department



Before winter break, the Outreach Team hosted a virtual visit with Santa who has cochlear implants and can communicate using voice or sign language. Some visits are held while children are at school or at home with 23 children from across the state participating.



We are so proud and excited for our amazing Parent-Infant and School-Age Outreach specialists. Ashley Martin received her 15 year service award from co-worker, Linda Ehlers. Nicole Swartwout, Coordinator was also honored by receiving the 11th Annual High-5 Award from North Dakota Hands & Voices. Nicole's nominee stated that she was a much deserved recipient of our 11th annual High 5 Award. She has made such an impact on so many lives. We are so grateful for what she does."

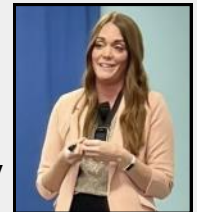
To support families with children who have Microtia and/or Atresia, a special "Growing Up Deaf" virtual meeting was held with Chris Bowman and Alex Lang, who grew up with Microtia and/or Atresia as part of a week-long Microtia-Atresia Awareness Week activities.



We sponsored our annual Family Understanding and Networking (F.U.N.) in May. Both professionals and families of children with hearing loss came to see Cheryl De Conde Johnson. We discussed "Using the NASDSE Guidelines to Support Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing."



Cheryl Johnson



Tricia Nechodom

We were also able to talk to Tricia Nechodom, Au.D. from Trinity Health in Minot. Courtney Ness Fuch, a mother of a child with hearing loss who works for North Dakota Assistive in Fargo, about making sense of hearing and technology.



Pictured on the left, Courtney Ness Fuch, shows a parent assistive devices available for those with a hearing loss.

Our Department hosted several regional events around the state for families and children with differentiated hearing. The pumpkin patch is a much anticipated event in the fall. We all enjoy coming together and having fun.



Adult Outreach in the News



Our very own Kathy Frelich, was instrumental in the passage of House Bill 1097, which directs Legislative Management to study the accessibility of government services for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have hearing differences. Legislators need to know about the challenges and/or barriers to services. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local entities to provide effective communication. We would like to hear from ND citizens who have had difficulty receiving services due to inadequate communication systems. Information will be compiled during interim meetings and a final report will be provided to Legislative Management prior to the 2027 Legislative Assembly.

Why Your Story Matters

Have you had difficulty accessing services due to a lack of effective communication; maybe there was no interpreter, signage was unclear, online resources lacked captions, or staff weren't trained in accessible services. Your personal experience is critical. Without real user stories, this study can't fully identify shortcomings in accessibility.

How You Can Help

- **Share your story in writing**
Include: *where* it happened, *when*, *what barrier you encountered*, and *the impact*. Detail how better communication (e.g., an ASL interpreter, clear captions, trained staff) could have helped.
- **Offer to speak publicly or via video**
Some Legislative Management hearings accept live or virtual testimony.
- **Offer suggestions**
You know best what would have worked for you in each situation. Share your knowledge.

Examples of Feedback needed by ND Legislators

- Delayed or misunderstanding when interacting at government offices.
- Public meetings, hearings, or emergency alerts lacking CART, captions, or ASL interpretation.
- Websites or digital services without captioning or screen-reader compatibility.
- Phone systems that fail to provide access.
- Physical spaces with poor signage or unclear visual alerts.

Feel free to reach out to any of the Adult Outreach staff across the state with any questions about serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults. Have a great summer from all of us!



Kristen Vetter, Adult Outreach Coordinator
Grand Forks
kristen.vetter@k12.nd.us
701-230-8701

Kathy Frelich, Adult Outreach Specialist
Devils Lake
kathy.frelich@k12.nd.us
701-665-4416

Dawn Sauvageau, Adult Outreach Special-
Fargo
dawn.sauvageau@k12.nd.us
701-351-0207

Karen Zinke, Adult Outreach Specialist
Turtle Lake
karen.zinke@k12.nd.us
701-516-2464

Retirees



Congratulations to Brian Morken

We extend our gratitude to Brian for his 24 years of dedicated service at NDSD/RC. Throughout his career, he has held various positions, including Cook, Custodian, and was currently serving in Maintenance.

Congratulations Brian!

We will miss you and wish you the best!

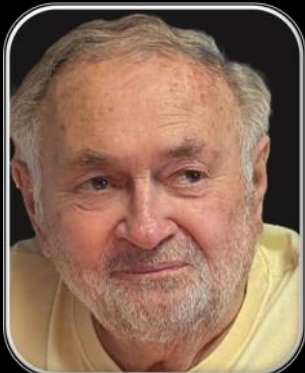
Happy Retirement

Congratulations to Jerry Allery

Jerry Allery, who after 8 years, enjoyed his last day at NDSD/RC with a luncheon in his honor.

Congratulations Jerry!

We wish you the best as you begin your days of retirement. You were a great asset to our Maintenance Department and will be missed!



We are deeply saddened by the sudden death of our beloved co-worker Arvin Carlson. In his retirement Arvin drove students home and back to NDSD/RC for 14 years during the school year. He built lasting relationships with the kids and their families.

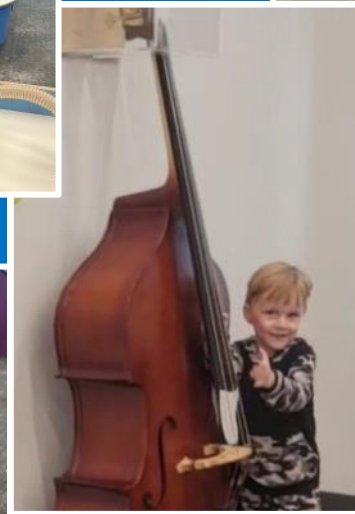
We will miss that witty humor and smile.



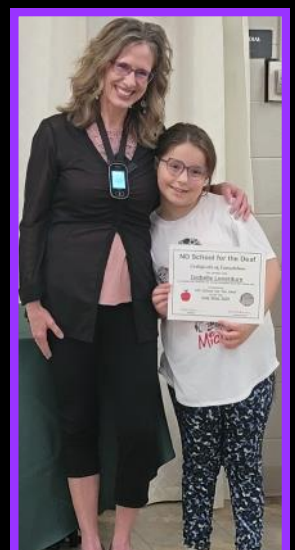
"THE STUDENTS ENJOYED A
BUBBLE PARTY ON THIS WARM DAY."



The elementary students and staff ended the school year with an exciting field trip to the Magic City Discovery Center in Minot, ND. There were SO many things to explore and do. GREAT fun was had by all. We ended the trip with lunch at a restaurant and a long, quiet ride back to school. WHAT A PLACE!



END OF THE YEAR AWARDS



Congratulations to Bailee "Class of 2025"



Kerry Olson-Rysavy-45 yrs



Diane Frelich-15 yrs



Ashley Martin -15 yrs



Tracy Hoeltl-10 yrs



Kathy Frelich-10 yrs



Kale Smith-3 yrs



Donna Sorensen-3 yrs



Katrina Wickware-3 yrs



Corene Dockter-3 yrs

"School's out for summer"



"Look how far we've come"



"Let the next adventure begin"



Pre-K thru 1st Grade

Keeping It Reel!

The annual summer camp sponsored by the North Dakota School for the Deaf/Resource Center was held this year, June 9-13, 2025, at the Triangle YMCA Camp near Garrison, ND. Experienced and new campers connected with peers with different hearing levels and made friendships that could last a lifetime.

The theme this year was **“Keeping It Reel”** with a fish theme. Campers, age 7 years to graduation, enjoyed a variety of typical recreational events such as fishing, watersports, climbing the 50-foot tower, a thrilling swing, a dance, s’mores and fish-themed arts and crafts. They also spent an afternoon at the Raging Rivers Waterpark in Mandan.



Posing with “Wally the Walleye” in Garrison City Park, campers from the North Dakota School for the Deaf enjoyed a week of getting to know peers from across the state with different hearing levels.



The [North Dakota State Library](#) (NDSL) has formed a digital collection partnership with its sister agency, the [North Dakota School for the Deaf](#) (NDSD). The Digital Initiatives Department at NDSL focused on digitizing the school's newsletters and making them publicly available on Digital Horizons. The *Banner*, the official newsletter of NDSD, was first published in 1891, and it is still published today. This digital collection was called the '[North Dakota School for the Deaf Banner](#).'

NDSL and NDSD decided to expand their collection partnership. The school has such a rich history, dating back to the 1890s, that it seemed appropriate to include more than just newsletters.

Several updates have been made. First and foremost, the name of the collection was changed. '*Banner*' was dropped from the title to reflect a broader name: the '[North Dakota School for the Deaf](#)' collection.

The *Banner* newsletters are still a core part of the collection. All issues of the *Banner* have been uploaded and are text searchable. Other documents, such as the school's trustee minutes and biennial reports, have also been added. Currently, the collection has biennial reports from 1890 to 2019. The collection also has registration ledgers from 1890 to 1933 that include information on the first 600 students who attended the school.

Images make up a large portion of the collection. These images include buildings, classrooms, sports, graduating classes, superintendents, and many more themes relating to the school.



The collection includes newsletters, biennial reports, photographs, videos, objects, and documents relating to NDSD since its inception in the 1890s to the present. Consult the [collection's finding aid](#) to learn more about it and the school, or start exploring the collection by going directly to [Digital Horizons](#).

To view *The North Dakota School for the Deaf Collection*, go to:
<http://digitalhorizonsonline.org/digital/collection/p16921coll12>



N O R T H
Dakota
School for the Deaf
Resource Center

<http://www.ndsd.nd.gov/>

Superintendent	701-665-4410
Main Office	701-665-4400
Fax	701-665-4409
Adult Outreach Services (call or text)	701-230-8701
Parent-Infant Outreach Services	701-858-3357
Communications/Interpreters	701-665-4400
Library/Resource Center	701-665-4433

If you would like to receive the **Banner** by e-mail, please contact:

Shelly Laverdure

NDSD/RC

1401 College Drive N

Devils Lake, ND 58301

shelly.laverdure@k12.nd.us

1-800-887-2980 or 701-665-4405



Thank you for your help.

**The NDSD Banner
ND School for the Deaf
Resource Center**

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Fax: 701-665-4409
<http://www.ndsd.nd.gov/>

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



GO GREEN

**See back inside cover for
information on how to receive the
NDSD Banner electronically.**