



**BE THE INSPIRATION**



**Rotary Club of La Crosse**

District 6250 Club 2690

# **Extra Effort Awards Recognition Program**



Rotary Club of La Crosse

P.O. Box 1914 • La Crosse, Wisconsin 54602-1914

[www.rotarycluboflacrosse.org](http://www.rotarycluboflacrosse.org) [rotarylax@charter.net](mailto:rotarylax@charter.net)

608-526-4491

**May 23, 2019**

The Rotary Club of La Crosse is honored to recognize these La Crosse students who have truly given the “Extra Effort” and overcome long odds to accomplish amazing things as they graduate from high school.

We applaud the students and the supportive people - including family members, friends, teachers and school counselors - who helped them along the way.

This program borrows its name from the longstanding “Extra Effort Awards” program of the La Crosse Tribune. For 23 years, the Tribune has shared the stories of area high school students who have overcome serious obstacles. Each year, the Tribune gathers those students -- one from each school -- and awards thousands of dollars in scholarships provided by generous donors, many of them members of the Rotary Club of La Crosse.

The Youth Committee is grateful to Rusty Cunningham, editor of the La Crosse Tribune, for his leadership and assistance in working with local schools to nominate additional students to be recognized today. We’re pleased to have Rusty here to introduce these students who deserve our applause and support.



## **Rotary Club of La Crosse Youth Committee**

David Stoeffler, Chair  
Katie Berkedal  
Tom Berkedal  
Tom Brock  
Dave Johnston  
Randy Nelson  
Anna Prinsen  
Val Schute  
Mark Solyst  
Mary Stanek  
Tom Thompson

The Youth Committee supports and maintains programs that recognize and encourage academic excellence, good citizenship and career development in youth. This committee also fosters and maintains positive relationships with local school administrators and counselors to identify students for Rotary awards and opportunities.

The committee regularly hosts “Students of the Month,” 11th-graders selected by La Crosse high schools. The committee also is responsible for administering the Service Above Self Awards, which includes three \$1,000 scholarships awarded to La Crosse high school seniors.

## Racelyn Tolomei

### Logan High School



Racelyn Tolomei spent a lot of time taking care of her brothers and sisters while she was growing up, often left alone to care for them.

When her mom left town, she and her siblings went to live with their dad.

While in high school, Racelyn started to make some bad choices, going down a wrong path.

She was connected with a family from her church who took her into their home. She

attended Holmen High School her junior year, then returned to her family to attend Logan High School.

When she turned 18, she moved in with an elderly woman from her church and she now provides homecare for the woman. She also works 30-40 hours a week at Culver's in Onalaska. She plans to attend Western Technical College to earn an associate's degree in Criminal Justice.

Racelyn attributes a lot of her success and determination to Officer Brad Stoner. She says he helped her stay on a good path. First semester, this year she earned a 3.6 GPA and is currently earning all As and Bs.

## Sudha Schultz

### Aquinas High School

Teachers consider Sudha Schultz a force of goodness.

Counselor Ryan Schaller says, "She's humble, positive, kind, respectful -- a ray of sunshine around here."

That's especially impressive for someone with a challenging start in life.

Sudha was put up for adoption in her native India. She was nine months old when she was adopted by James and Kristina Schultz of La Crosse – a process made more difficult by 9/11.

Her parents – especially her father -- taught her to appreciate music. But shortly before kindergarten, her father died – and, for a brief time, so did the music.

Today, she plays trumpet in the school band and sings in the choir to honor her father's legacy. She mentors young musicians, gets good grades and is a tireless volunteer.



## Jacob Savoldelli Aquinas High School



Jacob Savoldelli is a kind, humble young man and a quiet but positive and effective leader among his peers.

He has diabetes, which he must manage daily, including the need to have an emergency kit available.

Despite this, Jacob is involved in numerous activities, organizations and community work. He is a hard worker and maintains a 3.5 GPA, all while participating (and excelling) in baseball, basketball and football (for which he has served as captain for the last two years).

He also serves as an altar server and Eucharistic minister for mass and has been an active member of the Aquinas-based, philanthropic organization IMPACT.

Jacob is truly a star, but always treats others with kindness, respect and dignity and does so with a contagious, genuine smile. Jacob is a great student, an involved community member and a well-rounded gentleman.

## Patrick Schwabenbauer Logan High School

Patrick Schwabenbauer came to Logan his sophomore year.

Let's just say he had a chip on his shoulder. He had struggles at home. His mom was evicted so they had no place to live.

He eventually got hooked up with System of Care. His mom worked hard to get herself back on track and she got a trailer for them to live in.

He always told himself he wanted to be successful.

He didn't let people tell him he wasn't going to be successful.

That was something that motivated him to turn things around. He decided he wanted to get good grades, stick with a job and work 30-40 hours a week. His first job was in fast-food, then he found a better job, working there for a year. He is working for Domino's as a shift leader -- soon to become assistant manager.

Patrick still lives with mom and they work together to make ends meet. He has a saying: "You can do anything if you set your mind to it. Stay away from drugs and violence. It's the stupidest thing ever."

Patrick wanted to work full time to make as much money as he could. He graduated early this January.



## Cheyenne Mattie

### Logan High School



Cheyenne Mattie says art is her escape, her zen moment.

But there's a price for doing artwork.

For Cheyenne, that price is pain.

After struggling with stamina in sports, she was diagnosed with

a very rare, inherited syndrome that affects the skin, joints and blood vessels. Her father received the diagnosis, too, and there's a chance her sister has it.

At her young age, she already has painful arthritis.

She has been forced to give sports. Barring a cure, she'll face a lifetime of pain.

She's active in orchestra as well as art.

Cheyenne is near the top of her class academically. She plans to study biomedical engineering to help people just like her.

Because of her disease, she says she can't plan for her future. But, she controls what she can control and she'll keep drawing. "I might feel pain," she said. "But I can push through it."

## Anna Van Riper

### Aquinas High School

Anna Van Riper has been an honor student and a ridiculously hard-worker at Aquinas. She has consistently made honor roll and challenged herself with a rigorous course load.

She is active both in school and community events and organizations, and has risen within the theater department to become one of the strongest, most passionate performers.

This school year, she was diagnosed with aplastic anemia and had to be hospitalized for months, enduring chemotherapy to reset her body to prepare for a bone marrow transplant.

She has since had the transplant completed and is working toward a successful recovery.

All throughout her hospital ordeal, she thought of others.

She supported her theater cohorts, worked with friends to raise money to help her family pay for her medical bills, and even volunteered to give extra marrow during a preliminary extraction if it could help her doctors do research to benefit others.

She will graduate with her peers this year and plans to walk during the ceremony. Truly a remarkable young woman with a bright mind, a tireless spirit and a generous heart.



## Cydney Livingston Central High School



Imagine the strength required to make a life-or-death decision at age 13. Cydney Livingston had already seen her family endure addiction, incarceration and abuse. And in 2013, her mother was in a coma after suffering a heart attack.

Just barely a teen, doctors asked whether it was time to take her mother off life support. “Telling them to pull the plug was the right decision to do because she was a strong, independent woman who wouldn’t want someone to take care of her,” Cydney said of the decision she and her family made.

With therapy and courage, she battled through the grieving process and the struggles that followed.

Today, she’s involved in tennis, powerlifting, volunteering at the YMCA and Northside Neighborhood Clinic, and serving as vice president of Black Student Unity.

Her teachers say it’s clear Cydney is motivated to make her mother proud – and the college-bound senior has succeeded. Cydney says: “As long as I don’t lose myself, I feel like I can get through anything. As long as you keep a good head on your shoulders and do what you need to be happy, and keep pushing through, that’s the most important thing.”

## Byraius Moyer LaCrossroads High School

Byraius Moyer was bullied and alienated during elementary and middle school. He says he wasn’t good at school and was cynical.

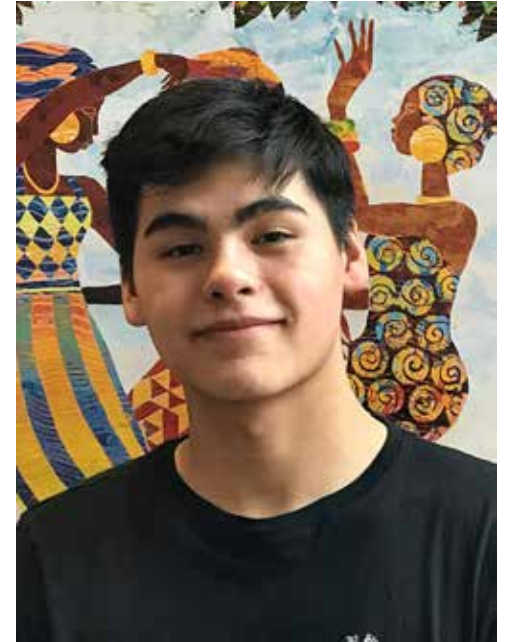
When the end of eighth grade came, he had 86 missing assignments and had all Fs. He essentially gave up.

He says he felt empty, and when he got to high school, his grades and his likability hadn’t improved.

But LaCrossroads helped change that.

It helped him accomplish his homework and start seeing some success. And, the bullying stopped.

His success was fueled by the earlier challenges. At the end of senior year, he has been on the honor roll for two years. He’s considered a role model to his peers, and he’s excited to go to Western Technical College and continue learning.



## Jordan Johnson

### LaCrossroads High School



Jordan Johnson was in third grade when her parents divorced. Then the bullying started. Jordan was bullied about her appearance throughout elementary school. In middle school, she was bullied through social media and became depressed.

She started to cut herself. She would isolate herself in class and at home. The bullying continued into high school and her frame of mind got worse. She had poor grades and skipped the first quarter of sophomore year to escape the harassment. She had suicidal thoughts.

Jordan had a rough life at home, enduring a very abusive relationship with her mother's boyfriend at the time. She moved in with her father, who got Jordan into therapy and on track. She joined LaCrossroads later that year and grew to earn Student of the Month – something she didn't think possible. She took summer school to catch up.

Today, she's maintained strong grades and is a three-time Student of the Month winner. She has been accepted to four colleges, including UW-Platteville. Jordan also got into Logan's top show choir, "The Class Act." She got a job at First Presbyterian Church and REM. And she's graduating with honors.

## Kayley Colburn

### Central High School

Kayley Colburn has had her ups and down, but she remains grateful and positive. She is a strong, independent young woman who has grown to love herself and her family.

When she was young, her family went through a number of challenges. On top of her parents' divorce, early in her high school career, Kayley lost her grandfather who was a major source of support. Losing him had a tremendous impact on her emotional health. Despite this loss, she still managed to have a very successful high school career. She works outside of school, plays a varsity sport and takes advanced placement classes.



Kayley shows how a student can overcome challenges. Her teachers are incredibly proud of her and excited to see her grow as she pursues a degree at Edgewood College in the fall. Kayley is an active volunteer. As a Link Crew member, she helps with 9th-grade and new student orientation. She always has a smile and a positive attitude as she helps new students navigate the school. She participates in Central's Trick or Can fundraiser and works as a peer tutor for AVID students. Recently, she participated in a Kindness retreat at Hintgen Elementary School where she taught students about bullying and acted as a mentor to the younger students.

## Andriel Morgan Central High School



Andriel Morgan has overcome so much. She is resilient and smart, fighting through barriers to achieve her goals. In the past 10 years, Andriel has lived in 15 homes. In the last four years, she's lived with five host families.

Through all that, Andriel still has a beaming smile. Everyone who meets Andriel falls in love with her - she is kind, smart, gracious and helpful.

Even with life's instability, Andriel continues to push herself to take honors and AP classes, work every week, and stay involved in dance.

She is an impressive student and a true example of perseverance and community service. She works at the Boys & Girls Club, running activities for younger students and serving as a mentor. She volunteers with the Health Science Academy. She gives presentations to school-age children about stroke prevention, volunteered for Children's Miracle Network to help raise money for children who are confined to the hospital, participated in Dragon Boat racing for breast cancer awareness, and helps at the Northside Neighborhood Clinic.

She's also been involved in the Rotary Lights display and the Steppin' Out in Pink fundraiser. She contributes to our community in many ways and will be an asset for years to come.

## Christian Dungy LaCrossroads High School

Christian Dungy had just turned 16, He had just done acid. He wound up in the hospital surrounded by family.

"My brother was crying," Christian said. "My grandma was pissed."

Both of his parents had struggled with substance abuse. Christian has struggled with mental health. But he has risen above those challenges and more.

Dorothy Hart of LaCrossroads says: "Everyone talks highly of Christian — great worker, dedicated, always there for other people. He really is the nicest guy. He'd give you the shirt off his back."

He participated in Western Technical College's YouthBuild, an alternative education program in which students split time between classroom and construction site, building homes in La Crosse. He tossed salads and washed dishes at Digger's Sting. When the soles of his favorite boots were shot, his co-workers chipped in and bought him a new pair.

Christian says. "There were times I felt like I didn't have anybody. Now, I know that people are here for me, that they're counting on me. I know how lucky I am." Christian dreams of opening his own construction firm. He's building a strong foundation.

