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Alumni Giving Fund sets goals for new school year

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WHS Graduate Ava Marasch receives the first-ever WHS Gosling Alumni Giving Fund scholarship at the end of the 2026 school year. L-R: WHS Graduate Ava Marasch, WHS Gosling Alumni Giving Fund Board Treasurer Sue Will and WHS Gosling Alumni Giving Fund Board Secretary Julie Chapman.

WHS ALUMNI GIVING FUND

WATERTOWN – The Watertown High School Gosling Alumni Giving Fund awarded its debut scholarship this past summer. This year, the alumni initiative is setting funding goals and scheduling events.

Formed in 2024 by the WHS Class of 1984, the fund is dedicated to supporting the “kid in the middle.” This would be a student who may not have the highest grades or the greatest need, but still requires some level of support to achieve educational goals.

The scholarship can be awarded to Watertown High School seniors pursuing post-secondary education, including technical or trade schools, two-year colleges or four-year colleges or universities.

“There's this whole other swath of people – maybe they had to work a couple jobs while they were in high school, maybe they were involved but they weren't the top of their class,” said Gosling Fund Board Member Dr. Maribeth Clifford Kuzmeski. “We wanted to find some of those students who are graduating from Watertown High School that aren't currently being served.”

The Gosling Fund accomplished this goal when it awarded its first-ever scholarship to Ava Marasch. Marasch currently attends the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD), pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a major in Education.

"I was a little shocked, but no doubt, grateful. Very grateful," said Marasch. "I'm happy with my school of choice. Within the first week I've already met so many new people and have learned so much about where my path is heading."

Fund goals, upcoming events

Marasch is not a one-off. The Gosling Fund has goals to create – as Kuzmeski put it – a “nest egg,” which can be reliably drawn from each year to fund their students of choice.

“From a fundraising standpoint, we want to raise \$300,000, and we want to raise it in the next 12 months,” said Kuzmeski.

She explained that the number was tentative and could be revised later.

“It may be much more than that. We want to develop a scholarship that will exist in perpetuity, and in order to do that, we've got to raise a decent amount of money,” she said.

The Gosling Fund is not just for the Class of 1984, but for any WHS alumni or supporters who want to give back to the school. An upcoming event that typifies this idea is the Gosling Alumni Leadership Forum.

Hosted on Oct. 1 at 5:30 p.m. at Silver Moon Watertown, 1601 E. Gate Dr., the event is meant to bring together any and all WHS alumni to talk about ideas including “scholarships, mentoring, class reunions and partnerships, community service, alumni engagement, the Alumni Class Challenge and new ways to keep WHS graduates connected.” There is no cost to attend.

“We wanted to really invite other people in and get others involved, not just to raise money, but to also take a look at where the needs are,” said Kuzmeski. “Maybe it's mentoring, maybe it's shadowing or doing other things with the students who are graduating.

“It's not just about raising money to give one scholarship a year. It's about raising enough money to give multiple scholarships for multiple years of school to our recipients, and supporting them in other ways. And the only way we can support them in other ways is if we get to know them.”

Those encouraged to attend include, “class reunion organizers, class officers, class Facebook administrators, alumni leaders, current and retired WUSD employees, and alumni from every graduating class.”

Above all, Kuzmeski emphasized the Gosling Fund's dedication to supporting its students in a way they may not have seen before.

“There are alumni who really want to see you become as successful as you can be,” said Kuzmeski. “In order to do that, we are willing to give of our time and our money and our expertise to help students at Watertown High School.”

Interested individuals can RSVP to the Leadership Forum by emailing goslingfund@gmail.com

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