

# Pastor

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tending meetings that I go to at church.”

Sodea said this is the first time he’s been in the United States and that he is lucky to live with Egbert, whom he had met in Cameroon previously.

“I had a lot of culture shock when I first arrived,” Sodea said. “The first town I came to was Chicago, which is a big city with big buildings, so I had some confusion as to how big the town I’d be staying in would be.”

However, Gayville has been different because he can meet people and sometimes ask them questions about living here. He said that he’s happy to be here and share information with the members of the church because oftentimes Christians send money to Cameroon but never actually see or meet anyone from there.

“It’s a good thing for me to come here so people in America know more about Cameroon,” Sodea said. “I see how Ralph (Egbert) is working here and how he can help me do some things in Africa. When he goes there, he will see what is good and what’s not good, and we can share that information together.”

Egbert will spend three months in Cameroon beginning in March.

Sodea said he has learned a lot from being in the United States.

“People can express their opinion during Bible study which sometimes helps the pastor with the sermon for Sunday,” he said. “I also see how the churches here take care of the youth. Back in Africa, the children’s program is done separately, outside of the church, so I appreciate the sense of community that takes place here.”

Sodea added that churches here are also more organized than they are in Cameroon.

“In Africa, time isn’t that big of a deal to people, so it even takes a lot of time to do announcements and when people want to speak during the service, they just raise their hands and talk,” he said.

“When programs are more focused, it’s faster and better because it allows us to control how the service is going and how long the program will last for.”

Another big difference, Sodea said, is that in Cameroon, people often visit the pastor at their house after the service, whereas here sometimes people just greet the pastor right after church then go their separate ways.

“Just being in church here, I find the community of being together in a place that we can all exchange conversation and a sense of community,” he said. “In small group bible study here, we share with each other our thoughts about something we’re all learning about together.”

One of the big things that Egbert has been amazing for Sodea has been the connections he’s seen people have to Africa in places like Menard’s or the grocery store.

“These connections have been there probably about a dozen times and it’s really been amazing to see doors get opened and have people interested in what’s going on,” he said.

Sodea said one of the things that fascinated him was the November elections, which took place shortly after he arrived in Gayville.

“The elections in Cameroon sometimes have trouble afterwards,” he said. “The loser of the election in Cameroon sometimes disappears, while here, people do not divide after the election — they walk together. I have to bring back the message that living in

peace in Cameroon will help the country.”

Sodea added that when he goes home, the first thing he has to teach people is how to be free.

“I need to teach people how to have a dialogue with one another — a good dialogue is to tell the truth to someone, and if you have a problem it’s good to share it with other people,” he said. “In Africa, if you have a problem, you usually keep it to yourself.”

Egbert said the time he has spent with Sodea has been amazing.

“He’s coming from a place where the people are more patient, time is different and issues of authority are also different,” Egbert said.

He said one of the things that shocked Sodea was the concept of leftovers.

“Tim got here in November, so one of the first things we’re cooking was turkey,” Egbert said. “We put some turkey back in the refrigerator and ate it again. In Cameroon, you sit at the table and eat everything that’s there. A person who puts leftovers away for another meal is considered selfish.”

When Egbert travels to Cameroon in March, he said he is looking forward to seeing how people live there and how church is run.

“Some of the things they do there are similar to here, but others are not,” he said. “Most of the Lutheran churches there are in French-speaking areas, and I have a very limited knowledge of that language. I’m also interested in seeing how people react to me as an American, because most people there have not had much contact with American people.”

You can follow Andrew Atwal on Twitter at [twitter.com/andrewatwal](https://twitter.com/andrewatwal)

# Mother

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build the life they enjoy today. But those memories are very special and have molded Schiferl into the wife and mother she is today.

“I’m very passionate about being a mother,” said Schiferl. “I always wanted to be a Christian mother who gave my children what they needed to survive in their future lives.”

For the Schiferl family, that includes a faith-filled life and sitting around the kitchen table sharing those insights and experiences. It’s as normal a conversation as talking about the weather.

Years ago, when the couple started to look where they wanted to put down roots, a family member recommended the Crofton School District. A brother-in-law was a principal at Osmond and gave the Crofton system high marks, so they looked in the area. It was 1982 and Greg had just landed a job as a General Electric serviceman for a CAT scan recently purchased by Sacred Heart Hospital. He would work in the area as a GE repairman for the more advanced medical machines.

“When we looked at our farm place the first time, the front door fell off when I tried to open it,” Schiferl said with a laugh. She wanted to turn around and never look back, but they couldn’t refuse the price. It was just right — cheap. For a time during remodeling, the couple went outside and climbed a ladder to their bedroom window every night.

The Schiferl family includes Sarah and her husband Tom and nine-month-old son Will; Tyler, his wife Jaime and four-month-old son

Grayson; Megan and Tanner.

Schiferl had lots of help proofing her first application. Megan is an English major, soon to be graduating from South Dakota State University; Sarah works in vocational rehabilitation and does job interviews; and daughter-in-law Jaime works in human resources. Together, they had plenty of advice for Schiferl and jumped at the chance to proof her entry.

Now for the next level, they will be providing some wisdom about their mother also.

Along with promoting the American Mothers Association, Schiferl is thinking about a cause or a philosophy she wants to advocate.

“I hope to use this year to promote family because that is what it is all about for Greg and me,” said Schiferl. “And living a faith-filled life as a family.”

The couple sat together one morning and realized the parallels between parenting and horsemanship. Both Greg and Jan have been around horses all their lives and to this today, the cowboy way is a vital part of their family life. Their homestead, known as WJ Schiferl Ranch, has become a well-known cowboy and horse center, offering cowboy clinics, cowboy adventures, colt training, concerts and a Cowboy Christmas.

“Horses can’t be forced to do anything, and hard discipline doesn’t work either; you need to build a relationship so they can be comfortable with you, teaching them confidence,” said Schiferl. “You need to earn their respect.”

It’s the same way the couple raised their children and the love is so evident.

Schiferl has something not every Nebraska Mother of the Year can boast: a college degree in music from two prisons. She attended the University of South Dakota at Springfield for two years and graduated from Yankton College. Both facilities are prisons now but she admits she had the best education from the two schools.

Schiferl knows there will be many other deserving mothers on hand in New York for the national presentation in April, and she is honored to represent Nebraska.

But as son Tyler reminded her in a phone call after when she found out, she will keep saying thanks.

“We are so blessed; I feel we take our family for granted,” said Schiferl. “I hope to remind mothers how important families are. And when families and faith go forward hand in hand, the puzzle pieces will all fit.”

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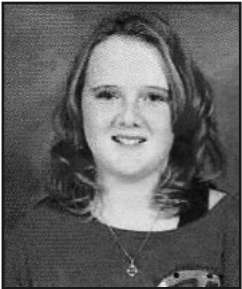
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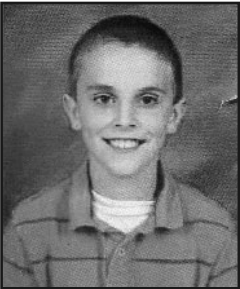
# A+ Students of the Week



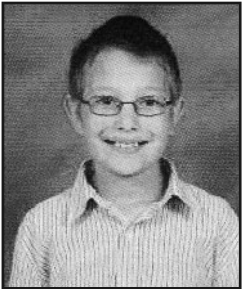
**McKenzie Carson**  
**Parents:** Kris and Nolan Carson  
**Grade:** 4th  
**School:** Springfield Elementary  
**Why Nominated?** McKenzie is a talented girl. She works hard, is organized, and works independently.  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Math, Spelling, Science.  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Just coming to the school and meeting the teachers and having fun.



**Makayla Kelley**  
**Parents:** Terry and Lisa Kelley  
**Grade:** 4th  
**School:** Springfield Elementary  
**Why Nominated?** Makayla is a kind and helpful girl. She shows concern for the feelings of others, works hard, and is conscientious.  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Art and P.E.  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** When I am with my friends and teachers.



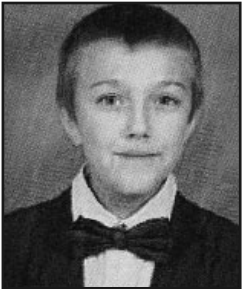
**Carter Libis**  
**Parents:** Chris and Jen Libis  
**Grade:** 5th  
**School:** Springfield Elementary  
**Why Nominated?** Carter is hard-working and kind. He is very polite and considerate. He understands the value of hard work.  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Math and Science.  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Getting on the A honor roll showed me that all my hard work was worth it!



**Luke Boyd**  
**Parents:** Don and Kari Boyd  
**Grade:** 5th  
**School:** Springfield Elementary  
**Why Nominated?** Luke is a kind, quiet, hard-working boy. He is an avid reader with a wonderful sense of humor.  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Science.  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Going on a fieldtrip to a buffalo ranch.



**Karissa Boyd**  
**Parents:** Don and Kari Boyd  
**Grade:** 3rd  
**School:** Springfield Elementary  
**Why Nominated?** Honor Roll, a great listener and is responsible.  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Math  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Taking a trip to see movies in Tripp, SD every year.



**Elijah Eastman**  
**Parents:** Clare and Carl Eastman  
**Grade:** 3rd  
**School:** Springfield Elementary  
**Why Nominated?** Honor roll student, attentive, loves to read and learn.  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Math  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Writing Stories.

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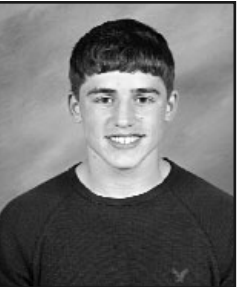
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**Austin Kaul**  
**Parents:** Billy and Michelle Kaul  
**Grade:** 11th  
**School:** Bon Homme High School  
**Why Nominated?**  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Science, Math, Music  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Playing with the All-State Jazz Band.



**Elizabeth Mitzel**  
**Parents:** Ed and Kate Mitzel  
**Grade:** 10th  
**School:** Bon Homme High School  
**Why Nominated?**  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Biology, Honors Geometry  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Going on field trips with my class, being in sports with my friends.



**Maddison Hajek**  
**Parents:** Cary and Dorothy Hajek  
**Grade:** 9th  
**School:** Bon Homme High School  
**Why Nominated?**  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Science  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Going to State Cross Country as a seventh grader and 8th grade field trip to Kansas City.



**Haley Frank**  
**Parents:** Todd Frank and Malena Frank  
**Grade:** 8th  
**School:** Bon Homme High School  
**Why Nominated?**  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Language Arts and Art  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Hanging out with my friends.



**Alec Weber**  
**Parents:** Scott and JoLynn Weber  
**Grade:** 12th  
**School:** Bon Homme High School  
**Why Nominated?**  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Biology and Chemistry  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** State FFA, band trip to St. Louis, and prom.



**Claire Sorenson**  
**Parents:** Pete and Lorraine Sorenson  
**Grade:** 4th grade  
**School:** Tabor Elementary  
**Why Nominated?** Claire is a pleasant young lady who is a friend to everyone. She genuinely cares about school and works very hard.  
**Favorite Subject(s):** Science, Math, Computers, Spelling, Art, and Reading.  
**Favorite School Memory(s):** Going to Track & Field day and winning.

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