

WOKSAPE

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Yankton Students Continue in the Spirit of Giving All Year Long



**BY
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It’s that time of year again: the Thanksgiving season. Everyone in the Yankton community is getting ready. People are buying turkeys, baking pies, and planning get-togethers. The students of Yankton High School are one step ahead of the rest of the community. They are always in the spirit of giving. From collecting canned goods, clothes, and toys, to serving food at the Banquet, YHS students are involved in many activities focused around the spirit of giving all year round.

Student Council is one of the groups that organizes activities to benefit the Yankton area. The Children’s Miracle Network is the chosen charity for this year. Donations will be made specifically to this cause. The Remembrance Tree is a giving spirited activity in which families or friends can purchase a Christmas ornament in honor of a loved one who is no longer with us. The money raised goes towards Gift Givers. Student Council also is in charge of many food drives and helping out at the Banquet.

Ms. Becky Tasa is the head of Student Council. “The students understand that Yankton is their home and they want to better the community,” Tasa says. “Therefore, the giving spirit of the YHS students is unbelievable, no matter what project it is. I’m lucky enough to see the full effect of the student’s giving spirit all year. YHS students have amazing generosity which will make them successful as adults.”

Tasa feels that the “students involvement will affect their own lives forever. The ability to help someone out is a feeling that can only be felt by action and once someone has felt that feeling of giving it becomes a habit that will continue the rest of their lives.”

The vice-president of Student Council is Nathan Rausch. “Student Council has a great deal of spirit when it comes to giving,” Rausch says. “The council also has great involvement with other students, and we try to open as many projects as we can to the rest of the student body to get them involved in giving.” According to Rausch, the giving spirit of YHS is so active because students want to help out those in need, and want to show how YHS as a school is always here for their community.

National Honor Society also is in charge of many giving spirited activities. Adviser for NHS, Mrs. Jennifer Powell, feels the spirit of giving is “alive and strong” in the NHS and the high school as a whole. Annually money, food, and other items to assist the Yankton Food Bank are collected. Not only food is collected, but students also give their time and talent to help the community as well. For instance, last year the Environmental Club and NHS participated in the Great Clean-up Day cleaning the school ground as well as highways and spaces in the community. Powell says that “YHS students are great role models for giving in the community.”

The National Honor Society is coming upon its annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. In October the group hosted the Sioux Land Blood Drive and helped with set-up as well as promotion. In addition, NHS has already voted to give Gift Givers a monetary gift to help with their expenses. Last winter the NHS served at the Banquet several times; a group of the NHS students helped with the State Special Olympics opening ceremonies, and every first weekend of the month, the NHS sponsors the Bingo at the local nursing home, Majestic Bluffs. Along with that, many members donate time to tutoring at the high school in the ALC as well as in the library.

National Honor Society president Vanessa Rockne says the events that NHS sets up affect the community by “allowing the community members the awareness of what the students at YHS have to offer and the care we have towards our community and benefiting others.” Rockne says that the YHS students give not only their time, but they also put in thought and ideas to better their projects and outcomes.

“The year round spirit of giving keeps YHS students aware of the pride and care our school has for our community of Yankton,” Rockne states. “When students see and participate in the activities NHS and Student Council put on, they are more likely to do the same for the community outside of school. NHS helps to lead by example



PHOTOS COURTESY OF YHS ARCHIVES

ABOVE: National Honor Society students organize food for their “Mountain of Food” food drive held annually during the days preceding Thanksgiving break.

RIGHT: Yankton High School alum, Allison Struck, is shown attending a student legislature event during her career at YHS. Struck has continued pursuing civic minded interests after graduating.

and promote the spirit of giving so that fellow students might do the same.”

Lauren Fanta is the NHS vice-president, and she says, “students embrace the responsibility to give back to the community, not just during the holidays, but all year round. Students learn the value and self-fulfillment of giving to those in need.”

According to Fanta, the events that NHS chooses to set up are to help various people in the community, not just one group. “The activities help out less fortunate people who need help putting food on their table or giving Christmas gifts to their children. Other events such as reading to elementary children help to enhance reading: a vital skill in our society. Events such as singing Christmas carols and playing bingo help to bring enjoyment to the elderly. YHS is full of students who know the value of giving all year round! Every activity is overflowing with students wishing to help.”

The National Honor Society is in charge of the Thanksgiving Food Drive. Leslie Henderson and Jenna Grossenburg are the leaders of this year’s drive. Grossenburg says that “many people tend to forget about the holidays, especially teenagers. The food drive is a way for students to be brought back to reality and realize what *Thanksgiving* is all about.”

Henderson agrees, bringing up that “it is important for us to give back to the community too, because so many people help and support Yankton High School. It is only fair that we do our share also.” The Thanksgiving Food Drive is a way for people who cannot afford food during the holidays to get a nice meal on Thanksgiving.

“With the food also comes joy,” Henderson says. Students find joy in giving to the less fortunate, and Grossenburg says it is “great to see the school come together.” “

Gift Givers is an activity that National Honor Society sets up. Students are given the choice of providing one or more gifts for a boy or a girl. The ages range from toddler to teenager. After the shopping is done, students wrap the gifts. The gifts are then divided into anonymous family piles. Once all the gifts are wrapped and divided,

students and other volunteers from the community deliver the gifts.

Nicole Doerr, YHS senior, has overseen Gift Givers for the past couple years. “Gift Givers affects the families of the Yankton community,” Doerr says. “I believe that when families receive our gifts, it lifts a weight off of their shoulders so they can really enjoy the holidays with their families without any worries.”

Doerr feels that students who participate in this activity “aren’t only thinking of their own happiness, but also the happiness the children will have when they receive their gifts.”

Graduates of YHS remember the giving spirit of the school. Allison Struck, a 2006 YHS graduate, was a member of Student Council and participated in many giving spirited activities.

“When I was a YHS student, I helped organize many food drives, worked the Banquet and the Blood Drive, and helped raise money for the March of Dimes,” Struck said. Even in Struck’s high school days, YHS had a community focus, not only a school focus. She adds, “A lot of my peers were involved in activities that possessed the giving spirit. Their activities ranged from teaching religious education to visiting the elderly at the nursing homes. I know that Gift Givers, for example, was very successful and much appreciated.”

Struck feels that during her high school career, Yankton students “definitely affected the community.” Struck says “doing something that benefits someone other than yourself is a learning experience, and then you’ll be attracted to similar activities in the future. Doing activities full of the giving spirit with like-minded people makes a positive difference and can inspire a person.” Struck feels that any project that can better the community also benefits the volunteers.

Struck, after all her high school volunteering, continued with volunteering in college at the University of South Dakota. “I was involved with service learning at the U. I participated in AWOL (Alternative Week of All Campus Learning). I went on two trips: one to Eagle Butte and one to Pine Ridge. We filled a van and a U-Haul with supplies and food to give to the less fortunate



people. Yankton High School helped collect items to bring to Pine Ridge, and it was awesome to work with those students again. The involvement was impressive. ”

Struck is still involved in the giving spirit to this day. She is the Backpack coordinator for Feeding South Dakota. From September to May, around 4,000 backpacks are delivered to 49 schools across the state. These bags are filled with food and other supplies and are then sent home with children on the weekends. “It’s a non-profit organization, and the children really benefit. It’s fortunate for the children because there is a major gap of food from Friday to Monday.” Struck also has a “little sister” from the Big Pal, Little Pal organization with whom she spends time and mentors.

The giving spirit is very alive in Yankton High School. This attitude has a positive effect inside and outside the school and also has a great impact on the students and their futures. Yankton High School is very full of the giving spirit all year round, not just around Thanksgiving.




Noteworthy News Briefs




The following Yankton Bucks football players were recognized for ESD All Conference Awards: Ty Soulek, Kellen Soulek, Alex McKee, Brady Knodel, and Connor Fitzsimmons. Honorable mention: Terry Huber and Jackson Pasco.




The following Yankton Gazelle volleyball players were recognized for ESD All Conference Awards: Emily Fedders, Chloe Cornemann, Mikala Hora and Kelsey Fitzgerald .




Yankton High School student council elections for student body president will be held on Monday, December 5th. Students in the sophomore or junior class may run for student council president.




The Yankton High School chorus and orchestra holiday concert will be performed at the Yankton High School main theater on Monday, December 5th at 7 p.m. featuring traditional Christmas music.




Courtney True, YHS senior, was selected by KSFY and Touchstone Energy to be the Scholar of the Week for the week of November 7. True was featured on a short news clip last week on the KSFY station in Sioux Falls. Bon Homme Electric also awarded her a \$100 check.



On Tuesday, November 21, a Parents for Safe Prom meeting will be held at the Summit Activities Center at 5:15 p.m. Parents are encouraged to help with this committee to provide safe after prom activities.



Measurements for caps and gowns for all seniors who are going through graduation will be held on Tuesday, November 22 from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Yankton College Alumni Hall.



On Tuesday, November 29, Yankton High School Jazz Band auditions will be held. Anyone interested in playing in one of the jazz bands can download and print parts from the high school band webpage at: <http://www.yzd.k12.sd.us/band>.

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