

The Guardian

Fall 2025

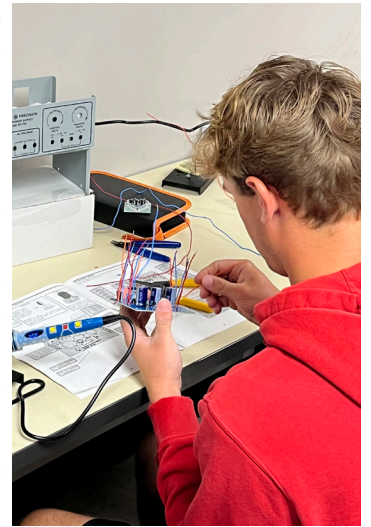
Newsletter of the Alton Educational Foundation

Foundation Partners with Alton High to Expand CTE Courses and Pathways

At the start of the 2024-2025 school year, the Alton Educational Foundation (AEF) Board of Directors expanded their services to include partnering with Alton High School to focus on increasing Career and Technical Education (CTE) course offerings and pathways.

In an effort to further support students with high levels of interest in the trades, the AEF partnered with I.B.E.W. Local 649 (electrician union) and Lewis and Clark Community College (LCCC) to add two new pathway courses for students interested in becoming an electrician. These two new electricity classes are dual credit classes, meaning students can earn college credit through LCCC while still in high school. Additionally, the classes provide students with early exposure to the skills and technical expertise required in seeking an apprenticeship and career in the electrical field.

Additionally, the AEF also partnered in the return to home building for Alton High students in construction trades classes. After a nearly 20-year hiatus, students returned to building homes in August with the first house being constructed at the Woodlands Golf Course during the 2025-2026 school year. Paul Yost, owner of Tycon Construction, was a student in construction trades classes at AHS back in the 1980s and built homes with his classmates. With a deep commitment to seeing students gain experience through home building once again, Yost led the charge. He, along with his Tycon carpenters, are working jointly with Alton High Construction Trades Teacher, Scott Venum, to provide students with hands-on instruction at the home building site. Students have already been hard at work this semester pouring the new home's foundation and preparing it for framing.



The sponsors who made the students return to home building a reality include Tycon, Fischer Lumber, R.P. Lumber, Carrollton Bank, Arrow Signs, Home Depot, Lowe's, JEN Mechanical, the Alton School District and Alton Educational Foundation. A number of subcontractors will also be lending their expertise to the project in the areas of HVAC, electrical, plumbing and others.



Congratulations to the 2025 Brunjes Memorial Scholarship Recipients

The Orville and Kathleen Brunjes Memorial Scholarship was established in 1987 by Kathleen Brunjes. She and Orville were longtime educators and also served their community at the highest of levels. Kathleen established the scholarship fund to ensure students, in the communities they loved, had the opportunity to access college. She made sure funds were provided from her estate to continue their legacy of giving after their passing and over \$110,000 has been granted to over sixty students since 1987. The Alton Educational Foundation began administering the scholarship funding in 2018. The 2025 Brunjes Memorial Scholarship recipients are Wren Crawford and Lauren Massey, who are two exceptional Alton High graduates.



Wren Crawford



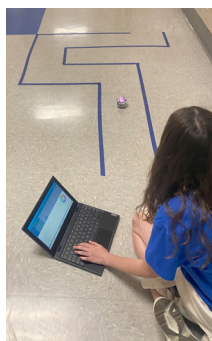
Lauren Massey

Wren is attending Spelman College in Atlanta, GA and is majoring in English with a minor in political science. Her career goal is to become a political journalist.

Lauren is attending the University of Missouri in Columbia and majoring in nutritional and exercise science. Her career goal is to work in the field of nutritional science.

2025 Grant Recipients Bring New Innovations to Classrooms

Thanks to the generosity of donors, the Alton Educational Foundation awarded four grants to teacher and staff applicants in the spring. The projects awarded represent a wide range of instructional opportunities for students that deepen their understanding in a given content area, provide career-connected experiences and/or allow for hands-on opportunities. The Spring 2025 grant recipients and their respective projects were:



CARLA MALY – EAST ELEMENTARY: Carla and her 5th grade students used AEF grant funds to purchase Spheros to enhance science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) opportunities for students. Spheros are robotic balls that students control using a joystick or through coding. Students can develop their coding skills through interactive activities such as bridge building, Battle-Bots and maze running.

ALTON HIGH CONSTRUCTION TRADES: The AEF is providing grant funds to support students in AHS Construction Trades Classes who are returning homes this fall. Students, along with Tycon Construction/Paul Yost (builder partner), are building their first home at The Woodlands Golf Course. Students are returning to building homes after 20 years.



BRIDGET HECK – ALTON HIGH: Bridget proposed a program entitled “The Halls

Are Alive with Art” where 200+ Alton High students will create artistic works on large scale canvases which will then adorn the various hallways at the school. The project encourages artistic expression, increases levels of engagement and provides a student-inspired school environment.

AMANDA MARKO – EAST ELEMENTARY: Amanda’s project focused on enhancing her small instructional group setting with the addition of “wobble stools” for a student seating option. The stools aid in supporting student posture as well as sharpening vestibular and proprioceptive senses which help students, even at a young age, understand how balance, posture and body awareness enhance their ability to learn by remaining engaged for longer periods of time.



DOLLY PARTON IMAGINATION LIBRARY — Later this year, the Alton Educational Foundation and additional funding partners will launch the Imagination Library. This program provides a free book every month, mailed directly to the home, for the first five years of a child’s life. Children from birth to five years old are eligible and can access up to 60 high quality books over their duration in the program. Any parent in Alton, Godfrey or Fosterburg may sign their child up for free and the program will start later this fall.



Student Internship Program Takes Center Stage for 2025-26 School Year

-AHS Students Gaining Work-Based Experiences Across the Region-



The Alton Educational Foundation (AEF) is partnering with Alton High School this school year to establish and implement internship opportunities for students in a multitude of career fields. These important experiences allow students to explore fields of their interest at a deeper level by working directly in the workplace under the thoughtful guidance of industry partners and employers.

Internships can be paid or unpaid experiences where students earn high school credit as a part of the program. The State of Illinois now offers students a College and Career Pathway Endorsement, a seal that is affixed to their diploma and transcript which indicates the student has prepared in a given career field at the highest level possible while in high school.

In order to obtain the endorsement, students must successfully complete the pathway courses (in the content area or field of interest) available at Alton High, participate in team-based challenges within the classroom and then complete a 60-hour internship at an external employer with their work related directly to the career field. Students can complete these hours as a part of their school day or before or after school. In order to qualify, students must be completing/completed the necessary pathway classes, demonstrate a high level of readiness to be in the workplace, receive teacher recommendations and complete an interview process. Eligible students are then matched with an internship in their field of interest based on availability with area employers. Currently, Alton High has students already placed this fall in specific internships with the majority of others starting in the spring semester.



The AEF has been working with area employers to establish numerous internships for students across a wide array of fields. The program is offered as a no “out-of-pocket” cost opportunity for employers through foundation grant resources that subsidize or completely cover the cost of paid internships for a given employer.

For more information on the Alton High Student Internship Program or for employers interested in hosting an intern(s), please email info@altoned.org.

~ AHS STUDENT INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES ~

The following are just examples of the various career fields that students will be exploring this fall and spring through area employers who are providing real-world experiences and career-connected learning through internships:

- Biomedical Sciences, Nursing and Healthcare
- Engineering
- Human Resources
- Broadcast Journalism
- Cybersecurity and Information Technology
- Early Childhood Education
- Auto Body and Auto Mechanics
- Business Administration
- Finance and Banking
- Research and Development

THANK YOU TO OUR 2024-2025 FOUNDATION DONORS! BECAUSE OF YOU, WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR STUDENTS, STAFF AND SCHOOLS!

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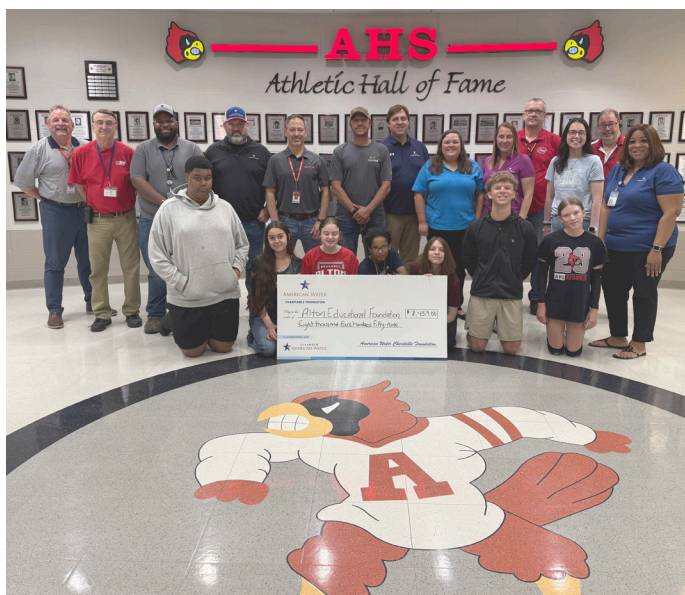
Grant Provides Summer Watershed Academy for Alton High Students

Over the course of the summer months, Alton High students spent their extra time studying regional watersheds and ecosystems across the St. Louis region while also conducting water tests. The activities were all a part of the first-ever Alton High Summer Watershed Academy which was offered free to students thanks to a grant from the American Water Charitable Foundation received by the Alton Education Foundation.

Students received high school elective credit towards graduation for the unique opportunity that combined both classroom instruction and work in the field. Some of the various watershed, river and wetland areas studied included Deer Creek Watershed, Meramec River, Sugar Fork Watershed, Creve Coeur Creek, Mississippi River and the Watershed Nature Center. Students also conducted water tests assessing for water quality,

measuring temperature, pH turbidity, nitrates, phosphates and also checking for the presence of microorganisms and bacteria.

In preparing for the watershed academy, Dan Pettus, Alton High Field Ecology Teacher and academy coordinator, said the new academy was designed for students that love outdoor adventures and have an interest in biology. "We were excited to provide the Summer Watershed Academy. Not only was it a great way for students to get a jump on science elective credit towards graduation, it also was a great opportunity to explore St. Louis area watersheds and wetlands while building on their knowledge in the field. Conducting water tests and then determining how to apply the data collected using real-world connections was truly a significant opportunity for students." Pettus added that the entire process was a great deal of fun as well.



INAUGURAL AEF “PARTNERS IN EDUCATION” LUNCHEON A SUCCESS

On August 7, the Alton Educational Foundation (AEF) celebrated the very best in partnerships between our schools and communities. The event, held at Lewis and Clark Community College, hosted over 260 guests including students, educators, industry partners and community representatives.



Cathy Droste, AEF Board Chair, kicked the event off welcoming attendees and expressing her gratitude to the Alton High Chamber Strings and Laura Plummer for providing the music and Lewis and Clark Community College for hosting the event.



The focus of the program was to highlight the growing partnerships between area employers and Alton schools including, Alton High School. Kristie Baumgartner, AEF Executive Director, provided updates on the Guardians of Education Program that provides classroom grants to teachers and staff. She also discussed the foundation's

efforts to increase Career and Technical Education (CTE/vocational) course offerings and student internship opportunities in a wide variety of career fields for students at Alton High. Mike Brey, Alton High Assistant Principal, also provided an overview of the expansive CTE/vocational opportunities currently available at Alton High including some recent awards and accolades received by the teaching staff.

After the 2025 Alton High Wall of Fame recipients were inducted, Elaine Kane, Alton CUSD



#11 Superintendent, closed the program out by thanking guests and sponsors for their support of Alton students, staff and schools. She also shared her excitement for the 2025-2026 school year and the continued successful partnerships with both community and industry partners.



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Alton High Inducts Seven “Wall Of Fame” Recipients For 2025 Class

At the Alton Educational Foundation’s inaugural “Partners in Education” Luncheon hosted on August 7, seven individuals were inducted into the Alton High School Wall of Fame for 2025. This year’s induction class included: Katie Ammann, Richard Baird, David Elson, David Goins, J. Richard (Dick) Miller, Steve Thompson and Karen Wilson. Baird and Miller were posthumously inducted. The recipients and their families were honored at the luncheon and celebrated by the large crowd in attendance.

The Alton High Wall of Fame recognizes excellence in a wide array of areas. Individuals who are graduates of Alton High School, retired employees of the Alton School District and/or community members who have achieved excellence in their respective field and/or community are eligible to be nominated.

A call for nominations was shared in May 2025. The nominations received were then carefully and considerably reviewed by a community-based panel with seven recipients then selected for the Induction Class of 2025.

In addition to being honored at the August luncheon, Wall of Fame recipients will also be recognized at an Alton High School athletic event and enshrined with a plaque on the Wall of Fame which located in the auditorium lobby at Alton High School.

The Wall of Fame started in 2009 and over forty deserving individuals have now been inducted in addition to the seven new recipients this year.



David Elson



David Goins



Karen Wilson



Katie Ammann



Richard Baird



Dick Miller



Steve Thompson

COMING SOON!

The Dolly Parton Imagination Library Launching Later This Year



The Alton Educational Foundation is pleased to share that the Dolly Parton Imagination Library will soon be coming to children in Alton, Godfrey and Fosterburg. The program mails a free book each month to children from ages birth to five years old. By the time



a child turns five, they will have a home collection of 60 high quality, award winning books. The program is absolutely free and families will soon be able to register their child. Watch for more information and announcements on social media. Thank you to our local sponsors who will soon make this outstanding program a reality for regional children: Carrollton Bank, Hayner Library, Riverbend Rotary and the Alton Educational Foundation.

When You Contribute to the Alton Educational Foundation, You Are Investing in...

✓ **Teacher and Staff Grants:** The AEF has awarded over \$200,000 in grants to teachers and staff to fund innovative and important programs for students. Awards have been given in the areas of: technology, STEM programs, arts education, curricular enhancements, science, writing, physical education, math, construction trades, engineering, architectural drafting and many more.

✓ **Expansion of CTE and College Access Programs:** The AEF partners with Alton High and our regional industry partners to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes and career pathways. This includes new courses in growing fields of interest as well as student

internship and apprenticeship opportunities with regional employers.

✓ **Support of Staff and Student Recognition Programs:**

The AEF joins the Alton School District in providing a wide array of recognition opportunities for students and staff including events such as Teacher Appreciation Week, student scholarships, breakfast sponsorships, social media promotions and many others.



The Guardian Newsletter is a publication from the Alton Educational Foundation. For questions or information regarding this publication, please email info@altoned.org.

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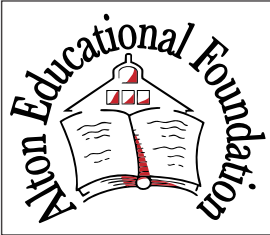
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