

# WEST CENTRAL MN CEO **ANNUAL REPORT** EDITION **2023**



## From Our Board Chair

It's been my pleasure to watch the 2022-2023 class grow, to become more confident in skills that will contribute to their success in the future.

Our goal of the West Central Minnesota Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (West Central MN CEO) class has always been to create opportunities of student growth out of experiences that may not be available in a traditional classroom setting. I think it is working.

The Class of 2023 raised \$5,900 right out of the shoot in their first business - the Badge Project. Immediately they were pushed out of their comfort zones to start a micro-business learning along the way and realizing the importance of organization and structure. The students put in a big effort into their class business, Battle of the Creek volleyball tournament. Collectively they built their business from the ground navigating through logistics, sales, marketing, customer service, and financing. Now each one of them is embarking on the journey of launching their own business at the 2023 Trade Show. The students gain an immense amount of life knowledge that cannot be mimicked inside of any other life experience at their age. It will serve them well.

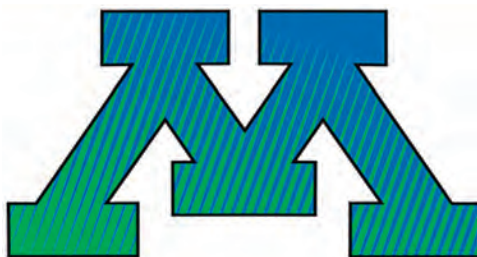
I'm thankful for the partnerships we have made in our communities. Without those, this program would not be possible. A big thank you to our investors, business community, mentors, board members, facilitator, and our school districts, Renville County West (RCW), Central Minnesota Christian (CMCS), Maynard-Clara City-Raymond (MACCRAY), and Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg (KMS). We appreciate the leadership you provided and knowledge you have willingly shared to this CEO class.

As we close our third year, we look forward to welcoming the next class of students. The CEO class is one of the best investments to offer area students an exceptional opportunity to practice and implement 21st century learning skills while creating their own personal business, before they graduate high school. Again, we are very humbled by the support our local communities have given; let's keep this thing rolling.

Please reach out to any of the board members if you have questions or concerns - that's what we are here for.

Thank you,

*Tom Walsh*





## From Our Facilitator

It was a great year for the West Central MN CEO Class of 2023!

Wow, what an experience! I would like to take this time to personally thank the students of the Class of 2023 for taking a chance on this class and hopefully the lessons you learned will ring true during your lifetime. The program took a leap forward and could not do so without the continued support of our local communities and the board members; the future continues to look bright.

I am so incredibly proud of the CEO Class of 2023. They worked hard, adapted to the situations at hand, and have grown so much as entrepreneurs. Many times throughout our business year, we heard from the business owners that they wish they would have had this opportunity as a high school student. Many new partnerships and friendships were formed during the year. We were able to team up with our colleagues of the Southwest MN CEO, Lyon and Murray CEO, Southwest Minnesota State University, and the Center of Innovation and Entrepreneurship to offer a collaborative space for us to work together. Some of the learning shared has helped guide us when things go tough.

- "The mountain of success is built on my failures." ~ Greg Punt, Punt Industries
- "Surround yourself with a group of five and be the average." ~ Cody & Mel Nelson, Iverson Tree Farm
- "How did you learn to play sports or learn a new trade, through a book or by doing? That is why you take CEO!" ~ Author Unknown

Thank you again for your continued support; I hope you enjoyed the program.

*Ryan Luft*



### MISSION

CEO nurtures entrepreneurial thinkers who possess awareness of themselves and their communities.

### VISION

**To be learners, owners, creators communicators, and connectors.**

The CEO class embodies everything that our country was built upon. The core principles of hard work, innovative thinking, and entrepreneurship are values that we experience every day through CEO.

**CEO Program**

For Fiscal Year Ended: July 31, 2023

As of May 1, 2023

**Class of 2023**  
**August 1, 2022**  
**July 31, 2023**

**INCOME**

Investor Income	\$ 44,050.00
Misc. Income	\$ 600.00

**Total Income** **\$ 44,650.00**

**EXPENSES***Program*

Midland Institute	\$ 5,000.00
Fiscal Sponsor Fee	\$ 250.00
D&O Insurance	\$ 473.00
Mentor Background Checks	\$ 80.00
Mentor Appreciation	\$ 200.00
Mentor Pairing Facilitator	\$ 300.00
Investor Care	\$ 76.31

*Facilitator*

Payroll/Contracted	\$ 25,000.00
Travel	\$ 3,103.92

*Student*

Travel	\$ 0.00
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*Class Expenses*

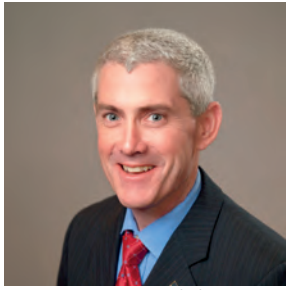
Food/Facilities	\$ 100.00
Graduate Gifts   Jackets	\$ 675.00
Welcome Gift	\$ 680.25

Annual Report	\$ 950.00
Trade Show	\$ 200.00

**Total Expense** **\$ 35,799.98**

**FUND BALANCE** **\$ 7,561.52**

# BOARD MEMBERS



Tom Walsh  
CEO Chairman  
Riverview LLP



Nate Hultgren  
CEO Vice Chairman  
CEO  
Hultgren Farms



Liza Fagen  
CEO Secretary  
Executive Administrative  
Assistant, SMBSC



Beth Elliott  
CEO Treasurer  
Vice President  
Financial Security Bank



Rachel Aeikens  
Owner  
December Day Creative



Sherri Broderius  
Superintendent  
MACCRAY Public Schools



Ted Brown  
Jr./Sr. High School Principal  
KMS Public Schools



Jon De Groot  
Superintendent  
Central Minnesota  
Christian School



Jason Duinink  
Director of Business  
Development  
Duinink Inc.



Gina Hagen  
Retired K-12 Principal  
Renville County West  
Public Schools



Peyton Mills  
High School Principal  
Renville County West  
Public Schools



Judd Wheatley  
Sr. High Principal  
MACCRAY Public Schools



Jordan Zeller  
Economic Developer  
Renville County Economic  
Development

WEST CENTRAL MN



[www.westcentralmnceo.com](http://www.westcentralmnceo.com)  
Social Media @westcentralmnceo  
Email: [westcentralmnceo.com](mailto:westcentralmnceo.com)



Our Program Investors provide support to our community driven program. A 3-year investment of \$1,000 provides the necessary resources for current-year facilitator salary and operating expenses, and ensures the sustainability of the West Central MN CEO class for future students. Investors also contribute their time to the program - hosting business visits, provide guest speakers, and serve as mentors. All crucial to the success of West Central MN CEO.

Almich's Market, Clara City  
Bonnema Excavating, Raymond  
Bremer Bank / Insurance, Willmar  
Citizens Alliance Bank, Clara City  
Clara City EDA, Clara City  
Country Pork, Renville  
Dahmes Stainless, Inc., New London  
Duininck Concrete, Willmar  
Duininck, Inc., Prinsburg  
Farmers Co-op Oil Co., Clara City  
Farmers Co-op, Prinsburg  
Farmward Cooperative, Morgan  
Financial Security Bank, Kerkhoven  
Glacial Plains Co-op, Kerkhoven  
Hanson Communications, Willmar  
Harvey Anderson Funeral Homes, Willmar  
Heritage Bank, Willmar  
Hultgren Farms, Raymond  
Johnson Seed Farm, Sacred Heart

K & M Manufacturing, Renville  
Kay's Naturals, Clara City  
Kensington Bank, Willmar  
Lakeland Broadcasting, Willmar  
Nutrien Ag Solutions, Kerkhoven  
Olivia Hospital & Clinics, Olivia  
Petersen Farms, Inc., Murdock  
PrinsBank, Prinsburg  
Prinsco, Prinsburg  
Punt Companies, Prinsburg  
Renville County HRA/EDA, Olivia  
Southern MN Beet Sugar Cooperative, Renville  
Southside Lumber, Clara City  
Southwest Initiative Foundation  
Swift County RDA, Benson  
Taatjes Financial Advisors, Willmar  
West Central Initiative/Riverview LLP, Morris  
West Central Sanitation, Willmar  
West Central Steel, Inc., Willmar



The Friends of CEO supply much-needed space, contributions in-kind, or financial donations that are not at the investor level but also play an important role in the life of the program. After learning about the program and seeing the impact it has on high school students in our business communities, it is our hope that these contributors are the West Central MN CEO investors of tomorrow.

AgCountry Farm Credit Services, Willmar  
 Divine House, Willmar  
 Don's Building Center, Kerkhoven  
 Dooley's Natural Gas/Dooley's Petroleum, Willmar  
 Citizens Alliance Agency, Clara City  
 Community Electric, Renville  
 Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing, PLLP, Willmar  
 Freetly Electric, Kerkhoven  
 Gitch Gear, Duluth  
 Hawk Creek Country Club, Raymond  
 Pam Mansfield, CPA, Kerkhoven  
 Renville Sibley Co-op - Round Up Program, Danube  
 Riley Bus & Tours, Murdock  
 Rustad Bus & Tours, Kerkhoven  
 Schwitters Brothers Partnership, Raymond  
 Shae Fath, Murdock



A Mentor is a business owner, entrepreneur, or intraprenuer from the West Central MN CEO business community. A mentor is someone willing to share their time and expertise with a CEO student.

## Mentors

## Mentees



**Harris Duinick**

*Retired Owner  
Duinick Inc.*

Harris was born in Prinsburg to Wilbur and Nellie Duinick. He graduated high school in Prinsburg and attended Dordt College in Iowa. Harris began working full time at Duinick Bros. in 1959. He has served on a variety of industry Boards.

His favorite part of CEO is helping young students explore their business skills and grow into confident business owners.

Harris is married to Connie, wife of 62 years, has four children and eight grandchildren.

**Macy Rohner**



**Trevor Duinick**

*CEO  
Duinick Inc.*

Trevor and his wife, Janey, live in Prinsburg where they grew up. Together they have four kids, two of which are in college and the other two are enrolled at Central. After graduating from Bethel University with a Business degree with an emphasis in Finance and Management, he spent a few years working outside of the family business. In 2001 he began with Duinick Inc. and he has worked in a variety of roles since then. Trevor is currently the CEO of Duinick Companies and serves as Board Chair.

The CEO program offers a dynamic opportunity for high school students to get a jump on their career journey. It is a unique educational experience to extend connection of the students between area schools and local businesses in a way that can have a big impact on their life.

**Samuel Timmer**



**Yvon Fils-Aime**

*Co-Founder & CEO  
CollConnect*

Yvon is a retired physician and healthcare executive.

As a CEO, Yvon knows that mentoring can provide an opportunity for him to share knowledge, skills, and experience with others who are just starting out in their careers or looking to develop their skills further. He believes that mentoring not only helps others grow professionally and personally, but it can also help you stay connected to the latest industry trends and insights, as well as gain a fresh perspective on his own experiences and expertise. In addition, mentoring can be incredibly rewarding and fulfilling, when he is able to see the mentees succeed and achieve their goals.

**Madyson Elliott**



## Mentors

## Mentees



**Melanie Nelson**

*Owner*

*Iverson Tree Farm*

When asked to be a mentor, Melanie easily accepted knowing she could be an encouragement to these young adults. She bought her first business, a hair salon, in Lincoln, Nebraska with a business partner. They both worked in the salon prior to the purchase. When Melanie moved to Minnesota in 2010, she purchased another hair salon in Danube that was remodeled to make it her own. Together with her husband, Cody, they purchased the Iverson Tree Farm in 2019 and have continued to grow the business. Both work full-time on the farm planting, pruning, and transplanting trees and growing the pumpkin patch. They enjoy hosting many families to their farm during the Fall Festival and throughout the Christmas season.

Iverson Tree Farm is truly a family farm. Their three kids ages, 14, 9, and 7 along with Melanie's mom, all assist in the day to day work and fun around the farm!

**Alana Hettver**



**Samantha Nelson**

*Founder*

*Brave Girl International*

Samantha is a leadership cultivator and the founder of Brave Girl International. She is a beginning farmer, an author, a Minnesota Teacher of the Year, and holds a Master's degree in Educational Leadership with a unique approach to leadership and learning through hands-on experiences. From a farm in rural Minnesota, she is a small-town girl with a world-wide vision to transform leadership development and personal empowerment for the next generation female leaders from every corner of the globe.

Mentorship supports personal transformation. It is different than coaching, teaching, or facilitating. Mentorship develops and enhances big picture life skills and can help people refine values, personal beliefs, and direction. From the incredible mentorship Samantha has received throughout her life, she wants to give back and help support girls and young women as they grow into adulthood and leadership in various forms.

**Liv Aasen**



**Lisa Neutgens**

*Human Resources Coordinator*  
*Renville County*

Lisa grew up on a farm near Sacred Heart and graduated from BDRSH. She received a BS Degree in Agricultural Education and then earned her Master's Degree in Education, Society of Human Resources (SHRM) Certified Professional. Lisa served as a 4-H Program Coordinator for U of M Extension for twelve years before moving into the Human Resources field.

She has enjoyed being a part of the CEO program because it allows her to connect with students and see them develop their ideas and passion.

Lisa and her husband Josh live on a farm site near Sacred Heart with their two girls.

**Katlyn Peters**

## Mentors

## Mentees



**Tami Ruf**

*Firm Administrator*

*Anfinson Thompson & Company*

Tami grew up outside of Kerkhoven on a crop and dairy farm. She attended Ridgewater College and graduated with an Administrative Assistant degree. She obtained a job with Anfinson Thompson & Company as their Firm Administrator and has been with them for 25 years. Tami is passionate about helping assist clients on making sure that they have all their tax items in line.

She became a mentor to help guide kids grow into well-rounded people and to help them achieve their goals.

Tami and her husband Jeremy have two daughters.

**Amber Winzenberg**



**Todd Terhaar**

*Owner*

*Glacial Lake Environmental Consulting, Inc.*

Todd grew up on a crop and livestock farm near Foreston, and graduated from Milaca High School. He attended the University of Minnesota – Morris and St. Cloud State University, graduating with a math and biology degree. After graduation, he worked as an environmental consultant for Braun Intertec, and Baumgartner Environics, Inc. of Olivia for 12 years before venturing out on his own in 2007. Todd has spent the last 16 years as owner of Glacial Lakes Environmental Consulting, Inc. He and his wife Susie live in Sacred Heart where they raised a son and a daughter; they are both excitedly awaiting their first grandchild this summer!

Todd has worked with area youth in the church setting for a number of years and it has always been a valuable experience. When he was approached about becoming a mentor in the CEO program, it was exciting to work with youth again in an entirely different setting. It has been a very rewarding opportunity and the youth always have something to teach us.

**Tim Brouwer**



**Samantha VanHeuveln**

*Owner, CFO*

*K&S Poultry and Meats*

Samantha became a mentor for CEO because of her love of business and accounting. She thinks it is absolutely amazing that these kids are already pursuing entrepreneurship at such a young age.

After high school, Samantha received a degree in accounting and entered the work world of public accountancy. Meanwhile her husband, Klinton, decided that the family should expand from butchering their own chickens in the garage to building a designated facility for processing all the livestock for surrounding farmers! K&S Poultry and Meats was born and became a full-time occupation for Klinton. Samantha enjoys putting her accounting background to work doing bookkeeping, payroll, invoicing, and much more.

In her "spare" time she has the privilege of raising four wonderful children, working seasonally for Christianson PLLP, and coaching cross country and track for Benson-KMS.

**Kara DeBerg**



## Mentors

**Jordan Zeller**  
*Economic Developer*  
*Renville County EDA*

Jordan Zeller is Renville County's Economic Developer. He has nearly 20 years of economic development experience working with entrepreneurs looking to start businesses, and well as helping existing business grow and thrive.

Jordan likes helping people explore opportunities for entrepreneurship. Everything we do is a learning experience. Maybe the students start a business next week, or maybe it's 30 years from now – whenever the time is right for them. He just wants to help them get started with a solid base and on the right foot.

## Mentees

**Emma Holmgren**



*"A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you, than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you."*

— Bob Proctor







## *Liv Aasen*

Liv Aasen is a junior at KMS High School. In her spare time, she enjoys painting, drawing, cooking, seeing friends, and playing with her three dogs. After high school, she plans on going to college to continue studying entrepreneurship.

The West Central MN CEO program has brought her closer to students from different areas and inspired her to always shoot for the moon.

Liv Aasen is the founder of **LIVARI** as a desire to help people reconnect with the powerful benefits of nature through the intentional daily use of her candles. Liv creates products that unlock the powers of essential oils by connecting directly to an individual's mood, physical health, and mental well-being. Her overall goal is to strengthen your love of nature, other people, and of yourself... to take the weight off of humanity's shoulders.



www.livari.online  
Facebook: Liv Aasen  
Instagram: @liv.livari



## *Tim Brouwer*

Timothy Brouwer is a junior at Central Minnesota Christian School. He participates in cross country, track and field, and drama. During his free time, he enjoys hanging out with friends.

Tim joined West Central MN CEO to learn skills and knowledge from entrepreneurs that will be helpful for the rest of his life.

Tim Brouwer is the founder of **Rent - A - Lad**, a handyman service that you can call to do anything. Tim bridges the gap in experience and community resources. He will drive over and help you with almost any task you would like.



Phone: (320) 444-7983  
Timbrouwer281@gmail.com





## Kara DeBerg

Kara DeBerg is a junior at DeBerg Christian Academy. In addition to her homeschool classes, she is also enrolled in PSEO courses. In her free time, Kara likes to play in a local community band, read, bike, and play games; her favorite pastime is creating handmade bags. Following high school, Kara intends to pursue an Entrepreneurship Certificate and/or a Marketing & Sales degree to equip herself with the necessary skills to run her business.

Kara joined West Central MN CEO to learn more about the operations of running successful businesses and the characteristics of successful entrepreneurs.



Kara DeBerg is the founder of **Mernara Co.**, where she creates handmade totes, purses, and wallets that are stylish, organized, and of high quality. The handcrafted bags are created from a variety of durable materials including leather, canvas, and cork. Step up in the world of handbags and find a bag that is as beautiful and unique as you are.

Mernara.co@gmail.com  
Instagram: @mernara.co



## Madyson Elliott

Madyson Elliott is a senior at KMS High School. During the summer she likes to spend time with family, helping on the farm, and going four-wheeling.

She joined the West Central MN CEO program to learn more about where businesses start. Her favorite part of the program is the hands-on learning.

Madyson Elliott is the founder of **West Farm Market**. The West Farm Market offers five different wood products, with customization. Spruce up your home with a new retro look made with unique natural wood products, handmade locally.



Phone: (320) 979-9387  
Madyson.elliottwestcentralceo@gmail.com  
Facebook: West Farm Market  
Instagram: @westfarmmarket





## Alana Hettver

Alana Hettver is a senior at KMS High School. She participates in varsity track and tennis, member of National Honor Society, choir, pop group and solo/ensemble. When not in school or sports, she works locally at Cenex.

After graduation, Alana wants to attend university to major in social work and minor in psychology and American Sign Language.

I bet you can't name half of the ingredients in your dog treats.

**Bella's Treats** offers dog treats that are vegan, organic, and human-safe. They are made from ingredients from a garden and with love. Many dogs have tested my treats, none of them have died, and they give their paw of approval.



Alana.hettverwestcentralceo@gmail.com  
Instagram: @bella.s.treats.



## Emma Holmgren

Emma Holmgren is a senior at KMS High School. She has been a member of Business Professionals of America (BPA) for four years. In her free time, she likes to hang out with friends and family.

Following high school, she plans is to attend college for marine biology.

Emma joined West Central MN CEO to learn more about what it takes to start a business, how to go about it, and to experience firsthand advice from such amazing people in our community.

Emma Holmgren is the founder of **Loon Nest**. She creates customized tie blankets with two thick layers of fleece for ultimate warmth. A variety of colors and patterned fabric are available. From baby blankets to adults, Loon Nest has you covered.



Facebook: Loon Nest  
Instagram: @loon.nest





## Katlyn Peters



Katlyn Peters is a senior at KMS High School. She is involved in cross country, softball and band. During her free time, she likes to hang out with family and friends, work at church camp, and attend church retreats. She was a summer Intern at SGS, the world's leading testing, inspection and certification company, in Murdock.

She joined West Central MN CEO to get hands-on business experience and help make connections that will benefit future career plans.

Katlyn Peters is the co-founder of **MK Western Mini**, which specializes in stylish and affordable clothing; including onesies, t-shirts, and crew necks. Let MK Western Mini eliminate the struggle of finding high quality Christian and Western clothing for you children.



Facebook: MK Western Minis  
Instagram: @MK\_Western\_minis  
Tiktok: @MK\_Western\_minis



## Macy Rohner



Macy Rohner is a senior at KMS High School. She is involved in various school activities including band, track and field, FFA, and National Honor Society. When not at school, Macy milks cows at Mary & Roger Swart dairy farm, shows beef cattle and Boer goats. She also enjoys spending time with friends and family, riding horses, hunting, and fishing.

Macy joined West Central MN CEO to help advance her business skills and expand opportunities within future career plans.

Macy Rohner is the co-founder of **MK Western**, which specializes in stylish and affordable clothing; including onesies, t-shirts, and crew necks. Let MK Western eliminate the struggle of finding high quality Christian and Western clothing.



Facebook: MK Western Minis  
Instagram: @MK\_Western\_minis  
Tiktok: @MK\_Western\_minis





## *Samuel Timmer*

Samuel Timmer is a junior at Central Minnesota Christian School. He enjoys working on cars and has plans to study law after graduation.

He joined the West Central MN CEO program to find ways to improve as an individual and as a young entrepreneur.

Samuel Timmer is the founder of **Sam's Snack Shack** that creates delicious caramel corn for every occasion. No need to eat stale snacks, Sam makes high quality and fresh caramel corn.

Place your order at Sam's Snack Shack at the West Central CEO Trade Show on May 15.



## *Amber Winzenburg*

Amber Winzenburg is a senior at KMS High School. She enjoys being outside, cooking, baking, playing with her dog, and spending time with friends and family. After graduation she plans to attend college to pursue a career in nursing.

She joined West Central MN CEO to help her realize what it is like in the real world, and to learn how to work in a business.

Amber Winzenburg is the founder of **Sweet Cake**. She creates simply decorated, mouth watering cakes and cupcakes that will please every tastebud.



Phone: (320) 979-6710

Sweetcakehomemade2023@gmail.com

Instagram: @sweetcake\_homemade2023





## BUSINESS VISITS

An important piece of the CEO experience is visiting local businesses in west central Minnesota. People drive by these locations daily without recognizing their contribution to economic development of the area. The students walk away with a changed mindset, never viewing the business the same way again.

212 Hub Nutrition, Renville  
 Almich's Market, Clara City  
 Apol's Harley-Davidson, Raymond  
 Anfison Thompson Accounting, Willmar  
 Citizens Alliance Bank, Clara City  
 Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing, PLLP, Willmar  
 Country Pork, Renville  
 Duinink Inc., Prinsburg  
 Farmers Co-op, Prinsburg  
 Financial Security Bank, Kerkhoven  
 Harvey Anderson Funeral Homes, Willmar  
 Hawk Creek Country Club, Raymond  
 Iverson Tree Farm, Belview  
 Johnson Seed Farm, Sacred Heart  
 Kerkhoven Farmers Market, Kerkhoven  
 Lakeland Broadcasting, Willmar  
 Nolan Baker Ford, Kerkhoven  
 Nutrien Ag Solutions, Benson  
 Pam Mansfield Accounting, Kerkhoven  
 Premier Marine, Big Lake  
 PrinsBank, Prinsburg  
 Prinsco, Prinsburg  
 Punt Companies, Prinsburg  
 Rambow Inc., New London  
 Renville County HRA/EDA, Olivia  
 Riverview LLP., Louriston Dairy, Murdock  
 Southern MN Beet Sugar Cooperative, Renville  
 Swift County RDA, Benson  
 Taatjes Financial Advisors, Willmar  
 West Central Steel, Inc., Willmar  
 Willmar Lakes Area Vision 2040, Willmar



# THANK YOU!





"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired and success achieved."  
– Helen Keller





## SPEAKERS

CEO participants have a unique experience with guest speakers serving as instructors for the program. Community leaders present their life stories, entrepreneurial journeys, and share lessons on a variety of business topics.

Duininck Inc., Prinsburg  
 Jordan Zeller, JZP LLC., Olivia  
 Kerkhoven & Hayes Mutual Insurance Co, Kerkhoven  
 Kim Miller Photography, Clara City  
 Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development  
 Peter Taunton, Founder, Snap Fitness & CEO, Nautical Bowls  
 Renville County HRA/EDA, Olivia  
 Samantha Louise Inc., Atwater  
 Southwest Small Business Development Center, Marshall  
 Sweets Ice Cream Shop, Kerkhoven  
 Ten Oaks Design Studio, Willmar



## SMSU Center for Innovation and Entrepreneur Student Entrepreneurship Field Day

At the second annual SMSU event, both high school and college students had an opportunity to give their business pitch and receive feedback.

*"This event is a chance for young people to learn from each other, and from the area business community. It was exciting to see the progress students were making Friday morning."*  
 - Dr. George Taylor, Director (Marshall Independent)

West Central MN CEO students enjoyed the event and came away with accolades. Liv Aasen and Alana Hettver placed 1st and 9th respectively with their business pitches.





## Battle of the Creek

On Saturday, January 28 the West Central MN CEO students hosted Battle of the Creek. A six person team co-ed, volleyball tournament hosted at KMS High School.

Five teams with their fans and spectators filled the gymnasium. All aspects of the tournament were handled professionally by the CEO students. A full concessions stand of healthy snacks and sweet treats was set up and managed throughout the tournament.

Thank you to all the sponsors!



Lamecker's General Store  
The Little Store that has everything from  
SOUP TO NUTS





Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) is a course designed to utilize partnerships that provide an overview of business development and processes. Our local business community partners with area schools to create project-based mentoring. Business concepts learned through the experiential CEO class are critical; the 21st century skills of problem-solving, teamwork, self-motivation, responsibility, higher-order thinking, communication, and inquiry are at the heart of a student's development throughout the course.

## **CEO Students will:**

- Attend class every day dressed in appropriate professional attire
- Write weekly journals
- Interact each week with local business and community leaders
- Communicate and interact with their business mentor
- Formulate, research, write, and present two business plans
- Actively participate in a class business
- Start their own small business and present it to the community at the CEO trade show

## **2023-2024 Class:**

- **When?** Class is Tuesday-Friday
  - 7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.
- **Where?** At host businesses in the school districts of CMCS, KMS, MACCRAY, and RCW
- **Transportation?** Students are responsible for their own transportation. Designated funds are available for students that need assistance for gas.
- **Virtual Class?** At times. However, a program essential is that the CEO students are never in a classroom, but always in one of the different community businesses that are the lifeblood of our communities. This is the experiential, hands-on environment that is the foundation to CEO.

## **At the end of CEO, students are expected to be able to:**

- Create and present an effective business plan
- Demonstrate effective communication and collaboration skills
- Demonstrate their understanding of appropriate professional attire.
- Compare and contrast a wide variety of businesses
- Interact with business owners, community leaders, and class guests
- Execute the creation of a small business

## *What makes a CEO student?*

Great CEO students are trustworthy, hardworking, and motivated. If students have those characteristics, they have everything necessary to have a successful and transformational experience in CEO. CEO isn't like most school activities. The application process doesn't take into account things like grade point average and extra curricular activities. The best candidates may include: the student who is very intelligent but is not interested in school, the student that is a bit disruptive because school just isn't their thing, the straight A student who is good at school, or the student who is good at learning by doing and appreciates the opportunity to discover, explore, and build.

CEO classes benefit from a wide variety of students. Seeking involvement from people different from oneself is a cornerstone of CEO, and students will quickly appreciate the diversity.





# DISCOVER HOW TO TRANSFORM YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CEO®



## CEO Immerses Students in the Community.

CEO is never held in a classroom. Instead, students visit area businesses and hear from guest speakers from their community. They develop a network of local leaders and are exposed to the opportunities that exist in their hometowns.



## CEO Instills an Entrepreneurial Mindset.

Each student is guided through the creation of two real businesses. Every CEO participant leaves the class with an operating business. These aren't classroom exercises - they are real products, real services being exchanged for real money.



## CEO Inspires the Next Generation

It challenges young people to own their work, innovate creative solutions, and consider the possibilities available to them. CEO creates students who are invested in your community and grows your entrepreneurial ecosystem of new business owners and future workforce.

I think it's imperative for our local communities through CEO to set up experiences where young people can fail safely prior to getting out into the real world. If a student knows they have the backing of their boards and their communities, they can do amazing things.

*Maegan Schwindling  
Decatur Morgan AL CEO,  
CEO Facilitator*

My future is brighter than I ever thought possible because of the way the CEO program ingrained within my mind the desire to dream, think, and live... bigger."  
*Aubrey Fisher, Union  
County CEO Alum*

I never really knew what I was doing after high school, I had an 'anywhere but here' attitude. I thought college was the only thing to do. But CEO changed that...There was so much happening in this town that I had no idea about...it changed my mind on the community.

*Billy Trindle,  
Granite City CEO,  
CEO Alum &  
Business Owner*

CEO really allows kids to thrive who like to challenge the norms of traditional school, but also who have a lot of creativity to really put themselves out there and shine in a team player in traditional school doesn't always allow that.

*Angela Blessing,  
Principal, Kokomo  
High School*



# INVEST IN TOMORROW, TODAY.

**CEO TRANSFORMS** your high school students into creative problem solvers & entrepreneurial thinkers.

**CEO INGRAINS** essential employability skills in your future workforce.

**CEO IMPACTS** economic development through the cultivation of future business owners and the launch of 15-20 new businesses every year like clockwork.

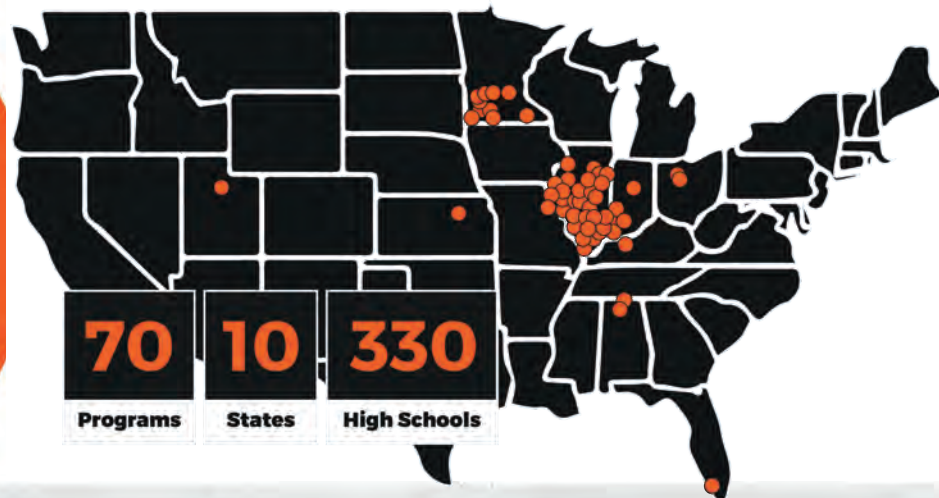
**CEO GROWS** your entrepreneurial ecosystem, connecting students to their community, and showing them the opportunity that exists in their hometowns.



In 20+ years in economic development, the chamber of commerce and the economic development corporation, CEO has been the most beneficial, most gratifying program I have been involved with.

*Ron Arnold  
Retired Executive Director  
Daviess County Economic  
Development Corporation  
Daviess County IN CEO Board  
Member*

## CEO IS A GROWING NATIONAL MOVEMENT.



## A LONG-TERM INVESTMENT IN YOUR COMMUNITY'S FUTURE.

**70%** In pre-impact surveys, only 30% of CEO students report that they plan to stay in their community after high school or return after college. In post-impact surveys, that number jumps to 70%.

**60%** of CEO Students report that they can see themselves working for a business they encountered during CEO.



Our future is tied to innovation and entrepreneurship. If you want your community to be vibrant and available and an attractive option for tomorrow's young...they are going to expect you to be promoting a culture of entrepreneurship.

*John Joseph IV, Executive  
Director, The E-Center &  
Decatur-Morgan AL CEO  
Board Member*

VIDEOS & MORE AT [DISCOVERCEO.COM](http://DISCOVERCEO.COM)

Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship is the provider of **CEO** and your community's partner.



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