



2024

ANNUAL
REPORT

West Central MN CEO





ABOUT US

West Central MN CEO is an entrepreneurship program that students from CMCS, KMS, MACCRAY, and RCW have an opportunity to apply for and be accepted into a unique year-long cohort of students who learn from community experts and start their own businesses. Founded in 2020.

CONTACT US

facilitator@westcentralmnceo.com

OUR MISSION

To provide on-going support for developing, implementing, and sustaining the West Central Minnesota Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities program and to foster collaboration between school districts, business, and industry.

OUR VISION

CEO nurtures entrepreneurial thinkers to be learners, owners, creators, communicators, and connectors.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Tom Walsh
Board Chair

On behalf of the West Central Minnesota Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (West Central MN CEO) Board of Directors, we want to extend our congratulations to the Class of 2024 – the largest CEO class to date!

As a Board, our unwavering focus has been to provide on-going support for developing, implementing, and sustaining the West Central MN CEO program and foster collaboration between school districts, business, and industry. We can proudly state we're achieving that goal. Our partnership with the business community is truly special. Not only do they support us as Investors, but their leaders generously invest time as educators during business visits, imparting invaluable wisdom to the next generation. This year, eleven business leaders graciously served as mentors, guiding students through real-world challenges, sharing their expertise, and providing insights that transcend the confines of the classroom. These relationships strengthen the CEO program's success and build the gap between students and the business community.

Consequently, the mentorship experience equips CEO students with an invaluable networking model, laying a solid foundation for their future connections. The Board sincerely appreciates the leadership and knowledge our businesses provide and willingly share with this CEO class.

Sustaining our relationship with the school districts remains paramount. We appreciate the ongoing collaboration and support from our educational partners, CMCS, KMS, MACCRAY, and RCW. Additionally, we extend our gratitude to Ryan Luft, our facilitator, who plays a vital role in guiding and inspiring our students within the program. His dedication and commitment are invaluable to the success and growth of West Central MN CEO.

The Class of 2024 hit the ground running. They bravely tackled the challenges of sales head-on and collectively generated over \$12,000 in profit from their inaugural business venture, the Badge Project – an outstanding achievement. Utilizing each other's strengths, they navigated operational hurdles leading to the success of their class business, *CEO Sunday*. Their exemplary performance has not only showcased the program to our communities, but also played a pivotal role in recruiting the next class of students. The Class of 2024's dedication and success are a testament to the transformative power of the West Central MN CEO program. As they prepare to embark on their own entrepreneurial journeys at the upcoming tradeshow, we are excited to witness their continued growth and impact.

CEO nurtures entrepreneurial thinkers to be learners, owners, creators, communicators, and connectors. We are building a brighter future by equipping our youth with the knowledge, skills, and mentorship needed to excel. Together, we're shaping a future where innovation and leadership thrive. Thank you for your commitment to the West Central MN CEO program.

LETTER FROM THE FACILITATOR

What an incredible journey it has been for the West Central MN CEO program in the year 2024! I'm thrilled to reflect on the remarkable experiences we've shared and the growth we've witnessed. To the students of the Class of 2024, your willingness to embrace this opportunity has truly made a difference. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your dedication and enthusiasm throughout the year.

None of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our local communities and the West Central MN CEO board members. Your commitment to nurturing young entrepreneurs has paved the way for a bright future.

I am immensely proud of the Class of 2024. Your hard work, resilience, and entrepreneurial spirit have been inspiring. It's been incredible to see how much you've learned and grown. Many business owners have expressed envy, wishing they had such an opportunity during their high school years.

This year, we formed new partnerships and friendships, expanding our network and enriching our experiences. Together, we've created a supportive environment where learning and innovation thrive.

As we reflect on our journey, let's remember the lessons we've learned and the challenges we've overcome. Each failure is a stepping stone toward success, and every experience shapes us into stronger entrepreneurs.

Thank you all for your continued support. I hope you found the program as rewarding as I did.



Ryan Luft
Facilitator

WEST CENTRAL MN CEO PROGRAM

For Fiscal Year Ended: July 31, 2024 | as of May 1, 2024

	Class of 2024 August 1, 2023 - July 31, 2024 Forecast	Class of 2023 August 1, 2022 - July 31, 2023 Actual	Class of 2022 August 1, 2021 - July 31, 2022 Actual
INCOME			
Investor Income	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 44,050.00	\$ 45,300.00
Misc. Income	\$ 230.00	\$ 600.00	\$ 25,000.00
Total Income	\$ 37,730.00	\$ 44,650.00	\$ 70,300.00
EXPENSES			
<i>Program</i>			
Midland Institute Chapter Fee	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 35,000.00
Fiscal Sponsor Fee	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00
D&O Insurance	\$ 498.00	\$ 473.00	\$ 450.00
Mentor Background Checks	\$ 80.00	\$ 80.00	\$ 120.00
Mentor Appreciation	\$ 400.00	\$ 208.82	\$ 60.00
Mentor Events	\$ 0.00	\$ 357.29	\$ 0.00
Investor Care Events	\$ 0.00	\$ 76.31	\$ 105.00
<i>Facilitator</i>			
Payroll/Contracted	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 25,000.00
Travel	\$ 154.43	\$ 3,371.20	\$ 3,899.41
<i>Students</i>			
Travel/Attire	\$ 82.98	\$ 0.00	\$ 230.00
<i>Class Expenses</i>			
Materials	\$ 140.55	\$ 0.00	\$ 119.79
Food/Beverage	\$ 265.10	\$ 252.79	\$ 276.38
Gifts Welcome/Graduation	\$ 816.30	\$ 680.25	\$ 197.48
Advertising Recruitment	\$ 796.61	\$ 0.00	\$ 307.86
Annual Report	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 990.00	\$ 475.59
Trade Show	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 71.66	\$ 100.00
Total Expense	\$ 36,183.97	\$ 36,811.32	\$ 66,591.51
NET INCOME/(LOSS)	\$ 1,546.03	\$ 7,838.68	\$ 3,708.49

Our Program Investors provide support to our community driven program. An annual 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, providing guest speakers and serving as mentors. All crucial to the success of West Central MN CEO.

INVESTORS

Almich's Market, Clara City
 Bonnema Excavating, Raymond
 Bravera Bank, Kerkhoven
 Bremer Bank/Insurance, Willmar
 Citizens Alliance Bank, Clara City
 Clara City EDA, Clara City
 Community Electric, Renville
 Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing, PLLP, Willmar
 Country Pork, Renville
 Dahmes Stainless, Inc., New London
 Duinick Concrete, Willmar
 Duinick Inc., Prinsburg
 Farmers Co-op Oil Co., Clara City
 Farmers Co-op, Prinsburg
 Farmward Cooperative, Morgan
 Glacial Plains Cooperative, Kerkhoven
 Hanson Communications, Willmar
 Harvey Anderson Funeral Homes, Willmar
 Heritage Bank, Willmar

INVESTORS

Hultgren Farms, Raymond
 Johnson Seed Farm, Sacred Heart
 Kensington Bank, Willmar
 Lakeland Broadcasting, Willmar
 Olivia Hospital & Clinics, Olivia
 Petersen Farms, Inc., Kerkhoven
 PrinsBank, Prinsburg
 Prinsco, Prinsburg
 Punt Companies, Prinsburg
 Renville County HRA/EDA, Olivia
 Riverview LLP, Morris
 Southern MN Beet Sugar Cooperative, Renville
 Southside Lumber, Clara City
 Swift County EDA, Benson
 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 play an important role in the life of the program. After learning about the program and seeing the impact it has on the high school students in our business communities, it is our hope that these contributors are the West Central MN CEO investors of tomorrow.

FRIENDS OF CEO

AgCountry Farm Credit Services, Willmar
Dooley's Natural Gas/Dooley's Petroleum, Willmar
Citizens Alliance Agency, Clara City
Hawk Creek Country Club, Raymond
Kim Miller Photography, Clara City

FRIENDS OF CEO

Pam Mansfield, CPA, PA, Kerkhoven
Renville Sibley Co-op Round Up Program, Danube
Schwitters Brothers Partnership, Raymond
Signature Stills by Mariah, Benson



A Mentor is a business owner, entrepreneur, or intrapreneur from the business community. A mentor is someone willing to share their time and expertise.



Liv Aasen
LIVARI

MENTEE
LILLY RONHOLDT

Liv Aasen is a senior at KMS High School. Last year, she started her business LIVARI through the West Central MN program with the help of her mentor. Liv's mission is to provide a natural and healthier way for her customers to enjoy candles and bring light to the benefits of essential oil.

Other than candles and nature, Ms. Aasen loves animals, painting, baking, and any form of crafting.



Rachel Aeikens
DECEMBER DAY CREATIVE

MENTEES
ISABELLE DAUGHTERY
EMILY ZURN

Rachel Aeikens graduated from South Dakota State University with a degree in Advertising and minors in Art and Marketing. She then moved North to Fargo, North Dakota, and worked at B2B Advertising agency as a public relations writer and moved into account management.

Ms. Aeikens next step took her to Spicer, Minnesota, where she worked for Alison Werder at Ali J Boutique and Rebel Marketing. She gained a wealth of knowledge from her teammates in those three special years. Rachel was able to fully immerse herself in Facebook Ads marketing, website design and client account management (handling client marketing campaigns, strategies and meetings).

After her son was born, her heart was moved to start her own business in 2019. And here she is five years later!



Melissa Aker
BLESSINGS & BLOSSOMS

MENTEE
KORI BRISTLE

Melissa Aker started Blessings & Blossoms 11 years ago with a desire to use her creative and artistic gifts to help contribute to her family and their adoption process at the time. Ms. Aker does not have a college degree. She is a very driven person and tend to jump in head first to the ideas she has. Melissa is self-taught and gives God all the glory for what she has learned, her abilities, and the success of her business.

When Melissa is not working with flowers, she enjoys spending time with her kids and granddaughters. The Akers love camping, hiking, and spending time at the lake.



Julie Anderson

KENSINGTON INSURANCE

MENTEES

**QUINN LOTTMAN
ANNIA MONTIEL**

Julie Anderson has been in the insurance industry since 2009. She is licensed in Property & Casualty Insurance and Life & Health Insurance with her primary focus on personal lines insurance. Ms. Anderson has about sixteen years of Direct Sales experience, selling kitchen tools and marketing wine.

Julie enjoys giving back to our community. She is a board member on the Carter Bremseth Memorial Foundation and serves as an Ambassador for the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce.

In her personal time, Julie enjoys traveling, gardening, reading, and simply hanging at home with friends, family and their many pets.



Beth Elliott

BRAVERA BANK

MENTEES

**BRUNO DELGADILLO
LONDON TAVEIRNE**

Beth Elliott states her business experience is evolving. Ms. Elliott was in the insurance industry for 15 years and is currently in her tenth year at Bravera Bank f/k/a Financial Security Bank in Kerkoven. Though the industries are vastly different, she has been able to blend her insurance experience with the bank and grow in other areas. Until recently, her title has included Human Resources, Employee Benefits, Payroll, Accounts Payable, Security Officer, Ag Lender, and Vice President. The recent merge with Bravera Bank has allowed Beth to focus on the area she enjoys the most, Ag Lender.

Ms. Elliott lives on a farm east of Sunburg. She has three awesome kids, two daughters and a son. Beth enjoys renovating homes or repurposing buildings, woodworking, four-wheeling, summer and winter fishing, reading, puzzles, and trivia. She enjoys traveling and long road trips noting her favorite destination is anywhere without cell phone service!



Zach Gerdes

FARM BUREAU FINANCIAL SERVICES

MENTEES

**DEANDRE HOLLOWAY
ISAAC POST**

Zach Gerdes grew up in Willmar, Minnesota and graduated from Central Minnesota Christian in 2002. He attended Northwestern University in St. Paul, with a double major in business and Bible. After college, Mr. Gerdes worked as a pharmaceutical representative for Pfizer for two years. He and his wife Emily desired to get move closer to home, so Zach started with Farm Bureau in August 2007. Initially, he was a sales associate and eventually became an agent with Farm Bureau in 2015. Currently, he has a team of 10 in two offices - Willmar and Paynesville.

Zach and Emily have four children who all attend CMCS. In addition to coaching various basketball teams for their kids, Zach is a golf coach at CMCS.

Zach enjoys playing golf, coaching, and fishing at their cabin in northern Minnesota.



Kristie Haubrich

MENTEE

NOVA-TECH ENGINEERING, LLC

KATELYNN MARQUARDT

Framing vast career shifts as opportunities for personal growth, and lifestyle changes as a blessing for raising creatively skilled and adventurous boys, this is how Kristie Haubrich describes the last 20 years of her experiences and transitions.

Kristie grew up on a hobby farm among the great pines on the Minnesota/Canadian border. She graduated from Alexandria Technical College with a degree in Communications Art and Design, later going back to business school to continue in Business Administration and Marketing. Kristie has held positions in movie theatre graphics and animation, voiceovers, customer management, web creative and development oversight, project management, and most recently product development and branding of automated agricultural systems.

She proudly calls Danube her home and lives with her husband Matt on the Haubrich family farm raising the next generation to continue the family tradition of farming - their three sons.



Sergio Morales

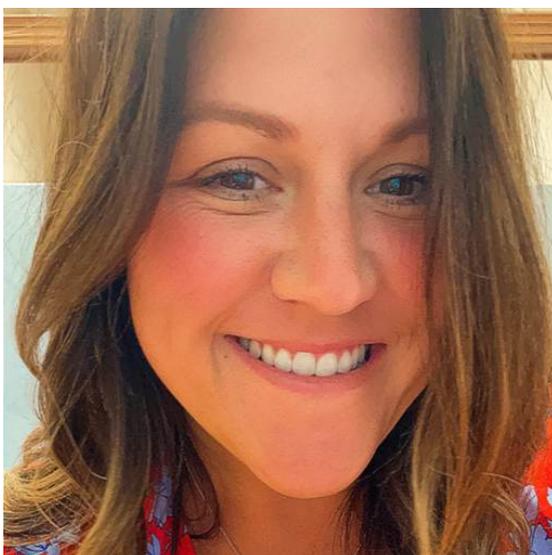
MENTEE

212 HUB NUTRITION

ETHAN MOAT

Throughout Sergio Morales' career journey, he ventured into various fields, starting from working in a dealership environment where I gained valuable insights into customer service. Following that, Sergio explored trucking. However, it was his leap into entrepreneurship that truly resonated with him, allowing him to harness his creativity and determination to create his own path.

Beyond the professional life, Sergio enjoys spending quality time with his family, he has a passion for music, and he finds great satisfaction in playing the accordion. He also thrives on the adrenaline rush of paint-balling and when he is not working, you can often find him exploring the outdoors, whether it's hiking or camping.



Kristy Nystrom

MENTEES

NOVA-TECH ENGINEERING, LLC

DEVON BOHMAN

MADELYNN LUFT

Kristy Nystrom serves Nova-Tech Engineering as a Corporate Agile Coach since 2021 specifically in Team and Individual development, Operational Strategy, and planning.

After receiving her Bachelor's Degree in Marketing, she spent the beginning of her career in the Marketing, Promotional Marketing, and Direct Sales fields with experience as Director of Marketing. She earned her Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology, which led her to become a self-employed Marriage and Family Therapist and Coach. After years of being on her own, she desired more of a community. Kristy now enjoys being able to put her passion for people together with an entrepreneurial spirited company.

She enjoys being a mom to three, chasing them to hockey, dance, baseball, football, golf, and all of the things in between. Together they enjoy golfing, listening to music and traveling. She has coached volleyball for many years in the KMS District and enjoys watching the youth in the community compete.



Brian Punt

NEXT LEVEL AGRICULTURE SOLUTIONS

Brian Punt has deep roots in agricultural having worked on neighboring farms since he was old enough to drive a tractor. He completed an Ag Business Associates Degree through Ridgewater Technical College of Willmar, Minnesota in the fall of 2007. He then continued to work for three ag businesses until co-founding Next Level Ag with the Condon brothers in 2015. Now, with over 10 years of Precision Ag experience, Mr. Punt works each day striving to help take the stress out of electronics on the farm for his customers.

When he is not working, Brian enjoys camping and boating with his wife and three children. Brian also enjoys attending his children's school activities and being involved with his church.

MENTEES

**SAWYER JANSEN
GARRETT STRUXNESS**



Klinton VanHeuveln

K&S POULTRY AND MEATS

Klinton VanHeuveln worked in the family farm drainage business from the age of 12 (likely earlier) until he was 27 years old. The VanHeuvelns had a hobby farm/business of raising and processing chickens. In 2021, Klinton took the jump of faith and began a full blown butcher shop. K&S Poultry and Meats was born to process poultry, beef, pork, and lamb for surrounding farms and it has been a great adventure since!

MENTEE

AARON JONES





Devon Bohman

Devon Bohman is a senior at KMS High School who participates in the Color Guard. Devon has lived in Wisconsin and North Carolina and has traveled to many states. Ms. Bohman has been accepted into the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, California for a Bachelor's Degree in Animation and Visual Effects with a minor in Acting, Illustration, and Visual Development.

Devon desired to take CEO to learn more about how to make the most out of what she can do business-wise and how to take advantage of the resources and information that she is learning and being provided with, along with the opportunities that come with it to be best prepared for the future.

DIVERGENT DISCOUNTS

Are you tired of endlessly searching for the best prices on the items you want or need, whether online or in stores? Enter Divergent Discounts! We're dedicated to hunting down the greatest deals across various platforms to bring affordability straight to you. Whatever you're looking for, you'll likely find it on our website at an unbeatable price. Connect with us on on Twitter and Instagram @divergentdiscounts, and don't forget to explore our website at <https://divergent-discounts.square.site/>. Let's make savvy shopping a breeze!



Kori Bristle

Kori Bristle, a senior at MACCRAY High School, has immersed herself in a diverse range of activities, including volleyball, basketball, and golf. Beyond sports, she is an active member of the Business Professionals of America (BPA) and National Honor Society.

What drives her to pursue West Central MN CEO class is simple yet profound desire - to challenge herself and grow. She firmly believes that stepping out of her comfort zone is the key to unlocking new opportunities and potential. Ms. Bristle saw the class as a chance to develop not only her business acumen but also her leadership skills.

CARDS BY KORI

Cards by Kori offers handmade occasion cards designed for every special moment. Each card is meticulously crafted with love and attention to detail, ensuring a unique and memorable experience for both the sender and recipient. Why choose us? Because our cards speak volumes where words sometimes fall short. Fueled by frustration with generic, mass-produced cards lacking personality, Cards by Kori has you covered. Elevate your gifting game with Cards by Kori - where every card narrates a story worth sharing. Connect with us today on Facebook or Instagram @cardsbykori24!





Isabelle Daugherty

Isabelle Daugherty is a senior home school student. She attended Central Minnesota Christian School through 8th grade, and then decided during the pandemic her education needed to shift to specialize in classes she was interested in. In addition to her studies, Ms. Daugherty works at the New London Bakery and Dairy Queen to utilize and sharpen her cake decorating skills.

Two years ago she began her own business, Isabelle's Bakes. Isabelle specializes in cupcakes and cakes for special occasions, weddings, graduations, and birthdays. In her desire to learn how to grow her business, she applied to join West Central MN CEO to gain business knowledge, business sense, and marketing skills from people who have built and are operating their own business.

ISABELLE'S BAKES

Isabelle's Bakes provides the best quality homemade cakes, cupcakes, and cake pops. Indulge in over 20 delightful flavors, all crafted with farm-fresh eggs and locally sourced sugar from the nearby sugarbeet factory. Find us on Facebook and Instagram @isabelle'sbakes - a taste of sweetness guaranteed to bring smiles.



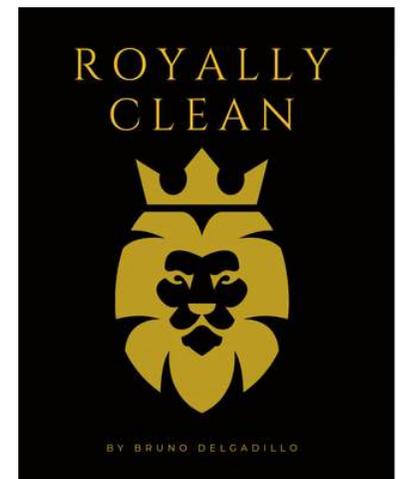
Bruno Delgadillo

Bruno Delgadillo attends KMS High School. In addition to participating in Business Professionals of America, he is currently serving in the Army National Guard as a 13B and using the benefits he obtains to go to college for computer science. Mr. Delgadillo enjoys practicing boxing, visiting the Cities with friends, listening to music, and making money.

Financial freedom is a big goal of his. Bruno believes the West Central MN CEO class can help him gain knowledge and guidance to make that happen.

ROYALLY CLEAN

There is nothing worse than feeling less than fresh. It's a universal truth that no one, regardless of gender, enjoys smelling unpleasant. However, traditional hygiene products often cater more to women, leaving men with limited options. That's where Royally Clean steps in. Infused with shea butter for smooth skin, activated charcoal for gentle exfoliation, and a luxurious scent fit for royalty, Royally Clean is the epitome of refinement. Follow us on Instagram @royally.clean and elevate your grooming game. Don't be clean - be Royally Clean.





DeAndre Holloway

DeAndre Holloway is a senior at KMS High School. He is involved in basketball and track. In his free time, he enjoys going to the basketball courts to work on his craft.

Mr. Holloway is currently undecided following his future plans following high school. He joined West Central MN CEO to gain knowledge of the business world and allow him to meet many successful entrepreneurs to expand his network.

DRE'S SNEEZIN' SEASONIN'

Imagine this - you're in the kitchen, poised to whip up a culinary masterpiece. Suddenly, you reaches for Dre's Sneezin' Seasonin' - the secret ingredient that ignites flavors and sets your taste buds dancing! With just a dash, your dishes will transform from ordinary to extraordinary, leaving you craving more. It's the perfect blend of spices that will tickle your palate with joy. Why settle for bland when you can elevate every dish with a sprinkle of Dre's Sneezin' Seasonin'. Find us on Facebook and Instagram.



Sawyer Janssen

Sawyer Janssen, a senior at MACCRAY High School, is active in football, basketball, golf, trap shoot, and FFA. Following graduation, Sawyer plans to further his education at Ridgewater College for Agriculture. In addition to pursuing farming, he is seeking opportunities to establish an additional income stream.

Mr. Janssen felt the CEO class would help explore other business options. He loved the idea of going and meeting area super successful and smart people. Sawyer believed he could gain a lot of knowledge from the business community as well as build relationships.

SJ'S CUPS

SJ's Cups produces unique and personalized drinkware through the process of sandblasting. Customize your to reflect your personality or show something about who you truly are. Enhance your drinkware game with SJ's Cups - your drink deserves to stand out as much as you do. Follow us on Instagram or Facebook @sjscups or reach out at sjscups@gmail.com.





Aaron Jones

Aaron Jones lives in Degraff, Minnesota who is a junior at KMS High School. He is involved in football, wrestling, FFA, National Honor Society, and robotics. In his free time, he enjoys helping others on the farm, doing chores, putting up siding, painting, etc. Aaron also enjoys hunting and hanging out with his family and friends.

Mr. Jones applied for West Central MN CEO because he thought it would teach him a lot about the business world and show him what the real world will be like. The class will also allow him to meet many successful entrepreneurs and expand his network.

L'ROY MEATS

Entrepreneur Aaron Jones is one of five boys whose mother often struggled to find enough meat in the stores to feed her growing boys. So, Aaron founded L'ROY Meats. Each month, L'ROY Meats will deliver a bundle of locally grown and processed meats to your community. Every cut is vacuumed-sealed to ensure maximum freshness. Contact us at 320.979.1246 or find us on Facebook @L'ROYMeats. Let's take the stress out of meat shipping for your family together.



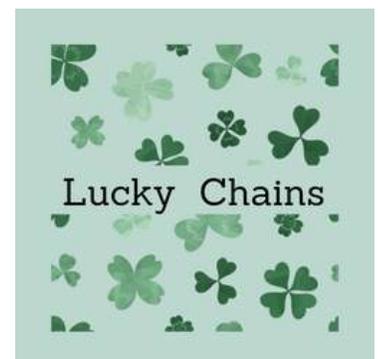
Quinn Lottman

Quinn Lottman lives in Kerkhoven, Minnesota and is a senior at KMS High School. She is an active participant in school productions while also taking vocal lessons. In her spare time, she enjoys watching movies and going out to eat with friends. Following high school, Quinn intends to seek a degree in early childhood education.

Ms. Lottman applied for West Central MN CEO class to keep her academic pathways versatile and learn entrepreneurial skills.

LUCKY CHAINS

Lucky Chains' signature product is a sleek and practical keychain that effortlessly wraps around your wrist and slips into your pocket. With a diverse range of colors available, from understated and classic to vibrant and playful, there's a Lucky Chain for every taste. More than just a key holder, our chains are a reflection of your unique style. Discover the new you with Lucky Chains today!





Madelynn Luft

Madelynn Luft is a junior at KMS High School who lives in Kerkhoven. She is involved in basketball, cross country, track, band, choir, the fall musical, National Honor Society, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). When her time is not consumed with activities, Maddie loves hanging out with family and friends, going to the lake, hiking, and traveling.

West Central MN CEO intrigued her as she can learn from some of the most successful people in her community and how they found their success. Ms. Luft had hoped this class will expand her knowledge of business and how the real world works.

HAZEL AND MILLIE CO.

Hazel and Millie Co. is a high quality dog treat company created with locally sourced ingredients, ensuring your furry friends get nothing but the best. For those with busy schedules, we offer convenient monthly subscription boxes packed with goodies, taking the hassle out of treat runs. Hazel and Millie Co. offers a variety of soft treats and bones, all made with simply and healthy ingredients because every pup deserves a taste of local goodness. Check us out on Instagram @hazelandmillieco and on Facebook @HazelandMillieCo. Need to chat? Reach out at 320.241.3479 or drop a line at hazelandmillie.co@gmail.com.



Katelynn Marquardt

Katelynn Marquardt is a senior at KMS High School. She is a three-sport athlete who loves being involved in both her school and all aspects of the community. In addition to being in cross-country, basketball, and track, she participates in dance, Color Guard, FFA, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), church youth group, and school musicals. In Katelynn's spare time, she enjoys spending time with animals at The Humane Society, hiking, and spending time with family and friends.

Ms. Marquardt has a creative spirit and is grateful for this unique opportunity through West Central MN CEO to pursue learning through hands-on experiences in business. She is excited to learn from and network with successful entrepreneurs from around the community.

SUNRISE SWIM

The mission of Sunrise Swim is simple: to offer swimwear that not only makes a style statement but also contributes to a greener Earth. Each piece in our collection is crafted from eco-friendly and recycled materials, ensuring both comfort and sustainability without compromising style. Dive into our collection today and be part of the movement that feels as good as it looks. Swim with style, swim with Sunrise - follow us on Instagram @swim.with.sunrise.





Ethan Moat

Ethan Moat is a senior at KMS High School who is involved in football, basketball, golf, and Business Professionals of America. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with friends whether it is going to Willmar or just playing basketball or video games.

Ethan's path following high school is undecided. Mr. Moat joined West Central MN CEO to learn about the business world and hoped it would help make his future path clear.

SNEAKERSWIPE

Whether you're a sneakerhead like me or just someone who wants to keep their kicks looking fresh, we have a solution for you. SneakerSwipe is your go-to on-the-go cleaner, perfect for erasing dirt and scuffs in seconds. Compact and powerful, it's your secret weapon whether you're hustling through the city, hitting the trails, or heading to a meeting. Keep your shoes fresh and pristine wherever you go with SneakerSwipe. Elevate your style and stride - follow us on Instagram @officialsneakerswipe.



Annia Montiel Perez

Annia Montiel Perez is a senior at KMS High School who participates in Business Professionals of America and choir. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, exercising, and watching soccer. Annia is interested in attending college pursuing a degree in Marketing.

Ms. Montiel was excited to grow her social skills and expand her knowledge about business and entrepreneurship through the West Central MN CEO program.

COASTAL SUNSHINE

Welcome to our beach jewelry paradise! Coastal Sunshine allows you to dive into a world where every piece tells a story of sun-kissed shores and salty air. Our collection captures the essence of coastal living, crafted with passion and precision. From shimmering shells to glistening pearls, each design is a celebration of beach beauty. Join us in embracing the spirit of the sea and adorn yourself with treasures that inspire endless summer memories.





Isaac Post

Isaac Post is a senior at MACCRAY High School who participates in football, basketball, weightlifting, track, and golf. He enjoys spending time with friends, being in the gym, and going to the lake. Following graduation, Isaac will be pursuing his academic and athletic pursuits at Ridgewater College in Willmar.

Mr. Post was looking forward to the West Central MN CEO class providing real-world situations as well as teach him how to start his own business.

ISAAC'S CHRISTIAN TEES

If you've come across countless Christian-based t-shirts, but haven't found the perfect fit, look no further than Isaac's Christian Tees. Our shirts are the most comfortable; they are tailored to fit you perfectly and suit for any occasion. Handcrafted with care, each tee is more than just fabric - it's a testament to your beliefs and a catalyst for meaningful conversations. Show your faith in style with Isaac's Christian Tees, where fashion seamlessly intersects with faith.



Lilly Ronholdt

KMS High School senior, Lilly Ronholdt, participates in cross country, basketball, and track and field. Upon graduation, she will be attending the University of Minnesota Morris to continue her education in athletic training and participate on the Track and Field Team.

Lilly is an outgoing person who likes to learn new skills and learn about all the opportunities that that world has for young entrepreneurs like herself. The West Central MN CEO class was an avenue to explore those opportunities.

BALLIXER

Curious about the ingredients of those protein balls lining the store shelves? Well, with Ballixer, you won't have to wonder any longer. Our transparent approach lets you see the ingredients and savor the authenticity in every flavor. Gluten-free and dye-free, our protein balls are designed to fuel both your body and soul. Follow us on Facebook @ballixer2024 or give us a call at 320.444.7612.





Garrett Struxness

Garrett Struxness is a senior at MACCRAY High School involved in football, baseball, weightlifting, Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), FFA, and Business Professionals of America. He enjoys spending time outdoors, hunting and fishing as well as going to the lake and hanging out with friends and family.

Garrett's college decision is still undecided. Mr. Struxness believes West Central MN CEO will point him in the right direction for his future decisions. He is looking forward to being involved in real-world experiences, and gaining a better understanding of the world of business.

STONEHAM VISUALS

Welcome to Stoneham Visuals, where we redefine your perspective from the ground up! Utilizing cutting-edge drone technology and a fervor for capturing breathtaking aerial imagery, Stoneham Visuals transforms your vision into reality from the skies above. Whether it's capturing awe-inspiring landscapes, dynamic real estate shots, or unforgettable events, we soar above the rest to deliver unparalleled quality and creativity. Trust Stoneham Visuals to elevate your ideas to new heights. Connect with us on Facebook or Instagram @stonehamvisuals, or visit our website stonehamvisuals.mypixieset.com.



Landon Taveirne

Landon Taveirne is a junior at KMS High School. Landon has always been quite passionate about cars for as long as he can remember. Prior to the acceptance into the West Central MN CEO program, he was attempting to start his own automotive restoration business, and name it in honor of his great-grandpa. Mr. Taveirne is very passionate about what he does and is determined to accomplish his goals.

HARVEY CUSTOMS

Harvey Customs will turn automotive dreams into reality. Specializing in handcrafted custom cars and trucks tailored to your desires, we're dedicated to exceeding your expectations. Whether it's a full restoration project or a routine tune-up, we've got you covered. When you're ready to make your vision to life, reach out to us on Facebook, Instagram @harveycustoms_automotive, or at customsharvey@gmail.com. Your dream ride awaits!





Emily Zurn

Currently a junior at KMS High School, Emily Zurn loves being involved in her community and school. Emily is involved in basketball, baseball stats, band, National Honor Society, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).

Ms. Zurn applied for the West Central MN CEO class to discover different job opportunities within our communities. She is excited for the opportunity to learn from people who have become incredibly successful and use their advice to better herself and her future business!

HOLY THREADS

Are you tired of staring at the same boring clothes in your closet every morning? I sure did, which is why I launched Holy Threads - where fashion meets faith. Holy Threads is a Christian clothing brand offering apparel that not only looks great but also spreads a powerful message of love, hope, and faith. Elevate your wardrobe and boldly share your faith with unique and inspiring designs. For more information, check out Holy Threads on Facebook and Instagram, and let's embrace fashion with a purpose together!



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 group walks away with a changed mindset, never viewing the business the same way again.

212 Hub Nutrition, Renville
Almich's Market, Clara City
Anfison Thompson & Company, PA, Willmar
Blooming Creek Flower Farm, DeGraff
Christianson, PPLP, Willmar
Citizens Alliance Bank, Clara City
CNH Industrial America LLC, Benson
Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing, PLLP, Willmar
Country Pork LLP, Prinsburg
Dahmes Stainless, Inc., New London
Duininck Inc., Prinsburg
Glacial Plains Cooperative, Murdock
Hanson Communications, Clara City
Hawk Creek Country Club, Raymond
Hawk Creek Real Estate, Clara City
Hazeltine National Golf Club, Chaska
Hultgren Farms, Raymond
Iverson Tree Farm, Belview
J & O Seeds, LLC, Murdock
Johnson Seed Farm, Sacred Heart

K&S Poultry and Meats, Kerkhoven
Kensington Bank, Willmar
Kim Miller Photography, Clara City
Lakeland Broadcasting, Willmar
Next Level Agriculture Solutions, Clara City
Nova-Tech Engineering, LLC, Willmar
Oasis Aero, Inc., Willmar
Olivia Hospital & Clinic, Olivia
Premier Marine, Big Lake
Punt Companies LLC, Prinsburg
Riverview LLP., Louriston Dairy, Murdock
Rustad Tours Inc., Kerkhoven
Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative, Renville
Taatjes Financial Group, Willmar
Tepetonka Golf Club, New London
Vinna Human Resources, Willmar
West Central Steel, Inc., Willmar
Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, Willmar
Yost Farms, Murdock



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 speakers variety of business topics.

- Cameron Macht, Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development
- Christine Fischer and Kris Boedigheimer, Southwest Minnesota Small Business Development Center, Marshall
- Elsa Olson, Independent Sales Director of Mary Kay, Kerkhoven
- Jason Duinick, Duinick Inc., Prinsburg
- Jerrid Sebesta, Taatjes Financial Group, Willmar
- Jordan Zeller, Renville County HRA/EDA, Olivia
- Kim Miller, Kim Miller Photography, Clara City
- Peter Taunton, Founder, Snap Fitness and CEO, Nautical Bowls
- Rachel Aeikens, December Day Creative, Maynard
- Signature Stills by Mariah, Benson

SMSU Student Entrepreneurship Conference

In March, the West Central MN CEO program had the opportunity to attend Southwest Minnesota State University's Student Entrepreneurship Conference. The conference is where high school and college entrepreneurs from across southwest and west central Minnesota convene to make quality connections with seasoned entrepreneurs and network with one another.

The West Central MN CEO team was part of the regional business pitch competition and received valuable feedback on their business plans from professionals that are top in the area. The day included expanding their network and they had the opportunity to tour Action Trackchair to gain insight on how an issue turned into a successful business.



BUSINESS VISITS & SPEAKERS





CEO is a hands-on learning experience, with the students diving into business endeavors from the get-go, typically launching their first business within the first week of class. Collectively, the CEO students start one small business, “The Badge Business,” encountering mistakes along the way realizing the importance of organization and structure.

The Badge Business is structured to provide students with hands-on experience in the entire product production process. From design to production to payment, students are responsible for creating name badges. The team devised a plan to sell advertising packages, offering options such as featuring company logos on badges and/or social media posts. Their efforts resulted in a profit of \$12,250!



INVESTORS

VIP

- Duininck Concrete, Willmar
- Duininck Golf, Prinsburg
- Freetly Electric Inc., Kerkhoven
- Harvey Anderson & Johnson Funeral Homes, Willmar
- Iverson Tree Farm, Belview
- Next Level Agriculture Solutions, Clara City

GOLD

- Dooley's Petroleum, Inc., Willmar

SILVER

- Pam Mansfield, CPA, PA, Kerkhoven
- Rustad Tours, Inc., Kerkhoven
- Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative, Renville

BRONZE

- Hawk Creek Country Club, Raymond
- KnockerBall Willmar, Kerkhoven
- Marcus Construction, Willmar
- Riley Bus & Tours Inc., Murdock

The West Central MN CEO class business venture is designed to immerse students in a corporate environment, fostering organizational leadership and personal accountability. Students are tasked with forming company teams and appointing Executive Officers, including roles such as Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Marketing Officer, and Chief Financial Officer. Each student assumes a distinct role within the business, with individual responsibilities aimed at contributing to the success of the venture.

CEO SUNDAY

The Class of 2024 embarked on hosting an event for their class business. *CEO Sunday* was a fun morning of family-friendly breakfast and entertainment. On Sunday, February 4, around 350 guests enjoyed a pancake breakfast, played BINGO, and supported the CEO students by bidding on silent auction items and participating in a 50/50 raffle. Thanks to the outstanding support of our communities, the CEO class profited \$4,890!

SPONSORS

To help defray event expenses, sponsors were actively sought. The CEO students successfully secured commitments from four sponsors and obtained silent auction items from 17 contributors.



**SHERRIE'S
CAFE**

Silent Auction Donors

- Bath & Body Works, Willmar | Gitch Gear, Kerkhoven
- Isabelle's Bakes, Renville | K&S Poultry and Meats, Kerkhoven
- Lamecker's General Store, Kerkhoven
- Little Crow Golf Resort, Spicer | LIVARI, Kerkhoven
- Kim Bristle, Norwex Sales Consultant
- Pit Stop, Kerkhoven | Pursuit Youth Group, Kerkhoven
- Scheels, St. Cloud | UNRL, Minneapolis

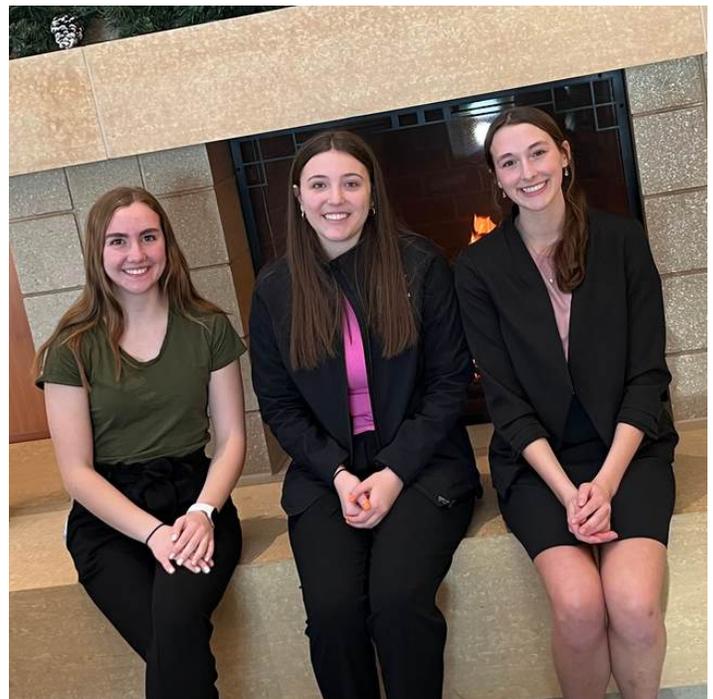
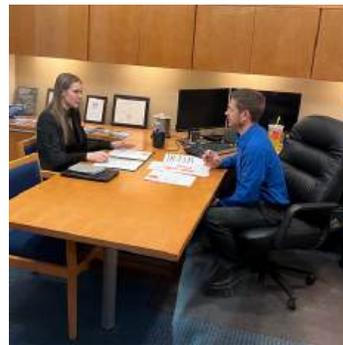
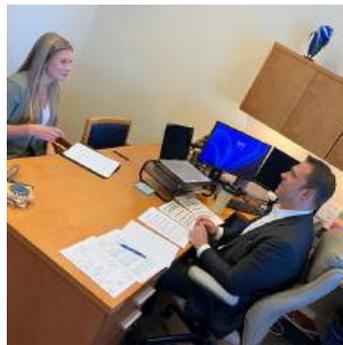
Independent Donors: Craig Dischinger, Kerkhoven Lutheran Church Quilters, Bonnie Kluver, Kole VanHeuveln, Sydney Watson



A pivotal milestone in the entrepreneurial journey is securing financing, which involves crafting a compelling pitch and a comprehensive business plan. This stage marks the transformation of a dream into a tangible reality, requiring entrepreneurs to articulate their vision to potential investors or lenders. Through this process, CEO students gain invaluable experience in effective communication, financial management, and investor relations, while feedback received informs incremental improvements to the business model.



Kensington Bank in Willmar and Bravera Bank in Kerkhoven graciously welcomed the young entrepreneurs from West Central MN CEO for Banker Day. Each student had the opportunity to meet with a lender, presenting their 30-second business pitch and showcasing their business plan. The lenders were encouraged to offer professional feedback and suggestions aimed at enhancing the potential success of the proposed businesses, specifically the feasibility and financial possibilities of each business. Following the meetings and plan presentations, each student was granted start-up funds based on the merits of their proposals.





BOARD MEMBERS



TOM WALSH
CEO Chairman
Partner,
Riverview Dairy



NATE HULTGREN
CEO Vice Chairman
CEO,
Hultgren Farms



BETH ELLIOTT
CEO Treasurer
Ag Banker,
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LIZA FAGEN
CEO Secretary
Executive Admin.
Assistant, SMBSC



RACHEL AEIKENS
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JODEE DRIGGS
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JASON DUINICK
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Schools



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High School Principal,
RCW Public Schools



KARA DEBERG
Ex-Officio Member
CEO Class of 2023





DISCOVER HOW TO TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITY AND GET INVOLVED WITH CEO.



GUEST SPEAKER

Come join class as a guest speaker, this is such a critical part of CEO. We love for speakers to tell us stories about how their business started, personal philosophies about work and success, life topics or specific business topics. Guest speakers are really the true teachers in CEO.



BUSINESS VISIT

Students look forward to visiting the many different businesses that create our community. Consider inviting the class to tour and learn more about your business. Contact facilitator@westcentralmnceo.com to learn more.

MENTOR

Become a mentor if you are ready to experience CEO right along with the students. Being a mentor is a rewarding way to get involved.



INVESTOR

CEO is free for students and schools. The program relies on local investors to support this transformative learning experience. By helping us connect our young people with local businesses and area leaders, you can make a direct impact on the workforce and leaders of tomorrow.

BOARD MEMBER

Becoming a board member for CEO offers a rewarding opportunity to shape the future of aspiring entrepreneurs. Serving on the board allows you to contribute to the growth of the next generation of innovators and make a lasting impact on our community.





WE NEED COMMUNITY-MINDED INDIVIDUALS LIKE YOU.

CEO is free for students and schools. The program relies on local investors to support this transformative learning experience.

INVEST IN TOMORROW, TODAY.

By helping us connect our young people with local businesses and area leaders, you are making a direct impact on the workforce and leaders of tomorrow.



AS AN INVESTOR, YOU RECEIVE:

- Name/Logo Recognition on CEO Website
- Social Media Acknowledgement
- First Rights to host/visit the class



"The CEO experience has been life changing for me. I learned a lot of skills I wouldn't have been able to gather otherwise and I feel more prepared for my future. CEO opened up more doors for me than any other opportunity ever has."



"CEO is so much more than how to run a business. It is teaching students the life skills and all of the things that go into being successful in any career path you choose. It exposes all of our students to what endless opportunities are right here in our backyard."



"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."

Contact us



www.westcentralmnceo.com/Investors



Beth Elliott, CEO Treasurer
belliot@bravera.bank

DISCOVER HOW TO TRANSFORM OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CEO.

The CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) Program gives young people hands on business experience and transforms them into entrepreneurial thinkers who are invested in our community.



ABOUT THE

CEO PROGRAM

CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) is unlike any other class. It is a program for high school juniors and seniors that teaches them about business. But even more, it teaches them about life.

Kids think that opportunity exists everywhere but in their hometowns. The CEO Program shows them that there are thriving businesses, opportunities for growth, and people who want to support them right here in their community - all they have to do is look.

We know that where our young people have a good network, they have opportunities.

70%

Of all CEO students said they could see themselves returning to their community in the future.



CEO IMMERSSES STUDENTS IN THE COMMUNITY.

CEO is never held in a classroom. Instead, students visit area businesses and hear from guest speakers from their community.



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.



CEO INSPIRES THE NEXT GENERATION.

It challenges young people to own their work, innovate creative solutions, and consider the possibilities available to them.

**ceuo[®] WEST
CENTRAL MN**

creating entrepreneurial opportunities

CMCS | KMS | MACCRAY | RCW



www.westcentralmnceo.com

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