



**We promote opportunity for students through intentional in-school, afterschool, and out-of-school programming that provides education, exposure, and mentorship**

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## MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



### DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude and pride in what we have accomplished together. The 2024-2025 school year was a remarkable one, filled with growth, innovation, and impact for the Teen Center. Thanks to your unwavering support, we have made significant strides toward achieving our mission of promoting opportunity for students through intentional **in-school, afterschool, and out-of-school programming.**

This year, we expanded our academic supports, increased crisis intervention resources, and formalized early release programming. These successes are a testament to the dedication of our staff, volunteers, partners, and, most importantly, the students we serve. Despite the challenges faced in a rapidly changing environment, our commitment to high-quality, individualized, relationship-focused programming has remained steadfast.

Looking ahead, we are excited to build on this momentum. Our strategic priorities for 2025-2026 include expanded post-secondary services, increased access to nutrition education, and resurrection of our student advisory board—all aimed at deepening our impact and fostering a more equitable and resilient community.

I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you—our donors, partners, volunteers, and supporters—for your trust and partnership. Your generosity and dedication inspire us to push forward and serve with even greater purpose.

Together, we are creating a brighter future. Thank you for being an essential part of our journey.

With gratitude,

**Abbey Jackson**  
Executive Director



## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

### Fostering a Culture of Continuous Learning

Our Assistant Director of Operations and Finance attended the Every Hour Counts Conference in Minneapolis with other after-school leaders from Omaha. There, she was able to learn more about policies and legislation affecting after-school activities, build connections with like-minded individuals working in the afterschool community, and gather numerous resources for our staff and students to utilize. A highlight was hearing from Minnesota's Attorney General, Keith Ellison, speak on his passion for youth, how he leads his office with empathy and compassion for all residents, and his continued work to ensure all rights are protected.

The leaders participated in the TEAMS Cohort Leadership training, spending 10 days with 19 other leaders at Lied Lodge in Nebraska City. The curriculum was expansive and critical, including personal assessment and development, management of conflict and crisis, development strategies, and industry trends. The depth of relationships, community and accountability amongst the directors was profound.





ALL-NEW  
THIS YEAR



## A Kitchen Upgrade that Feels Like Home

Thanks to the Dixon Family Foundation, our space has been modernized with new appliances. This update creates a homelike feel with added efficiency for our cooking classes.



## Return to Learn: Everyday Help When It's Needed Most

Return to Learn (RTL) was implemented upon the Teen Center's move into Burke High School. All Teen Center members are eligible to use RTL as needed throughout their school day. Students may visit for a variety of reasons, from accessing period products to seeking de-escalation support during conflict.



## New Paths for Seniors: Early Release Programming

Students are eligible for early-release during their senior year. The Teen Center created specific curriculum and added programming to address those students and their schedule. Upon completion of their school day, at either 11 a.m. or 1 p.m., seniors are able to access academic assistance, post-secondary preparation, community service opportunities, and social-emotional programming.



**"BEING ABLE TO HAVE MISS JULIE IN THE BUILDING WHEN I NEEDED ADVICE, A MOMENT TO CALM DOWN, OR HELP FINDING RESOURCES HAS BEEN AWESOME FOR ME. I HAVE OVERCOME A LOT THIS YEAR AND HAVING THIS RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL."**

Jesslyn, Burke High School Sophomore



# Ann DeGray Spirit Award

This award is given to underclassmen who encourage authentic relationships and interactions within the Teen Center community—those who lift others up and treat them with respect while exhibiting a humble and compassionate spirit.



## David Segura Diaz De Leon

"Winning this award means a lot to me. I try to be the best fella I can be, and this shows I'm doing a good job. The Teen Center has helped me in every way, from learning how to talk to new people, to wanting to come to school, to trying to be a better version of myself."



## Sakinah Kanunde

"To receive the Spirit Award and know that the love I have worked to spread over the last few years has been seen and truly felt and appreciated means more to me than I can ever express. It is a reminder to what goes around truly comes back around."



## Tee'Anna Turner

"The only risk you don't take is not taking a risk. I am able to take risks in a safe and supportive space at the Teen Center and have grown to be a leader in my school and community."



# The Teen Center distributed \$11,500 in scholarships this year!

Senior class — 24 strong!



## Celebrating the Class of 2025: Military to Middlebury

The Class of 2025 is defined by its perseverance, innovation, and deep care for the world around them. Whether headed to college, military service, or the Omaha Public Schools transitions program, each of our 24 seniors has a different story and passionate journey ahead.

It has been wonderful to watch our seniors strive and explore not just academically, but emotionally, socially, and creatively. All faced challenges—some expected, others unpredictable—and each one shaped the future. Our seniors learned to adapt, to lead, to listen, and to speak up—discovering passions, forming lifelong friendships, and finding their voice in our world.



## Scholarship Donors:

Cheryl and Michael Goodwille  
Lauren Goodwille  
Steven Goodwille  
Julie Hughes  
John Jeter  
Joe and Cari Kenney





Every graduating senior has specific, individual plans after high school. Each senior receives a tailored basket with items to help prepare them for their next steps.







# Always Home: Stories of Connection, Support, and Belonging

For many alumni, the Teen Center isn't just a place they went after school—it's a home they return to, year after year, through milestones big and small.

These stories, told in their own words, show how those bonds don't end at graduation. They grow, change, and sometimes come full circle in the most unexpected ways.



## Tara's Story: A Journey That Comes Full Circle

After high school, you never truly know where life will take you or how relationships will evolve. Life often sends us in different directions, and for a while, that was true for me. I got married and became a mother at a young age, and throughout all of life's changes, the Teen Center remained a constant presence and support.

Abbey and I lost touch after my 2010 graduation from Burke High School, but life brought us back together in the most unexpected way—through a Lamaze class. As fate would have it, we gave birth to our firstborn sons on the same day, at the same hospital. From that moment, our bond was rekindled, and we picked up right where we left off. Abbey reminded me that, no matter where life took us, the Teen Center would always be home—a place I could return to without hesitation.

The Teen Center has stood by me through my proudest achievements and my most challenging times. As a young mother of two, one of whom is on the autism spectrum, I often stayed home, navigating feelings of isolation and financial stress. My twenties were filled with moments when I felt like I was barely keeping up—raising children, managing a household, and trying to finish school.

As an alumni, I've always been incredibly grateful for the continued support the Teen Center offers. From alumni events and family outings to essential resources like food pantries and school supplies, the Teen Center has remained a lifeline for me and my children.

Over time, I've had the opportunity to give back by teaching crafting classes through my small business and sharing my journey with fellow alumni. Reflecting on the path I've taken, I'm overwhelmed with gratitude. The Teen Center has truly been with me every step of the way, and words can't fully express what that support has meant to me and my family.

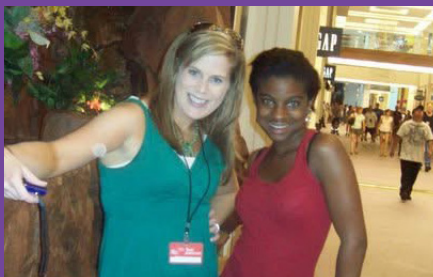


## Always a Call (or Hug) Away



I GRADUATED IN 2012 THINKING MY TIME AT THE TEEN CENTER WAS DONE, BUT IT WASN'T. THEY'VE SUPPORTED ME THROUGH PREGNANCIES, MOTHERHOOD, HOLIDAYS, AND EVEN HELPED FURNISH MY HOME. MOST RECENTLY, THEY CELEBRATED MY MARRIAGE: ABBEY OFFICIATED AND JULIE TOOK PHOTOS. THEY'RE ALWAYS JUST A CALL OR TEXT AWAY, AND OFTEN I DON'T EVEN HAVE TO REACH OUT BECAUSE THEY CHECK IN FIRST. THE IMPACT ON MY LIFE HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIAL.

Pareshia Perry, 2012 Teen Center Alumni



### Abbey's Reflection: From Friendship to Chosen Family

I remember meeting Tara for the first time—she was chopping it up with everyone on the bleachers at the Teen Center. Her bubbly spirit matched her contagious, bright smile, and she was often accompanied by an older brother or younger sister in tow. As years progressed, I saw less of Tara as she spent her upperclassmen years couch-surfing and navigating young adulthood on her own.

Flash forward to 2011, my husband and I were expecting our first baby. We signed up for the Parenthood 101 class. As we walked into the crowded room, I heard a sweet sing-song voice: "Hey Miss Abbey." Bellies almost touching, we introduced our husbands and spoke of the nerves and joy that come with motherhood.

July 2012—it's time! We headed to the hospital to welcome our firstborn. Doing labor laps in the hall, I hear that sweet voice again: "Hey Miss Abbey." Our boys were born hours apart.

Our bond was sealed forever. We became chosen family.

The things we have shared over the years are immense. We have done a lot of life together!

Tara served as the 2024 Alumni Speaker at the Teen Center Graduation Party. There, she shared her advice—one piece being: "The Teen Center will always be home. Come visit often. Reach out. Celebrate your wins. When low, someone will be there to wipe your tears and give hugs. There is love here. There is family here."

### A Place That Stays With You

These stories remind us why the Teen Center is so much more than a program—it's a community that stays with you through every chapter of life. It's a place to celebrate the good times, lean on when things get tough, and always come back to, no matter how much time has passed.



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS & IMPACTS



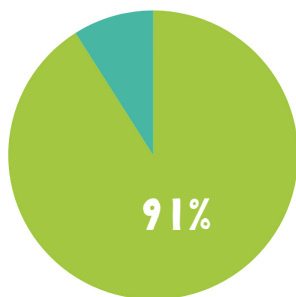
### THIS is why we're here

**Burke High students who need someone in their corner**

During the 2024–2025 school year, the **Teen Center supported 178 Burke High School students.**

As a Title I designated school, Burke has a significant percentage of students who need extra help—10% need additional support during the day, and 5% need out-of-school support like food or housing assistance. Our Return to Learn program is built to meet these needs head-on, ensuring students don't just stay in school but feel seen, supported, and equipped to succeed.

**AND IT WORKS: 91% of our members choose to stay after school for programming, making the Teen Center part of their daily lives.**



### THIS is Daily In-School Support

**Showing up every day where students need us most**

In-school supports meet students where they are—whether they need a quiet place to work, help regulating emotions, or access to basic needs like meal bags and period products.

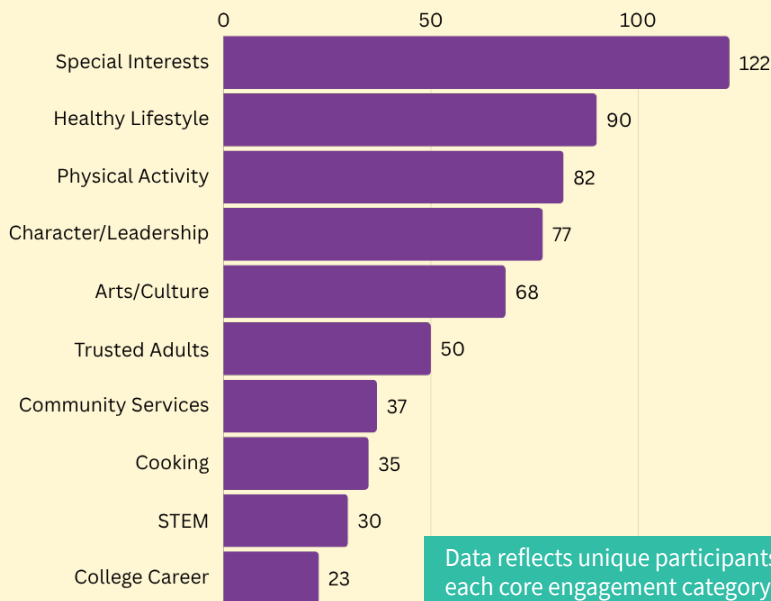
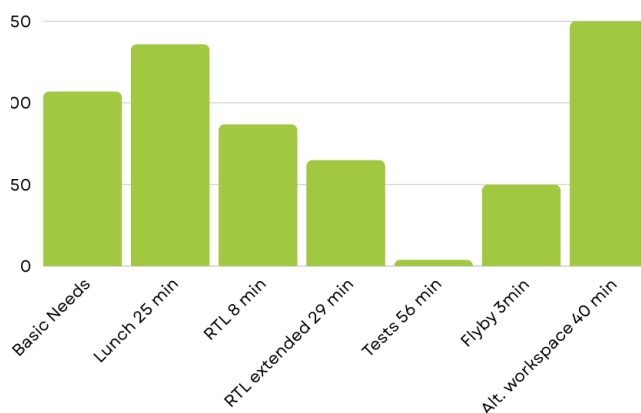
**This year, Teen Center supported 627 student visits:**

**202 Return to Learn sessions** (*helping students manage stress, conflict, and crisis moments*)

**150 alternative workspace visits, averaging 40 minutes each**

**Dozens more visits for lunch, “flybys,” test-taking support, and basic needs**

By offering a safe place to regroup and feel heard, the Teen Center helps students stay in class, avoid risky behaviors, and build resilience.



### THIS is After-School Engagement

**A safe space to belong, connect, and grow**

Programs spanned Health & Wellness, Arts & Culture, tutoring, homework help, and clubs.

**Highlights included:**

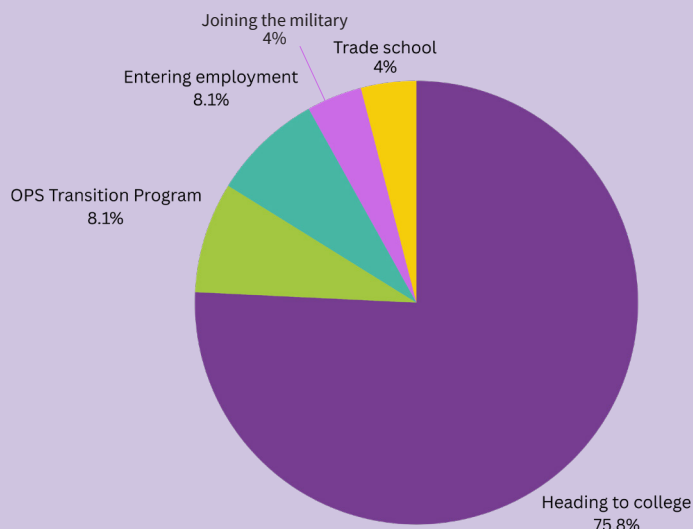
- **Skatefest, now with skill-based level cards**
- **Healthy Decision Making with Ms. Keisha, known for real conversations on mental health and consent**
- **Arts Access with Omaha Performing Arts**
- **Clubs like: Dungeons & Dragons, Gender and Sexuality Alliance, Anime, Esports, Drama**



# THIS is Senior Success

## Personalized support for graduation and beyond

The 2025 class included 24 graduates:



Together, seniors spent over **3,000** hours with Teen Center staff on schoolwork, college and job applications, scholarships, and capstone projects.

And it paid off:

**100%** were eligible to graduate on time

**94%** felt ready for their next step

**81%** had three or more trusted adults at the Teen Center

All supported by a dedicated team of just four full-time staff.



# THIS is Lifelong Connection

Support that continues long after graduation

This year, Teen Center had **159 meaningful contacts with alumni**, from check-ins to stability supports and celebrations.

Engagement rose during:

**August:** Back-to-School

**October-December:** Holiday Assistance Program

Even better, alumni gave back: donating **70 volunteer hours** through Holiday Assistance, alumni-led programming, advice panels for younger students, career mentoring, and the Legacy Gala.





ACCESS PERIOD



During the 2024-25 school year, the Teen Center distributed:

- 300 period product kits
- 44 pairs of period underwear
- 23,710 period products

These products covered 830 periods and created 4,152 worry-free days.

Beyond the Teen Center, period products are located in all women's restrooms, the nurse's office, and three teachers' classrooms.

***Thank you to our volunteers—Shauna Daly and Eleanor Hollowell—for consistent and compassionate delivery of products to the Teen Center.***

**An interactive Game of Life** experience gave 60 students real-life exposure to financial literacy and planning, thanks to the employees at BMO.

Students drew a career, then maneuvered through stations, making life decisions based on their financial situation. The stations ranged from the IRS to child care.



BMO



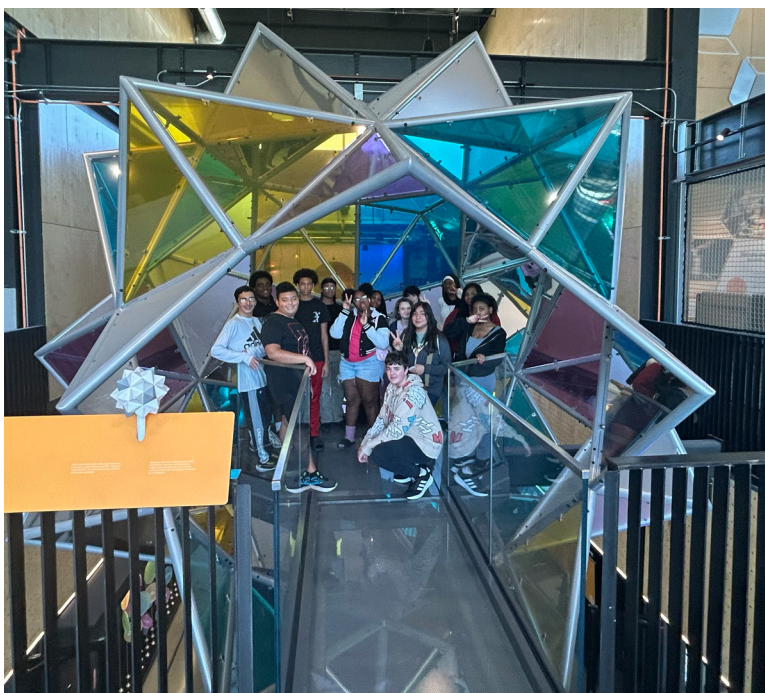




**Skatefest Omaha** remains a popular program option for students to stay active and build confidence. New this year, students were challenged with proficiency cards, where they could try, practice, and master three levels of tricks.

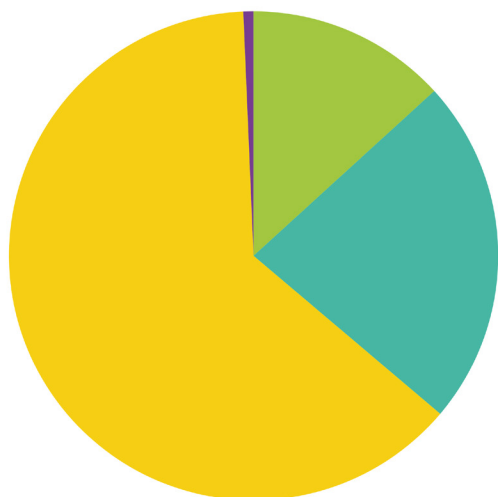


**Downtown Day** included an engaging visit to the Kiewit Luminarium, followed by lunch and exploration of The RiverFront park.





## 2024/25 Financials



### Income

Private Donations: \$55,858

Fundraising Dinner: \$96,943

Grants: \$266,679

Interest: \$2,822

**Total: \$422,302**

### Expense:

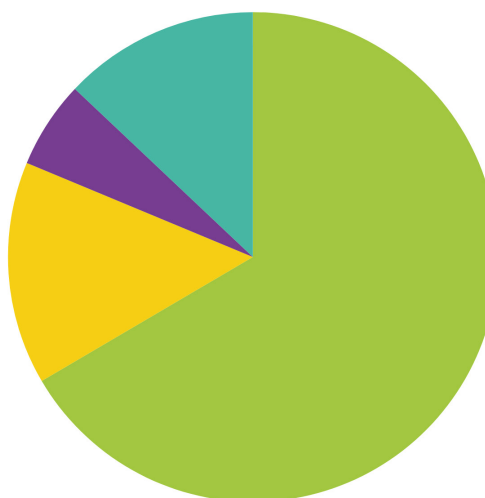
Program Management: \$232,147

Operations: \$51,375

Fundraising Dinner: \$20,146

Programming: \$45,179

**Total: \$348,847**



*\*Revenue currently exceeds expenses due to cash flow timing.*



# ALUMNI GROWTH

## The Transition to Adulthood is Complex

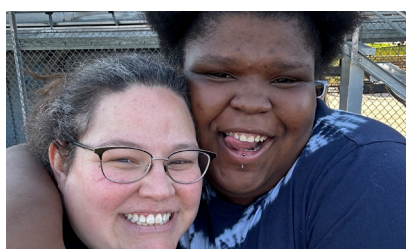
Graduates face a sudden shift in responsibilities—navigating college, employment, finances, housing, and independence. Support helps bridge the gap between high school structure and adult expectations.

The growing alumni base calls for additional efforts in supporting students beyond high school while strengthening programs to ensure graduates have access to resources, guidance, and community. From networking opportunities, basic-needs pantry, and emergency fund to continued mentoring support, our growing alumni services are designed to ensure students thrive long after graduation.



**"AS I REFLECT ON MY LIFE, I CAN SEE HOW PIVOTAL THIS PLACE HAS BEEN IN SHAPING MY RESILIENCE, PUSHING ME TO DO BETTER, AND INSPIRING ME TO CREATE A BETTER FUTURE."**

Charles Byars,  
2011 Teen Center Alumni



## 11 Teen Center grandbabies were born this year!

With 18 years of the Teen Center, we are old enough to be a 'grand program'. We send branded onesies to all Teen Center grandbabies we know about.



## Gala update:

With an alumni behind the DJ booth, memories made at the 360 photo booth, and the addition of the dessert dash, the Legacy Gala 2024 was a night to remember. The evening began with a signature cocktail and silent auction, followed by a program and live auction. **Funds raised to benefit the Teen Center totaled \$96,943.**



## MEET OUR STAFF



### **Abbey Jackson // Executive Director** *The Adaptable Designer*

Abbey was hired as the Founding Director in 2007 and now serves as the Executive Director. Originally from Minnesota, Abbey attended Creighton University and fell in love with Omaha (and a teacher). With two elementary-age kids, life is filled with trips to the lake, board games, and youth sports, all while staying active and involved in the community. She has never tried coffee in her lifetime but loves a good fountain pop!



### **Julie Butler // Assistant Director of Finance and Operations** *The Insightful Collaborator*

Julie Butler was the first-ever volunteer of the Teen Center when it opened in 2007. Life has taken Julie and her family across the great state of Nebraska. The Teen Center has always held a special place in her heart, so it was natural for her to return as staff. Julie is passionate about helping people and her work history reflects this. From working as a licensed massage therapist to working with CASA of Dawson County, her ease to connect and build relationships is phenomenal. Her second love, outside of her family, is houseplants! Julie loves sharing her knowledge of plants with others. Want a plant, just ask!



### **Cassie Young // Assistant Director of Academics and Data** *The Enthusiastic Encourager*

Cassie—the teacher formerly known as Mrs. Benzel, Ms. Frerichs, and Mrs. Young from Burke, Omaha South, and Papillion La Vista South, respectively—took a risk to return to the Teen Center as the Assistant Director of Academics and Data. Cassie hails from a farm near Hinton, Iowa and earned both her undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in Special Education, B-12 Special Education Curriculum and Instruction, and School Administration. She walked in the doors as a tutor and mentor in 2008, and, honestly, never really left. Cassie's special interests include dismantling the systems of oppression and "soft pants" (IYKYK).



### **Kyla Channita // Administrative Director** *The Idealistic Supporter*

Kyla is no stranger to this program. She is a Burke and Teen Center alumna alongside her two oldest brothers, and now a younger sibling passing through. Kyla serves as the Program Assistant, doing anything from helping serve meals to convincing her students she is not a crazy cat lady (she is). Originally from California, she has been a Nebraska girly since 2005. Kyla has always had a passion for working with young adults and creating meaningful mentorships. She is a fur mom to her cat, Max and a big music enthusiast!





## Board of Directors

**Kristi Reimers // President**

Nutrition Research Fellow, Conagra Brands

**Tam Webb // Vice President & Secretary**

Community Volunteer

**Kirk Kellner // Treasurer**

Retired, Wells Fargo

**John Deardorff**

Retired, Peterson Brothers Insurance

**Kendra Craven**

Dean of Health Professions,  
Nebraska Methodist College

**Marshall Johnson**

Senior Pastor,  
St. Luke United Methodist Church

## Collaborators

Burke High School

Collective for Youth

Nebraska Methodist College

St. Luke United Methodist Church

## Funders

21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning  
Center Grant

The Hawks Philanthropy

Heider Family Foundation

James C. Semerad Foundation

Lozier Foundation

Peter Kiewit Foundation

The Sherwood Foundation

Suzanne & Walter Scott Foundation

William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation

## Legacy Dinner

Honorary Chair: John Deardorff

Event Chair: Tam Webb





A COMMUNITY  
THANK YOU



## Join Us in Building a Brighter Future

Your support is vital to our mission and helps us continue the important work of the Teen Center. As a nonprofit organization, we depend on generous individuals like you to contribute so that we may continue our critical programming. If you feel inspired by what you've read, please consider donating to help us reach even more students in need. Together, we can create brighter futures.



**Scan**  
to donate!



**Scan**  
to see our wishlist!





“

**TWO YEARS AGO, THE TEEN CENTER  
MADE THE BEST MOVE OF THEIR  
EXISTENCE: THEY MOVED INTO BURKE  
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OUR STUDENT POPULATION ON AN  
EVEN LARGER SCALE.**

Alison Lane, Burke High Teacher

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