

Teacher parents say goodbye to their kids

By Zachary Pearlman

Almost every senior class to graduate believes it is a tight-knit, amazing group of friends who will see each other for years to come. Our senior class is no different in that regard.

However, we also have an unbreakable bond with the staff.

I, along with several other seniors, have family members who work in the Durant school district.

It is always hard for parents to send their children off to the workforce, a trade school, or a university, but this year it will be especially difficult.

Senior Ellie Dorris is one of the students graduating and plans to attend the University of Northern Iowa to become a high school English teacher.

She believes her relationship with her mom, school nurse Mary Dorris, has grown while at school.

"I would say my relationship with her has gotten stronger from all of the extra time I spend with her," she said. "It's nice to be able to have her office to go to when I

need a quiet area or for someone to talk to."

Ellie's mom started working at Durant when her daughter first started school here.

Mrs. Dorris said she is lucky to have spent time together in the building with Ellie over the past 13 years.

"I will miss her for sure, but I am excited to watch her move on to a new chapter in her life," she said. "I know she is ready to attend UNI in the fall."

Ellie said her transition to college may be difficult, yet exciting.

"I have grown so used to having her [Mrs. Dorris] there and being able to go see her constantly," she said.

"It's going to be difficult getting used to her not being in the same building as me during school hours. At the same time, I'm excited to stand on my own two feet while at college."

Senior Brady Meincke will be attending a trade school after Durant. Mrs. Laura Meincke, Brady's mom and high school Spanish teacher, came to Durant when Brady started preschool.

"Over the years, it has been wonderful being in the same place as my kids during the day," she said. "This year has been a bit different due to my shared schedules with Wilton and Brady's open blocks. I rarely see him at school."

Brady always counts on his mom, saying "if I forget something at school, or if I don't have my work, or if I miss a day of school, she can get that stuff for me, or she can let me in the school."

Mrs. Meincke said she is proud to see her senior graduate.

"Congratulations, Brady," she said. "Go do great things."

Brady believes he is prepared for the future ahead.

"I am going to the local SMW [Sheet Metal Workers] 91," he said. "It is basically a school for the Sheet Metal Workers Union."

He said he can study HVAC through their program, and he wants to pursue that for his future career.

Other senior students who have parents in the building as staff members or

substitutes are Max Thoma, Nolan DeLong, Garrett Hollenback, and Jacy Wiese.

My own mom, high school English teacher Mrs. Cathy Pearlman, is excited yet sad to see me leave Durant as well.

"I have seen you multiple times a day, almost every day at work and home for the past ten years," she told me in an interview. "It is going to be really hard not seeing you anymore."

My mom has worked in the school building for most of my life and has climbed the ranks alongside me.

During my elementary years, she was an associate. During middle school, she returned to college to get her teaching degree and student taught in Muscatine, and now she is in the high school wing alongside me.

Going to college is exciting, and I can't wait. Yet I have become used to having my mom to turn to when I needed help in school, and she was someone I could trust without any doubt. I got to see her every day.

I can't help but wonder if one day in college I turn into a classroom trying to find her, and she won't be there.

Military From page 1

the Navy for four years, especially because of the strict work environment.

"I feel like exploring the world for four years will be enough traveling for me," said Salemi.

"I just got yelled at a couple days ago for having my hands in my pockets because it looks unprofessional. If I wear the wrong color socks with any of my uniforms, it's quite literally the end of the world."

Although Salemi has to wake up at three in the morning and gets off at about seven in the evening, he enjoys it.

"I've got to keep my sailors safe and secure," he said. "But also I'm doing my duty of serving my country."

Salemi said he would encourage students to check out the military.

"If you're thinking about joining the military, just do it, and don't let your parents or boyfriend/girlfriend talk you out of it either. The military has a career for everyone."

Graduating from Durant High School in 2018, Sgt. Jordan Craig knew that he wanted to go into the Iowa National Guard.

Sgt. Craig enlisted in the Guard in December of 2017 and would get to his unit in late 2018. With a specialty in plumbing, Sgt. Craig will be deployed later this year to the Middle East for the first time.

"Personally I'm excited for this deployment," said Sgt. Craig. "It's one of the biggest reasons I joined, and I'll be happy to see how it evolves my future."

He'll be deployed for up to 400 days doing major construction and rehabilitation on his base and the surrounding cities.

The closest thing that Sgt. Craig has gotten to deployment was active duty orders to Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa, from February to August of 2021. While there, he rebuilt some barracks, laid a new concrete motor pool for vehicles, and did some demolition and construction.

When working as a plumber, Sgt. Craig does everything that a civilian plumber would do.

"I work with installing new copper, PVC, and PEX supply lines as well as underground waste lines," said Sgt. Craig. "I've also done quite a bit of carpentry, electrical, and some heavy equipment operations."

Sgt. Craig is pretty sure he wants to make a career out of the Guard since he enjoys it.

"I'm just about to finish my first term, and I've already signed on for another six years," said Sgt. Craig.

A 2021 graduate of Durant, Keagen Head is now enrolled in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) at the University of Iowa.

Head transferred from Wartburg College after his freshman year, and he now studies civil engineering.

"I've always felt a calling to join the military at some point in my life, and I thought there's no better time than now," said Head. "Looking back, I don't regret going to Wartburg, but I'm glad I followed my dreams and came to Iowa."

The main reason Head transferred to the University of Iowa was for the ROTC program.

"Ever since graduating high school, I've been searching for a true purpose," said Head. "The military is something I can take pride in, and it gives me a purpose."

Head has to work extra to accommodate for the ROTC class load.

"Cadets in the ROTC have workouts three days a week and a leadership lab Thursday mornings," Head explained. "We also have military science classes we take on top of our regular course load."

Upon graduation, Head will be commissioned as a second lieutenant, and he may choose to serve in the military as an engineer.



Photo contributed by Jordan Craig
Durant graduate Jordan Craig receives a certificate of promotion to the rank of sergeant in the Iowa National Guard.

Therapy From page 1

the production of oxytocin, a hormone linked with feeling comfort and contentment," according to the Alliance website.

"Therapy dogs are rooting for you! They want to help comfort humans. Our canine friends offer non-judgmental companionship and can have a calming effect on our moods. They also make people feel less physically alone, especially those who live away from loved ones."

Isa goes to different parts of the school on certain days interacting with students of all ages and teachers too.

Addison Zindel, a sophomore, said that there are many benefits to having a therapy dog.

"It makes people's days better," stated Zindel.

She's hoping to see more of Isa either in the hallways or classroom.

High school English teacher Mrs. Cathy Pearlman said that Isa relaxes her students and is very therapeutic for her as well.

Mrs. Pearlman is hoping to see Isa in her classroom more often, maybe on a daily basis.

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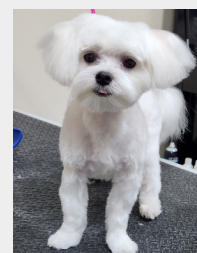


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"Rooster"



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Senior Zachary Pearlman is a first-year member of the Robotics club. He joined for his love of anything STEM-related. He has helped in all areas from building the robot to finding sponsors and new recruits. Because of his hard work, five new members will join the club next year.



Pearlman