Maroon & Gold

ELDON ALUMNI MAGAZINE



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EHS 2020 VOLLEYBALL TEAM WINS DISTRICT TITLE UNDER DIRECTION OF 1990 GRADUATE MELINDA WRYE WASHINGTON.

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OCTOBER 8th-9th 2021

FRIDAY:

2:00 PM HOMECOMING PARADE 4:30 PM LIONS CLUB DINNER - MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA 5:30 PM ALUMNI TAILGATE PARTY - VICTOR FIELD (food provided) 7:00 PM HOMECOMING FOOTBALL GAME

SATURDAY: 5K RUN/WALK 7:30 AM CONTACT: MEGHAN OPIE - 573-375-1960 RACE WILL START IN FRONT OF THE OLD GYM AT 8:00 AM

ALL DAY ELDON GOLF CLUB WILL BE HOSTING AN ALUMNI GOLF TOURNAMENT. ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO THE ELDON MUSTANGS BOYS & GIRLS GOLF TEAMS.

10:00 AM TOUR OF EHS BEGINS AT THE OLD GYM

7:00 PM ALUMNI REUNION STREET PARTY AT THE POCKET PARK ON MAPLE STREET FOOD AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT WHITTLES MUSIC 7:00PM - 1:00AM

For more information contact Wendy Winters - (573) 392-8010 ext. 1009 wendy.winters@eldonmustangs.org

LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

I am so glad you are reading the sixth edition of the Maroon & Gold! Our goal is to keep our patrons connected with what is happening in the school and with Eldon Alumni. I know we all have some great memories of our school. It could be your favorite teacher, your best friend that you haven't seen for years, your coach, your bus driver, or the cook that made you smile. We want to do our best to remember those days but also focus on the great things that are currently happening. In order to accomplish this, we need you to send us ideas about who to interview for our stories. I believe the Maroon and Gold is going to be the venue that allows Eldon Alumni to stay connected. Send your information to wendy.winters@eldonmustangs.org or mail it to her at 101 Sounth Pine St. Eldon, MO, or call Wendy at 573-392-8010 ext. 1009



Another idea I want you to consider is coming back home. We continually strive to make our school and community one of the best places in the state. I believe you and your family will make an economic impact on our community. You will help us build an even better community that has a great infrastructure, great schools and great people. I feel blessed to live in Eldon, I know you will, too.

We are including information about some job opportunities in the area. Please take a look at them and see if any of them fit your needs.

I hope you enjoy the Maroon and Gold! Matt Davis EHS'95

JOIN THE ELDON ALUMNI ASSOCIATION FOR ONLY \$10 PER YEAR

Money will be used to keep you connected through the Maroon and Gold

a a a a a wal tha fallowing information.

Please sen	ia the following information:
Name:	
Address: _	
Phone:	
Email:	

Mail to Eldon High School, attention Wendy Winters, 101 S. Pine St., Eldon, MO 65026. wendy.winters@eldonmustang.org or 573-392-8010 ext. 1009. You may also find us on Facebook at Eldon Mustangs or Eldon High School Alumni.

E L D O N T O W N P L A N

GRO ELDON'S PLAN TO ACHIEVE COMMUNAL PROSPERITY



Prepared by: The GRO Eldon Core Leaders GRO Program Coordinator: Matt Davis Technical Support Provided by: Innovation Economy Partners



2021

GRO ELDON

WHAT IS GRO?

Growth In The Rural Ozarks (GRO) program launched in 2016 to help Missouri towns design and launch community and economic development initiatives that bring sustainable local prosperity. The GRO program has grown over the years to include nine communities and tap into the knowledge of more local leaders.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

LEARN MORE ABOUT GRO: <u>WWW.GROOZARKS.ORG</u>



COMMITTED LEADERSH

- Planning
- Action &
- Accountability
- Resource Developmen
- ENGAGED CITIZENS Community Outreach & Programming
- Academic & Experientia
- Learning Community Support
- Quality & Affordab Housing
- Public Spaces &
 Experiences
- Experiences
 Town Infrastructure

RESILIENT ECONOMY

- Create it: Entrepreneursh
 and Inneurstien
- Grow It: Expand local
- businesses
- Attract It: Bring in new



WHY DID ELDON JOIN GRO?

Eldon has a small-town feel with a drive for continuous improvement. Many towns can be resistant to change, but Eldon is constantly improving. We joined the GRO family to bond the businesses, city, and schools together. We are creating a united vision and working toward making that bond a reality. OUR VISION

Together We Rise!

INITIAL ASSESSMENT & FINDINGS

OUR COMMUNITY'S Voice

Our big observation: Eldon's citizens view our economic future in a more favorable light than any other GRO community. The opportunity for the leaders of Eldon is to harness this community enthusiasm and focus it towards establishing a more sustainable community future.

2021

THE ASSETS THAT WE NEED TO BUILD ON



We embrace our youth and educate them to become active members of the community in hopes for them to continue as leaders of the town.

• There are several originations and projects for the community to get involved and have a voice.

We are proud to help each other and be citizens of Eldon.

School district has several opportunities available to help our students thrive. We have a very active chamber of commerce vested in the businesses and community

- Have been working in the past 5+ years in identifying afforadable housing.
- We have medical and dental practionars easily avaliable along with local pharamcy.

GRO INITIATIVES

2021 OBJECTIVES

- Increase Engagement via GRO Video & social media.
- Project RISE: Get the program launched. Recruit the first class.
- Business Speaker: Keep engaging with local businesses through the business speaker event.
- Rock Island Depot: Finish the Depot and make it a destination in the community
- Housing: Bring together partners in the community and establish a cohesive plan of action. Plan, develop, and execute certain infrastructure repairs.

WINS TO DATE

- We continue to conduct monthly business speaker events.
- We launched a comprehensive community outreach effort. The city is working to conduct a massive infrastructure improvement project. The trails and depot project is well underway.
- Established a highly skilled core GRO team that brings an array of experiences.

ELDON'S GRO PROJECTS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

The goal is to create a deeper level of citizen engagement and involvement by enhancing the connection to the community.

BUSINESS SPEAKER SERIES

PROJECT

RISE

- Educate, and inform local business leaders on helpful topics to give them advice and expertise to reach their community's goals.
- This systematic program helps elevate people who are living paycheck-to-paycheck to a more financially and emotionally stable state.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

 Quality, affordable housing helps attract more citizens to the community to help bring more life and economic development.

ROCK ISLAND TRAIL AND DEPOT

Our community has the opportunity to renovate the railroad depot to be a welcome center, museum, and office for the Chamber of Commerce with the use of implementing a Rock Island Trail into the heart of

structures.

town.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT

This project is to preserve all the beautiful and unique aspects of our town; while supporting the advancement of conditions in road networks, water, waste systems, and commercial and residential

LEARN MORE ABOUT GRO ELDON AT: WWW.GROWOZARKS.ORG/ELDON/

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Empowering our people

We attract, develop and reward the best people- we're approximately 77,000 strong in 32 countries. Learn about joining the Adient team.

To schedule a specific time for an interview, please reach out to Brianna Christensen at 573-392-2782, or via email at brianna.sue.christensen@adient.com

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COMING "BACK" HOME

Dr. Megan Kretsinger Porter

Written by 2019 Eldon alumnus Parker Dunham

"This is home... this is home." For Dr. Megan Porter, Eldon is not just a place to start her business or simply a place to live. For her, Eldon is home. Megan's parents, Cal and Jan Kretsinger, were originally from St. Louis but moved to Eldon where Megan was born and raised. While at Eldon High School she was involved in cheerleading, basketball, band, track, and drama. "I like to be involved in all the things." Megan also loved her teachers and coaches. "Eldon is very lucky and fortunate that they always have great teachers and people who truly care."

Although Megan loved the place where she grew up, her dad's job moved them to St. Louis her sophomore year. Not only was Megan sad to go, but her hometown was sad to see her leave as well. Coach Marriott, her cheer coach at the time, even offered to let her stay in her house until Megan finished high school. "Several people did. That's Eldon for you. Where else does that happen that people step up to take care of you so you don't have to leave the life you have known?" Although she moved away, it was almost like she never left because of how often she would visit. "Even after I moved I would come back on the weekends, get on the bus and go to speech and debate tournaments with them. I went to prom both years I missed. I still half lived in Eldon those two years."

After high school, Megan began to pursue her lifelong dream of becoming an oncologist. "I have always wanted to be a doctor. It was always my calling." Her path towards that goal soon changed, though . While in college she was working full-time at St. Mary's and realized that the only real goal was keeping patients alive. "It wasn't truly about quality of life, or what came after. It was about what could be done just to keep the body physically going. Obviously, this is extremely important, don't get me wrong, but I couldn't do that forever. I knew I needed to find something else." Soon after, she quit her job at the hospital, quit school, and moved back home with her parents. Megan says, "I'm kind of a jump and just see what happens kind of person."

Shortly after moving home, a doctor friend of Megan's recommended she connect with a colleague of his who was a chiropractor. "I told him I wasn't interested. I knew nothing about chiropractic other than it seemed kind of dumb honestly." He shared her contact information, though, and the chiropractor himself eventually got ahold of her directly. "I still was not really interested, but my parents were very encouraging. I was living in their house with no job and this guy was offering to pay me money. So long story short, I took it." It wasn't long though before she realized this was exactly what she had been looking for. "I fell in love with it. The main focus is quality of life and giving it back to people through natural healing. 'What are you missing out on in your life due to pain and limitation? What do you want to be able to do, but don't think you are capable of? Let's focus on those things and work together with your body to achieve them.' It gave me a new perspective on the body and how amazingly it is designed. It is so capable of healing and giving us so much more than we give it credit for. We just have to put in the effort to set it up for the win."

Her passion led her back to school to finish her bachelor's degree in human biology and then go on to earn her doctorate in Chiropractic Medicine from Logan University. During this time, she and her husband Ryan Porter had their first two boys, Kyler (9) and Zaden (8). After graduating, Megan purchased a chiropractic practice in Webster Groves, Missouri where she practiced for a little over 2 years. After having her third son, Avitt (5), she decided to stay home with her children. It wasn't long before the final Porter boy, Daxon (3), was added to the mix and then the Porter's decided it was time to come home. "We honestly just assumed we would stay in St. Louis forever, and that was fine. We had our people and our routine, but as our kids started to get a little older, we missed that sense of community. We both kind of woke up one day and said, 'Nope! It's time to go home.'"

Megan did not just come back to Eldon to live here. She came to make Eldon an even better place. Upon returning to Eldon, Megan naturally fell back into practice. "I had friends and family that needed help, and I knew I could work with them to make their lives better." Eldon Family Chiropractic opened on March 1, 2020.

Having four boys only 6 years apart is challenging enough, but Megan and her family were thrown into challenges coming home right off the bat. It only strengthened her confidence in Eldon still having the same strong sense of community. "We came home about 2 months before the tornado hit... and it was kind of awe striking to come back and see that Eldon was still like that. Loving one another and always working together. It was not just something you had in your head when you were a kid. It really is that way here." Of course, the pandemic was also a challenge for the new chiropractor in town with four boys who were now home from school for the foreseeable future. Megan says she could not have done it without help and support from people in her community, friends, and "her girls." "It really does take a village, 100%" and that is how she describes Eldon. "It is a village!



Dr. Porter adjusting a patient at her clinic in Eldon.

Porter cont.

That is really the definition of Eldon. Everybody is in it together. It is about how you can benefit all of us and that is huge. And everybody wants everyone else to succeed as well."

Megan is not the only one to succeed because of her drive and passion for her community and the people in it. She has helped countless people in her short time back home to get back to healthier and more fulfilled lives. A friend and former employee of Megan said, "Megan and her business strive to support the people of Eldon and the surrounding areas. She's worked extremely hard to learn new ways to help make the community healthier through chiropractic services, functional health consulting, and physical therapy." Megan is not only an excellent chiropractor but is an even better person. Another employee and friend said, "Patient care is her top priority. I've seen her put in countless hours squeezing patients in and working to find the root cause of their pain or health complications. I have not met a more determined individual. Having four sons all close in age and a new practice is extremely difficult to manage, but after watching her I feel like she could do just about anything she sets her mind to. She is truly my role model."

Megan is committed to her family and her community which to her are one in the same. She is confident in Eldon and what it has to offer. "I think Eldon's on a good track. It's getting a lot of people who are willing to come back and invest and are pushing themselves to not just be good enough for Eldon. There's a lot of people who are saying, 'We're going to take these things that people see in bigger cities and if you build it, they will come and it's going to do nothing but benefit the people here locally.' I think that is key. People who are willing to take the risk here." Luckily, Megan was one of those people who were willing to risk it, and Eldon is better off for it.







Caitlyn Vernon, DDS • Bruce King, DDS Eldon Mustang Alumni



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Heritage \$1,000 and up

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Coffee, Cars & Community Community Community Cars Stars Star

Written by 2019 Eldon alumnus Parker Dunham

Although Zach Taylor and Richard Gray may have different sets of parents, they really are brothers, as their businesses would indicate. These two are business partners, brother-in-laws and lifelong friends that have been investing in this community for their whole lives. Zach's parents, T.L. and Janice Taylor, are Eldon natives as is his whole family. "My mom and dad have been around their whole lives. I've got family going way back. My great-great-great grandpa was actually the first mayor of Eldon." Richard's mother, Pat, is from Eugene and his father, Allen, joined her there at the age of 11 when his family moved from Massechussetes. "My siblings and I all went to school in Eldon our whole lives." The two were in the same graduating class and knew each other since kindergarten.

While in high school, Zach was highly involved in FFA. "Some of my best memories were in FFA, working for Biddle on the football field and in the greenhouse. All that we were able to do there and learn from those teachers was great. I fell in love with landscaping and lawn care while doing those things in school. If it wasn't so hard on my body, I might still be doing it, but since I'm not, all these other things have been a real blessing." Richard was also involved in several organizations while in high school like FBLA, DECA, and Learn and Serve. "Who I am today has a lot to do with the teachers and the staff. I remember Coach Campbell and Mrs. Henderson and loved being a part of FBLA. Learn and Serve with Mrs. Matzen was probably my favorite thing in high school. That one on one time with teachers is something you don't get in some of those other places."

Hed VANL- BOLING

un initiation

Both of them went to work at Eldon Furniture while in high school which was where their friendship really blossomed. Zach said, "Once I started working, I just wanted to work." Richard shared a similar sentiment. "I started working and making money, and I realized, 'That's fun!'" Not only did they grow their friendship and make some money while working in their clubs and at the furniture store, but both of them were influenced by the people they worked for that would prove to be useful later on. When reflecting on FFA and his time at Eldon furniture, Zach said, "Biddle was a big influence on me, John Caine at the furniture store working for him, watching him run his business and his work ethic as an owner of a business was an influence on how I want to runmy business and how I want to treat my employees."

After graduating, the two took different paths, but kept connected. Zach bounced around from a few colleges, but ended up obtaining a turf and landscape management degree from OTC, continuing his passion that he grew in FFA. After graduating from OTC, he went to work running his brother's lawn care business for 11 years. "I for sure wanted to leave Eldon when I was in high school, and then once I moved to college and came back and did lawncare and started my life here, I really just fell back in love with it." After high school, Richard went to Warrensburg for about a year, during which time he started dating Zach's sister Tessa. He came back home where he got to work with Zach once again for the landscaping company. Richard eventually married Tessa and moved his way into selling cars. "I got into the car business originally in Jeff City, and my whole goal was to get started there just so I could come back home." This goal came to fruition when Richard went to work for Lloyd Belt Automotive in his hometown. Lloyd also had a huge impact on Richard while he worked for him. "I worked for two other dealerships, and the owners really had no part of the day to day, but then working out at Lloyd Belt's, he was there every day. He really didn't want to be anywhere else. Hearing his story and watching his work ethic was a huge influence on me. I saw things that he did that I aspired to do. I appreciated that relationship more than he ever knew as far as the way he helped me to grow."

While Richard was at Lloyd Belt, and Zach was running the landscaping company, the opportunity to buy Refills Ink was presented to the two in 2013, so they bought it and Zach ran the business full time. Refills Ink was the spark that lit the rest of Zach and Richard's enterprises in Eldon. Richard described his experience dreaming up Brew Brothers. "I'll never forget. I'd been driving around the railroad tracks one day on lunch at Belt's because I was looking for properties and I was thinking, 'Man, it would be cool to have a coffee shop or a sandwich shop along a bike trail,' so I called Zach and I said, 'Hey man, I just want to tell you I felt led to look for properties.' He said 'I was just talking to somebody about that exact same thing!'"

They took their shared aspiration of bringing a place like that to Eldon and acted on it. The perfect place for their business venture happened to fall right into their laps like it was meant to me, so they got to work, transforming the old building on Business 54 into the coffee shop we see today. Richard said, "At that point, Eldon didn't really have a coffee shop that specializes in coffee with an atmosphere to come and just relax and be quiet and enjoy company." Both of them were passionate about what this place could be. During this time, their families and Zach married his wife Tesa in 2017. Zach also shared some of his dreams for Brew Brothers and why they started it in 2018. "We love coffee. We love the atmosphere of coffee shops. We like what it brought to the

Coffee, Cars cont.



Tessa, Richard, Kora - 7 yrs. & Hudson- 10 yrs. Gray.

community— a place to hang out with friends and visit. Just the idea of that, I think we both fell in love with. Anytime I walk into the coffee shop and there's people hanging out,"my heart's happy. It doesn't matter if they've got ice water in their hand if they're enjoying the place"

Brew Brothers soon grew into exactly what they had hoped it would become, but they didn't stop there. Just last year, the two "brothers" teamed up once again and opened "GT Brothers Automotive" just down the street from their coffee shop. The two friends are now closer than ever (literally and figuratively) as Zach runs Refills lnk directly adjacent to Richard over in the new dealership. Richard shared, "I can't even put it into words how we ended up where we are because it doesn't really make sense to be in this office right here with Zach next door working side by side. It's an amazing thing. We just try to do what we think is right and pray it all works out."

Both Zach and Richard are highly motivated individuals and they say this is due to the people they have been surrounded

In your head as a kid you think, 'Eldon is so small, there's so much more out there.' And there is, I get it, but once you leave and come back and you start building those roots, and realizing just the heart of this town and the people you grew up around—seeing them grow and succeed. You see people rallying around others, just that community we have here that you're going to miss out on if you head somewhere else.



Tesa, Zach and 1 year old Colt Taylor

by in Eldon which is what made them want to come back here. "In your head as a kid you think, 'Eldon is so small, there's so much more out there.' And there is, I get it, but once you leave and come back and you start building those roots, and realizing just the heart of this town and the people you grew up around- seeing them grow and succeed. You see people rallying around others, just that community we have here that you're going to miss out on if you head somewhere else. It was an easy decision when I came back that this is where I wanted to be," said Richard. When asked what specifically made him want to return to Eldon, Zach said, "Family, community, church family, Richard... It's home. There's a lot of people here that I love. Whether it's family or just people you grew up with or worked for. You just kind of grow this passion for the people you're around and you want them to succeed."

Their motivation has kept them going and growing all of these years, but the two do not credit themselves with their success through it all. "We've had numerous challenges- financial challenges, physical challenges, the tornado, COVID. Being a business owner isn't easy, but it's rewarding. Being led here and walking with God through it is the only way we could do it." Richard reflected on how they got to where they are today saying, "It's been a thing where God answers your prayers in ways you don't understand, and there's things that weigh heavy on you and somehow, without you even realizing it, you're on the other end going, 'What a blessing.' There's been challenges, but it's always been, 'Give it to God, trust in Him.'" Zach and Richard are excited for Eldon's future and they will surely continue to play a role in the development and improvement of this town. These two are exemplary of the perseverance and hard work that can be found throughout Eldon.



GT Motors & Refills Ink in Eldon.



Richard and Zach inside Brew Brothers Coffee.

1979 Alumnus & Eldon Chamber Citizen of Year

DAVID WOOD

"I have always wanted to help others and make a difference, and teaching gave me the opportunity to do both."

Written by Tammy Witherspoon

Upon his graduation from EHS in 1979, Wood decided to pursue a career in education. "Jim Ward was my high school English teacher and friend. If there was one person that pushed me towards education it would have been Mr. Ward, because I saw the difference that he made in his students' lives by educating them, but more importantly caring about them".

Wood started out attending UMR right out of high school but quickly decided that being an engineer was not for him. "I loved the math courses so I transferred to the University of Central Missouri and received my bachelor of science in education in mathematics. I have always wanted to help others and make a difference, and teaching gave me the opportunity to do both."

Wood graduated from UCM in 1983 and took his first job, teaching upper-level math at Morgan County R-II in Versailles. "Over the years I taught many levels of math, computer classes and physics. I was also the technology coordinator for the district, and when the technology demands reached a point that I couldn't do both, I left the class-

room and became a full-time computer guy."

Along the way, Wood met and married the love of his life, Cheryl Charlson. "She had no idea the wild ride that she was signing up for that day," he says. "She has supported me in all of my adventures and I am grateful for her love and help." Together David and Cheryl have two sons, Jonathan and Patrick. Jonathan and his wife Laura live in Lawson with their three children, Joanna, Logan and Jacqueline. Patrick and his wife Laura are currently living in Versailles with their three children, Grayson, Parker and Flora Mae. "I have been truly blessed with a wonderful family."

Leaving Education and the Road to the Capitol

After 25 years in the Morgan County R-II school district, Wood decided it was time to retire and find a different occupation. He got a job in the IT department at Capital Region Medical Center and spent the next five years working in the hospital and all of its clinics.

Wood was friends with both Chuck Pryor and Rodney Schad, who were the two previous state representatives. Through his friendship with them, he understood what the position required. "I had been approached by the superintendent at Versailles when I retired and he encouraged me to run. It would have been a very tough race against an incumbent and I didn't know very many people in the district where I lived."



However, in 2012 the district lines changed. Wood lived in Rodney Schad's area and he was term limiting out of office. "I mentioned in passing one day that I would like to run and Cheryl didn't laugh at me, so we never looked back," he said.

During his tenure David said he "was very fortunate to be able to make a difference in many different areas. I have always wanted to serve and make a difference, and this position gave me the opportunity to improve 6.5 million lives in the state and to fight for the 37,000 individuals that I represented in District 58."

Final Thoughts

Wood says his parents had the greatest influence on him. "Every day I find something that I do or think that is a direct connection to my mom and dad."

Wood added, "If there is one person that I have to give credit to for any success that I have had it is my wife, Cheryl. Not only has she been there for me through this journey, she has traveled thousands of miles to events and ate hundreds of fund-raiser dinners, read seven newspapers each week to find where we needed to be, and most importantly kept me grounded as to what is really important."

"I am driven by a desire to help others and I have no interest in personal gain. I have always found that I am more blessed by giving than I am by receiving." Wood says he finds just regular hard work relaxing. "I relax by climbing on a tractor to cut brush or a lawn mower to cut grass, grab a chainsaw to clear dead trees and burn brush piles. The more time I spent in an office the more I appreciated hard work and the peace that comes with it."

Wood added, "I have been truly blessed in my life by a wonderful family, great friends, unbelievable opportunities, and given the chance to serve people I truly care about."

Although Wood resides in Versailles now, a part of his heart will always be in Eldon. "Eldon is my foundation. This is where my family lived. This is where I received a quality education that has served me very well," says Wood. "When I graduated from college and had several opportunities to teach in different districts, the deciding factor was to be close to Eldon and family. I have lived in Versailles for a long time but Eldon is still home, too."







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Jason, Lindsay, Cannon (16yrs), Britton (13 yrs) Barron (10yrs), and Landyn (18 months) Ahart

Written by 2019 Eldon alumnus Parker Dunham

If you talked to Jason and Lindsay Ahart, you would notice three things about them right off the bat. They love their family, they love their friends, and they love their town. They love these things so much, the Aharts have spent their entire lives here in Eldon and don't plan on leaving anytime soon.

Jason's parents, Mike and Pam, are also both Eldon graduates, and raised Jason and his brother here as well. Lindsay's parents, Rob and Tami Frazee, moved to the Eldon area in the 70s where Rob worked as a juvenile officer and eventually a banker here in Eldon where they settled down and raised Lindsay and her sister. Both Jason and Lindsay developed their work ethic at a young age. Jason started what would eventually become Ahart Enterprises when he was 15 years old with a lawn mowing company. Lindsay also worked throughout school at a number of places. "Whoever let me work, I worked. I loved to work and meet new people." She worked at Bond Pharmacy, J. Michael's Pizzeria, the Department of Public Safety for the State of Missouri, and Studio 54 while in high school and college.

During their time at Eldon High School, Jason and Lindsay not only met and started dating each other, but they also cultivated friendships that have lasted and grown to this day. Lindsay said, "Our friends are very influential in our lives. They're the same friends we had all throughout our school years, and now all of our kids are in school together and are in the same circles of friends, so it's really fun to see them doing the things that we did with their parents. It's really fun to watch it all evolve."

Both of them enjoyed their time in high school and all of the activities they were involved in. "Jason was an athlete, so he loved sports. I was more into the social aspect." He loved basketball but also did baseball and FFA his senior year. Jason was actually on Eldon's first EHS baseball team and even threw the first pitch ever on the old McMillen Field. His coaches also taught him a number of skills while in sports. "My coaches were influential and always pushed us to be the best we could be. I remember Coach Klein and Coach Carlock and Coach Franks. Those guys always push you." Although Jason's time in FFA was only his senior year, he said, "They teach life skills that you don't get anywhere else like work ethic and how to be responsible." Lindsay was also very impacted by FFA during high school. "I think FFA was a huge influence. Mr. Haley and Mr. Biddle were amazing teachers and to get to learn and grow from them was very special. It forced me to be in things that I would not have normally have been in. Mr. Biddle put me in a public speaking contest and I wanted to die, but then look at what I do now for my career. I do a lot of public speaking. They could bring out qualities you didn't even know you had." The two are both glad that the school system they experienced as kids is just as good if not better for their kids today. "I love that our kids have had some of the same teachers that we had in school. Our school is definitely another reason we

we love our town. You simply can't beat it. We have awesome teachers and amazing leaders."

After graduating high school, the two took very similar paths, as they both earned business administration degrees from Lincoln. During their college careers, they both continued on their path of hard work. Lindsay continued to work at Studio 54 and the Department of Safety with the State of Missouri while Jason grew his business. After graduating from Lincoln, Jason really put in the work and shifted his business' focus to construction which has since grown into his construction company, Ahart Enterprises. Lindsay got a job with the Public School Retirement System where she puts into practice all of the things she learned in school.

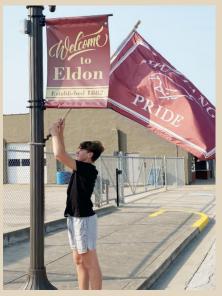
The two then got married in 2002, and began to grow their family here in Eldon. They had their oldest, Cannon in 2005, Britton in 2008, Barron in 2011, and their only girl, Landyn just last year. When talking about their newest addition to the Ahart clan, Jason said, "Boys are boys... boys are easy. Girls are different and a lot harder!" Lindsay always wanted to stay in Eldon and raise their kids here. "I knew I wanted kids and I wanted them to have the same sense of community that I had growing up. I love that we can go anywhere and someone is watching my kid." She also jokes, "Listen... we leave our kids somewhere quite often, but you can leave your kids places and you know they're fine. They'll find a ride home because they always know somebody." The Ahart's love this community and are grateful for all it has to offer them and their family. Not only are they heavily involved in their community, but so are their kids, parents, families, and friends. Their close group of high school friends are still very close. "Most of our great friends stayed around here, and all of our kids have grown up together. When you have that kind of a group of friends, it's kind of hard to think about leaving," said Jason.

Jason and Lindsay have loved Eldon their whole lives. Lindsay reflected on why her and Jason wanted to stick around their small hometown. "We never even thought about leaving. Never. I have always loved our town. I just thought it was so wonderful that everyone knows each other. Even when I was a kid, it was just so fun to go somewhere and you knew everybody." The two love the perseverance of their hometown and how it faces adversity. "When something happens to a family here in town, whether you know them or not, you still drop everything to help. Big towns don't get that. That's one thing that I love most about our town— no matter what, there's always going to be someone rooting for you whether they know you or not. It all comes back to the community. No matter what you go through, you always have your community here to support you and pray for you." When asked what challenges they faced personally getting to where they are today, Jason said, "Everyday is a bit of a challenge. We have four kids. We are very busy. You just don't know what the day's going to bring. It changes all the time but we just keep working hard, focus on raising good humans and pray we're going to instill good work ethic, kindness and a strong sense of community in each of them."

As the Ahart's grow their business and their kids grow up, they are very hopeful for what Eldon has to offer in the future. "I think Eldon is in a great place. There have been some ups and downs in our community. My mom worked at FASCO for thirty-something years, and when that closed it was really scary for our town and sad for so many of our fellow community members, but now we have so many great little businesses and Quaker's here and growing— it's just really exciting to see the town and school growing and doing so well." The Aharts are a perfect example of what Eldon has to offer. They are so excited for their future and their kids' futures here in Eldon; there's no place they'd rather be.



Jason and Lindsay before a Mustang football game.

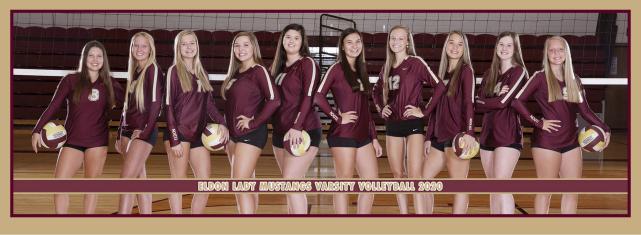


Cannon helping hang flags before Friday night Football.



Britton holding Landyn before his football game.

2020 CLASS 3, DISTRICT 9 CHAMPIONS



2020-2021 STATE QUALIFIERS



OLIVIA CHAPMAN Wrestling



ANMARIE DILLON Wrestling



AIDAN GERBER Wrestling



TAYLOR HENDERSON TRACK & FIELD



KASSIDY HULL Golf



ZOE MARTONFI TRACK & FIELD CROSS COUNTRY



PJ PATTON Track & Field



COLTON PHILLIPS TRACK & FIELD



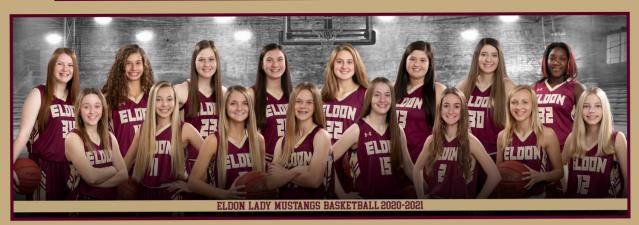
NATE REYNOLDS TRACK & FIELD CROSS COUNTRY



AIDAN WELLS Golf



CLASS 4, DISTRICT 10 CHAMPIONS



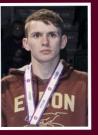
2020-2021 ALL-STATE ATHLETES



CAROLINE BECKMANN VOLLEYBALL



ADDIE DAVIS Volleyball



AIDAN GERBER WRESTLING 4th place

NATE REYNOLDS

CROSS COUNTRY

19TH PLACE



KASSIDY HULL GOLF 4TH PLACE



AIDAN WELLS GOLF 15th Place





TRACK & FIELD CROSS COUNTRY



PJ PATTON

TRACK & FIELD 5th place- discus

The Baileys: Forever Home



Taylor and Allie (Harvey) Bailey with their daughter Caroline, 3 yrs.

The question wasn't if Eldon High School graduates Taylor and Allie (Harvey) Bailey would move back to Eldon, it was more so when, and how? The young couple loved living in Columbia where they both attended college. They had built a great life there both professionally and socially, however, when they found out they were expecting their first child, they really started thinking about coming home. Allie felt like it was the right decision at that time, "We knew if we moved back to Eldon, we would be closer to family, Caroline could grow up being close with her grandparents and cousins, which is something I really appreciate now as an adult". Taylor agreed, but they wanted to make sure the move was beneficial to both their growing family and their professional careers. "Having a degree in Agriculture made it somewhat difficult early on to find job opportunities in the manufacturing and tourism-based economy that Eldon has. When Central Bank had the opportunity of an Ag Lender, based in Eldon, I knew I had to jump on it." The Eldon school district played another factor in their decision to move back. As Eldon alumni, they were familiar with the education system. "The Eldon school district has only improved since we have been there. So why wouldn't we want our daughter to go to school here?"

Allie is the daughter of Bill and Sheri Harvey of Eldon. The Harvey Family is a four-generation family of Eldon High School graduates. The family has a great history in the Eldon community that has been present since the late 1800's. Taylor is the son of David and Teri Bailey of High Point/Eldon. The Bailey Family moved to the Eldon area in 1984 where David, more so known as "Mr. Bailey" taught American Literature, Drama, and Speech and Debate at the high school for over 30 years and Teri worked as a Para at the Upper Elementary.

Both 2009 EHS graduates, Allie enjoyed playing the alto saxophone in marching and concert band, and participated in volleyball for three years. She also took Health Occupations and was involved in SkillsUSA, which helped solidify her career in the health field. Taylor was an active member in the FFA and played several sports, including football, baseball, cross country and track. Both Taylor and Allie enjoyed attending sporting events and hanging out with friends during their time at Eldon High. They were also members of various clubs such as Spanish club, science club, and NHS, among others. Their involvement in these activities definitely help shape their futures both by piquing their interest in future careers and giving them necessary leadership skills they still use todav.

Taylor and Allie met before they started high school at an eighth grade graduation party. He went to High Point, kindergarten through eighth grade and then attended Eldon High School. They never dated in high school, but were in the same friend group. They didn't actually start dating until the summer after their freshmen year of college. Needless to say, they became inseparable that summer and Allie followed Taylor to Mizzou that fall. "We have been together for over eleven years and married for almost six. We have a beautiful three-year-old daughter, Caroline, and are excited to be expecting a son this fall".

When they decided to move back to Eldon, they both wanted to be involved and give back to the community in some way. They are both fortunate to be able to do that through their jobs, Taylor as an Agricultural/Commercial Loan Officer with Central Bank and Allie as an RN Supervisor at the Capital Region Clinic-Eldon. Taylor felt that "living and working in the same small town offers a connection with people that you don't get in a larger city. I love seeing customers in my office that, in-turn, become friends and neighbors out in the community." Allie agreed, "I enjoy working in a community where I can build trusting relationships with patients in and out of the clinic setting. That's something you don't necessarily see in the city."

When the Bailey's are not working, they enjoy spending time with family, friends and their daughter. Taylor enjoys playing golf, checking the cows and working on their small farm. Allie likes to read, cook, and enjoy the peacefulness of living in the country. However, she says "As I do enjoy doing all of those things, lately my extra time is consumed with chasing around a tod-dler!" They additionally enjoy getting together with a small group of friends and their kids every weekend for breakfast; formally named "The Breakfast Club".

They also spend their time as avid sports fans, rooting on the Mustangs on a Friday night, or watching the St. Louis Cardinals or Kansas City Chiefs. They try to tailgate at as many Mizzou football games as they can with a group of very special Eldon residents. The Bailey's also attend First Christian Church in Eldon. Eldon is blessed to have this young family back home, investing in their community and enriching the lives of others, both professionally and personally.



Taylor and Allie at a EHS homecoming when Caroline was an infant.



Taylor's parents and former Eldon teachers, David and Teri Bailey with their grandchildren.



"The Breakfast Club" - Taylor and Allie get together with former EHS classmates almost every weekend for breakfast. Pictured left to right: Justin Uptergrove, Baker Uptergrove, Whitney Lodge, Cheyanne Uptergrove, Thomas Lodge, Cole Lodge, Allie Bailey, Taylor Bailey and Caroline Bailey.



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JAMIE LOFTIN Army



JESSICA LOFTIN Army



ASHER PEPPERS NATIONAL GUARD



DONN TAYLOR NATIONAL GUARD



Grow Your Own

2015 Alumnus Larissa Duckworth Carroll

Written by 2021 Eldon alumnus Alexis Dupont

The number of high school graduates who are choosing to go in to the field of education has decreased dramaticallly over the last 50 years. This has caused a definite teacher shortage in America. To combat this problem, Eldon Schools has worked hard to mentor and encourage students to become teachers and most importantly, return home to give back to their community. Larissa Carroll is one of many young teachers in the "Grow Your Own" initiative.

Larissa Carroll began her career as an Eldon Middle School teacher in August 2019. Although Carroll did not decide to go into the field of education until her freshman year of college, she knew one thing for sure: she was bound to end up back in Eldon. Her love for teaching and her students remains apparent to her community and other staff members.

2015 EHS graduate Larissa Carroll grew up and currently lives in Eldon. In high school, Carroll participated in a wide range of extracurricular activities including cheerleading, cross country, track and field, band and color guard. She chose to attend Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri where she graduated with her Bachelor of Arts degree in Education. When asked why she made the decision to attend the university she stated, "I chose to go to SBU because of the great education, Christian atmosphere and the small class sizes." Carroll married her husband Kyle Carroll in June 2020 and they currently have two dogs together. The couple both love the community in which they are surrounded by in Eldon, one that embraces love and togetherness, which explains why they chose to come back to the small town. As said by Carroll, "I enjoyed growing up in Eldon and I think Eldon School District is an amazing district to be in and work for. It is a district that we would like our kids to attend school in when we have children."

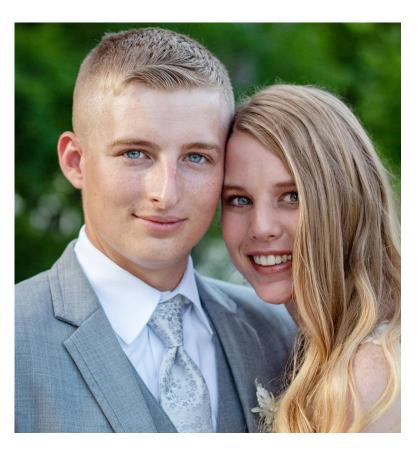
Growing up, Carroll was not certain of what career she wanted to pursue. Her freshman year of college, she believes she was drawn to the field of education "because it is a combination of all the areas [she] was interested in." She credits her former Eldon teachers for their



positive influence. "Many teachers from Eldon helped direct me onto the path that I am on now with their encouraging words and dedication to education." Carroll views the field of education as an area in which she can always grow in and know that she is making a difference to other individuals. As a special education teacher, Carroll has to be especially considerate and be sure to make sure all of her students are learning in the most efficient way possible. "Building relationships is a huge part of being a teacher. My goal as an educator is to address independent learning needs of each individual student while fostering a love for learning. This is my goal in the special education setting as well as the regular education setting. Being able to build relationships to learn what individual learning needs each student has, to then help them grow and foster a love for learning is my favorite part of being a teacher although it can also be the most challenging part at times." Carroll's strive to meet such goals remains apparent in her teaching methods.

Outside of the classroom, Carroll enjoys spending time with her husband and their two dogs. "We enjoy traveling and spending time outdoors. I also enjoy reading, running and coaching cheerleading." If there was one thing Carroll could advise students who aspire to become an educator it would be to "be flexible and learn to go with the flow. Take that time where you are learning how to be an educator to seek out new ideas, new technologies, new teaching methods, even if they are things you don't think you'll like or use you never know when they may be useful. Learn and grow with your students. Be willing to try new things, even if it intimidates you. What is best for your students may be a new method that you have never tried or something that scares you, but it is worth a try even if it helps just one student." Although Mrs. Carroll has only been an educator for two years, she has learned many important lessons and is willing to learn more. The Eldon School District is eager to have such an inspirational and dedicated new school teacher.





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