



## ***Thank you, Centennial Community!***

*A column by Circle Pines Mayor Dave Bartholomay for the Quad Community Press Newspaper (6/4/2013)*

I've long believed in the saying that it takes an entire village to raise a child. As my son Kyle graduates this week from Centennial High School, I want to thank those people and organizations that have been so important in the lives of our graduating high school seniors.

The challenges young people face today are indeed very different than the ones I faced, but the secret to overcoming obstacles and becoming successful in life still relies on the knowledge and encouragement of others. With Kyle, it all started with excellent, patient teachers and tremendous staff at Golden Lake Elementary School.

Through Centennial Middle School and High School, once again teachers and staff provided tremendous opportunities to grow and learn. Kyle benefitted from the classroom curriculum as well as the life lessons learned from being a Peer Leader, from serving as a mentor back at Golden Lake Elementary School, from participating in sports, mock trial, and drama, and so much more.

I'm thankful that the Centennial School District worked wonders with Kyle and with kids from all walks of life who show up with all levels of ability. Our schools continue to help prepare students for the next step, whether that is a job, the military, or college.

And for many kids, their activity in Centennial-area churches has provided them with a faith that will perhaps be the most important gift of all. The wonderful youth programs at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Circle Pines provided Kyle with the opportunity to grow in his faith, to help younger people in confirmation, and to serve the less fortunate on mission trips. Thank you to all the churches in our area that provide an ethical foundation from which our children can base their future decisions and actions.

The Centennial communities have people and organizations that provide young people with the assistance and opportunities necessary to grow and learn from real-life leaders. The American Legion sent Kyle to Minnesota Boys' State where he learned valuable leadership lessons. Employers like the Dairy Queen in Lexington and Athletic Outfitters in Blaine are good examples of local businesses that provide young people with that important first job and work experience. And volunteer coaches in soccer, baseball and hockey help drive home the value of hard work, of being a member of a team, and of learning to grow through the disappointments that come with a loss.

Kyle and his fellow graduates have felt the tremendous impact of people committed to building a better community. They know and appreciate those who support kids with their time and talents. I am hopeful that they have come to realize that everyone, no matter what their current station in life, has value within a community and that even the most successful people do better when we all do better.

Like every parent in the Centennial area, my work will never be completely finished. But the pride and joy I have in my son and the high hopes I have for his future are in large part due to all of you who have helped guide him along the way. Kyle will be heading off to Concordia College in Moorhead soon and he will carry with him the kindness and wisdom you have showered upon him.

Thank you so very much for all your contributions!