

# Algoma Area Education Foundation 2024 Annual Report

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## Introduction

The Algoma Area Education Foundation was formed in 2002 to support the philanthropic goals and educational mission of the Algoma School District. Over the past two decades, our primary focus has been on awarding scholarships to students, and this remains a cornerstone of our work.

In 2024, we continued our commitment to enhancing scholarship opportunities while expanding our philanthropic reach and operational capacity. This report highlights the foundation's activities, financial placeholders, and future goals.

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## Strategic Highlights

### Mission

The Algoma Area Education Foundation supports and provides opportunities for a diversity of student learning experiences. We engage in innovative education projects that engage community partnerships and leverage a mixture of funding sources. Our goal is to be partners in driving educational innovations through collaborations with our schools, students, and communities.

### Five-Year Strategic Goals: 2022-2027

1. Continue and expand scholarships, including named scholarships, and consider award programs for students that are not college-bound. Explore the possibilities for a pre-college student internship or travel program.
2. Proactively engage in innovative, impactful education-related projects, including those that build upon and engage the community and/or student-led projects. Develop a strategic innovation plan that is congruent with these ideas.
3. Leverage and complement current foundation funding sources with new sources.
4. Hire staff and expand philanthropy activities, including a potential annual giving campaign.
5. Explore creation of a “student innovation” grant program.

There were no updates to the foundation’s mission or strategic goals in 2024. We remain focused on expanding scholarships, exploring new philanthropic activities, and furthering the success of the Algoma School District.

### Milestones

In 2024, the Algoma Area Education Foundation celebrated key milestones that advanced our mission and expanded our philanthropic reach.

**Scholarships Revamped:** We awarded scholarships to 18 recipients, guided by a more inclusive application process designed to broaden access to both traditional four-year college pathways and other post-secondary opportunities.

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**Staff Expansion:** The continued support of the Director of Innovation and Philanthropy position directly meets our strategic goal to hire staff and expand philanthropic activities.

**Expanded Online Presence:** A new website and social media channels were launched, increasing our visibility and simplifying the donation process through the availability of online submissions.

**Private Scholarships Growth:** We grew our privately funded scholarship base to support additional recipients among the 2025 graduating class.

**New Fundraiser:** A partnership with the Algoma Venture Academy (AVA) led to a new pickleball tournament fundraiser launching in 2025. This initiative will help fund innovative school projects and a 2025 Costa Rica trip for AVA students.

## **Community Give Back Program**

The Community Give Back Program continues to be administered by the foundation, with no significant changes in 2024. This program encourages community engagement, promotes health and well-being through improvement projects, and fosters collaboration to strengthen the Algoma area.

## **Scholarships**

### **2024 Scholarship Overview**

The foundation continued its tradition of supporting diverse post-secondary paths by awarding scholarships through a more inclusive selection process by expanding its application criteria to include a wider range of post-secondary pursuits, ensuring more students benefit from our scholarships.

**Foundation Scholarships:** Five scholarships awarded directly from the foundation for a total of \$10,000. In addition, the foundation awarded twelve past student scholarship recipients with continuing scholarships totaling \$12,000.

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### **Privately Funded Scholarships:**

- Muskrat City: One award for \$750
- Kewaunee County Tavern League: One award for \$500

### **Special Funds**

Mitch Groessl Memorial Scholarship: Four scholarships of \$500 each were awarded from this fund in 2024.

Other Memorial or Donor-Specific Scholarships:

- Norma Mueller and Marge Curtin: One award for \$1000
- Janice (Dettman) Hanamann: One award for \$500

### **Philanthropic Donations**

Community-driven contributions further strengthened our philanthropic reach, enabling us to support innovative initiatives and broaden student opportunities.

Homestead Kitchen and Tap generously donated \$679 as part of our community fundraising efforts. The City of Algoma Concert in the Park event also provided an opportunity for the foundation to raise \$965 through sales of food and drink at the event. The foundation also received a \$2750 donation from the family of Bill Wilbert, retired Algoma High School teacher, and \$50 from Ann Schmitz, former Algoma School District Board member.

### **Overall Finances**

The foundation ended the year with an overall financial balance of \$ 305,971.19.