



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Leadership Waupaca County

Graduating Class XIX 2018-2019



Alison Acker
Student

Brief Bio:

Alison Acker is a high school senior from New London, Wisconsin. Alison is active in school through GSA, Color Guard, National Honor Society, Band, Set Construction, Art Team, and Yearbook. She is also an active member in the 4-H program where she serves as a club leader and county ambassador. In the fall of 2019 Alison will begin her college career at UW-Whitewater where she will major in Graphic Design and Marketing.

LWC Project:

Alison worked on the *A Study of the Issues Surrounding Drug Use and the Need for a Drug Treatment Program Within Waupaca County* project.

"I make it my mission to continuously work toward a more accepting society, using the privileges and knowledge I have to generate change and spur the inclusion and kindness I want to see." - Alison Acker



Heather DeGrand.
City of Weyauwega
Police Department

Brief Bio:

Heather DeGrand was born February 8, 1995 and grew up in Winneconne, WI. She graduated Winneconne High School in 2013 and continued her education at Fox Valley Technical College. She received an associate's degree in Criminal Justice, a certificate for Cyber Crime Investigation, a certificate as a Child Protection Investigator, and successfully completed the Law Enforcement Academy. After college, Heather began her career in law enforcement with the Weyauwega Police Department in March of 2017, as a part time patrol officer. In November of 2018, she was hired for the position as the full time School Resource Officer (SRO) for the Weyauwega-Fremont School District. Heather volunteers with the Waupaca County Senior Meal Site in Weyauwega and as a citizen advisor with the Oshkosh Police Department's Police Explorer Program. In her free time, Heather enjoys spending time outdoors on the water with family and friends.

LWC Project:

Heather worked on the *Operation Opportunity* project.

"I will do everything I can to protect all my fellow citizens....by being the best I can be both physically and mentally, by living the traits of leadership, and never giving up " - Heather DeGrand



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Casey Gardner

Premier Community Bank
Branch Manager

Brief Bio:

Casey Gardner grew up in Muskego WI and moved to Waupaca in 2001. She changed her career from homecare nursing to banking in 2008. She began her banking careers as a teller and has advanced to become branch manager. Working for a community oriented company, Casey is involved in various volunteer work. She is also an ambassador for the Waupaca Chamber of Commerce. In her spare time Casey enjoys spending time with her daughter, kayaking, hiking and painting

LWC Project:

Casey worked on the *Operation Opportunity* project.

“I will strive to understand all sides and perspectives...and be open to conflicting thoughts, for this is how we as families, communities, and the world can grow and achieve a higher level of existence.” -Casey Gardner



Donald Heise

Waupaca County
Highway Department

Brief Bio:

Donald Heise is an equipment operator with the Waupaca County Highway Department where he is responsible for helping maintain the roads in Waupaca County. Don is also a member of the Weyauwega Area Fire District. He values all opportunities to learn and grow in both his professional and personal life.

Growing up on a small sheep farm in rural Waupaca County it was only natural he learned how to shear sheep. For the past 23 years he has help many local herdsman harvest the wool from about 700 sheep annually. He also shears sheep for some of the exhibitors at the local county fairs.

Don loves spending time with his wife Jennifer and their 2 girls. Some of this time is spent riding bike, running and fishing. He also uses his talents from previous employment to remodel and restore their home to make it more comfortable and beautiful. In 2003 Don acquired is private pilot's license and has flown about 500 hours in a single engine airplane. Flying many young eagles and providing them the chance to experience flight. With a busy family life he has not had much time to enjoy many flying adventures but hopes to reignite this passion in the future.

He also enjoys staying physically fit running and biking. Don has completed many obstacle course races, 4 half marathons, one full marathon, 4 small triathlons and 2 100 mile bike races in the past 5 years.

LWC Project:

Don worked on the *Operation Opportunity* project.

“(I will) be known as a dedicated, hardworking individual willing to help others in need. (I will) give direction, strength, and encouragement to those who have fallen on hard times.” - Donald Heise



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Wendy Hoppa
First State Bank
Retail Sales Manager

Brief Bio:

Wendy Hoppa graduated from New London High School in 1990. She is the Retail Sales Manager for First State Bank. She started her banking career in 2011 as a part time teller. She has served in various roles including Teller, Assistant Branch Manager, Teller Operations Supervisor and Retail Sales Manager since 2017. Although raised in Waupaca County, Wendy now resides in Appleton. In her free time, Wendy enjoys spending time with her family as well as gardening, camping and traveling.

LWC Project:

Wendy worked on the *Operation Opportunity* project.

“(I will) continue to grow, never lose myself, and always remember to stay humble. (I will) live with integrity and empathy, and always be a positive role model for others.” - Wendy Hoppa



Eric Johnson
City of Waupaca
Certified Operator

Brief Bio:

Eric Johnson works for the City of Waupaca as a Certified Operator for the past four years. Eric has lived in the Waupaca area his entire life. Eric grew up on a small pig farm east of Waupaca, and continues to run a small beef herd. He has prior experience in the construction business, building new houses. He was a self-employed general contractor for 8 years before working for the City of Waupaca. Eric recently built a new house near where he grew up. He lives there with his wife, twin 6-year-old daughters, and their pet dog. He enjoys being outdoors, whether it's hunting, working, or just relaxing.

LWC Project:

Eric worked on the *A Study of the Issues Surrounding Drug Use and the Need for a Drug Treatment Program Within Waupaca County* project.

“I will look for the good in people, put others before me, speak up, keep a positive outlook, and be receptive to change.” - Eric Johnson



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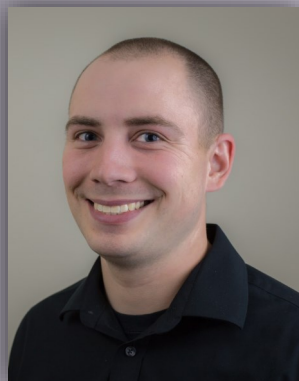


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Bryce Mares
Waupaca County
Highway Department

Brief Bio:

Bryce Mares is employed at the Waupaca County highway Department as an equipment operator for two years. He grew up and currently lives in Clintonville, WI. He was raised on his family's large cash crop operation, learning at a young age leadership and great responsibilities. After high school Bryce worked for N&M transfer, starting as a dock worker, quickly getting promoted to 2nd shift coordinator, then a few years later moving to a truck driving position. Bryce enjoys taking first time hunters out, fabricating things out of metal, and spending more time helping on various farms in the area.

LWC Project:

Bryce worked on the *Operation Opportunity* project.

"I envision myself becoming someone that helps others connect with different people in the community to help them grow." -Bryce Mares



Angie Nielsen
Waupaca County—DHHS
Foster Care & Kinship Care

Brief Bio:

Angie Nielsen has spent the last 19 years supporting children, youth and families in a variety of capacities. The most recent seven years have been in her role as the foster care coordinator and kinship care coordinator for Waupaca County Department of Health and Human Services. As a foster care and kinship care coordinator, Angie supports foster parents and relative caregivers through the triumphs and challenges in caring for children and youth. Angie's passion for honoring each families' story has allowed her to develop genuine relationships with those whom she works with. Angie lives in Iola, Wisconsin her husband, Troy, and their family. Angie and Troy are the proud parent of two amazing living children, Oscar and Eva, and two heavenly identical twin daughters, Greta and Harriet. The Nielsen family can often be found doing craft projects or enjoying the outdoors on walks, bike rides or hiding their precious, painted rocks. Angie recently accepted the role of Advocacy Chair for the Wisconsin Chapter of Star Legacy Foundation in an effort to educate and advocate for stillbirth awareness and prevention.

LWC Project:

Angie worked on the *Building Social Capital in Waupaca Capital* project.

Develop and maintain relationships in a way that others share their journey with you. Value their journey." -Angie Nielsen



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Susan Popham

Waupaca County Highway
Department Office Specialist

Brief Bio:

Susan Popham grew up in Waupaca and graduated in 1984 from Waupaca High School. She then ventured out West for approximately 12 years before deciding to return to Waupaca to raise her family. Susan and her husband, Brad operated Uptown Pizza in downtown Waupaca from 1999 to 2009. They now own Team Outfitters, a custom clothing business, in the Village Plaza, Waupaca. In May 2017 Susan began her current career at the Waupaca County Highway Department where she provides a variety of routine clerical, administrative, accounting and technical work to the highway employees and the public as the Highway Office Specialist. Susan has been very active in her three, now grown, children's lives and served on many clubs during the course of their school days. She enjoys watching her boys play baseball for the Waupaca Lakemen, watching her new granddaughter, Lilyann, hiking with her husband and hanging out with family and friends.

LWC Project:

Sue worked on the *Building Social Capital in Waupaca County* project.

“To continue to always learn and grow in all aspects of my life...to make positive impressions with everyone I meet so that when I leave this world it is well with my soul and I may hear the words ‘well done, good and faithful servant’.” - Susan Popham



Jeff Simons

Waupaca County
Information Systems

Brief Bio:

Jeff works as a Computer Systems Administrator for Waupaca County bringing decades of experience in electronics repair, manufacturing automation, software development, and general information technology with him. He lived in several states while growing up – Wisconsin, Florida, Connecticut, and Maine – proportional stints in each. After graduating from High School in Topsham Maine Jeff entered the US Army as a Test, Measurement, and Diagnostic Equipment (TMDE) maintenance support specialist where he served until retiring as a Sergeant First Class in 1998. He moved to Waupaca with his wife and daughter in August 2000 to be closer to family members and started working for Waupaca Foundry as an electrical technician. Jeff's interests include reading, programming, foraging for edible mushrooms, aquaponics, and fingerstyle jazz guitar. Family time with his wife, daughter, grandchildren, and dogs – that's his joy.

LWC Project:

Jeff worked on the *State of Access to Internet and Mobile in Waupaca County* project.

“My mission is to artfully navigate this mysterious journey with frequent, focused, and intentional self-provisioning—and savor it along the way.”

- Jeff Simons



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Taylor Sorenson

Waupaca County
Recycling Coordinator

Brief Bio:

Taylor Sorenson is the Recycling Coordinator for Waupaca County, helping to ensure all County residents and businesses are recycling right! Having a passion for the environment she studied Environmental Studies and Sustainability at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, graduating in 2017 with a Bachelor's of Science. Taylor was excited to accept the job of the Recycling Coordinator position in February of 2018 as she not only gets to do work that makes an impact on the environment, she also gets to do it in a place she is very familiar with. Taylor grew up in Clintonville and has family who lives all over the County. She and her husband recently purchased a home in Dale and can be found there working to fix it up and playing with their energetic dog, Marnie. When not recycling or working on her new house you can find Taylor camping, hiking, travelling, and spending time with friends and family.

LWC Project:

Taylor worked on the *Building Social Capital in Waupaca County* project.

Be an active citizen. Be engaged. Be a steward of our earth. Be present (with myself and others). Never stop learning.” - Taylor Sorenson



Thiago Souza

Waupaca County—DHHS
Economic Support

Brief Bio:

Thiago Souza is the Economic Support Manager at Waupaca County Department of Health & Human Services. He started his career in the Information Technology field in his place of birth Sao Paulo Brazil, working for Citibank, Softtek and Tivit before relocating to Wisconsin in 2009.

Thiago enjoys ping pong, kayaking and spending time with his wife Felicia and his daughter May and his son Sol. He is also known to complain too much about the cold in Wisconsin and claim that Brazilians are not made for snow and ice, nevertheless he appreciates the beauty and community found in Waupaca.

LWC Project:

Thiago worked on the *State of Access to Internet and Mobile in Waupaca County* project.

“I live by the belief that the toughest choice is most often the right one, by living this way you won’t settle and you can be the best for yourself and those around you.” - Thiago Souza



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Annette Spieth

UW-Madison Division of
Extension Waupaca County

Brief Bio:

Annette Spieth has been employed with Waupaca County for over 25 years. Currently she provides program support to the 4-H Coordinator and the Human Development & Relationships Extension Educator in the UW-Madison Division of Extension office in Waupaca. She owned and operated Strelow's Drive-In for six years. Annette is a 4-H leader for foods & nutrition and arts & crafts and has been a shooting sports leader in archery. She resides in Waupaca and has one adult son. Annette enjoys cooking, arts and crafts, fused and stained glass, camping, fishing, hunting, and spending time at the cabin.

LWC Project:

Annette worked on the *State of Access to Internet and Mobile in Waupaca County* project.

“(I will) be confident, brave, and kind. (I will) connect with people in a meaningful way, experience new adventures, and continue to learn new things.” -Annette Spieth



Madison Trip (Session 5) January, 2019



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