



Project Management  
Community Giving Project  
(PMCG)



Running United for a Cause!



**Presented by Emery Holland**

Central Cass Public School District  
802 5th Street North, Casselton, ND 58012

February 17, 2025



**RUNNING UNITED FOR A CAUSE!**

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# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## TWO RIVALRY TEAMS COMING TOGETHER TO HELP OTHERS!

### II. INITIATING

#### A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:



There are two rival communities, with a teacher in each school district battling cancer and in financial need for medical expenses.

The cross country teams from both schools want to raise awareness for their sport, get more athletes to join, and try to bring both communities together to help raise money for a greater cause at a rivalry football game.

#### B. PROJECT SCOPE:

**Purpose:** To promote the sport of cross country, build relationships with fellow athletes from our neighboring district, and start a fun new tradition while giving back to two people in need, in each community.

**Rationale:** To help show two rival teams, schools, and communities they can come together for others.



### III. PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

#### A. PROJECT GOALS:

**G** Gather over \$20,000 in donations (\$10,000 per person)



**I** Increase bonding amongst two rival communities and improve support for the sport of Cross Country

**V** Validate the need to come together and give back to two cherished members in our communities

**E** Ease of donating and longevity of the event for years to come

#### B. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN:

##### PROJECT MANAGER & EVENT COORDINATOR:

**EMERY HOLLAND**

Central Cass Cross Country Captain

##### RESPONSIBILITIES:

Manage and Coordinate Event, Execute Marketing, Lead Volunteers, and Track Donations

##### SKILLS & STRENGTHS:

Organized, Detail Oriented, Communication, & Advertising



Josh Roberts, Emery Holland, Marv Roeske

##### HEAD CROSS COUNTRY COACHES:

**JOSH ROBERTS, KINDRED & MARV ROESKE, CENTRAL CASS**

##### RESPONSIBILITIES:

Pacing and Safety of Athletes



Team Mascots

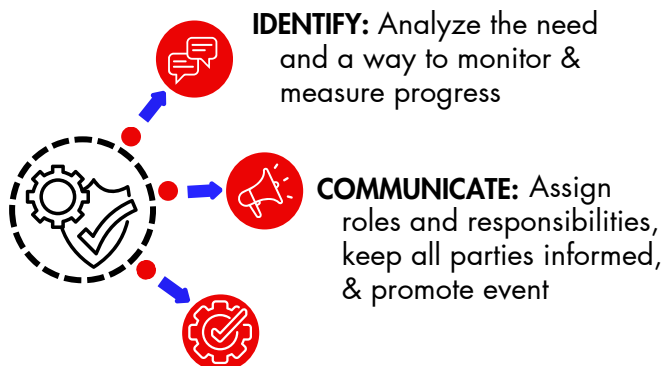
#### C. SCHEDULE:

### "ROAD TO SUCCESS!"



The following timeline was used for organizing the Running United event.

#### D. QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN:



**IDENTIFY:** Analyze the need and a way to monitor & measure progress

**COMMUNICATE:** Assign roles and responsibilities, keep all parties informed, & promote event

**EXECUTE:** Check for completion & understanding of duties



1.



## E. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN:



**S**  
Safety of  
Runners

**A**  
Assess  
Impact

**F**  
Formulate  
Plan

**E**  
Execute  
Strategy

Ensuring the plan is “SAFE” by working with the Cass County Sheriff's Department, Athletic Trainers, Coaches, Activities Directors, and both Recipients & Communities

## F. PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET:



The Expenditure Budget for the Running United Event was \$100.

## IV. EXECUTION

To effectively carry out the Running United for a Cause Event, I began by outlining clear objectives centered around team building, assisting two individuals in need, setting a fundraising target, and organizing event logistics, including the route and safety measures. I promoted the event through social media platforms, press releases, and interviews. I sought partnerships with both school's booster clubs while encouraging community members to contribute with donations. On the event day, I coordinated with volunteers and provided refreshments and necklaces to help build team spirit. I followed up with my project management team to ensure everything ran smoothly. I also reached out to donors after to share the results and express gratitude for making the event a success.



## V. MONITORING AND CONTROLLING

### A. MONITORING:

- Promoting the event to generate maximum interest and contributions
- Monitoring and acknowledging donations
- Ensuring tasks were completed on time by myself and everyone helping with Running United
- Managing and tracking expenses effectively



### B. CONTROLLING:

- Effective Communication is Key
  - Ensure that each school and community were equally informed about the event
  - Maintain clarity and conciseness in all communications
  - Allow sufficient time for responses
  - Send follow-up emails as necessary



## VI. CLOSING THE PROJECT

### A. EVALUATION OF KEY METRICS:

The goals for this project were not only met but exceeded!

**We raised approximately \$24,000 (\$12,000 per teacher)** by focusing on coming together for a greater cause. Central Cass and Kindred's sense of community and belonging strengthened. We did this all while meeting our goal of creating exposure for the sport of Cross Country and building our program while most importantly giving back to two very influential people in need.

Overall Success of the Project



### B. LESSONS LEARNED:



**Communication-** Needs to be precise and effective, especially when working with two different schools and communities  
**Flexibility-** Plans can change and that is ok  
**Time Management-** Keeping a schedule and timeline is crucial to getting things done

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS:



- Task Delegation:** Engage in the planning process and give direction to next year's captains from each school
- Board of Directors:** Establishing a board to help develop an application process for whom money is raised for
- Donation Platform:** Ensure consistency for all recipients by using a single donation site instead of multiple sites
- Tracking Application:** Implement a fun way to monitor the ball's journey from one school to another

# II. INITIATING

## A. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Casselton (Central Cass School District) and Kindred are located just 28 miles apart, and although they are similar in size and demographics, the two schools and communities have been significant rivals in sports for as long as anyone can remember. **Fans and athletes from both schools have often been observed displaying excessive competitiveness and sometimes even breaching the sportsmanship policies set forth by the schools and the activities association.** This behavior does not reflect the values we wish to uphold for our schools and our youth.



Central Cass  
Squirrels

VS.



Kindred  
Vikings

It has also been noted that the Cross Country teams from both schools have not received the attention they deserve, despite their achievements as other sports readily get. Over the years, **the number of athletes participating in the sport of Cross Country has been declining,** making it challenging to spark interest among student-athletes. Cheering sections are limited at Cross County meets as a majority of fans prefer to attend other contact sports. This means that they miss out on experiencing the amazing atmosphere of the race and the excitement it brings. Cross Country is a unique sport where everyone cheers for one another, unlike other sports where rivalry can lead to frustration or hostility.

**The third and most pressing issue is that both communities have identified two remarkable women in need.**

Mrs. Stansbery, a school librarian and head volleyball coach from Central Cass, is courageously battling breast cancer, while Mrs. Roe, a retired librarian from Kindred, is fighting brain cancer. Both women have made a significant impact in their communities over the years and have touched countless lives.

**It has been heart-wrenching for both communities to witness their struggles and feel so helpless watching them fight their battles alone.**



Mrs. Roe



Mrs. Stansbery

## B. PROJECT SCOPE

**Purpose:** To promote the sport of cross country, build relationships with fellow athletes from our neighboring district, and start a fun new tradition while giving back to two people in need, in each community.

**Rationale:** To show two rival teams and communities they can come together for others.

Running United will unite two rival communities for a cause: raising funds for two individuals in need, promoting cross-country running, and ultimately establishing a new tradition that could last for generations.

Cross Country athletes understand the rigor of long-distance endurance racing and unlike other sports they often wish to see their teammates and competitors succeed. Spectators are often seen cheering for athletes from rival schools, providing encouragement as they pass by. The Kindred and Central Cass Cross Country Teams wish to continue the spirit of good sportsmanship during the Running United event, running for two beloved women from their communities.

As cross country participants pass the game ball relay-style across a distance of 28 miles, the initiative will aim to foster a sense of unity between two highly competitive towns the night of their homecoming football game while raising funds for Mrs. Stansbery of Casselton, who is battling breast cancer, and Mrs. Roe of Kindred, who is facing brain cancer.

The wish is for Running United to become an annual event and even encourage other area schools to put their longstanding rivalries aside and "Run United" for a greater cause of their choice and raise awareness for the sport of cross-country.



# III. PLANNING & ORGANIZING



## A. PROJECT GOALS

I established the following four primary project “GIVE” goals for my Running United project:



Kindred & Central Cass Cross Country Teams at the Halfway Point, Sept 20, 2024

- G** Gather over \$20,000 in donations (\$10,000 per person)
- I** Increase bonding amongst two rival communities and improve support for the sport of Cross Country
- V** Validate the need to come together and give back to two cherished members in our communities
- E** Ease of donating and longevity of the event for years to come

**G- Gathering** over \$20,000 in donations (\$10,000 for each recipient). I plan to do this by setting a clear financial target and promoting the event online, in local papers, and in news stations. By also keeping my expenses minimal, I will make sure the money donated is given back to the women in both communities.

**I- Increasing** bonding amongst two rival communities and support of Cross Country. In addition to promoting unity, I aim to enhance the visibility and appreciation of Cross Country as a sport. Through these efforts, I believe we can create a legacy of the Running United Event and build enthusiasm for Cross Country that will last for years to come.

**V- Validate** the need to come together and give back to two cherished members in each of our communities. By organizing the Running United event or simply offering a helping hand, we can show Mrs. Stansbery and Mrs. Roe that we care about them and the impact they have had on both of our communities. Our goal is if we unite together, we can inspire others to contribute in their own unique ways.

**E- Ease** of donating and longevity of the event for years to come. I know if this is going to be a sustainable event, it needs to be easy for our school, coaches, and communities to carry on the tradition. It also has to be convenient for our donors to donate to the cause so that we can raise as much money as possible for each individual.



## B. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Fundraising and running an event successfully for someone in need is not an easy task and includes outlining roles, responsibilities, and resources. This plan also includes organizing the event from start to finish, staffing needs, volunteer requirements, communication protocols, and task assignments.

### PROJECT MANAGER & EVENT COORDINATOR:

**Emery Holland, Central Cass Senior, Central Cass Cross Country Captain**

#### Responsibilities:

- **Project Manager:** Oversees the entire event, coordinates with all team members, manages budget and timelines, and ensures the fundraising goals are met. Covers emergency protocols and safety guidelines and develops a timeline with specific tasks, deadlines, and responsible individuals.
- **Marketing and Communications:** Develops a marketing strategy, manages social media, reaches out to media outlets with press releases, and creates promotional materials.
- **Financial Manager:** Identifies potential sponsors, manages donation platforms, and coordinates with donors. Tracks budgets, handles transactions and ensures transparency in all financial dealings.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Recruits and manages volunteers, assigns tasks, and ensures volunteers understand their expectations and are ready for their roles.
- **Post-Event Activities:** Show appreciation to team members and volunteers by sending thank-you notes and summarizing outcomes, volunteer contributions, and insights for future events.



**Josh Roberts, Emery Holland, Marv Roeske**

Running United Human Resources Team  
Pictured Left to Right

### HEAD CROSS COUNTRY COACHES:

**Josh Roberts, Kindred High School**

**Marv Roeske, Central Cass High School**

#### RESPONSIBILITIES:

##### Pacing and Safety of Athletes:

- Organize transportation to and from the race location.
- Assess each runner's endurance and speed to assign the most suitable race legs to ensure the game ball makes it to the football field on time.
- Familiarize the team with route and handoff locations.
- Establish a communication plan for tracking each runner's progress, sharing updates, and coordinating handoff points.





## C. SCHEDULE

### i. MILESTONE

There were nine milestones that I used in the planning process, to help ensure the success of the Running United event. I used this as a guide to keep me on track, monitor progress, and achieve my fundraising goals for Mrs. Stansbery and Mrs. Roe while raising awareness for the sport of Cross Country.

#### **Milestone #1: Initial Planning & Goal Setting - Define Objectives & Organizing Committee**

- Determine the fundraising target amount (\$20,000 in donations -\$10,000 for each recipient)
- Establish the event's purpose (raising awareness and supporting two teachers)
- Assemble a human resources team with specific roles and responsibilities

#### **Milestone #2: Budgeting & Fundraising Strategy - Create a Budget & Fundraising Plan**

- Develop a comprehensive budget
- Identify potential donors and sponsors
- Set up online donation platforms and open bank benefit accounts

#### **Milestone #3: Logistics - Select & Secure Route, Date, and Schedule**

- Confirm the race route
- Coordinate with city and school officials regarding road closures and safety measures
- Choose the event date and ensure key resources are available
- Draft a detailed schedule for the event day

#### **Milestone #4: Marketing & Promotion - Launch Marketing Campaign**

- Design and promote the event on social media
- Create promotional materials such as flyers and graphics
- Announce the event through press releases, email campaigns, and local news outlets

#### **Milestone #5: Volunteer Recruitment & Training - Recruit and Train Volunteers**

- Announce volunteer opportunities and begin recruitment
- Inform volunteers of their specific duties, safety protocols, and event flow

#### **Milestone #6: Order Event Supplies**

- Order t-shirts and spirit necklaces and purchase snacks and drinks

#### **Milestone #7: Final Preparations - Finalize Race Day & Safety Logistics**

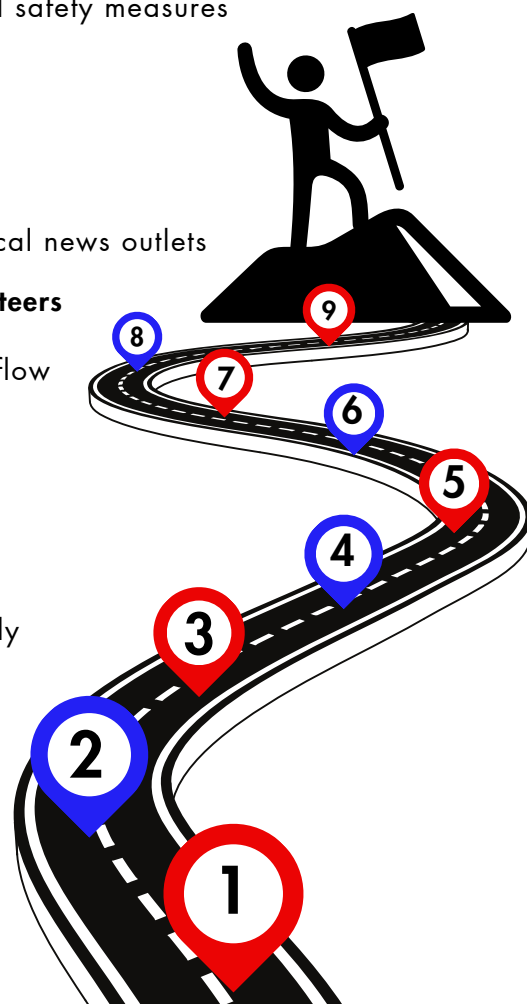
- Conduct a site visit to ensure everything is ready
- Review the safety plan with volunteers and local authorities
- Ensure emergency contact lists and communication protocols are ready

#### **Milestone #8: Event Day Execution**

- Set up course markers
- Hold a final briefing with my management team and volunteers
- Monitor the race's progress and address any issues as they arise

#### **Milestone #9: Post-Event Review - Financial Reporting & Debriefing**

- Review all income and expenses
- Send personalized thank-you notes to donors and volunteers
- Share highlights, photos, and videos from the event on social media
- Conduct a debrief meeting to discuss successes and lessons learned
- Check presentation to recipients



Using the identified Milestones on page seven, I created the following timeline for organizing the Running United event to help keep me on track, ensuring each task/milestone was completed efficiently and on time. I was able to get everything done on the timeline without needing any adjustments.

## "ROAD TO SUCCESS!"

**Milestone #1**  
**Initial Planning**  
July 10, 2024

**Milestone #2**  
**Organized Fundraising**  
July 30, 2024

**Milestones #3-6**  
**Promote & Organize Rivalry Run**  
August 12 - Sept 19, 2024

**Milestone #7**  
**Race Preparation**  
Sept 20, 2024

**Milestone #8**  
**Race Day**  
September 20, 2024

**Milestone #9**  
**Thank You Notes & Check Presentations**  
September 25, 2024

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH RUNNING UNITED RUNNING SCHEDULE

**2:50 PM-** The Kindred XC Team  
departs Kindred with the game ball

**4:30 PM-** The football arrives at the Canaan Moravian Church and is passed off to the Central Cass XC Team

**6:25 PM-** The football arrives at the Central Cass Elementary side parking lot and meets back up with the Kindred XC Team

**6:35 PM-** The game ball arrives at the Central Cass Football Field and will be passed off to the game officials.

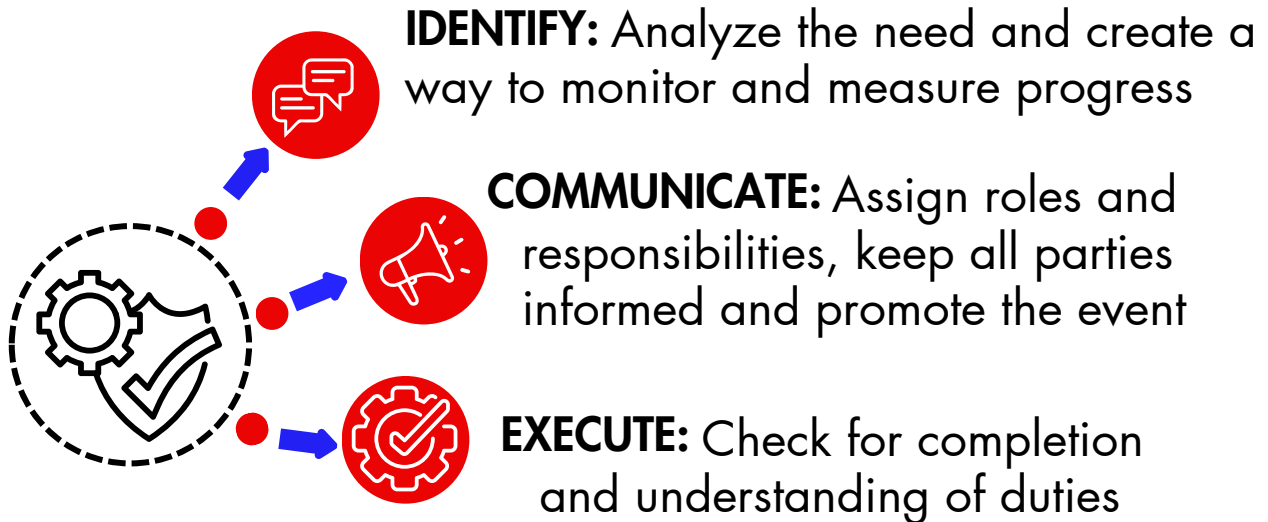
*\*Times are approximate\**

**28 Miles**

The head coaches created a pacing guide based on how fast each runner could run their leg of the race. As noted, both Cross Country teams will run rely-style for fourteen miles to complete the twenty-eight-mile journey from Kindred to Central Cass High School passing the game ball off to the football officials. I shared the tentative schedule on social media and in my press release to encourage spectators to attend and show their support throughout the event.

## D. QUALITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

My goal for creating my Quality Management Plan (QMP) for the Running United event was to ensure that every aspect of the event went the way it should by providing a positive experience for both cross country teams and by maximizing fundraising success. To do this, my plan focused on identifying the need, communicating the plan, and executing the goal.



Emery running in the game ball, Sept 20, 2024

### Quality Standards and Metrics

- **Event Logistics:** Define standards for each operational aspect, including start/finish line setup, course markers, and hydration stations.
- **Safety Protocols:** Outline quality and safety protocols for first-aid kits, check the safety of the route between Casselton and Kindred, and have emergency vehicles with flashing lights to pilot the runners from start to finish.
- **Participant Experience:** Set expectations for a fun day of team building, sportsmanship, and collaboration between two teams.
- **Volunteer Performance:** Establish guidelines for volunteer responsibilities and reliability to ensure smooth operation.
- **Fundraising Integrity:** Ensure all funds are accurately tracked, donations are processed securely, and financial reporting is transparent.



## E. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

As a project manager, it was important to make sure the event went smooth from start to finish. To do this I made sure to adequately plan, obtain necessary permissions, and ensure clear communication throughout the process.

The primary objective of my risk management plan was to ensure the safety of all our athletes. I carefully evaluated any potential threats to their well-being.

To help eliminate risks for the runners, I arranged a meeting with the athletic directors and coaches to discuss liability and safety concerns. I also personally drove the twenty-eight-mile route multiple times to check that it was free from busy intersections and other hazards.

In collaboration with the Cass County Sheriff's Office, we developed a plan to deploy patrol cars behind and in front of each runner, to enhance the safety of all our runners.

To address the risk of heat exhaustion and promote proper hydration, I donated water bottles and Gatorade along with light snacks to have before, after, and during the relay.

## S A F E

**S**afety of Runners    **A**ssess Impact    **F**ormulate Plan    **E**xecute Strategy

Ensuring the plan is **"SAFE"** by working with the Cass County Sheriff's Department, Athletic Trainers, Coaches, Activities Directors, and both Recipients & Communities

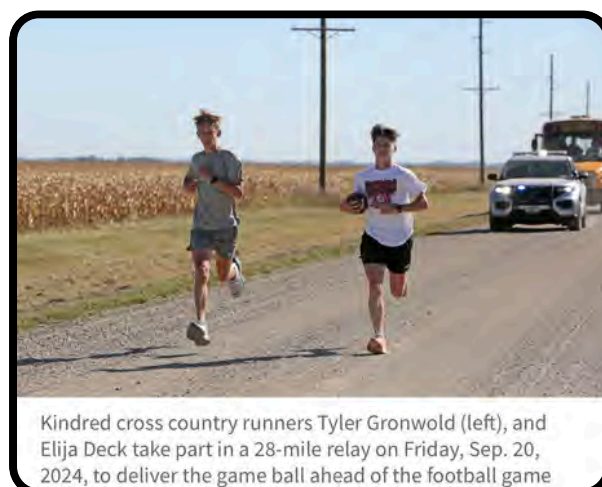
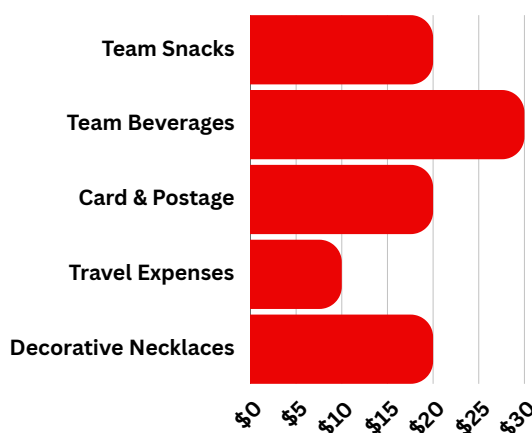


Photo Credit Fargo Forum Communications Newspaper

## F. PROPOSED PROJECT BUDGET

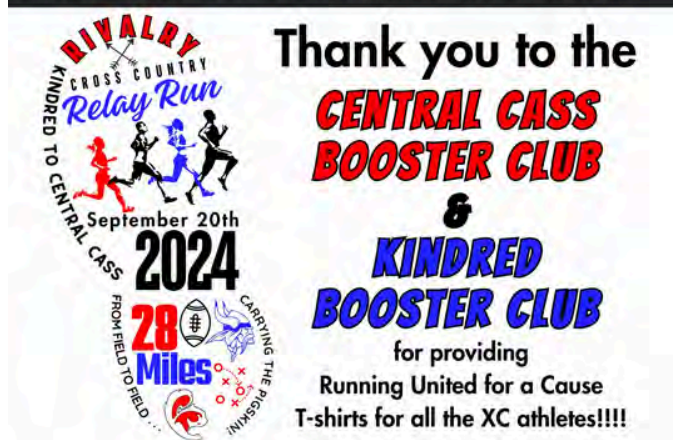
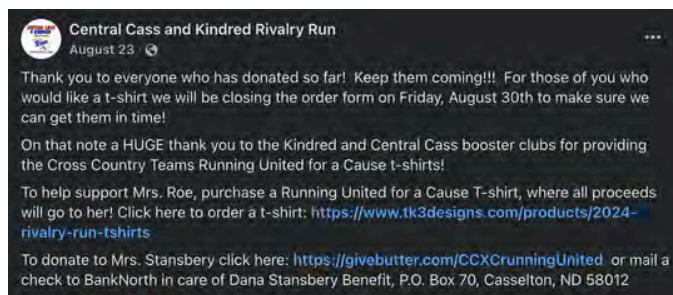
The wonderful aspect of the Running United project was its minimal expenditures, which ensured that donations remained focused where they were needed most: in the benefit accounts of Mrs. Stansbery and Mrs. Roe. Because of this, I believe donors felt a sense of purpose, knowing that their contributions made a difference in the lives of others. In total, I had 100 dollars in expenses that I donated as my own contribution to the cause.



The Expenditure Budget for the Running United Event was \$100.

In the early planning phases of the run, I reached out to the Central Cass and Kindred Booster Clubs to present my proposal. Both clubs agreed to support the Running United project by committing to purchase Rivalry Run t-shirts for all coaches and athletes. The Kindred Booster Club generously contributed \$608 (38 Shirts), while the Central Cass Booster Club offered \$512 (32 Shirts). Altogether, their donations totaled an impressive \$1,120. I celebrated their generosity on our social media page and sent personalized thank-you notes to each organization following the run.

Their support not only helped us financially but also fostered a sense of community and camaraderie among all of the participants.



Screenshot of what was posted on Social Media

## IV. EXECUTION

This project first came to me in the middle of summer while I was brainstorming ways to get more students to join cross country and while trying to come up with something fun to do with my teammates. When I looked at our schedule I noticed our homecoming football game was against one of our biggest rivalries, Kindred. I went onto Google Maps and discovered if we cut across country it was exactly twenty-eight miles from one school to the next. Being a cross-country runner, I knew this was manageable! If our teams came together we could do something really neat and run the game ball from one school to the next before the homecoming football game. I set out in my car to drive the route to make sure it was safe and something we could indeed do. When driving the course I found out that there was a country church right in the middle which would work as a perfect spot for the teams to pass off the ball to each other.

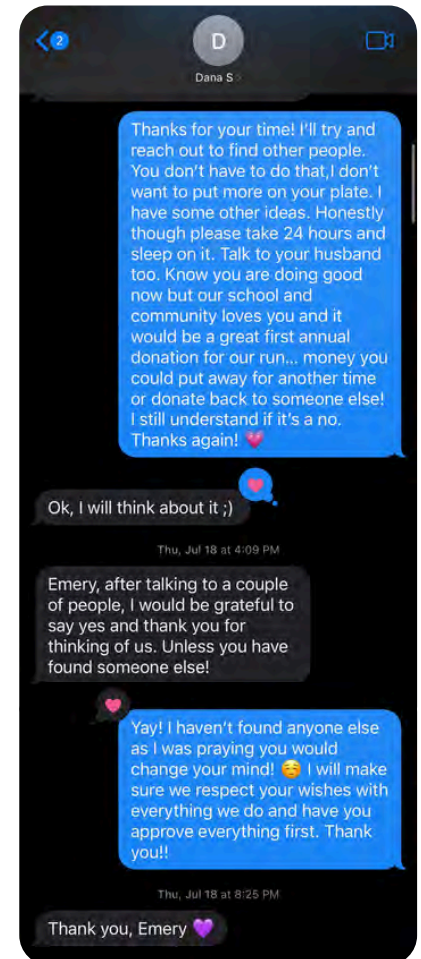
As soon as I got back home from driving the route I drafted out a plan and sent an email to our Athletic Director, Travis Lemar, to see if he would be interested in meeting with me. During our meeting, I shared my vision and what I wanted to do for the Rivalry Run event. He was incredibly supportive and assured me he would do everything possible to help. He then reached out to Kindred's Athletic Director, Bradley Ambrosius, who was also enthusiastic and completely on board to help with the event.



When I first considered organizing a relay run from Kindred to Casselton during homecoming week, fundraising was not even something I considered. That quickly changed when I was informed one of my favorite teachers, Mrs. Dana Stansbery, was battling breast cancer. From that moment on, the idea of fundraising took on a life of its own. What started as just a Rivalry Run evolved into Running United for a Cause. As the planning progressed, I realized that there was a lot left to plan to make sure not only that the run went well, but that I also could raise as much money as possible.

The next step was to identify the recipients. I immediately knew I wanted to ask Mrs. Stansbery to be the Casselton recipient, but I needed her approval first. I called her to explain my plans for the run and the intention of running for her along with someone from the Kindred community. Initially, she declined; she is a kind and caring person who did not want to burden others or draw attention to herself during such a challenging time. I honored her request. After I got off the phone I sent her a text message thanking her for her time and asking her to take the night to sleep on it, discuss it with her family and husband, and text me the following day if she would reconsider. The next afternoon, I received a message from her expressing gratitude for the opportunity and agreeing to be the Central Cass recipient. With the Casselton donor secured, it was time to reach out to Mr. Ambrosius again from Kindred. Without hesitation, he expressed interest in raising funds for Mrs. Polly Roe, a retired teacher fighting brain cancer.

One thing that was important to me was honoring both Mrs. Stansbery and Mrs. Roe and making sure they were comfortable having their story heard and having their name out there. After getting permission from both of them, I made sure to check in to ensure they were comfortable throughout the remainder of the event. To do this, I made sure I texted updates and details to Mrs. Stansbery and Mr. Ambrosius who would contact Mrs. Roe for me.



Screenshot of text messages with Mrs. Stansbery, 7-18-2024



Meeting with BankNorth Bank to set up the Benefit account 7-30-2024

With both teams and communities having someone in mind to fundraise for, it was time to ensure I had donation methods in place and finalize the details for the run. For Mrs. Roe's account, Kindred used an existing donation platform site called LendAHandUp that had been set up for fundraising earlier in the summer for a different event they hosted. For Mrs. Stansbery, I went to a local bank in Casselton called BankNorth to set up a benefit account. The staff were fantastic and they made it easy to establish the account. Since I was not yet eighteen, I did need to have my father come with me to co-sign on the account.





In addition to the bank account, I knew in order to make things convenient for our donors I needed to have a way for our community to donate online if they wanted. After researching various platforms, I decided to implement a user-friendly online donation system I found called Givebutter. I believe this not only streamlined things for our donors but also increased our fundraising efforts. By offering this secure, easy-to-use app, we could ensure that donations could be made easily making it helpful for people to support our cause from anywhere.

The Givebutter account also was able to be linked to the bank account I set up at BankNorth for easy transfer of money. Everywhere I advertised the Running United event I listed ways people could donate online or by check if they did not feel comfortable paying online or wanted to avoid the convenience transaction fee.

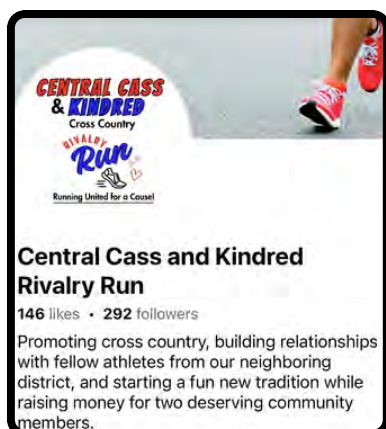
Next, I knew I desired to create a sense of unity among our runners and wanted to have matching race day shirts. I reached out to a local businesswoman, Tanya Kahl, from TK3 Designs for help. Together, we designed a shirt that promoted our event and she listed it on her website for convenient online sales. To cover the costs for the runners and coaches, I contacted both the Central Cass and Kindred Booster Clubs, to go over my proposal for the run and what I hoped to get out of the run by bringing two communities together for a greater cause and they generously agreed to sponsor our shirts.



T-shirt Design

With the help of Tanya, we were also able to add a few dollars to each shirt and add the profits to Mrs. Roe's benefit account.

The next phase was promoting the event. I chose Facebook as my primary platform since it was the place I found most parents and potential donors to be the most active. I created a video advertisement, shared the donation links, and expressed my gratitude to all those who had supported me along the way.



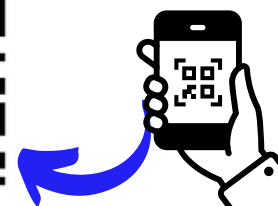
Running United Facebook Cover Page



YouTube Promotional Video  
<https://shorturl.at/EeHbX>

To kick off the event, I created a short video advertisement to generate excitement for the event, where I announced our two recipients, and shared how people can donate.

**Scan the QR Code below to watch!**



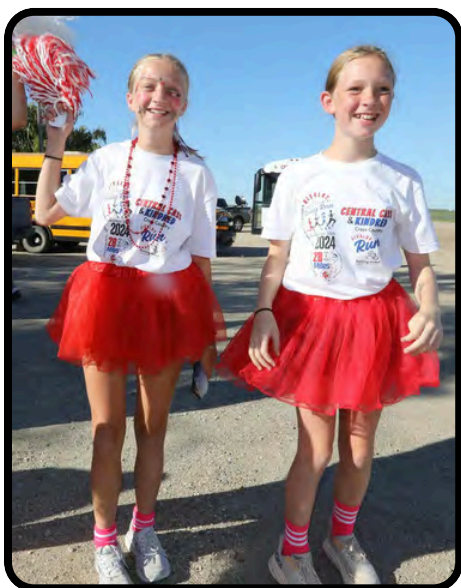
I needed a way to reach more people in addition to the social media posts I already posted, so I set out to promote Running United for a Cause by writing and sending out a press release. I reached out by email to local news channels, radio stations, and newspapers to find out who would be interested in covering our story. After my press release was sent out, I received many replies requesting interviews. In total, I conducted five interviews, one of which was live. Overall, these combined efforts resulted in people from all around the state hearing our story, drawing a larger crowd than we anticipated, and creating a memorable experience for everyone involved.



North Dakota Today Live Interview 9-17-2024

As we neared the day of the race there was a lot of preparation to make sure everything was ready. This meant making sure everyone knew where they were supposed to be and getting the runners all ready. Some of the ways I made sure the runners were prepared was by making sure they had all the information about the run that they needed. I did this by sending home a packet that had the route, order of the runners, where each person was going to get dropped off, the halfway point where we would meet the other team and take a picture, the time the game started, and when we would run the ball into the football field.

I left most of the safety arrangements and pacing to our coaches, Marv Roeske and Josh Roberts, to ensure the ball made it to the football game. They came up with a plan for getting our runners to their designated spots and even created signs to guide the runners on where to be dropped off. Our Athletic Director coordinated with our School Resource Officer, who agreed to oversee the race to ensure everyone's safety during the run.



Athletes Dress Up & Ready to Run!

To also help prepare the runners, I focused on generating excitement. I purchased red, white, and blue necklaces, reflecting the school colors of Central Cass and Kindred. Additionally, I sent out messages and reminded our runners during practice to keep the atmosphere enjoyable. I encouraged them to wear fun accessories like colorful socks, tutus, and ribbons in their hair.

It was also important to me that the runners stayed healthy throughout the relay, we did not want to have to worry about anyone being dehydrated or hungry as they sat on the bus and cheered on the runners. I donated snacks along with Gatorade and water to keep our athletes healthy and feeling good throughout the four hours it took to get the ball from Kindred to Central Cass.

To execute this project, we needed several final touches. We needed volunteers to livestream us running into the field for those watching at home. When we met up at the school we had two teachers on a golf cart, livestreaming the whole thing. Viewers were able to watch both teams join together as one to run into the final stretch of the field. We wanted a lot of media documentation for the day of the race and this was another way we provided it for those who could not attend. It was also beneficial for donation purposes because when people watched us run from town to town, it was inspiring and helped us secure more donations.



Live Streaming Volunteers



Passing the game ball off to the referees

Another key element of the relay day for Running United was timing the handoff to the referees before the start of the football game. To build up hype before we game in I prepared a script for the announcer to read as we entered the field. Positioned in the center, the referees were ready and waiting to receive the ball from us.



Who is excited for some football? The Central Cass and Kindred Cross Country teams will be here momentarily with the game ball to get this game started!

Today is their first annual Rivalry Run, a twenty-eight-mile journey from Kindred to Casselton running relay style with the game ball. To make their run even more special, both teams are Running United for a Greater Cause in honor of two very influential people in each community: Mrs. Polly Roe of Kindred and Mrs. Dana Stansbery of Casselton!

The Kindred and Central Cass Cross Country teams would like to wish both football teams good luck on tonight's game and to remember when we come together for a greater cause amazing things can happen! Let's now get on our feet and cheer them on as they come into the stadium and meet our game officials at the 50-yard line!

Announcement read over the loud speaker at the football game

Lastly, once the day of the relay and homecoming football game was over, I made sure to write personalized thank you cards to everyone who helped throughout the whole process. I could not have done it all by myself. I counted all the money, took all the cash donations I received to the bank to deposit into the benefit account for Mrs. Stansbery, and did a check presentation. Mrs. Stansbery received a check in the amount of \$11,900 and Mrs. Roe made \$570 from t-shirt sales and it was documented that over \$11,000 was raised on her donation site during the month of advertising the run. I am so grateful for everyone who helped and made this possible!



# V. MONITORING & CONTROLLING

## A. MONITORING

Monitoring this project required close attention to the donations coming in. I made it a point to acknowledge each donation with a comment or an emoji as a way to ensure each donor felt valued and appreciated for their support. My goal was to raise \$10,000 for each recipient. I worked hard to keep donations coming in by promoting our event on Facebook, writing a press release, and conducting interviews to generate interest from start to finish.



Coach Marv talking to the Central Cass Team, 9-20-2024

I also did my best to make sure I stayed on top of my timeline and crossed off each milestone as I completed it. I did this by checking in often and making sure others were doing the tasks I needed them to do in a timely fashion. I would check in every week at first and then as the race got closer I would check in several times a week or daily as needed.

Something that was also important to me was to keep a close watch on the expenses. Before the project started I wanted to personally donate one hundred dollars of my own money to the cause. I knew there would not be a lot of expenses only needing team snacks, drinks, necklaces, and thank-you notes. I aimed to keep costs within my budget and I successfully achieved this, with total expenses coming very close to that amount. This felt less like an expense and more like a meaningful contribution to the cause.

## B. CONTROLLING



The primary challenges I faced revolved around communication. This was a huge project for a high school student, and initially, I could tell others questioned whether I could handle it all by myself. I wanted to demonstrate my ability to manage this on my own and ensure the event's success. Keeping everyone on the same page proved difficult at times while trying to work with not only my own school and community but also another rival school and community twenty-eight miles away. I discovered that sending follow-up emails to both schools was very important, so everyone was aware of what was discussed and had the same information.

I often also had to wait for people to get back to me in a timely order. Waiting for responses was hard and frustrating from time to time but there were a lot of moving pieces to get everything perfect and patience did pay off. This included details about the donation sites, our departure times, the handoff of the ball, and the scheduled time for us to run the ball together. Once we established an effective communication process, the project progressed smoothly without any major issues.

Emery with the Game Ball, 9-20-2024

# V. CLOSING THE PROJECT



## A. EVALUATION OF KEY METRICS



Central Cass Runners and Coaches pictured with Mrs. Stansbery before the Running United Run, September 20, 2024

Reflecting on my "GIVE" goals on page five, I realized that I not only achieved each goal but surpassed them! This project turned out even better than I dreamed it could and the support, love, and donations we got from both communities and even people from all over the state was greater than I could have imagined. Throughout the whole project our cross country teams had a strengthened sense of community and connection and we knew we were running for a greater cause than just ourselves!

**G**

**Gather over  
\$20,000 in Donations**



My objective was to raise over \$10,000 for each teacher, and I accomplished that, collecting approximately \$12,000 for each recipient totaling over \$24,000.

**I**

**Increasing Bonding  
& Support of Cross Country**



This project brought two rival teams and communities together and increased bonding and support for the sport of Cross Country. The smiles and feedback were the evidence.

**V**

**Validating the Need to  
Come Together & Give Back**



The common message throughout the run was that we wanted to do something for others and that the run was about more than just ourselves. We had donors giving to the recipients in the opposite community they lived in, which proved people came together for a greater cause.

**E**

**Ease of Donating  
& Longevity of Event**



Donations came in quickly and were easy to track. Feedback from the coaches proves that this is an event that will continue for years to come and also could be implemented in other districts.

## **B.** LESSONS LEARNED

I learned many valuable lessons, throughout this project, especially how important effective communication is. I was not only working with individuals from my own school whom I knew but also with people from Kindred whom I had never met before while trying to unite everyone. Details that I believed were clear still left some people uncertain, leading me to realize that I needed to be even more descriptive in my instructions. I quickly learned that instead of emailing people separately putting everyone on the same message helped keep everyone informed.

I also discovered the importance of being flexible. Although I had a plan in mind for how I wanted things to go, I had to adapt when collaborating with adults who had their own perspectives and ideas. I learned to accept that I could only control certain elements of the process, which was probably the hardest part, letting go of some control.

Another important lesson I learned was time management. As a full-time student-athlete, my days are very busy, so I found myself doing most of my work and emailing in the evenings after practice. I found that many of the adults I was working with did not respond to emails until the following day during their work hours, which created delays in communication. To address this, I started responding to emails during lunch or whenever I had free time between classes.

## **C.** RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS

For the future of the Running United Relay Run project, I would recommend that the head coaches start early to delegate tasks so everything is in order before the season starts. It is important to me that the tradition I established continues. The Cross Country captains from both Central Cass and Kindred will need to take ownership of the project next year to ensure we can continue this tradition to promote the sport of cross country and build relationships with fellow athletes from our neighboring district, while giving back to two people in need, in each community. I did everything on my own throughout the project but think it would have been an even better experience if I had been able to work with the Kindred captains more throughout the process. Examples of tasks to delegate would be having someone check the route, figure out what or who we will be raising money for, and have someone make flyers to promote the event.

I would also like to see a board of directors established to determine whom money is raised for each year by creating an application process. This board could help identify the most deserving causes and further community involvement and unity with the run.

Something that I would change for the future would be to have the two donation sites to be on the same website. For Casselton we used GiveButter and for Kindred, they used LendAHandUp. The reason for this is that Mrs. Polly Roe from Kindred already had the LendAHandUp open. We supported her by promoting the LendAHandUp site that she already had open, as well as having the t-shirt profits go to her.

Another fun recommendation that I would have is to have a tracker on the football so people can see where the ball is on the route. Many people were excited to see where the runners were and people were texting each other to line up along the route and cheer for the runners. It would be easier for fans to know where the ball and runners were so they could come out and cheer.



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# VIII. APPENDIX

**Central Cass and Kindred Rivalry Run**  
August 15

We are excited to announce our two fundraising recipients that the Central Cass and Kindred Cross Country teams will be running in honor of for this year's Running United for a Cause Run. Central Cass is fundraising for Mrs. Dana Stansbery, a beloved teacher and volleyball coach battling breast cancer and Kindred is fundraising for Mrs. Polly Roe a cherished retired teacher and coach who was diagnosed and is undergoing treatments for brain cancer. See the flyer and information below on how to support each of these amazing, influential women in our communities!

To donate to Mrs. Stansbery click here: <https://givebutter.com/CCXCRunningUnited> or mail a check to BankNorth in care of Dana Stansbery Benefit, P.O. Box 70, Casselton, ND 58012

To help support Mrs. Roe, purchase a Running United for a Cause T-shirt, where all proceeds will go to her! Click here to order a t-shirt: <https://www.tk3designs.com/products/2024-rivalry-run-tshirts>



**MRS. DANA STANSBERY**  
Casselton Recipient

Scan here to donate online to Mrs. Stansbery OR  
Mail or drop off a check to BankNorth in care of the Dana Stansbery Benefit, P.O. Box 70, Casselton, ND 58012



**CENTRAL CASS & KINDRED**  
Cross Country  
**RIVALRY Run**

Running United for a Cause!




**MRS. POLLY ROE**  
Kindred Recipient

Scan here to order your Run United Shirt today! All proceeds will go to Mrs. Roe!

**InForum**  
September 21

The Kindred and Central Cass cross country teams run into the Squirrels' football stadium Friday to finish out a 28-mile relay run from Kindred to Casselton to deliver the game ball ahead of Friday night's homecoming clash between No. 1-ranked Kindred and No. 2 Central Cass.

Organized by Squirrels senior cross country captain Emery Holland, the run served as a fundraiser for Central Cass teacher and volleyball coach Dana Stansbery and retired Kindred teacher and coach Polly Roe, both of whom are currently battling cancer. More: <https://www.inforum.com/.../photos-running-united-for-a->



Nikki Wix, Amy Warrey and 312 others  
10 comments 44 shares

September 21

Hi Friends!

I was excited to see the XCountry team's terrific fundraising efforts for Polly. I'm also excited because it brought some more activity on the LAHU site.

So, now we only need to raise \$525 to reach the full \$5000 boost before mid-October. Can you all ask for donations from people who may not have donated yet, or anyone who might want to give a little extra? Just make sure they know they have to use the LAHU site.

Here is the link  
<https://lendahandup.org/give/polly770/>

Thanks so much!  
Karen

**InForum**  
13h

**Suzanne Schultz**  
This is so awesome! I saw the girl, Emery, on North Dakota Today talking about it. What a well-spoken amazing young lady!

12h Like Reply 1



# Running United: Kindred, Central Cass XC teams to deliver game ball via 28-mile relay ahead of football clash

The run, organized by Central Cass senior Emery Holland, will also serve as a fundraiser for two cherished people within the Squirrels' and Vikings' school communities

BY RYAN SPITZA  
The Forum

CASSETON, N.D. — Emery Holland was visiting with her family on Independence Day when she asked one of her relatives how she can help promote the sport of cross country.

"On the Fourth, I was visiting with my aunt who used to coach cross country," said Holland, a senior at Central Cass and captain of the Squirrels cross country team. "And I was kind of just asking her if they did anything fun or special to bring awareness to cross country because there's not a lot of people who go out for cross country. I wanted something fun to kind of end our senior year with a bang."

Holland's aunt is Heidi Eckart, a teacher at Jamestown High School who spent many years coaching cross country as well as track and field at both Jamestown and Hillsboro High School.

Eckart mentioned to her niece how the teams she coached would sometimes run a relay in which the cross country team delivered the game ball for that school's homecoming football game each season.

"It just kind of snowballed off of that and got bigger and bigger," Holland said.

The "it" Holland is

referring to is a project she calls "Running United for a Cause." Prior to this Friday night's rivalry football game between No. 1-ranked Kindred and No. 2 Central Cass — set for 7 p.m. in Casselton — the Vikings and Squirrels cross country teams will join together to run a 28-mile relay route to deliver the game ball for the homecoming showdown between the top-ranked teams in Division A.

The run will begin at Kindred Elementary School at 2:50 p.m. with members of the Vikings each running a mile before handing the ball off to the next. At the halfway point, which is the Canaan Moravian Church in Davenport, the last Kindred runner will hand the ball off to the first Central Cass runner at 4:30 p.m., and the Squirrels will take it the final 14 miles to Casselton.

From there, the two teams will reunite at Central Cass High School where they'll run onto the football field to deliver the game ball to officials prior to kickoff.

However, there's much more to it than simply being a fun run. The Squirrels and Vikings are also using the event as a fundraiser to benefit two beloved people within their school communities.

Dana Stansbery, a

## RUNNING CONTINUED from B1

teacher and the head volleyball coach at Central Cass, is battling breast cancer. Polly Roe is a retired teacher and coach from Kindred currently undergoing treatment for brain cancer.

An online donation link has been set up for Stansbery, while all proceeds raised from "Running United for a Cause" T-shirts will be donated to Roe.

"I was really surprised with how both communities came together," Holland said. "We've had Kindred families donating to Mrs. Stansbery and Casselton families buying the shirts with (proceeds) going to Mrs. Roe."

"So it's just really awesome to see how both communities have come together for a cause and for two people who are very important in both communities."

Holland initially approached Central Cass activities director Travis Lemar with the idea. From there, Lemar contacted Kindred AD Brad Ambrosius and the Vikings were immediately on board, as well.

"Emery emailed (Central Cass cross country) coach (Marv) Roeske and myself this summer about this idea of running the game ball from Kindred to Casselton," said Kindred cross country coach Josh Roberts. "That is and has been done around the country and is a cool way to unite two rival schools."

But she took it a step further in that we are raising money for someone in our communities. It's pretty easy to get on board with the idea when she had everything organized from the social media down to the route we will run. (Holland) has done an amazing job creating and organizing this event."

As of Wednesday morning, the online donation link for Stansbery exceeded \$4,100 while Holland noting that the fund has exceeded \$6,500 when mail-in and in-person donations are included. The Central Cass Student Council also held a "Hat Day" on Tuesday, during which students could donate \$1 and wear a hat to school with proceeds going to Stansbery.

Holland said more than 130 T-shirts were sold to benefit Roe. While T-shirt sales have closed, Holland added that people can still donate to Roe by dropping off or sending in these donations to Kindred High School.

Several groups have chipped in to help with the project, Holland said. The Cass County



Dana Stansbery is a beloved teacher and the head volleyball coach at Central Cass High School. She's currently battling breast cancer and is one of the beneficiaries of this year's "Running United for a Cause" fundraiser being put on by the Kindred and Central Cass cross country teams.



Polly Roe is a cherished retired teacher and coach from Kindred. She's currently battling brain cancer and is one of the beneficiaries of this year's "Running United for a Cause" fundraiser being put on by the Kindred and Central Cass cross country teams.

Sheriff's Office will pilot the run itself to ensure the safety of the runners, while the Kindred and Central Cass Booster Clubs provided the cross country teams with Running United T-shirts.

BankNorth in Casselton provided the donation account for Stansbery while TK3 Designs spearheaded the T-shirt initiative to benefit Roe.

After contacting each school's AD to pitch the idea, it was time for Holland to get to work spreading the word.

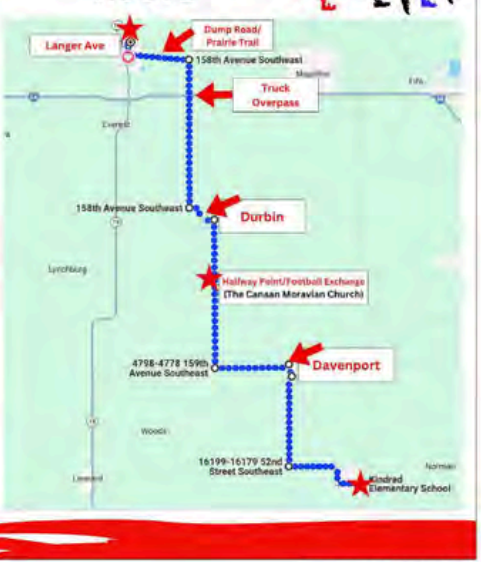
"From that point on, I just got into contact with the coaches and the

athletes," Holland said. "I had to let them know everything and get the parents on board. Everyone was just super awesome to talk to and was just really supportive of this idea."

Given his relationship as a coach to Holland and a coaching colleague to Roberts, it didn't take any more than a thumbs up for Roeske to get on board with the project.

"It's all Emery," Roeske said. "She's the driving force and organizer. All I need to do is get out of her way. Emery is outstanding. She's very thoughtful and leads by example and her ideas

## RUNNING UNITED ROUTE



Emery Holland / Contributed photo

The "Running United for a Cause" relay route will run 28 miles from Kindred Elementary School to Central Cass High School. The halfway point will be the Canaan Moravian Church in Davenport, where the last Kindred runner will hand off the football to the first Central Cass runner. The run will be piloted by the Cass County Sheriff's Office to ensure the safety of participants.

She deserves full credit for this and so much more when it comes to the culture of our team. You can always count on Emery not just to be there, but to be there and do whatever it is the right way."

Roeske doubles as the women's track and field coach at Concordia College as he's done for 30 years, which is how he crossed paths with Roberts long ago.

"Coach Roberts and I go back in our friendship to his years when he was a collegiate head coach for track and field and cross country for the University of Jamestown," Roeske said. "And, of course, I was in my early years at Concordia. I have a lot of respect for him as a coach, so it's a pleasure to work with him on this project. He's the first person to give Emery the highest praise for spearheading this event."

Roberts said it's a warm sight to see the youth within their school stepping up for a good cause.

"Anytime you can unite two rival schools for a

united cause is very cool," Roberts said. "We have two community members who are dealing with a very tough time in their lives both physically and financially. If we can help just a little bit, it's a worthy cause."

"So often our youth are consumed with, 'What do I get out of it? How does it benefit me?' But as coaches, we try to teach them that there is a bigger cause than themselves. At the end of the day these kids will go to college together, work together at the same jobs and, dare I say, maybe even become neighbors whose children play together."

Roeske said he's proud of Holland for putting it all together as well as both the Kindred and Central Cass programs for embracing the project in the best manner possible. He also said he hopes to see it become an annual event for years to come.

"Emery is a senior but her vision is for this to become an annual event," Roeske said. "So next fall, the football travels from Casselton to Kindred."

The community can follow along with the project on the Central Cass and Kindred Rivalry Run Facebook page. The public is also welcome to cheer on the runners along the relay route. To contribute to Stansbery's donation fund, the donation link can be found here. Checks may also be dropped off or mailed into BankNorth in Casselton at P.O. Box 70, Casselton, ND 58012 and should be made out to Dana Stansbery Benefit.

"It's just really awesome to see how both communities can come together for a cause that's bigger than just a sporting event," Holland said. "One awesome thing about cross country is that the environment is just amazing. Everyone is so supportive. Parents aren't just cheering for their own kids or their own team, they're cheering for everyone because everyone knows how hard it is."

"So it's really nice to see that everyone can come together as one for something bigger than ourselves."

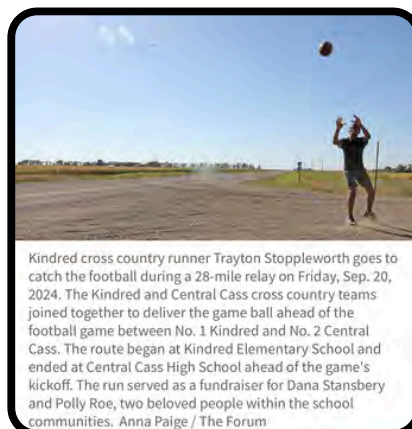
## Letter to the Editor

I am an assistant coach for the Kindred X-Country team.

I would like to commend the Central Cass High School team for their participation in the Central Cass & Kindred Rivalry Run on Sept. 20. A special shout out to Emery Holland who was the brainchild for this activity. I would also like to thank Central Cass Coach Marv Roeske and Kindred Coach Josh Roberts on planning the relay for all their runners to participate. That was a time-consuming task to work out all the details. And the best part is we were run-

ning for a cause to support 2 coaches dealing with cancer. Central Cass volleyball coach, Dana Stansbery and former Kindred coach Polly Roe were recipients of donations made by both teams. This was a fun activity for our athletes and I hope we can make it a tradition. Thanks again to Emery for coming up with the idea and following through to see it come to fruition. So proud of her and all the runners that participated.

Harry Clark,  
Assistant X-Country Coach  
for Kindred High School



Kindred cross country runner Trayton Stoppleworth goes to catch the football during a 28-mile relay on Friday, Sept. 20, 2024. The Kindred and Central Cass cross country teams joined together to deliver the game ball ahead of the football game between No. 1 Kindred and No. 2 Central Cass. The route began at Kindred Elementary School and ended at Central Cass High School ahead of the game's kickoff. The run served as a fundraiser for Dana Stansbery and Polly Roe, two beloved people within the school communities. Anna Paige / The Forum

JAMIE N. LEMING

Emery Holland. You nailed it. As a graduate of Kindred many years ago, it took me many years to understand the power of Helping Others. In fact, the number one thing that makes people Happy, according to research by Stanford, is Helping People. Second was Dancing! Keep up the amazing work. Your passion and vision for this amazing cause gave me goose bumps. I love seeing the Mighty Vikings and Rascal Squirrels getting along! The motto of Kindred is "Where Kindness is a Way of Life". You stole that from us but I am so glad you did. And Polly and Dana, please get better! Well done Emery! 