

# Youth

Two Otter Tail County 4-H high schoolers will be joining the statewide organization as Minnesota 4-H ambassadors for the next year.

Nathan Blashack, a junior at Bertha-Hewitt High School, and Madison Pesek, a junior at Kennedy Secondary in Fergus Falls, will be two of 29 youths that were selected to take part in state program.

In order to be selected, the two students needed to submit a written application, participate in an interview and give a presentation.

In a news release, Blashack said, quote: "For me, being a 4-H state ambassador means I am the youth face of 4-H, I get to build leadership in the youth of Minnesota, and my favorite part is meeting all the new people."

The state ambassadors become the leaders and spokespeople for 4-H over the next year, the news release stated. Adding, the role is one of the highest honors a 4-H member can achieve within the organization.

### >>Body Found After Northeast Minneapolis Encampment Fire

(Minneapolis, MN) -- Police are investigating after a body was pulled from a homeless encampment fire in northeast Minneapolis. On Wednesday, firefighters put out the fire and a unidentified person was found dead. The person has not been identified, but the Hennepin County Medical Examiner's Office is working to identify the victim and cause of death.

### >>MN Boys Volleyball Season to Begin 2024-2025 School Year

(Brooklyn Center, MN) -- The Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) has approved boys' volleyball as a spring sport, with the first season to be played in the 2024-2025 school year. This comes just one year after the M-S-H-S-L denied approval of the sport, and after it was officially sanctioned this May. While many schools have a boy's volleyball team already, the state approval will bring greater resources to the nearly 2,000 students in Minnesota who want to play.

On Saturday morning at 6:37, the Otter Tail County Sheriff's Office received a 911 from a 15 year old male. It was reported the he and two others were boating across Rush Lake when their boat flipped.

They were able to climb on top of the capsized boat. Deputies from the Sheriff's Office, and members of the Ottetail Fire Department, Ottetail Rescue, Perham Fire Department, and Perham Area EMS responded to the call.

The three juveniles were eventually located and rescued. They were uninjured except possible mild hypothermia. They were evaluated at the scene by EMS and were medically released.

The investigation determined that a 17 year old male was the boat's operator. A 16 year old male and the 15 year old male caller were passengers in the boat.

They had been boating across Rush Lake in the dark with the purpose of going duck hunting. Two of the three juveniles were wearing lifejackets.

The boat rolled onto its side while they were underway. The boat and most of its contents were later recovered and removed from the lake.

The cause of the capsizing was not immediately determined.

>>Report says Minnesota hospitals' red ink growing

**\*\*MEDIA REFERENCE - 2ND TO LAST LINE\*\***

(Undated) -- Two-thirds of more than 70 hospitals surveyed around the state lost money in the first half of 2023, and their combined losses were nearly double the amount in the same period last year -- according to a just-released report from the Minnesota Hospital Association. President, Doctor Rahul Koranne (cor-AH-nee) says the biggest factor is the number of patients on government insurance programs -- Medicare and Medicaid. Koranne says,

"You can't raise prices because those are already set by the government. And both of these programs pay significantly below the cost of providing care."

The report warns as many as half-a-dozen Minnesota hospitals could face closure if urgent action is not taken. Koranne indicates the state's share to address the problem is around one billion dollars . He says more staffed beds must also be available in nursing homes and other care facilities, so patients aren't stuck in hospitals waiting for space to open up elsewhere. Mayo Clinic was not included in the report, but a Star Tribune analysis showed it had stronger operating income during the first of the year and South Dakota-based Sanford Health also saw improvement. But St. Cloud-based CentraCare and Duluth-based Essentia Health both reported less operating income.

>>MN House lawmakers get public input on early care and learning programs

(St. Paul, MN) -- Minnesota House lawmakers heard from stakeholders today (Mon) on the impact of the 2023 state budget expenditures for early care and learning. Childcare Programs Solutions Officer Jessica Gilder of Little Falls says despite recent and direct funding towards Minnesota's childcare industry, "These funds don't help... all families with affordability. The middle-class working families still need better solutions." And Gilder says quality and affordable childcare also is for early childhood educators and care providers, "who deserve to be paid accordingly for the essential services that they provide."

## >>Salvation Army Packing Toys for Kids of Parents in Prison

(Roseville, MN) -- Volunteers are at the Salvation Army's Northern Division headquarters in Roseville today (Tues), wrapping and packing toys that will be sent to nearly a thousand children with a parent in jail or prison. Spokesman Dan Furry (FUR-ee) says inmates request it, and gifts are shipped with no indication they're from the Salvation Army. He says, "It's really a nice program that just adds a human touch to folks who are struggling in a unique way, and hopefully give them a happier Christmas than they normally would expect." The Salvation Army's "Toy Lift" has been operating for over 30 years. It was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID but resumed in North Dakota prisons in 2021 and in Minnesota prisons last year.

## >>Stillwater Inmate Gets 10 More Years for Stabbing Corrections Officer

(Stillwater, MN) -- A Stillwater inmate will serve an additional ten years in state prison for stabbing a corrections officer in June of 2020. Washington County prosecutors say 35-year-old Adrian Bell stabbed a corrections sergeant in the torso with a five-and-a-half-inch metal shank during an altercation involving one other man. The criminal complaint says the other inmate punched the officer in the head, two more corrections staff came to help, and that's when Bell stabbed the sergeant. All three officers were taken to the hospital. Bell was in the final year of a first-degree attempted murder sentence at the time.

## >>GOP Group Calls for Removal of State Republican Party Chair Hann

(Undated) -- A group of State Central Committee members wants to oust Republican Party of Minnesota Chairman David Hann (HAN). The group, calling itself Rebuild the Minnesota G-O-P, cites what it calls "Hann's leadership failures, including plunging the party into debt and overseeing one of the worst election losses in Minnesota history in 2022." Crow Wing County G-O-P member Dan Willett says, "We can no longer stand by and let Chair David Hann continue to further destroy this party." State Republican Party Executive Director Anna Mathews responds, "Like in all political parties, there are members... who disagree with leadership from time to time" and notes that "we have passionate activists with diverse perspectives on how Republicans can win."

## >>4-Year-Old Boy in Critical Condition After Falling Through Pond Ice

(Minneapolis, MN) -- The Hennepin County Sheriff's Office says a four-year-old boy is in critical condition after falling through the ice on a pond in Bryn Mawr (brin marr) Park in Minneapolis. The child was found unresponsive Sunday and taken to H-C-M-C for treatment. Investigators haven't released any other information about the incident. There is partial fencing around the retention pond in the park. Officers say ice conditions are not yet safe for walking and should be at least four inches thick.

## Walz Elected Chair of Democratic Governors Association

(St. Paul, MN) -- Governor Tim Walz is the next chair of the Democratic Governors Association (DGA). Minnesota's governor was elected chair during the association's meeting Saturday in Phoenix. Walz said on social media that Democratic governors "have some big goals in 2024, including keeping the North Carolina governor's office blue and flipping critical states like New Hampshire." Minnesota D-F-L Party chair Ken Martin says, "Governor Walz has championed an agenda that has made Minnesota a national model for progress on everything from ending child poverty to climate action." Walz will replace New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy.

## >>Special Task Force on Child Protection Task Meets Today

(St. Paul, MN) -- A special legislative task force continues its review of Minnesota's child protection system this afternoon (Mon 1pm) at the State Capitol. Representative Dave Pinto from Saint Paul says they're looking at the whole system. He says they will review, "how reports of potential maltreatment come into the system and kind of what happens with that, all the way to the other end: If a kid is in foster care, we want to make sure that they're receiving the care and support that they need." The task force is looking into whether changes need to be made during the next legislative session which begins in February.



University of Minnesota experts are recommending books for gifts this holiday season, specifically for the young people in your life.

Kerlan Collection of Children’s Literature Curator Lisa Von Drasek (dray-seck) says there is no “best book,” but she has three favorites this year, including Gary R. Gray Jr.’s picture book, “I’m From.”

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[awholidaybooks1.mp3] :06 (WHAT HE'S FROM!)

“So “I’m From” is a picture book and we hear the voice of a young child talking about what he’s from!”

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The book describes the child’s things he loves and surrounds himself with, something anyone can relate to:

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[awholidaybooks2.mp3] :09 (AND SOY EGGS)

“An example from my own life is I’m from Puppy Playgroup, I’m from kimchi rice and soy eggs.”

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Drasek says the book is a great jumping-off point for teaching people to tell their own stories and where they’re from. Drasek also recommends “We Are Branches” and “Paul Bunyan: The Invention of an American Legend.”

## >>MN Parental Fees for Medical Assistance Coverage Eliminated

(St. Paul, MN) -- Minnesota is eliminating monthly parental fees for children with disabilities who get their Medical Assistance coverage through the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act option, thanks to the Minnesota Legislature and Governor Walz's approval earlier this year. Human Services Commissioner Jodi Harpstead says "It's a positive example of the state coming together to look out for the parents of people with disabilities." Parental fees were determined on a sliding fee scale based on family income, so actual savings will vary from family to family.

## >>Children Injured After Vehicle Crashes Into YMCA In Brainerd

(Brainerd, MN) -- Seven children and one adult are recovering after a crash sent a vehicle into a Y-M-C-A building in Brainerd. Police say three vehicles crashed near the Brainerd Family Y-M-C-A Tuesday afternoon and one of the vehicles went through a wall of the facility, injuring seven children and one staff member. Y-M-C-A officials say they were taken to the hospital as a precaution. The building will remain closed until they determines the extent of the damage.

## >>Youth Gambling Risks

(St. Paul, MN) -- In Minnesota, gambling is surging among minors. The 2022 Minnesota Student Survey found that over 6,000 high schoolers indicated having issues with gambling. Susan Sheridan Tucker executive director of the Minnesota Alliance for Problem Gambling says to think twice before buying a minor a lottery ticket. She the younger a person is exposed to gambling the greater the likelihood of them experiencing problem gambling as an adult is far greater. Sheridan Tucker says gambling exposure during childhood is often through some lottery product, such as lottery tickets or scratch-offs. Often these items are given to a child by an adult unaware of the associated risks.