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WHAT'S INSIDE

FUNDRAISING BENEFIT FOR 10 YEAR OLD Page 2

RALLIES SCHEDULED Page 2

CLASSIFIEDS Page 3

ARTISTS SHARE WORK IN AITKIN EXHIBIT Page 4

CLC student support needed far beyond education

By ANN SCHWARTZ
An \$11.5 million renovation that lasted a year, was recently completed at the college. It includes a check-in area and consolidation of student services areas, along with upgrades to the athletic locker rooms.

According to the college, it is committed to student success through holistic mental health, wellness, basic needs and academic support.

Back in the Dark Ages, when I attended Brainerd Community College, times

were simpler. We had just one building and there was no food pantry, nor on-campus mental health services — at least not that we students knew about.

Central Lakes College now gives students needed access to community services. At the Brainerd Campus, students can be connected to Bridges of Hope, Crow Wing County for SNAP and health insurance, Tri-County Community Action Partnership for SNAP and Lutheran Social Services for Energy Assistance.

A student life director, Erich Heppner, can be reached at erich.heppner@clcmn.edu at 218-855-8260.



An \$11.5 million renovation is complete at Central Lakes College in Brainerd where services for students are now more accessible and convenient. Submitted photos

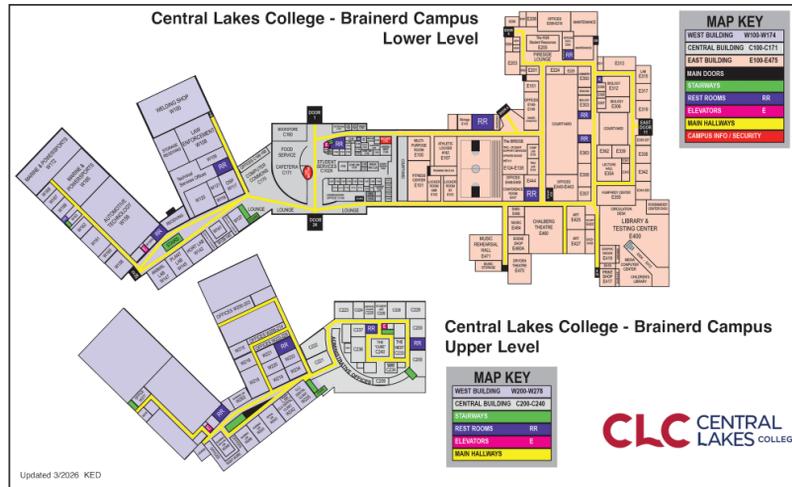
studying there during the day, I've seen students and staff getting coffee and treats from the food pantry, and many students bring bags of groceries home.

In this month of food share, readers might remember our college students who often have very little cash to live on after rent and school expenses are paid.

When I was in college, I knew of one girl who had to live on one pizza for a whole week and I don't want to see that happening to today's students.

The pantry distributed about 85,000 pounds of food last year and cannot keep up with the demand. You may donate by check to: CLC

Continued on Page 2



This map shows welcoming services in place in the blue area by Door 1 and the Hub area in the upper northeast quadrant of the Central Lakes College campus.

Kellee Rossina, a social worker, can be reached at Kellee.rossina@clcmn.edu 218-855-8024.

One very busy place is the on-campus food pantry located in The Hub. When



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Benefit March 21 for young leukemia patient



Family, friends and community members are coming together to support a local child facing a difficult health journey.

Ten-year-old Allison Dotzler, daughter of Matthew and Michelle Dotzler, was

recently diagnosed with leukemia and has begun chemotherapy treatments at Children's Minnesota Hospital. Following chemotherapy, she is scheduled to receive a bone marrow transplant at the University of Minnesota.

To help the family with medical and travel expenses, a community benefit will be held Saturday, March 21 from 3 to 7 p.m. at the Clarissa Ballroom, 19281 Kotter Rd, Clarissa.

The event will feature a free-will offering supper, along with a gun raffle, chance auction and live auction, giving attendees several ways to lend support while enjoying an evening together.

One of the event's biggest draws is a special raffle for an African Safari Hunt for two, donated by Numzaan Safaris and valued at \$7,635. Tickets are \$100 each, with only 150 tickets available.

Additional raffle prizes include:

- Second prize: a rifle

valued at more than \$1,000

- Third prize: an enclosed deer stand valued at more than \$1,000

Participants do not need to be present to win. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Neil Dotzler at 218-429-1326. Participants must be 18 years or older to gamble.

Those wishing to help but unable to attend the benefit may make monetary donations at any Unity Bank location to the "Allison Dotzler Benefit" account. Donations can also be sent via Venmo @mmdotzler.

This benefit is not only about raising funds, but also about surrounding Allison and her family with encouragement and community support, as they face the months ahead.

Community rallies

Residents looking to connect with neighbors and speak up about issues that matter are gathering each month in downtown Crosby for the Crosby Monthly Community Rally.

Held every third Saturday from 1 to 2:30 p.m., the rally takes place at the corner of Main Street and Third Street, near Red Raven Bike Cafe.

"Bring your signs and your voice. Support your community, meet your neighbors and have fun," said Barb Grove, organizer.

The gatherings are designed to be both energetic and welcoming, blending civic engagement with a festive atmosphere. Mu-

sic by the local group "Brass Tacks" adds a lively soundtrack as participants wave signs, greet passing motorists and voice their concerns.

In addition to the monthly event, organizers are also planning a "No Kings" rally on Saturday, March 28 at 2 p.m., with gatherings scheduled in three area communities.

Local rallies will take place in Crosby at the corner of Main and Third streets, in Aitkin at the stoplight downtown, and in Brainerd at the corner of Washington Street and Sixth Street.

Participants are encouraged to bring posters, signs or banners.



Central Lakes College | Continued from Page 1

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spoons, can openers, etc.

The pantry also delivers and student services has

vest Northland distributes food the first Thursday of each month at 10 .m. at

service on site for students with unique needs, such as foster youth, English Learn-

"Everything we do is about building futures for our students. This space now reflects our dreams for them - that when they walk in the door, they feel welcome and have all the resources they need to be successful. We've always had the people to do that, but now we have the equivalent space."

—Dr. Hara Charlier, President of Central Lakes College

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OBITUARY

VICTOR LIEN



Victor Alan Lien, 81, of Aitkin, MN, passed away March 2, 2026, from high-grade B-cell lymphoma.

A Celebration of Life will be held on June 6, 2026. Details to follow.

He was born October 12, 1944 in Berkeley, CA to Bernard and Alpha Lien. Victor served in the United States Army and later became a master electrician, proudly working over 55 years as a member of the IBEW Local 292.

Victor married Janet (Gesinger) November 19, 1966, had two children: son Gregory, and daughter Jennifer.

Victor is survived by his wife Janet, daughter Jennifer Preston (TJ), granddaughters: Taylor (Jake), Avery (Cam), and Kira; brother Kenneth (Kathryn) Lien, sister Mary Lien; extended family and many dear friends.

He was preceded in death by his son Greg Lien, parents, sisters: Janet Leuning and Thelma Thoreson, nephew Derek Lien and his Goldendoodle Zeke.

Full obituary at <http://www.cremationsocietyofmn.com>

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Artists showcase at Jaques Art Center

Art lovers will have a chance to meet local artists and view new work during a special reception at the Jaques Art Center on Saturday, March 14, from noon to 3 p.m.

The exhibit features the artists of Good Friend Studios—Donn Granros, Laura Heller, Linda Croteau and Jeff Lundeen—who have been painting together for more than 20 years.

All four artists studied oil painting under respected in-

structor Harvey Schroeder at his Elk River studio. Schroeder was deeply connected in the art community and introduced his students to workshops with nationally known painters including Carolyn Anderson, Mary Pettis, Bonnie Roberts, Skip Whitcomb and Lorenzo Chavez.

When Schroeder's studio closed during the COVID pandemic, the four longtime friends decided to continue their artistic journey together,

forming Good Friend Studios. Since then, they have continued studying, experimenting and developing their own individual styles while supporting each other's creative growth.

Though their approaches to painting differ, the artists share a deep respect for each other's perspectives and a common love of learning and creating.

The exhibit offers visitors a chance to see original works from each artist while enjoying the welcoming atmosphere of the Aitkin arts community.

The show will be on display at the Jaques Art Center this spring, with the March 14 reception giving visitors an opportunity to meet the artists, enjoy refreshments and explore the gallery. Admission to the reception and exhibit is free.

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