ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

October, 2026

First-Generation Alumni Share Their Stories of Success

Bay College TRIO Student Support Services welcomed first-generation alumni to the HUB Lounge for an informal Q&A celebrating the accomplishments of first-generation college students and the people and programs that help them succeed.

The conversation was facilitated by Erica Mead, Assistant Director of TRIO, and featured Martanna Schroeder, TRIO Academic Specialist; Ashley Borowski, TRIO Program Coordinator; and Julie Olson, Bay College alumna and Foundation Board member. All three are first-generation college students and proud Bay Alumni. Schroeder and Olson also attended college as non-traditional students.

The Schroeder-Borowski story offered a unique perspective on what it means to be first generation. Borowski attended college first, becoming the first in her family to pursue higher education. She attributes much of her her success to TRIO, "As a first-generation student, college felt completely unfamiliar. TRIO helped me navigate those first few scary weeks, but more importantly, it helped me build relationships and connect with mentors who shaped my college experience." Her mother, Schroeder, later followed her own path to college and was also considered first generation because her parents had not attended college.

The speakers shared candidly about uncertainty, returning to school later in life, balancing responsibilities, and learning when to ask for help. They also reflected on the moments that helped them realize they could succeed, from passing a first test or challenging math course to finding an instructor, tutor, or TRIO staff member who believed in them.



According to Schroeder, "TRIO didn't just help me get through college, it helped me believe I could succeed. Now I have the honor of being that support for the next generation of TRIO students."

TRIO Student Support Services is a federally funded program designed to help first-generation college students, students with financial need, and students with disabilities achieve their educational goals.

At Bay College, TRIO helps students succeed through personalized academic advising, career exploration, transfer and scholarship assistance, mentoring, and cultural activities. Students also have opportunities to visit colleges and build meaningful connections.

The alumni discussion reinforced an important message for first-generation students: you do not have to navigate college alone.

What's Inside

2 Call for 2027 Distinguished Alumni
3 Workforce Solutions
4 Message from the President
5 Foundation Updates
6 Arts & Culture on Campus
7 Norse Athletics

Call for Nominations: Bay College 2027 Distinguished Alumni Award



Each year, Bay College recognizes an outstanding graduate with its Distinguished Alumni Award. This honor celebrates alumni who have achieved professional success, made meaningful contributions to their communities, and maintained a strong connection to Bay College. The award recognizes individuals whose accomplishments reflect leadership, service, and lifelong learning. As part of the recognition, recipients are invited to return to Bay College as a commencement speaker, sharing their experiences and inspiring future graduates.

Nominations for the Distinguished Alumni Award are accepted year-round and can be submitted online at **baycollege.edu/nominatealumni**. To be eligible, nominees must have earned a degree from Bay College and graduated at least five years ago, allowing time to demonstrate professional success and community impact. Nominees should also have a history of civic or community involvement and accomplishments that extend beyond their regular job responsibilities. Current Bay College employees are not eligible.

All nominations are reviewed by the Bay College Alumni Committee and remain active for consideration for up to three years.

The nomination deadline for the 2027 Distinguished Alumni Award has been moved to **December 1, 2026**, to align with a new selection timeline. This change will allow future Distinguished Alumni recipients to serve as commencement speakers in the year they receive their award.
As Bay College transitions to this new timeline, two Distinguished Alumni will be recognized at the upcoming commencement ceremony: Dr. Thad Strom, the 2026 recipient, and the newly selected 2027 recipient.



Alumni Committee

Vicki DeGrand
Tina Jensen
Kathy Ryno
Nancy Przewrocki
Kathy Flagstadt
Laurie Mold
Larry Sundling
Kaylee Hubert

Alumni Engagement & Conference Services Coordinator
Laurie Mold
laurie.mold@baycollege.edu
Phone: (906) 217-4042

Alumni Spotlight

Every alumni has a story to tell!

Share your Bay story as a Monthly Alumni Spotlight and inspire the next generation!
Contact us: **alumni@baycollege.edu**
or call (906) 217-4042

Workforce Solutions: A Resource for Every Stage of Your Career

Graduation may mark the end of your time as a student, but it doesn't end your connection to Bay College. As careers evolve, alumni may be looking for a new opportunity, developing new skills, considering a career change, growing a team, or finding ways to give back.

Bay College's Workforce Development & Strategic Partnerships connects alumni, students, employers, and community members with resources for career growth, lifelong learning, and workforce development.

By listening to regional workforce and industry needs, Bay develops programs that help individuals and organizations build the skills they need to succeed. Opportunities include flexible online courses, professional development, leadership training, Nurse Aide Training, industry-recognized certifications, and customized employer training. Upcoming offerings include Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM®) Training beginning in February 2027.

Career resources also help turn exploration into opportunity. Focus 2 Career and What Can I Do With This Major? support academic and career exploration, while College Central Network connects current students and alumni with jobs and internships.





Alumni can stay involved by mentoring students, sharing professional expertise, participating in advisory and industry activities, or helping connect students with career opportunities. Employers can partner with Bay to develop employees, find talent, provide work-based learning opportunities, and create customized training.

Together, these connections strengthen individuals, organizations, and the regional workforce while keeping Bay alumni connected long after graduation.

No matter where your career takes you, Bay College remains proud to be part of your journey and looks forward to helping you explore what's next.

Ready to Connect? Whether you want to advance your career, explore lifelong learning, develop your workforce, find talent, or partner with Bay, we can help connect you with the right resource.

Explore Workforce Solutions
www.baycollege.edu/workforce

One Partner. Multiple Solutions.

A Message From President Hughes

Building Talent. Strengthening Communities. Creating Opportunity.

Dear Bay College Alumni and Friends,



Bay College President
Dr. Nerita Hughes

For more than six decades, Bay College has helped students build careers, support families, and strengthen communities. As our region faces workforce shortages, changing industries, and new technologies, our mission remains clear: helping people access meaningful educational and career opportunities.

One area of significant momentum is workforce development. Bay College is increasingly serving as a workforce partner, connecting employers, educators, workforce organizations, government agencies, and community partners to strengthen the relationship between education and employment. Our apprenticeship initiatives, dual enrollment opportunities, and workforce partnerships reflect our commitment to creating multiple pathways to success.

Another exciting development is the advancement of Bay College's Manufacturing Innovation Center. More than a new facility, it represents an investment in the future workforce and economic vitality of the Upper Peninsula. The Center will enhance our ability to respond to emerging industry needs while expanding collaboration with regional partners.



At the heart of all these efforts is student success. Through initiatives such as Achieving the Dream and Rural Guided Pathways, we are improving the student experience and strengthening connections between education, career preparation, and employment outcomes. Our goal is not only to help students earn credentials, but also to support their long-term success.

As alumni, you are among the strongest examples of Bay College's impact. Across the Upper Peninsula and beyond, Bay graduates are leading businesses, serving their communities, caring for others, and creating opportunities for the next generation.

You remind us that the value of a Bay College education extends far beyond graduation. As we look to the future, I hope you will remain connected to Bay College through mentorship, partnership, engagement, and the sharing of your experiences.

The groundwork of the past several years has positioned us for meaningful and lasting impact. Together, we have an exciting opportunity to strengthen our students, our communities, and our region. Thank you for being an important part of the Bay College story and an important part of what comes next.

With appreciation and Bay pride,

Nerita Hughes

Dr. Nerita L. Hughes
President, Bay College

Bay College Foundation Makes An Impact

The Bay College Foundation had a busy summer and carried that momentum into the fall semester with a continued focus on supporting students, creating opportunities, and strengthening the Bay College experience. Through scholarships, student support, and investments that enhance the campus learning environment, the Foundation remains committed to helping students succeed, both in the classroom and beyond.

Celebrating 35 Years on the Green
Each July, the Bay College Foundation hosts its annual Golf Outing at the Escanaba Country Club. This year marked a special milestone as the event celebrated its 35th anniversary!

The outing was a record-breaking success, with team registration filling in less than two weeks, 50 generous sponsors, and proceeds exceeding $40,000. Funds raised directly support student scholarships, helping make a Bay College education more accessible.

Beyond fundraising, the event brings together Bay College supporters, alumni, business leaders, and friends for a day of fun, conversation, networking, and, of course, a little golf! The Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to another successful year.

Investing in Student Success
This academic year, the Bay College Foundation awarded more than $800,000 in scholarships to Bay College students, made possible through the generous support of individuals, businesses, and organizations.

These scholarships make a tremendous difference, helping students stay enrolled, overcome financial obstacles, and achieve their educational goals. For alumni who received scholarships during their time at Bay College, the impact of that support is often something they understand firsthand.

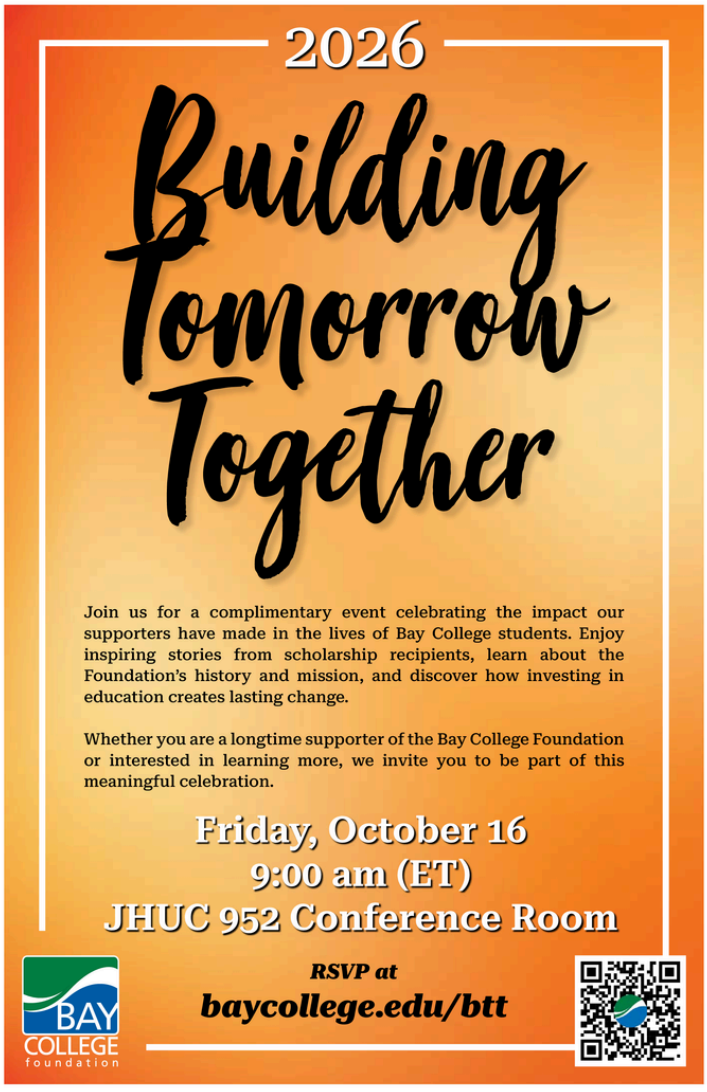
Students face a variety of financial challenges that extend well beyond tuition. Food, transportation, childcare, books, and other everyday expenses can all become barriers to completing a college education.

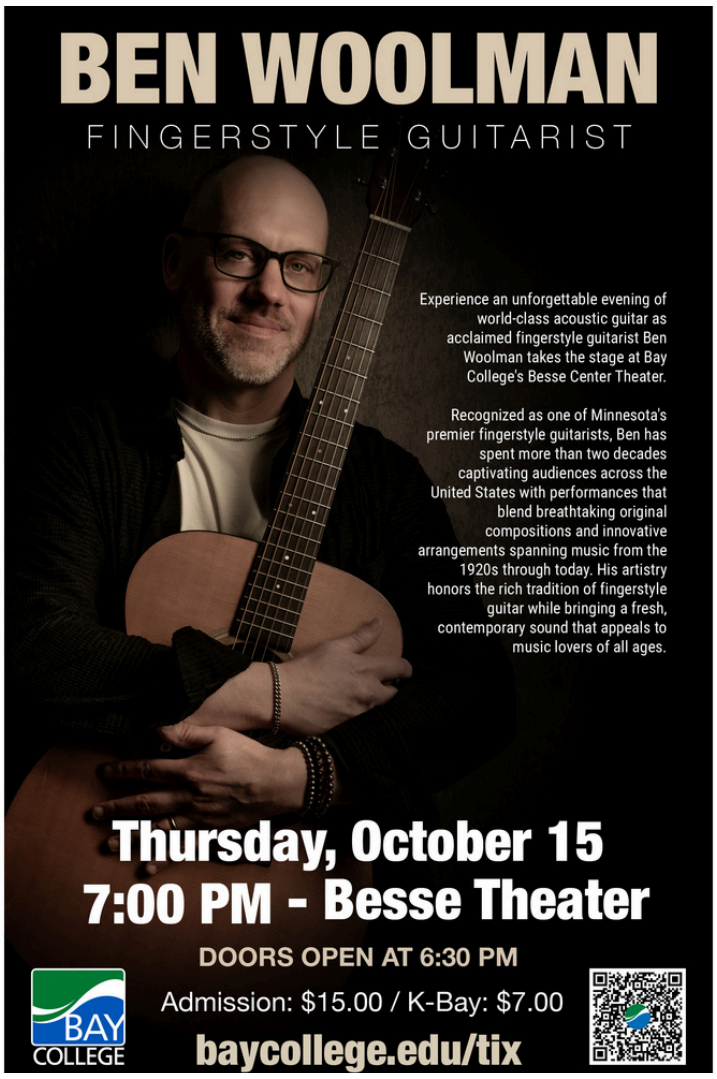
Every contribution helps remove those barriers and provides students with the resources they need to keep moving forward.

Bay College Foundation Makes an Impact
Whether reconnecting with Bay College, sharing alumni stories, attending Foundation events, or making a gift to support students, the continued involvement of the Bay College community makes a lasting difference.

The Bay College Foundation is grateful for the generosity and commitment of its supporters, whose contributions help today's students succeed and build a stronger future for the entire community.

To learn more or explore ways to support Bay College students, visit www.baycollege.edu/foundation or contact the Bay College Foundation office.







Arts & Culture on Campus

OCTOBER

15 **Tim Cleary/Artist Reception**
2 pm ET - Besse Center North Gallery

15 **Ben Woolman: Fingerstyle Guitarist**
7 pm ET - Besse Center Theater

16 **Building Tomorrow Together**
9 am ET - Escanaba Campus - JHUC 952

22 **Bay Film Series "Olmo"**
7 pm ET - Besse Center Theater

23 **Trunk or Treat**
4:30 pm - 6:30 pm ET - Parking Lot A
Escanaba Campus

29 **You Tao/Artist Reception**
2 pm ET - Hartwig Gallery

NOVEMBER

12 **Bay Film Series "Hadestown-The Musical"**
7 pm ET - Besse Center Theater

DECEMBER

1 **Day of Giving with the Escanaba City Band**
7 pm ET - Besse Center Theater

3 **Bay Film Series "Finding Emily"**
7 pm ET - Besse Center Theater

Visit baycollege.edu/events
for tickets and information about upcoming events

Bay College Athletics: Schedules

Norse Athletics Home Game Schedule

Women's Volleyball
10/14 6:30pm vs North Central MI
10/16 6:30pm vs Gogebic Community College
10/28 6:30pm vs Alpena Community College

Men's Basketball
10/21 3pm vs Lake Superior State University
10/30 5pm vs Minnesota N. College-Hibbing
10/31 4pm vs Minnesota N. College-Itasca
12/9 8:30pm vs Gogebic Community College
12/12 3pm vs Lake Michigan College

Women's Basketball
10/30 3pm vs Kalamazoo Valley Community College
10/31 2pm vs Jackson College
12/9 5:30pm vs Gogebic Community College
12/12 1pm vs Lake Michigan College

Check out the Norse Family Weekend activities on page 6



Bay College Volleyball Climbs to the Top

The Bay College Norse Volleyball team continues to build momentum this season. After starting the year 0-4, the team rallied with an impressive 8-2 stretch and currently sits at 8-6 overall and 3-2 in conference play, holding second place in the division under the leadership of Head Coach, Dan Porath.



The Norse have also earned recognition across the MCCAA North Division. Ava Johnson captured back-to-back Player of the Week honors, earning Offensive Player of the Week and then Defensive Player of the Week in consecutive weeks. Continuing the team's strong run, Kharman Loya-Magallanes was recently named MCCAA North Division Defensive Player of the Week, marking three straight weeks that a Bay College student-athlete has received conference recognition.

This year's roster includes 16 student-athletes, with most coming from communities within a two-hour radius of campus. Fourteen team members have earned athletic scholarships, highlighting both their talent and commitment to academic and athletic success.

Bay College is also proud to see former Norse athletes continuing their volleyball careers at the next level. Jade Jasenovsky is currently competing at Wheeling University in West Virginia, while Hilarie Porcaro is playing at Westfield State University in Massachusetts. With a talented roster, strong local representation, and continued conference recognition, the future remains bright for Bay College Volleyball.

GO Norse!

Visit baynorse.com for complete schedules and ticketing information!