

# Mesabi Range Foundation Newsletter

Volume 1  
Number 5  
February, 2023

*It's Great to be a Part of the Mesabi Family*

*By Scott Wirtanen, Foundation Coordinator*

During the 2021-22 academic year, I was asked to serve as a member on the Mesabi Range College Foundation Board. In October, 2022, I was delighted to accept the job offer from the Mesabi Range College Foundation to be its Foundation Coordinator.

My family has been associated with the "Mesabi Family" since 1967. My father, Bill, began teaching at Virginia Junior College, and worked 33 years as an instructor, coach and administrator at Mesabi until he retired in 1999. My mother, Joan, was instrumental in opening up the Wee Care Center at Mesabi in the mid-1970's, providing day care services to help non-traditional students earn their college degree while raising their families. My wife and I both graduated from Mesabi Community College, as well as my brother and sister. When the Foundation Coordinator position was vacated, I was very excited to have the opportunity to work for the Foundation, and be able to give back for all the opportunities my family received from the college.

I am grateful for the assistance I received during our transition period from our former Foundation Coordinator Kim Pittman. Kim worked for the Foundation for three years prior to accepting a position with Cleveland Cliffs as a Senior Buyer in April, 2022.

The first few months as the Coordinator kept me very busy. We have secured new student scholarship opportunities from the Iron Range Engineering Career Fair, Cleveland Cliffs, the Knights and Ladies of Kaleva, the Mt. Iron Lion's Club, the Iron Range Rotary Club, and have finalized the details of the Bill Ogden Scholarship with the Wells Fargo Trust office.

*Continued on page 2.....*

## **Board Accomplishments and Future Goals**

- October: Updated the Foundation Website.
- October—December: Conducted a Successful Year-End Appeal Campaign.
- November: Revised the Annual Activity Calendar.
- November: Established a PayPal Account.
- December: Opened Award Spring.
- December: Held a Coffee 'An Social for Bill Lessar and Family.
- January: Elected Annie Bachschneider-Perkio to the Board of Directors.



### *Board Members*

Sue Medure . . . . .President  
Luke Chopp . . . . .Vice President  
Gary Picek . . . . . Secretary  
Elizabeth Pluskwik. . . . .Treasurer  
Annie Bachschneider  
Perkio . . . . . Director  
Mary Gorman . . . . . Director  
Tom Inforzato . . . . . Director  
Shelly Jugovich . . . . .Director  
Brenda Kochevar . . . . .Director  
Mark Muhich . . . . .Director  
Kim Pittman . . . . .Director  
Scott Wirtanen . . . Office Coordinator

Office Phone: 218-550-2519

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mesabirange@minnesotanorth.edu](mailto:Foundation-mesabirange@minnesotanorth.edu)

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## *Calendar of Events*

<i>February 28</i>	Foundation Board Meeting
<i>March 3-10</i>	Spring Break
<i>March 19</i>	Scholarship Application Deadline
<i>March 28</i>	Foundation Board Meeting
<i>April 9</i>	Easter Sunday
<i>April 25</i>	Foundation Board Meeting Selection of Scholarship Recipients
<i>May 10</i>	Graduation at 4 PM at Iron Trail Motors Event Center

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*The Board of Directors of the Mesabi Range Foundation  
meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 12:00 noon.*

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## *It's Great to be a Part of the Mesabi Family*

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We currently have 53 organizations and donors that give out approximately 75 individual scholarships each year. During the 2022-23 academic year the Foundation paid out over \$107,000 in scholarships to our students. All of the scholarships offered through the Foundation can be found on our website, at <https://minnesotanorth.edu/campuses/mesabi-range-virginia/foundation> listed under the Scholarship Opportunities section.

We are currently in the middle of the scholarship application period, and are preparing to meet future students at the Mesabi Range – Virginia Campus Open House on March 16<sup>th</sup>. We will close our scholarship application process on March 19<sup>th</sup>, and award the 2023-24 academic year scholarships by April 28<sup>th</sup>.

The Foundation's Mission and Vision is to assist Mesabi Range Campuses in promoting extraordinary education opportunities for the students, faculty, staff, and administration, while delivering the highest value and most affordable option for a college education. I look forward to continuing to be a part of the amazing support our Foundation and its members provide the Mesabi Range Campuses, its staff and students.

If you ever have any questions regarding the Foundation, I can be reached at 218-550-2519. My office hours are 7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Monday-Thursday, so please feel free to stop in and visit when you are at the Virginia Campus.

# *Campus Update*

*By Jodi Pontinen, Director of Operations*

Please join me in welcoming Scott Wirtanen as the new Mesabi Range Foundation Coordinator. Scott has an impressive background in finance and office operations. He has a long personal and family tie to Mesabi Range College and has been a dedicated supporter of our athletic department and college in general for many years. Scott's most recent position as the Secretary of the Foundation Board lead him to pursuing this position. The Foundation Coordinator's daily operation was managed by the hard work and support of several board volunteers, including Scott, during the vacancy of this position from June to October. Scott's extensive financial background, knowledge of Mesabi Range campus operations and support to the Foundation for many years allowed him to hit the ground running. He has made a great impact in many areas within this position including moving the Foundation board's visions forward since October when he was hired.

The Virginia campus is proud to report that the newly updated Lesar Student Success Center has become a hub for our students. Students can be found any time of the day studying, getting tutored in a variety of subjects, or enjoying the quiet space. Our student athletes are often found at group study tables and faculty have found it a great space for open lab sessions for small group projects. The esthetic improvements to the athletic wing with wall and door wraps and the addition of a new trophy case which showcases athletic achievements from our past have also been greatly admired. We cannot express our appreciation enough to Mr. Lesar for his generous donation to these projects. Thank you to the Foundation and Mary Gorman for facilitating these improvements.

We are excited to announce that the Mesabi Range Campus theatre is active again since the COVID shut down. The Laurentian Arts and Culture Alliance (Lyric Center for the Arts) performed "A Christmas Story—The Musical" with seven successful shows in early December. The stage also hosted a presentation by Dr. George Erickson titled, "Unintended Consequences: The Lie That Killed Millions and Accelerated Climate Change." Seeing the theatre in use again has brought back great memories of community members flooding in to see many of the past musicals and orchestra performances. We look forward to seeing future events on campus and in our community.

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*Give Us A Call!*

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## *Changes in Foundation Contact Information*

With the change to the Minnesota North College, our contact information has changed as follows:

Our current Foundation Coordinator is Scott Wirtanen. His email address is [scott.wirtanen@minnesotanorth.edu](mailto:scott.wirtanen@minnesotanorth.edu)

Telephone – 218-550-2519

Foundation email – [foundation-mesabirange@minnesotanorth.edu](mailto:foundation-mesabirange@minnesotanorth.edu)

## Annie Bachschneider Perkio

At the January 24, 2023 Board meeting, the Foundation Board appointed Annie Bachschneider Perkio as a new Director. Annie is currently employed as the Foundation Associate for the Essentia Health Virginia Regional Foundation and has been with this role since April 2021. She is also an Iron Range Rotarian and enjoys volunteering for the Virginia Community Foundation as help is needed.

When asked why she was interested in serving on the Mesabi Range College Foundation Board, she replied - "As a Mesabi Range Alumni (May 2019) and recipient of scholarships through the Mesabi Range Foundation, I understand the importance of advocating for local community colleges. At my time at St. Scholastica, I truly fell in love with higher education and believe that young people are what our community needs to thrive and be successful long term. There is truly no better place for people to either complete a college career, or start a college career, than at their local community college."

Annie looks forward to assisting the Board in Fundraising, Special Events, Strategic Planning, Public Relations, Technology and our Capital Campaign.

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*Welcome New Board Member Annie!*

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## *New Scholarships for 2023-24*

For the 2023-24 academic year, the Foundation is excited to announce the following new scholarship opportunities for the students on the Mesabi Range Campuses.

**Mt. Iron Lion's Club Scholarship –**

This \$1,000 scholarship will be awarded to a graduate from the Mt. Iron-Buhl school district.

**Iron Range Engineering Career Fair Scholarship –**

Two \$1,000 scholarships awarded to students enrolled in the Pre-engineering curriculum with a stated engineering major, or a student registered in the Iron Range Engineering program at the Mesabi Range Campus through Mankato State University – Mankato.

**William Ogden Scholarship –**

Four \$4,200 scholarships will be awarded in the name of former educator William Ogden. These scholarships will be awarded to students attending the Mesabi Range – Virginia campus, and may be renewable in the student's second year if they meet the requirements of the scholarship.

**Virginia Ladies and Knights of Kaleva Scholarship –**

This \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a returning student maintaining a 3.0 GPA, with preference given to students of Finnish decent.

**Cleveland Cliffs Scholarship –**

Two \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to students with at least a 3.0 GPA and majoring in Engineering or IMT.

**Iron Range Rotary Community Service Scholarship –**

Two \$750 scholarships will be awarded to second-year students at the Eveleth Campus. The scholarship recipients must be active in volunteer service, demonstrate a financial need, and maintain a 2.5 GPA.

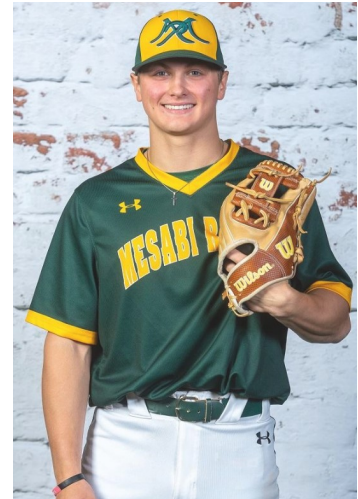
# Student Profiles

Nick Peters, a 2021 graduate from Virginia High School played baseball, basketball, and football from 7th to 12th grade. Currently, he is a sophomore at Mesabi Range and will graduate this spring with an Associate of Arts Degree.

At Mesabi Range, Nick plays shortstop on the Norse Baseball Team. Last year he was selected to the All-Academic Team, MCAC Elite Team, and North All Division Second Team. He decided Mesabi was the right fit for him because of the immediate bond he formed with his teammates and his coach, Chris Vito.

Next year, Nick plans to transfer to a four-year college, major in business, and play baseball. He would like to own his own business one day. This semester, his favorite class is microeconomics because his teacher makes the class interesting and enjoyable. His favorite pastimes include spending time with family and friends, baseball, and lifting.

For the 2022-23 school year, Nick was awarded the Andrew Lang Scholarship from the Mesabi Range Foundation and the William Monat Scholarship from the Mesabi Range Alumni Association. He said, "The scholarships that I received this year mean the world to me. I am humbled and blessed to be selected."



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## *Nice Job Nick and Kylee!*

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Kylee Huusko graduated from Hibbing High School in 2022 where she played volleyball for eight years, beginning in the fifth grade. Today she attends Mesabi Range where she is working on an AS degree in Health Sciences. After Mesabi, Kylee will attend a four-year university where she will major in Biology. Her ultimate goal is to attend Optometry school and become a Doctor of Optometry.

Kylee decided to attend Mesabi Range because the student-to-teacher ratio allows her one-on-one help when needed, the students and staff have been very welcoming, and all her teachers know her by name. She added, "It was also very special to my Grandpa, Terry Huusko, and one of my mentors, Dr. Matt Sipola, (an optometrist), that I begin my college journey at Mesabi Range. After all, they are both Mesabi alums!" She was also able to continue her volleyball career as an outside hitter for the Norse Volleyball Team and was selected to the MCAC All Northern Division 2nd Team Honors, MCAC Elite Team, and All Academic Team.

This semester, Kylee's favorite class is Anatomy and Physiology II because the various class topics interest her the most. In addition to a full academic load, Kylee works at the Chrysler Center, enjoys time with family and friends, likes to read, attend dirt track races, travel, play recreation volleyball, and exercise.

In addition to receiving the Bausch and Lomb Honorary Science Award and the Yale Book Award, Kylee received the Twin Cities Iron Ranger Association Scholarship and the Kraker Memorial Scholarship from the Mesabi Range Foundation and the Pat & Babs Dimberio Memorial Scholarship from the Mesabi Range Alumni Association. She is very grateful for the scholarships she received and said, "The scholarships enabled me to further my education with very little financial burden for my parents and me. I believe that applying for scholarships is an important step that everyone should take."

## Sara Matuszak, Coach of the Year



Sara Matuszak was first introduced to the sport of volleyball when she was a sixth grader in Cotton, Minnesota. Her interest in volleyball continued to grow and two years later she earned a spot on the varsity team where she played for the next five years. From 1991-1993, she played for Mesabi Community College and in her sophomore year, her team earned the title of Northern Division Champions.

In 1997, Sara's passion for volleyball led her to a coaching career at a middle school in Minneapolis. For the next 20 plus years, she held various counseling/coaching positions in Cotton, Cherry (2011 State Participants), Hibbing Community College (2017 Region 13 Runners Up), and finally at Mesabi Range College in 2018.

Volleyball has taught Sara the importance of teamwork because volleyball is the ultimate team sport. Besides serving, there is no individual aspect to the game. The team has to work together. Trust is the other component a team needs to be successful. She said, "As a coach, I have learned that the more I invest into team building, the more I will get from the team on the court."

Sara worked as a high school counselor for seven years before accepting a counseling position at Mesabi Range College in 2004. In addition to coaching volleyball, she currently teaches Sociology and Psychology. She is married, has four children, five dogs, and two cats. In her spare time, she is an active Board President for Contented Critters Animal Shelter, enjoys spending time with her family, and raises money for the shelter animals.

In terms of wins/losses and post season play, 2022 was one of Sara's best years of coaching. Mesabi finished with a 19-8 record, was crowned the MCAC Northern Division Champions, and hosted the Region Tournament. One of her players, Kaelynn Kudis, was named player of the year and first team All-American... and Sara... was named Coach of the Year. She said, "I was very honored and surprised to win coach of the year. It was very special to be recognized for something I have dedicated most of my life to."

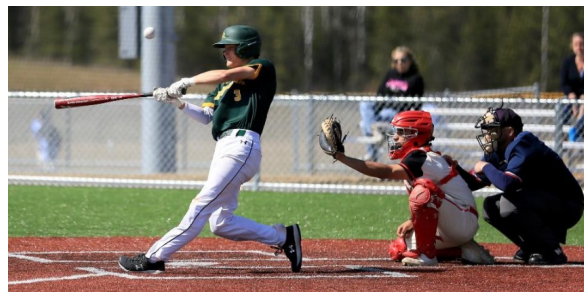
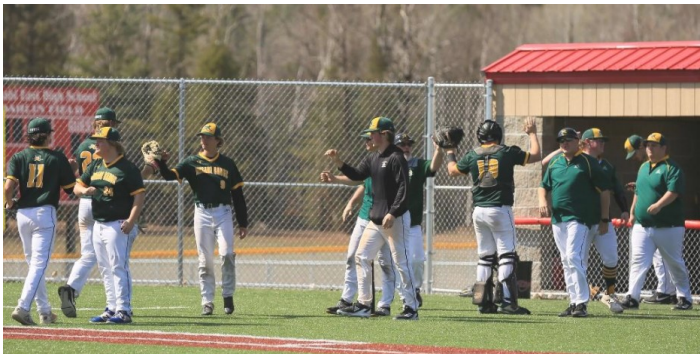
Next year, Sara will continue coaching volleyball. She has 16 committed players ready to defend their Northern Division Championship and hopefully be tough competitors in the region tournament.



2022 MCAC Northern Division Champions

## *2023 Norse Baseball Schedule*

<b>DATE</b>	<b>OPPONENT</b>	<b>SITE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
March 2 (Thurs)	Bryant & Stratton (WI)	Lake Myrtle (A)	1:00 pm
March 2 (Thurs)	Western Tech (WI)	Lake Myrtle (A)	4:00 pm
March 3 (Fri)	Jackson (MI)	Lake Myrtle (A)	3:30 pm
March 4 (Sat)	Owens (OH)	Lake Myrtle (A)	2:00 pm
March 6 (Sat)	Glen Oaks (MI)	Lake Myrtle (A)	4:30 pm
March 7 (Sun)	Mid-Michigan	NERP (A)	1:00 pm
March 17 (Fri)	St. Johns JV	Collegeville (A)	2:00 pm
March 18 (Sat)	St. Johns JV	Collegeville (A)	12:00 pm
March 22 (Wed)	Vermilion	Aurora (A)	12:00 pm
March 25 (Sat)	MN-State-Fergus Falls	Aurora (A)	10:00 am
March 26 (Sun)	Alexandria Tech	Aurora (A)	10:00 am
March 29 (Wed)	Itasca	Aurora (A)	12:00 pm
March 31 (Fri)	Riverland Tournament	Austin (A)	TBA
April 1 (Sat)	Riverland Tournament	Austin (A)	TBA
April 5 (Wed)	DCTC	Rosemount (A)	2:00 pm
April 7 (Fri)	Rainy River	Aurora (A)	1:00 pm
April 15 (Sat)	Itasca	Aurora (A)	1:00 pm
April 16 (Sun)	Itasca	Aurora (A)	1:00 pm
April 19 (Wed)	Rainy River	I-Falls (A)	1:00 pm
April 22 (Sat)	Northland	Thief River Falls (A)	1:00 pm
April 23 (Sun)	Northland	Thief River Falls (A)	1:00 pm
April 26 (Wed)	Rainy River	Stock Field (A)	1:00 pm
April 29 (Sat)	Vermilion	Ely (A)	1:00 pm
April 30 (Sun)	Vermilion	Stock Field (A)	1:00 pm



## 2023 Norse Softball Schedule

<b>DATE</b>	<b>OPPONENT</b>	<b>SITE</b>	<b>TIME</b>
March 22 (Wed)	DCTC	Blaine (A)	7:30 am
March 22 (Wed)	St. Cloud	Blaine (A)	9:15 am
March 22 (Wed)	Itasca	Blaine (A)	11:15 am
April 7 (Fri)	Northland (DH)	Blaine (A)	6:00 pm
April 8 (Sat)	Vermilion (DH)	Blaine (A)	12:00 pm
April 12 (Wed)	Itasca (DH)	Grand Rapids (A)	3:00 pm
April 15 (Sat)	Central Lakes (DH)	Virginia	12:00 pm
April 19 (Wed)	Rainy River (DH)	I-Falls (A)	3:00 pm
April 22 (Sat)	Hibbing (DH)	Hibbing (A)	12:00 pm
April 23 (Sun)	Northland (DH)	Virginia	12:00 pm
April 26 (Wed)	Vermilion (DH)	Virginia	3:00 pm
April 29 (Sat)	Itasca (DH)	Virginia	12:00 pm
April 30 (Sun)	Central Lakes (DH)	Brainerd	12:00 pm
May 3 (Wed)	Rainy River (DH)	Virginia	3:00 pm
May 6 (Sat)	Hibbing (DH)	Virginia	12:00 pm





# Easy Ways to Donate!

The members of the Mesabi Range Foundation are grateful for your support of our students at Mesabi Range. The Mesabi Range College Foundation's mission is to support the Minnesota North College - Mesabi Range Campuses (Virginia and Eveleth) in the work it does to provide an extraordinary education to our students!

Your support has provided students with over \$100,000 in scholarships each year over the past several years. These funds make a real difference to our students, many of whom are adult learners, athletes away from home, and students from our community.

As the College has transitioned from Mesabi Range College to the Minnesota North College-Mesabi Range campuses, several changes have been made to the logo, name, and websites - but the mission of the Foundation and the students who rely on our support has not changed a bit. In fact, the need is great.

The Mesabi Range College Foundation:

- ★ Facilitates approximately \$100,000 of tuition support annually through Scholarships – \$1.7 million to over 4,500 students so far!
- ★ Accepts monetary donations from individuals, businesses, and organizations on behalf of Mesabi Range Campuses.
- ★ Facilitates in-kind donations and grant opportunities for the College.

## Be part of the positive impact!

Make donations online: go to this webpage →

<https://minnesotanorth.edu/campuses/mesabi-range-virginia/foundation/>

Scroll down to "Donations" and click the "+".

Donations +

Click the "Donate Now" button

Donate



- Mail a check made out to *Mesabi Range College Foundation* to Mesabi Range College Foundation Office  
1001 West Chestnut Street, Virginia, MN 55792



- Call Office Coordinator Scott Wirtanen at 218-550-2519



- Email [foundation-mesabirange@minnesotanorth.edu](mailto:foundation-mesabirange@minnesotanorth.edu)

Thank you for your support!

Keep your compass pointed north to find the education you need. Minnesota North College offers programs in a variety of areas of expertise all designed to give you an on-campus college experience unlike anything else you will find. Our six campus locations across Northern Minnesota will ensure you find plenty of off campus activities as well. Let us help you reach your goal of finding an educational experience leading to the career of your dreams. All while you...

## Head North



# Mesabi Range Campus Foundation

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