



HOLDREGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Giving Back to Education

HHS Alumni Recognition Feature!

Dear HHS Alumni and HPS Foundation Supporters,

Holdrege High School is fortunate to have many very successful graduates. We are excited to continue sharing the stories of some of those HHS Alums thanks to the journalistic talents of Kristine (Long) Jacobson, Class of 1990.

We also welcome your suggestions and comments and encourage you to join the Duster Alumni Association (*see form below*).

Sincerely,

*Matt Allmand, Chairman
HPS Foundation Committee*

Tyler Grassmeyer - Class of 1998

HHS grad leads successful primary campaign for Ben Sasse

By Kristine Jacobson

When Nebraska Senate candidate Ben Sasse won a major victory in the 2014 primary election, a Holdrege High School graduate was a big part of the reason why. Tyler Grassmeyer, class of 1998, served as Sasse's Campaign Manager. It was his first time managing a statewide campaign.

According to a World-Herald article after the primary, Grassmeyer helped "assemble what was arguably one of the most brilliantly run campaigns in recent Nebraska history."

He said his key to success was simply following the Golden Rule. "It just goes back to the small-town roots and manners," he said. "I think the one thing that can train anyone for life is just to treat people with respect. That goes back to how I was raised in a small town. It goes back to the values that my mom and dad instilled." His parents are Randy and Debby Grassmeyer, who still live in Holdrege.

HHS teachers also encouraged him on his career path. Tyler said teachers like Jerry Buck, Diana Sall, and Jeff Van Eperen had an impact on him because their teaching extended beyond class subjects. "Those teachers really stand out to me as high school teachers who really prepared kids for life," Tyler said. "They



*Tyler, Kathryn, and
Charlotte Grassmeyer*

really teach kids more than just biology and English."

Tyler was involved in band, choir, football, basketball, and FCA in high school.

"I think one thing that is just great about a town like Holdrege is that you have the opportunity to try and excel at about anything that you want," he said. "A town like Holdrege does a great job offering opportunities for kids to find out what's their thing. It's amazing to see the opportunities that Holdrege High School provides for kids that they then are able to take and expand upon that in their schooling and life experiences and continue to move on and excel. It's pretty remarkable."

During Tyler's junior year of high school, he traveled to D.C. as part of the National Young Leader's Conference. "As a kid going to DC for the first time, it was inspiring," Tyler said. "I knew that's where I wanted to be at some point."

And, that is what he did. After he graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in Advertising, he began work in the political

world. He moved to D.C. and began working with Sen. Chuck Hagel. He then moved back to Nebraska in 2004 to help with the U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry campaign. He followed Fortenberry back to D.C., and that is when he met Ben Sasse.

Their friendship continued throughout the years and when Sasse, president of Midland University, was encouraged to run for the Senate position opened by the retirement of Mike Johanns, he sought out Tyler to lead his campaign.

Although Tyler realized how hard it would be to spend so much time away from his wife, Kathryn, and 20-month-old daughter, Charlotte, he knew he had to say yes. "The fact that it was Ben Sasse made it a completely easy decision," Tyler said. "He is a very special person."

The campaign was challenging. Sasse was among five Republican candidates vying for the position in Congress. "In Nebraska, we are not used to five candidates running for Senate all at the same time," Tyler said.

His first obstacle was to gain name recognition for his candidate. When Sasse announced his decision to run in the fall of 2013, he had 3 percent name recognition. "Nobody knew who he was," Tyler said. "We had to get people to know the Ben Sasse that we all knew."

Tyler and his team helped Sasse gain that name recognition through conducting town-hall meetings in all 93 Nebraska counties. "We invited people to come and talk to Ben about the future of the country," Tyler said. "It didn't matter if it was a big town like Omaha or a small town like Valentine."

Tyler assembled a team of 15 staff and many volunteers and oversaw the town hall meetings, the media coverage, social media, and paid advertising. "We integrated all that together and had a pretty successful campaign in the primary," Tyler said. Sasse won 92 of the 93 counties in Nebraska with nearly 50 percent of the vote.



Although the team was thrilled for the primary victory, the hard work now continues into the Nov. 4 general election. "We remind ourselves every day that we haven't won yet," Tyler said. "We've been running on all cylinders, working 60 to 80 hours a week since last October."

When he's not working on the campaign, Tyler spends as much time as possible with his wife and daughter at their home in Alexandria, Va., and still loves to watch the Huskers play football on television. He even still has time for occasional game of golf.

Tyler said the time commitment has been worth it as he continues to work for a Sasse victory this fall.

After the election, Tyler said he could see himself continuing a career in politics or in the private sector, as long as it involves serving and working with people. "This is a really neat opportunity to be able to serve and work on the big problems that our country and nation face today," he said.

About Us

The mission of the HPS Foundation is to support and enhance the educational efforts of students and teachers of Holdrege Public Schools by providing funding for innovative and challenging programs, learning experiences, and activities.

Holdrege Public Schools Foundation

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