As winter ends and spring begins, we not only feel the warmth of the sun and see the blooming flowers, but we begin to heat and brighten our remaining time with our seniors. We always have a series of events that focus on our graduating class as it finalizes its time on-campus and prepares for life after Mooseheart.

Graduation represents the culmination of a journey for the Class of 2019. This moment is clearly one of the most exciting times that they will experience in their young lives, and we at Mooseheart, and within the Moose Fraternity are blessed in sharing it with them. There is a sense of accomplishment and joy for everyone involved.

Each graduate will experience a wide range of emotions as graduation day approaches. Many students don't believe these feelings will exist when they assemble in the Mooseheart Fieldhouse for the Commencement ceremony, which takes place this year on June 1. However, those emotions always come to the forefront as each senior begins his or her journey down the aisle, with the fieldhouse full with more than 1,000 Moose members and families. Tears may run down their faces, while others will visibly show a nervousness they previously thought would not exist. No matter what emotions are exhibited, those in attendance will share in the same emotions.

Although graduation marks the end of the structured period in a student’s stay at Mooseheart, it also launches the chance of deeper connections with those who have helped and hopefully inspired them along the way. We strongly encourage our graduates each year to remain in contact with those at Mooseheart. We also encourage continued connections with those in the Fraternity, who have inspired our graduates from a distance, including the sponsoring lodges and chapters and those involved in the Sunshine program.

We are so fortunate in having the Moose Fraternity spread over numerous miles and the many connections we have with so many Moose members. The link between the Moose and Mooseheart is unique. That is the power of the Moose and the special bond that is created when you become a member. Thanks for all that you do to support the success of our graduates.

God bless Mooseheart, our Fraternity, and the Class of 2019.

— Gary Urwiler, Mooseheart Executive Director
Mooseheart received over 400 Valentines for students and the school cafeteria was decorated by volunteers as a surprise for Valentine’s week!

81 students kept track of their individual Active Minutes during February’s Fitness Contest. 55 of the 81 did something active for at least 30 minutes each day! The top four winners accumulated over 3,000 minutes each which means they were intentionally active for over 2 hours each day!

The winter of 2018-19 broke records temperature for Mooseheart, with -29 below zero actual temperature recorded on January 31.

Pennsylvania 1st 25,652
Washington 2nd 17,629
Virginia 3rd 17,077
West Virginia 4th 16,270
Marinello 5th 14,125
North Carolina 6th 10,050
Canada 7th 9,877
Indiana 8th 6,795
Minnesota 9th 2,070
Total minutes 119,545

Amanda 3,675
Gracie 3,348
Jeannine 3,655
Pauline 3,119
Exciting Events

Bridge Breaking
Senior Amanda Jones took first place in Mooseheart’s annual bridge breaking competition with Anthony Gomez the runner-up. Physics teacher Curt Schlinkmann began the contest in 1987. He will retire from his position this fall after serving the Mooseheart community since 1973.

Alaska Visit
In November members of the Alaska Moose Association travelled more than 3,000 miles to provide more than 300 pounds of halibut and salmon for a fabulous fish feast at Mooseheart campus!

Wisconsin Tree Lighting

Homecoming
Senior Victoria Obe is all smiles after being named Mooseheart’s 2018 Homecoming queen.

Visitors to this years’ Wisconsin Tree Lighting at the House of God were greeted by a host of Mooseheart angels.

Trick-or-Treat
Halloween at Mooseheart brought out some Minnesota Home wild animals, the inner flower child of Colleen Morgan, Assistant to Executive Director Gary Urwiler and a beautiful Virginia girl rainbow!
From The Mouth

Three seniors reflect on their time at Mooseheart and share some thoughts about their future.

What is your best memory from your time at Mooseheart?
Winning the regional basketball championship in 2018.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?
Scoring 1,000 points in my basketball career.

What plans do you have after graduation?
I’m going to work this summer to save money and then attend college and play basketball.

How do you plan to serve others after leaving Mooseheart?
I want to become an elementary school teacher. I’d also love to travel the world and support the homeless.

What advice would you leave with those following you at Mooseheart?
Don’t fight the system. It will get easier if you will cooperate.

What is your best memory from your time at Mooseheart?
Sharing a special handshake with Mr. Urwiler.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?
Being on the honor roll my entire high school career.

What plans do you have after graduation?
I plan to get a job, save some money and start college in the fall.

How do you plan to serve others after leaving Mooseheart?
I plan to study social work and help children that have been affected by domestic abuse.

What advice would you leave with those following you at Mooseheart?
Don’t spend time being negative. Take advantage of all the opportunities that are given to you.

What is your best memory from your time at Mooseheart?
My first performance in front of the Mooseheart community, when I sang “Suddenly Seymour.”

What accomplishment are you most proud of?
Developing the ability to speak and perform in front of others.

What plans do you have after graduation?
I plan to move to Indiana and begin college in the fall.

How do you plan to serve others after leaving Mooseheart?
I just love to help make people happy whether it is through music or other things.

What advice would you leave with those following you at Mooseheart?
Keep going even though you might not understand. Mooseheart will help you more than you realize.
Jennifer Novak, left, receives the elementary student of the quarter award with her Family Teachers, Mary and Julius Buzzard.

Senior Hannefah Aileru, right, receives the student of the quarter award with her Family Teacher Eric Westman.

OSI Group, LLC provided all Mooseheart’s Middle School Students with stuffed stockings during the Christmas season.

Haines City FL and Power Moves Yoga of Batavia, IL partnered together at Christmas to give all our Elementary Students stuffed stockings and hand-painted ceramic hippo banks complete with some starter cash.

Aldi continues its generosity toward the Mooseheart community with regular Friday donations of food, clothing and household goods. This year they matched Santa with a stockpile of toys for the children of Mooseheart.

Mooseheart elementary students stand up to breast cancer.

Director of Admissions Kyle Rife celebrated 20 years of employment here at Mooseheart this past January. He and his wife Krystal served their first 6 years as a Mooseheart Family Teaching couple with boys.
Connie was married when she met Hector. After a brief romance, Hector denied he was the father of the Connie’s daughter, Ally. Ally’s father was never identified, and Connie fell into a cycle of addiction and prostitution that often left Ally neglected. Connie and Ally moved frequently, to and from hotels or to family members or acquaintances, who were more like strangers. Eventually, Connie was unable to care for Ally, who was sent to live with her grandmother Meg. Ally and Meg shared a one-bedroom basement apartment with adults where drug use and acts of prostitution were commonplace.

Meg met Rico and Deb at a local church and asked for their help in caring for Ally. At first the couple would keep Ally for weekend visits, but as they learned the truth about her dire living conditions they spent more time with the girl. Local authorities became aware of Ally’s living conditions and the court ruled to place her permanently with Rico and Deb. Weeks after Ally’s placement, Deb and Rico noticed more acting out behavior than they had seen before. They sought counseling services for Ally and saw her make remarkable improvements in the home and at school. After careful consideration of their own professional obligations, the needs of their natural children, and Ally’s need for structure and supervision, Deb and Rico felt that their family was not the best long-term solution for Ally. They reached out to the Mooseheart Admissions Department for help. Ally now enjoys the comfort of life at Mooseheart.

Upon the death of her husband, Anita Gutierrez found herself a single mother of six children. She didn’t give up and worked hard to provide for her family. When she saw her older children struggling, Anita looked for options in order to provide her children their best opportunities for their future. When her son Martin earned recognition as a Daniel Murphy academic scholar and was offered a spot at Mooseheart, she asked that her two youngest children, Monica and Orlando, be considered as well. In August, 2006, 11-year-old Monica Gutierrez and her brothers were enrolled at Mooseheart.

Monica recalls being very scared when she arrived at Washington home. She was not a very social little girl and so the “Welcome Monica” poster and the kindness of two older girls, Marlene and Krystal, meant a great deal to her. Before long she was playing on the volleyball team and volunteering for anything she could. She also appreciated the Family Teachers who she says she could really talk to. “I was close to them and they believed in me and set high expectations for me. I wanted to make my mom and my Family Teachers proud of me.”

In the spring of 2013 Monica graduated as the Salutatorian of Mooseheart’s centennial class. She attended the University of Illinois at Chicago where she completed a B.A. in Psychology with academic honors. Thanks to her Mooseheart scholarship Monica is able to say, “All of my friends have loans, but I only had to borrow $5,000. I have no student loan debt.” Monica was close to many Moose members, especially Nick and Jan Grecco, whom she met in her 6th grade year at the annual Pilgrim March. She described Jan as her “second mom” and the two kept in regular contact until Jan’s untimely death. Monica paid her respects by attending Jan’s funeral in New Jersey.

Currently Monica serves children as a daycare teacher in Chicago, where she helps children develop stronger English skills. She recently accepted a marriage proposal on Valentine’s Day! Monica said, “Mooseheart and the members of the Moose helped shape me into the woman that I am today. I am grateful for that.”
Mooseheart Mustang Raffle Winners

On behalf of the Mooseheart Community and Moose Charities, we would like to express a big “Thank You” to everyone who helped support and participated in the Mustang Raffle to benefit Mooseheart. We held the drawing on December 1, 2018 at the House of God during the Wisconsin Tree Lighting Ceremony.

1st place 1967 Mustang – Reid Wilson (Indiana)
2nd place $5,000 – Matt Netzley (Illinois)
3rd place $2,500 – Erika Kelly (Alaska)

Thank you for supporting our efforts!
http://www.mooseheart.org/2018/12/06/mustang-raffle-winners/

On The Web Our top news on www.mooseheart.org

Mooseheart, IL October 30
Founder’s Day
Thank you to all of the Ohio/Michigan Moose members and guests who joined us on campus to celebrate 2018 Founder’s Day Weekend with us – we had so much fun and are already looking forward to next year!
http://www.mooseheart.org/2018/10/30/founders-day/

Mooseheart, IL December 11

Holiday Lights
One of the largest holiday lights shows in Chicagoland, Mooseheart’s Holiday Lights show was open every day through Dec. 31 from 5-9 p.m. The cost for all the family fun was the $10 per car admission to the Holiday Lights show, which includes dozens of displays over a 1.8-mile route through Mooseheart’s campus and visits from Santa on select nights.

Mooseheart, IL December 6
Mooseheart Mustang Raffle Winners
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