

For the past five years Drew's Crew for Kids has met the needs of so many students in the Waukee Community School District. When Drew's Crew was formed, we had a vision of providing stepping stones to help bridge the gap that exists in our community between students from socioeconomically challenged households and those with seemingly endless opportunities, like so many suburban communities across the country. The opportunities to play in the school band, to go to gymnastics classes, to play baseball, to walk in the high school graduation, to have crisp new books to read, are often taken for granted as a normal part of childhood. But for so many, these opportunities only belong to others. We have helped these opportunities become reality to many who only dreamed. With so many students to serve as this district continues to grow, the need far outweighs our ability to meet it as a small volunteer-run organization. As a result, we are pleased and honored to be able to transition our work to two organizations that will take over the mission of Drew's Crew - to facilitate access to enrichment activities for local youth in need. As of December 31, 2021, Drew's Crew for Kids will dissolve as an organization, but the mission will continue through the operations of Can Play and the Waukee Community Schools Foundation.

Can Play, through its Opportunity Programs provides free-of-charge athletic and developmental opportunities for children in central Iowa. Drew's Crew has partnered with Can Play over the years to provide no cost soccer clinics to students in Waukee. The \$25,000 grant Can Play will receive from Drew's Crew will allow Can Play to continue to expand their athletic programs, particularly in Waukee, which not only provide free activities to local kids in need, but also serve healthy meals, provide transportation and offer free equipment and uniforms. Further, Can Play will expand their new scholarship program, to include the Drew's Crew scholarships, which will assist more advanced athletes with the cost of participating in club programs. Partnering with Can Play has been a natural fit from our beginning and we are thrilled that they will be able to expand through our grant and reach even more students than we could have on our own.

The Waukee Community Schools Foundation has recently expanded their grant opportunities to include grants to students in the Waukee Community School District to promote equitable access and opportunities for otherwise underserved students; elevate the voices and stories that celebrate the beauty and strength of our community's diversity; or to fill a need arising from socioeconomic circumstances or financial hardship. With a new full-time executive director, the Foundation is well-positioned to take over the individual assistance that Drew's Crew has been providing in our community for the past 5 years and expand it. The grant of \$25,000 from Drew's Crew to the Foundation will establish four areas of funding: \$2,500 will be allocated to provide multi-year funding for caps and gowns for graduating seniors in the WCSD who demonstrate a financial need; \$5,000 will be allocated to assist WCSD students demonstrating financial need for participation in visual and performing arts in the schools; \$10,000 will establish a counselor's fund for WCSD counselors to seek funds to meet the social-emotional and activity-based needs of students demonstrating a financial need or hardship; and \$7,500 will be designated as general support of the Foundation's arm of supporting students in the district experiencing financial hardship or need through programming, individual or small group support to further the mission of Drew's Crew of facilitating access to enrichment activities for local youth in need.

For those who know the story of Drew's Crew, who know the story of Drew, you might recall that this year Drew would have been in kindergarten. This was always the year that we had targeted as a time for growth and expansion, just as we would have experienced with Drew entering his school years. As a volunteer run organization, we realized that in order for the growth to occur, we couldn't do it on our own. We have spent this year looking for the right opportunities to present themselves for a transition to occur that would honor Drew's memory, but even more importantly, honor the mission and serve the

purpose behind the many donations that have been so generously made through the years. Although Drew's Crew will no longer exist as an organization, the spirit and legacy will continue to grow and reach more children than we ever thought possible through this change. I will forever cherish the hugs, the tears, the smiles, and the high fives I have received over the past five years from the families we have served and that have given my family and me the opportunity to see Drew in the hearts and souls of the children of our community. We will forever be grateful to the community who saw this need as an important one and gave their time and money to fulfill our mission. And we are so excited to see where Can Play and the Waukeew Community Schools Foundation take it all from here. We encourage you all to continue to support our mission through the work of these two amazing organizations.

On behalf of the Drew's Crew Board of Directors and my family, we thank all of you for your love and support of not just our son, but of all the children of Waukeew.

In love and gratitude,
Lara Plaisance, President and co-founder Drew's Crew for Kids