

## Waconia High School 2017 ExCEL Award Candidates

WHS is proud to announce that Elizabeth Whalen and Caden Turner, juniors at WHS were selected as the school's 2017 ExCel Award candidates.



**Elizabeth Whalen**, daughter of Alan and Karen Whalen, has been active in Soccer and Dance throughout her high school career. As a member of the Wildcat soccer program, Elizabeth has served as a Junior Varsity team captain and earned the "Spotlight on Scholarship" Gold award for three consecutive years. A two-time letter winner in dance, Elizabeth, has competed as a varsity member of the Dance Team her 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade years and presently serves as a captain of the 2016-2017 team. Elizabeth has been a vital member of both the Varsity Kick and Varsity Jazz teams, and has taken on many team responsibilities. Responsibilities included: being a member of the Varsity Kick choreography team (2015-16), Varsity Jazz choreography team (2015-16 and 2016-17), Costume Design team (2016-17) and team leader of the 2016 Fall homecoming performance. Her dance expertise also allowed her to be a choreographer and leader for the 2016 Winter Kid's Dance Clinic. Elizabeth's creativity also shines through in her other passion, Art. She has taken many art classes and at present is taking Advanced Placement Studio Art. Elizabeth enjoys challenging herself in a variety of honors classes including AP Calculus while also engaging in many school activities such as Art Club, National Honor Society, Peer Mentoring, International Club, Conservation Club, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and Peer Tutoring. Elizabeth succeeds in all she sets out to accomplish, including compiling an impressive 3.99 grade point average. In her "spare time", Elizabeth volunteers in her church community working at their Vacation Bible School camp in the summer, decorating, packing donations, and making blankets for the homeless. Over the last 6 years Elizabeth has contributed countless hours of time to the "Relay for Life" campaign, raising money, setting up, performing, serving at the survivor's dinner, and even finding time to join in the walk to raise awareness. Elizabeth's leadership in our community is consistent with her favorite quote by Harold S. Geneen, "Leadership is practiced not so much in words as in attitude and in actions."



**Caden Turner**, son of Tim and Holly Turner, has been active in Cross Country, Track, and Hockey. His athletic accomplishments in track include: three varsity letters, Most Improved (9<sup>th</sup> grade), High Point Earner (10<sup>th</sup> grade), and two Spotlight on Scholarship awards. As a freshman, Caden qualified for the section finals in the 110 meter hurdles and in 10<sup>th</sup> grade he qualified for the 110 and 300 meter hurdles placing 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> respectively. At the Conference meet as a 10<sup>th</sup> grader, Caden placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 110 hurdles and 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 300 hurdles. Caden participated in Hockey for two years, one year as the Bantam A Captain and one year as a Wildcat team member where he earned a Spotlight on Scholarship award. A three-year Cross Country participant, Caden lettered twice and received three Spotlight on Scholarship awards. Academically, Caden has held a 3.9 GPA while taking Advanced Placement Classes in US History, Statistics, Calculus, and World History. He is also enrolled in the “College in the Schools” program taking Physics (a class limited to juniors based on their GPA). Caden was a member of the National Honor Society and spends countless hours volunteering in his community with numerous organizations such as the America Reads program (tutoring reading in the elementary schools), Relay for Life, St. Joseph Catholic School (cleaning classrooms, organizing supplies, etc.), Carver County Fair at the Waconia Hockey Association booth, Feed My Starving Children and serving as a Youth Hockey Referee. Caden stated, “my favorite volunteer experience has been America Reads...during the time I spent helping students read, I saw their skills improve and their confidence grow, it made me feel amazing...”

Well done and Congrats Wildcats!