

# THE CHARGER

## S.A.F.E., SADD promote Red Ribbon Week

Emma Frey  
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A Wabaunsee club hopes to keep kids drug free.

The week of October 23-30 is nationally recognized as Red Ribbon Week. The national campaign is sponsored by National Family Partnership, and the Wabaunsee S.A.F.E. and SADD clubs are promoting the event within the school.

S.A.F.E. and SADD co-presidents Bailey Coon said "The goal of the week is to get the word out about Red Ribbon Week because drugs are a really bad thing. I don't think drugs are a big problem at WHS compared to other schools." She hopes the events of Red Ribbon Week will help keep it that way.

The club is promoting activities throughout the week to raise awareness on the topic of drug abuse including a school-wide drawing and speakers on Thursday.

Trooper Luka Henderson will be joining the students to speak on the topic "What you don't know CAN hurt you" - the truth about drugs, along with John O'Leary from LIVE INSPIRED.

## New para adjusting to classroom

Laurel Barber  
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Wabaunsee has a new face helping around the school.

Pam Popovich started as a paraeducator at the school on October 15. She has lived in Alma for almost five years.

Her duties include making sure that the students are staying on task as well as making sure that they follow through with projects and assignments.

Popovich has worked as playground and lunchroom supervisor in Junction City, and ran a daycare in her home. She worked at the sheriff's department as a dispatcher then went to work for Puffy's grocery store before starting at the high school.

Popovich hobbies include taking care of her grandkids and working in her yard.

"I find it kind of challenging, but I like working with kids. It's been a while since I've been in a school setting, so there has been a lot of things that have changed and it is just trying to get accustomed to the new way things are done," Popovich said.



Popovich

## STATE BOUND Charger volleyball and cross country to compete for championships



Volleyball players pose with pep club supporters following the sub-state championship Saturday.

### BOYS CROSS COUNTRY RETURNS TO STATE

Sean Dugger  
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The boys cross country team earned one more race.

The team qualified for state, 10 a.m. Saturday at the Wamego Country Club.

Competing at the Wabaunsee course, one well known by the charger runners, resulted in another team qualifying for state, making it the 11th boys or girls team to do so in the past 10 years. With a second place finish as a team, the boys qualified the second year in a row. Junior Luke Stuhlsatz and sophomore Alex Warner ran strong individually as well, placing in the top 10.

The team had the goal of making it to state from the beginning of the season which was seen early as the boys team remained undefeated until the Riley County meet. They head into state with an overall record of 48-4.

"We were definitely wanting to go to state since the beginning of practice as it was the end goal in mind," junior Bryce Tharman said.

The running roster is not unfamiliar with competing at state. Most of the team that will be running at Wamego were on the roster that finished 5th place last year. Senior Sean Dugger and sophomore Austin Henderson were alternates on the roster before but will be part of the top seven members that will compete.

"It feels great as I was bummed out that I didn't get to run at regionals or state last year," Henderson said.

The state meet will be the first time that the boys have ran against many of the other participating teams such as Central Heights and Stanton, which are the top-ranked boys teams in 2A. Northern heights beat the boys team at regionals by only 5 points and will be seen at the state level.

"We have always been enthusiastic and worked hard," cross country coach Roger Alderman said.

The girls cross country team's season ended at the regional meet. The team balanced injury recovery and competition for most of the season but still showed their toughness by placing 6th as a team. Junior Madelyn Hutley and freshman Kyndal Maikie competed strong individually but were not able to qualify themselves for state.

"Our girls team came up short, but we've made great progress from last year," Alderman said. "Looking ahead we should be continuing to improve over the next few years."

### VOLLEYBALL ADVANCES TO FOURTH STATE TOURNAMENT IN FIVE YEARS

Volleyball advanced to the state tournament after a win over Herington Saturday.

The Chargers defeated the Mission Valley Vikings 25-12, 25-13 and the Northern Heights Wildcats 25-16, 25-22 to advance into the sub-state championship. The Chargers played a close game with final scores 25-23, 25-22 against the Herington Railers.

The Chargers enter the state

tournament seeded 6th out of 8 teams and will play at 10 a.m. Friday at Ft. Hays Gross Memorial Coliseum. "Even though we are the 6th seed we have a good pool that is easily beatable and we are definitely planning to play on Saturday," junior Autymn Schreiner said. The team will also play games at 1 and 2. The top two teams from pool play will advance to the semifinals 10 a.m. Saturday.

"Being a senior and a leader of the team makes this year special since I've looked up to them since my freshman year," senior Alyssa Lohmeyer said.

"It will be great bonding time and we will have great support from our fans like we did at sub-state," junior Macy Falk said.

### FOOTBALL GETS FIRST WIN UNDER NEW HEAD COACH JESS RUTLEDGE

Spirits ran high Friday night after the Chargers took home their first win of the season against the Northern Heights Wildcats, 16-7.

"They played really good defense and for the first time played with total confidence all four quarters," head coach Jess Rutledge said.

The players hope to build on last week's success. "When you get a win you just get hyped. All the hard work we put in finally paid off a bit. We've gotta keep grindin'," junior Eli Wollenberg.

The team will now proceed to the playoffs with a game Friday against the Troy Trojans. "It was a big step in the right direction," Rutledge said, "This week we will find what we did well and build on it to get better and take what we didn't do well and work hard to correct it."

The team plays the Troy Trojans 7 p.m. Thursday in the first round of playoffs.

## Little Munchkins Pumpkin Patch a family affair

Kaytlyn Meseke  
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Little Munchkins Pumpkin Patch continues to bring visitors to the community for another season.

Jarrod and Cori Meseke run the patch, located 1.5 miles north of Alma on Highway 99. The pumpkin patch first opened in the fall of 2008 and is open every weekend in October along with Friday afternoons.

Cori made the decision of opening the pumpkin patch after having her first son. "I fell in love with my baby Jude and decided I would never be separated from him, so I decided to do this to have an extra income for the household," Cori said.

To keep a pumpkin patch running it takes hard work, long hours and sacrifice. To help out, Jarrod and Cori's five kids help with the chores at the patch during the season. After school and on the weekends the kids help plant the pumpkins, pull the weeds and care for the animals. "It teaches them work ethic," Cori said, "And I hope they will carry it on." Once the children become older, Jarrod and Cori hope to pass it onto them.

Not only does the pumpkin patch take lots of work, it takes away their free time during the sea-



Preschool student Leo Pacheco glides across the patch on the zipline during a field trip. The zipline is made up of cables and tires to sit on. To make a softer impact, old mattresses are secured around the trees. Photo by Kaytlyn Meseke. son. With the kids becoming older, more challenges have come up with working around their schedules. Jarrod and Cori are very thankful for Jarrod's parents for being able to help out during the season by watching the kids and taking them to their sporting events along with making cookies for the customers. They are also thankful for carpooling with extended family and friends.

Cori enjoys seeing the gratified customers come each weekend and each year. "When they come out here, they've had a great time and that's the biggest payoff," Cori said.

The pumpkin patch also gives opportunities for high school students to make a little money during October. "I like seeing all the different kids and their families spending time and having fun together," junior Alexis Hafenstine said.

The pumpkin patch is \$10 for ages 2 to 14, but free for adults and children under the age of 2.

Activities include a train ride around the patch, a hedge ball slingshot, multiple slides, ziplines, hay bales to jump on, a petting zoo and a walking trail. Pumpkins and participating in the paint ball shooting gallery are an extra cost. The pumpkin patch also has different food trucks scheduled for the season (Smokin' Wille's BBQ will be there Saturday and Sunday) and a concession stand for food. It also offers reservations throughout the week for daycares, birthdays and other groups for small ages.

For more information about Little Munchkins Pumpkin Patch go [littlemunchkinpumpkinpatch.com](http://littlemunchkinpumpkinpatch.com).