

SENIOR & SENIOR FAMILY INFO

RE: Senior Year Prep for Graduation and Collegiate Planning

August & September

- Senior year begins by looking to the end of the year and post high school plans.
 - Awards Ceremony & Kaleidoscope Concert, Friday Late Afternoon and Evening, Time TBD
 - Graduation = May 21, 2022
 - 10am at GPLHS.
 - Graduation Lodging and Parties (May 20-22, 2022). See the chart below.

LODGING IN WATERTOWN					
<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Phone #</i>	<i>Block Rooms</i>	<i>Party Room</i>	<i>Other</i>
Best Western Ramkota	1901 9th Ave SW, Watertown	(605) 886-8011	Yes	Yes	Talk to Deb for rooms, talk to Brittney for Party Room (605) 886-6127
Country Inn and Suites	3400 8th Ave SE, Watertown	(605) 886-8900	Yes	Yes	\$125 for the Party Room
Days Inn	2900 9th Ave SE, Watertown	(605) 884-5067	Yes	Yes	\$75 for the Party Room
Econo Lodge	920 14th St SE, Watertown	(605) 884-5270	Yes	No	
Hampton Inn	2720 9th Ave SE, Watertown	(605) 878-1800	Yes	No	Right next door to Buffalo Wild Wings [(605) 878-3777] that does have a side room that can be reserved
Holiday Inn Express	2803 8th Ave SE, Watertown	(605) 954-1800	Yes	No	
MyPlace Hotel	3409 8th Ave SE, Watertown	(605) 878-3133	Yes	No	
Quality Inn and Suites	800 35th St Cir, Watertown	(605) 886-3010	Yes	Yes	Rated #2 Quality Inn. Two party rooms to rent (larger/smaller)
Super 8 by Wyndham	503 14th Ave SE, Watertown	(605) 956-3235	Yes	No	
Surestay Plus Hotel by Best Western	3901 9th Ave SE, Watertown	(605) 882-3636	Yes	Yes	Two party rooms (larger-\$125/smaller-\$50). Talk to Jamie or Andrea.
OTHER PLACES FOR GRADUATION PARTIES					
City of Watertown Park Pavillions	Multiple locations around town and Lake Kampeska	(605) 882-6260	Reservations will be taken after January 1, 2022		
Watertown American Legion	1412 9th Ave SW #5091, Watertown, SD 57201	(605) 886-6243	\$100 to use their spacious room. Encouraged by their contact, call ASAP.		
St. Martins Ev. Lutheran Fellowship Hall	1200 2nd St NE, Watertown, SD 57201	(605) 886-2928	Talk to Rachel Wendler, Church Secretary. Free Will Offering to help cover use of the Fellowship Hall.		

- Christian Life Planning - Part of our curriculum in Living Christianity (senior religion) is learning about how God equipped each of us with our personal gifts and abilities.
 - We will conduct a personal evaluation of God’s gifts and skills for college prep awareness.
 - Access to SDmylife.com for an excellent tool to use to help.
 - Scholarship Websites will be provided.
- ACT / Standardized Test
 - Total benefit to take the ACT again.
 - Personal scores cannot be harmed, only helped.
- School Visits - make plans to visit tech schools, colleges and universities.
 - At GPL we grant 3 days of activity absences for school visits during school hours. Please make the most of these; don’t wait. Make your reservations at least two weeks in advance. If you’re planning visits for your senior during regular school days, please inform the office of your senior’s absences.
 - These visits give you a taste of what certain colleges are like and an idea of whether or not a particular college is for you.
 - Do not feel limited to the three days, plan other trips during breaks.
- Discuss / Gather Input & Advice
 - Parents/guardians and student(s), it would be wise to make some time to talk about future plans (hints: likes & dislikes about future education (tech school, college, university), military?, work force?, what to look for in a college, future goals and degrees, being a distance - or not - from home, financial responsibilities, etc...).
- College Fair / Job Expo
 - As a class we will prepare for the Job Expo and College Fair which is usually scheduled for early October – in person?
 - The Job Expo will give snapshot opportunities to visit with professionals in certain occupations and to inquire about needed education for certain occupations.
 - The College Fair will offer opportunities to visit with possible schools that offer degrees to aid in pursuing desired occupations and information about financial assistance.
- Apply & Transcripts
 - Apply to schools as soon as you can. It’s vital to be accepted into colleges in order to receive timely financial aid for particular degrees. Those schools with “rolling acceptance” will probably take about 2-3 weeks for word back of acceptance. It may take more time if some schools wait for the application deadline and then decide on being accepted.
 - Apply for scholarships. Every dollar of scholarship is another dollar that doesn’t need to be borrowed and repaid or earned in a job. Try to apply for at least 1-2 scholarships a week. If by 20 weeks from now (Late January) you’ve applied for 40 scholarships and you receive about 4 scholarships amounting to about \$4000, that is “free” money for school and well worth the time put in.
 - Transcripts – Colleges will need transcripts of grades for acceptance. GPL will send transcripts to colleges, no cost to you. You need to ask for them; talk to Mrs. Miller.
 - ASAP - School Admission Counselors suggest that February is the latest month in which you should finish your visits and submit applications in order to have the best opportunity to be accepted.

October

- College Fair / Job Expo
 - God willing, we will be attending the Job Expo and College Fair at Watertown High School and LATC.
 - Seniors should be prepared to ask questions about what a school offers to help with a desired occupation and gather information especially about financial obligations and scholarship and grants.
- Fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).
 - The FAFSA will determine how much financial aid you are eligible to receive from the government.
 - You may begin filling this out on October 1. Filling out the FAFSA can take a few hours.

- FAFSA Fill Out Day
 - We have a FAFSA Fill Out Day planned.
 - On Saturday, October 30, 9am to 11am, Marlene Seeklander, Director of Financial Aid at LATC, and her assistants will be with us at GPL to help parents fill out the FAFSA.
 - Please watch for announcements and register for the “hands-on workshop.” This is a free workshop here on campus.

November & December

- A Financial Aid Seminar is planned for Sunday, December 5th at 1:00pm, just before the Christmas Concert.
 - This is for those who are curious about FAFSA and other options.
 - This is more geared for underclassmen families, but Seniors and their families may come too.
 - Onsite, here at GPLHS. No cost.
 - Please register by email. Watch for the invite.
- Continue to apply to colleges
- Keep on applying for scholarships.
 - Talk to admissions counselors about specific scholarships at particular schools.
 - The earlier the applications, the ‘better the piece of the pie’ one will receive.
 - There are specific deadlines per scholarship per school. Be mindful of these deadlines.
- Search for alternative scholarships. Good places to start to search online are:
 - <https://www.fastweb.com/college-scholarships>
 - <https://www.niche.com/colleges/scholarships/>
 - <https://www.unigo.com/>
- Start weeding out colleges that do not appeal to you or do not offer what you like.
- If you are deciding not to attend a college to which you have been accepted, please let them know in order to be taken off of their mailing list.

January & February

- Personal Senior Information.
 - For diplomas and the yearbook such as correctly spelled full name, home town, verse to be read at graduation, plan for after graduation (work force, military, further education, other?), scholarships received, personal 150 word blurb for the graduation service booklet.
 - There will be varying deadlines for these details. We will also be asking the seniors for an alternate, personal email by which GPL may communicate with them in the future.
 - A Google Classroom Doc / Assignment was given in August for this.
- Graduation Cap & Gown for Each Senior
 - These will be ordered in January.
 - Approximate cost is \$45 dollars payable to GPLHS. Stay tuned for the exact amount.
- Graduation Service Details
 - During January, seniors will be voting on graduation details (class verse, hymn, colors, flower, and guest preacher)
- Graduation Photo
 - A wallet sized senior photo will be needed for the graduate collage, graduation service booklet and the yearbook.
 - Please send those electronically to Sarah Roloff sroloff@gplhs.org
 - Due to yearbook deadlines, our deadline for the senior pictures to be submitted is February 28.
- Make further strides with college plans.
 - Finish applying to colleges by the end of February.
 - Continue applying for scholarships as long as you can.

- If you are considering a Build Dakota Scholarship, here are important details:
 - A student must:
 - Be accepted into a Build Dakota Scholarship eligible program at one of the four South Dakota technical institutes.
 - Be a U.S. citizen or U.S. national (Must meet citizenship eligibility requirements according to the federal financial aid regulations).
 - Show financial need through completion of the FREE Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Please note that individuals at all income levels are encouraged to apply. The program does not specify a threshold of need; this is one component of the selection process.
 - Applications are also reviewed for demonstrated work-readiness skills such as internships or work experiences, technical coursework and industry certifications.
 - Talk to admission counselors at the technical institutes for applications or apply on the website of the technical institute.
 - Apply from January 1 to April 15.

March & April

- Senior Graduation Display Board – It's not too early to start on this. 😊
 - (Tri Fold Board (bought by you) set up on half of an eight foot GPL table (shared with another senior).
 - The boards will be assigned alphabetically around the perimeter of the gym. People may look at them before and after the graduation service.
 - Seniors may display their God-given blessings of certificates, pictures, trophies, awards, etc... for others to see.
 - The graduates will also stand by their boards following the service for family, friends and others to find them for congratulations, pictures, etc...
 - The boards may be put up after the Kaleidoscope Concert the night before or on Saturday morning before the graduation service. The GPL gym doors open at 8am.
- Inform tech school, colleges and universities of your intentions – attend / not attend.
 - This will be a considerate act which schools appreciate. Either you can start planning for enrollment, registration, possible dorm life, and a fun, new school year in the fall ...
 - ...Or the schools you are not going to attend will remove your name from mailing lists and take the scholarship and financial aid you aren't going to be needing and direct it to those who are going to attend their school.
 - Try to make your decision by the end of April. If this isn't possible or you are still considering, strive to make a decision as soon as you can to ensure enrollment at a college.
 - List your school of choice on the FAFSA to help with knowing the bottom line financial aid for you.
- Formalize graduation celebration plans.
 - Graduation announcements should be sent out around the end of March (about six weeks before graduation).
 - Announcements will include the invitation, name of the graduate, date of graduation, time and place of the service, time and location of the party, and of course a picture or two. If needed, include the name of the hotel where there is a block of rooms.
 - Often graduates produce and order invitations from Walgreens, Walmart, or other online photo product sites.

May

- Almost Done!
 - Finalize your decision about post high school plans, terrific! Ask the Lord to bless your decisions.
 - If you are still struggling with what college to attend, ask the Lord to bless your considerations and to give you the wisdom to make the best choice to his glory. Talk to admissions counselors. Maybe make another visit or two to solidify or clarify thoughts. Consult parents / guardians, pastors, teachers, others for some advice. Trust in the Lord and he will guide your ways.
- Semester Test Day
 - Q&A for Seniors about collegiate street knowledge
 - Previous GPL Graduates here to offer “street knowledge” about moving on to college.
 - This will serve as the time for our test time. Attendance is taken.
- Friday, May 20, 2022
 - Graduation Rehearsal - TBD
 - Seniors are to be moved out of their rooms (along with all other dorm students) and checked out on Friday. However, if need be, Seniors may stay in their room overnight (limited to necessities of bed items, bathroom items, change of clothes, etc....) and are to be moved out by 9am on Saturday.
 - Awards Banquet begins at 4pm, but time may be adjusted. Keep an eye on announcements.
 - Kaleidoscope Concert which begins at 7pm, again, time may be adjusted. Keep an eye on announcements.
 - Senior boards may be put up after the Kaleidoscope Concert.
 - Some graduation parties may be held this evening.
- Saturday, May 21, 2022
 - Doors open at 8am if you are wanting to put up your display board in the gym.
 - Seniors who stayed in the dorm the night before need to be moved out by 9am.
 - Seniors to be at School, in the School Commons and ready to go with cap and gown at 9:40am.
 - Graduation Day Service at 10am
 - A Congratulation Reception Line will follow the service. Stand by your display board.
 - CONGRATULATIONS & GOD’S BLESSINGS

June, July & August

- Keep in very close contact with your college’s admission counselor.
- Registration, scholarships, financial packages, school life and other information (often with deadlines) will be sent to you over the summer via your college’s email. Check it daily! Respond to it as soon as you can.
- Prepare for your next stage of life.
 - Get to know your roommate(s), your new location and campus.
 - On the all-important faith-side of life, look for a local / close-by church.
 - You can search the www.wels.net web page of <https://yearbook.wels.net/unitsearch> to find a church. (The link is on the top of the WELS web home page.)
 - You can also google “WELS churches near _____.” Stay connected to Jesus!
 - WELS Campus Ministry has campus pastors in a vast majority of cities with larger colleges and universities.