



PRESS RELEASE

DATE: Friday, December 8, 2023
TO: Twin City media outlets
FROM: Phil Kuemmel, Activities Director, Park High School
RE.: Park High School's ExCEL Award Winners

Park juniors Hollen Thompson and Samuel Paulsen have been nominated to represent the school for the MSHSL ExCEL award. ExCEL – Excellence in Community, Education, and Leadership – is a unique recognition program designed exclusively for Minnesota high school juniors who are active in school activities, show leadership qualities, volunteer in their communities, and are model citizens.

Park's female recipient this year is Hollen Thompson. Hollen is a letter winner in cross country (and has been named a captain for next year) and lacrosse and also played soccer. In school she is involved in Student Council, National Honor Society, Key Club, math team, and other clubs. Thompson is also very involved in the community, volunteering at numerous church events (Sunday school, mission trips and camps) as well as at Shriners' camps and events. She has taken many IB and AP classes, has earned Academic All-State honors in lacrosse, and has a GPA of 4.1.



Sam Paulsen is Park's male award winner. Sam is a three-sport letter winner in cross country, Nordic skiing, and track and field. He is a captain in two of his sports and participates in orchestra. Paulsen is the historian of the school's National Honor Society and is also involved in Key Club, Link Crew, and Leaders of the Pack. Outside of school, he volunteers as a Special Olympics coach and with his church as a Sunday and vacation bible school teacher. Sam is a full IB Diploma candidate and has a 4.2 GPA.

The mission of the Park High School Activities Department is to create learning opportunities for students to develop character, become well-rounded citizens, and achieve excellence in their activities, school, and community.



This is the 28th year that the MSHSL has sponsored the ExCEL award. An independent panel of judges from schools throughout Minnesota will select ExCEL Award recipients in January. State award winners (sixteen males and sixteen females) will be announced via the League website in February and will be recognized on KSTC-TV (Channel 45) during the broadcast of the 2024 winter state tournaments. Park graduates Meghan Kuemmel and Ethan Berube (2015) were both selected as state winners of this award when they were juniors. Additional information about the ExCEL Award may be obtained by visiting the Minnesota State High School League's Web site at www.mshsl.org. Congratulations to Hollen and Sam for demonstrating excellence in community, education, and leadership.

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