

Press Release
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Winter Games Cheerleaders: THE VOTES ARE IN!

After collecting nominations for all of December and holding a community-wide voting on January 5th & 6th, the Winter Games Committee has officially tallied up the votes! This year around 1,000 ballots were counted both electronically and in person at the Iowa Great Lakes Area Chamber. We now present to you the 2026 University of Okoboji Winter Games Cheerleaders, and due to a tie we are announcing 9 deserving individuals.

Emily Boettcher

“Emily always has a ready smile and a giving heart. You're never a stranger for long, just someone she hasn't met yet. She is a proud farmer/cattlemen and loves to share her farm experience with anyone! She is active on golf and bowling leagues and participates in many fundraising events in these sports around the area. Emily is an avid hunter as well. She was a 4-Her and continues to give back to the community volunteering at the County Fair and also with Ag in the Classroom activities through Iowa State University Extension. She loves Winter Games and can be found out and about with friends participating in various activities. Emily is the epitome of service, she is the VP of Dickinson County Farm Bureau Board, Commissioner & Treasurer of Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District and is active on the Dickinson County Cattlemen Board. She is one of the Iowa Farm Bureau Ag Leaders and has been a panel speaker for the State Women In Ag Conference.”

Josh Carr

“Josh has worked for Camp Foster impacting lives for over 20 years. Josh has been a great community member through his volunteer work with youth programs, his church and supporting Chamber events.”

Nicole Evans

“Look no further than voting for Nicole Evans as a cheerleader for the 2026 University of Okoboji Winter Games! Nicole never says "no" when asked to volunteer or serve in our community- her can-do, go-getter, positive attitude and willingness to pitch in whenever needed is inspiring! Nicole is a caring, committed, generous community leader. Nicole serves on the Good Neighbor Fund board, Spirit Lake Youth Little League Board, treasurer for the Dickinson County Relay for Life, Family Crisis Center Board, and is the past president of the Spirit Lake Elementary PIE committee. Nicole works at Northwest

Bank and lives in Spirit Lake with her husband Tommy and two children Davis and Charlee.”

Michael Jensen

“Lifetime resident. Donates time and money to the area. Works tirelessly to promote preservation of the area. He gives back through the life jacket program, food drive, Halloween programs and Okoboji Wave”

Nick Plueger

“Nick is one of the gym teachers at Okoboji Middle School. He and his wife own CrossFit Okoboji. Nick is probably one of the biggest motivators and supporters for those in the community. Those who know him know he has such a huge heart. If you ask any of the kiddos at Okoboji Middle School who they want as a PE teacher, it’s Mr. Plueger. Nick is nothing short of an inspiration and a role model for all ages! Nick would make the perfect Okoboji Winter Games cheerleader!”

Krista Stafford

“To know Krista is truly to love her, always up for a good time and known for sharing laughs and good company (often with a Busch Light in hand). Krista is an exceptional nominee for Okoboji Winter Cheerleader because her heart for the Iowa Great Lakes community is evident in everything she does. Krista’s blend of community leadership, volunteerism, and infectious spirit makes her a true cheerleader for Okoboji in every season.

As CEO of the Iowa Great Lakes Board of REALTORS™, she leads with a mission rooted in service and giving back, organizing and supporting impactful initiatives such as backpack programs, food drives, school supply drives, pet drives, and blood donation sponsorships that directly benefit local families and organizations.”

Krista & Trevor Smith

“Trevor and Krista grew up in the Iowa Great Lakes area and returned home in the last few years to set roots and start their family. Trevor works for the Iowa Lakes Corridor and is a key supporter of the Lakes area and all it has to offer. Krista recently started working as the Executive Director of the Spirit Lake Chamber. Both Krista and Trevor are true cheerleaders of the area and are dedicated in their personal and professional lives to strengthening the community. They are involved in Special Olympics, Spencer Young Professionals, Kiwanis,

K-Kids and so much more.”

Andy Wolf

“Andy has served the Bedell Family YMCA for over 15 years in multiple roles. Outside of work, Andy has impacted numerous children as a volunteer coach for youth basketball, football and baseball. He currently serves as the Varsity Baseball coach for Okoboji High School.”

