

NPES North Park
Elementary School
Small school. Big impact.

ALUMNI

Newsletter

SUMMER 2026

Remembering Ira Lawrence

The NPES community was deeply saddened by the recent passing of Ira Lawrence, beloved husband of our co-founder and former Head of School, Lynn Lawrence, and a longtime supporter and friend of North Park Elementary School.

Ira's warmth, kindness, and unwavering support of Lynn and the NPES community touched countless lives. His legacy lives on through the generations of students, families, and educators whose lives have been shaped by the Lawrence family's extraordinary commitment to our school.

Those wishing to honor Ira's memory may make a memorial gift to the [Kellogg Cancer Center](#) or [North Park Elementary School](#). We continue to keep Lynn, the Lawrence family, and all who knew and loved Ira in our thoughts.



Ira and Lynn Lawrence at the 2025 NPES Alumni Golf Outing. A cherished friend and longtime supporter of NPES, Ira's warmth and generosity will be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing him. Today, Lynn continues her dedication to the school as a valued member of the NPES Alumni Committee.

Celebrating the Class of 2022

One of NPES's newest traditions is welcoming our graduating alumni back to campus as they prepare for their next chapter - and this year, we were thrilled to celebrate the **Class of 2022** following their recent high school graduation!

It was a joy to reconnect with so many familiar faces, hear about their accomplishments, and see them proudly representing the colleges, universities, and paths they will be pursuing this fall. Alumni had the opportunity to catch up with former teachers, tour the campus, and reflect on the friendships and experiences that began at NPES.

We are incredibly proud of all they have achieved and are excited to follow their journeys in the years ahead. No matter where life takes them, they will always be part of the NPES family.

We hope this tradition continues to grow each year! Be sure to keep your contact information up to date on our Alumni webpage, follow the [NPES Alumni Facebook Page](#), and watch for future alumni events. We can't wait to welcome you back to campus again soon!



Members of the Class of 2022 gathered in front of NPES proudly wearing the college and university gear that represents their next adventure.

See more photos from the reunion and relive the memories by visiting our [online photo gallery](#).

A Swinging Success: 2nd Annual NPES Alumni Golf Outing

The 2nd Annual NPES Alumni Golf Outing was a tremendous success! More than 30 golfers gathered at Tam Golf Course, on May 29, 2026, for a beautiful day of sunshine, friendly competition, and community - all in support of the [NPES Financial Aid Program](#).

Hosted by the NPES Alumni Committee, the outing brought together alumni, current and former parents, grandparents, faculty, staff, and friends of the school for a relaxed and enjoyable day on the course. Open to golfers of all skill levels and all genders, the 9-hole scramble is designed to be a fun, welcoming event focused on connection, camaraderie, and supporting a great cause.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our golfers, sponsors, volunteers, and community partners - including [Compass Transportation](#), [Crew Landscape](#), and [Deconstruct Architecture](#) - the outing continues to grow while helping make an NPES education accessible to more students.

What began as a new alumni initiative is quickly becoming a cherished NPES tradition, strengthening lifelong connections while supporting future generations of Sharks.

View photos from this year's outing and relive the day by visiting our [online photo gallery](#).

Mark your calendars - we're already looking forward to welcoming everyone back for the 3rd Annual NPES Alumni Golf Outing in 2027!



Oliver Weinstein, Class of 2022 (center) with with Aunt, Melissa Menard (left), and neighbor and friend, NPES Parent, Jonathan Miller (Ari, '26)

Congratulations to the Class of 2026!

Congratulations to the 22 graduates of the NPES Class of 2026! We are incredibly proud of your academic accomplishments, but even more proud of the compassionate, thoughtful, and inclusive individuals you have become.

As part of graduation week, students participated in a special Graduation Brunch, where they were officially inducted into the NPES Alumni Association and presented with their alumni pin - symbolizing a lifelong connection to the school and the community that will always be cheering them on. It was one of many memorable traditions celebrating their time at NPES and the exciting journey ahead.

This year's graduation ceremony was held at the beautiful Black Ensemble Theater, where students celebrated this milestone surrounded by family, friends, faculty, and classmates. This fall, our graduates will continue their educational journeys at a variety of outstanding public and private high schools, and we can't wait to see all they accomplish in the years ahead.

We wish the Class of 2026 every success as they begin this exciting new chapter.

Below is the Class of 2026 Graduation photo and the list of high schools they will be attending this fall.





Celebrating Our 2026 Distinguished Alumnus

Congratulations to Dimitri Panoutsos, Class of 2011, recipient of the 2026 NPES Distinguished Alumni Award!

Each year at graduation, North Park Elementary School recognizes an alumnus who exemplifies the values of leadership, service, achievement, and lifelong learning - the qualities reflected in our [Portrait of a Graduate](#).

Dimitri truly embodies these qualities through his professional accomplishments, creativity, and commitment to supporting others. After graduating from NPES, Dimitri built a successful career in accounting, gaining expertise in reconciliation,

reporting, analysis, tax compliance, and client management before bringing his experience and passion for helping others to his own business.

A lifelong member of the NPES community, Dimitri has continued to give back as a former aftercare and Summer's Cool associate at NPES and as a coach at Chicagoland Baseball Academy, helping inspire and support young learners and athletes. He is also a talented musician, demonstrating the creativity, curiosity, and passion for learning that make him a wonderful example of an NPES graduate.

Dimitri's leadership, collaborative spirit, and dedication to youth development represent the very qualities we hope to nurture in every NPES student. We are proud to recognize him as our 2026 Distinguished Alumnus and celebrate the lasting impact he continues to make.

Congratulations, Dimitri!

Know an NPES alumnus who deserves to be recognized? We invite nominations for future Distinguished Alumni Awards. Visit our [Alumni webpage](#) to meet past recipients - including [Daniel Swanson-Nystrom '08](#), [Ava Schlossman '16](#), and [Dimitri Panoutsos '11](#) - and learn how to submit a nomination.



NPES Board President, Ravi Kalhan, presents the Distinguished Alumni Award to Dimitri Panoutsos ('11), introduced by Rodi Hotaling, Middle School Math Teacher

Leaving a Legacy: The Spring Appeal & Class of 2026 Legacy Gift

Over the past two years, NPES has proudly connected our annual Spring Appeal with a new tradition: the 8th Grade Legacy Challenge Gift. This student-led initiative gives each graduating class the opportunity to leave a lasting impact on the school community that has supported them throughout their NPES journey.

Last year, the Class of 2025 helped launch this tradition by supporting LEAPP (Leaders Exploring a Professional Passion) - a faculty and staff enrichment grant program designed to provide educators with meaningful professional growth opportunities that ultimately enhance the student experience.

The tradition continued with the [Class of 2026](#), whose Legacy Challenge Gift helped inspire the community to raise more than \$49,000 through this year's Spring Appeal. Their chosen priorities focused on investing in our incredible faculty and staff while expanding place-based learning opportunities that connect students to experiences beyond the classroom.

One of the many ways these gifts make an impact is through LEAPP. This summer, Early Childhood–Second Grade Art Teacher Anna Nardulli, a recipient of a 2026 LEAPP Enrichment Grant, traveled to Reggio Emilia, Italy, to participate in *The Language of Computation: Constructing Modern Knowledge Conference*. This international learning experience explored the intersection of the Reggio Emilia Approach and computational thinking through hands-on, project-based learning. Anna will bring new ideas, inspiration, and strategies back to the NPES classroom to enrich learning for our students.

We are grateful to the Class of 2026 and all who supported this meaningful tradition. Their generosity demonstrates the lasting impact our graduates can have - not only during their years at NPES, but long after they leave our halls.



Early Childhood–Second Grade Art Teacher Anna Nardulli (upper far left), a recipient of a 2026 LEAPP Enrichment Grant, traveled to Reggio Emilia, Italy, this past June to participate in *The Language of Computation: Constructing Modern Knowledge Conference*.

Introducing the NPES Legacy Giving Circle Forever Connected. Giving Full Circle.



For generations, North Park Elementary School has been more than a school—it has been a community where students are known, supported, and inspired to grow. The friendships, relationships, and experiences created at NPES continue long after graduation.

We are excited to introduce the NPES Legacy Giving Circle, a community of alumni parents, grandparents, and graduates who choose to stay connected through ongoing support of the school they love.

Membership in the Legacy Giving Circle is a meaningful way to ensure future generations of students have access to the exceptional teachers, programs, and experiences that make NPES so special.

With a commitment of \$500 annually (approximately \$42/month), members help sustain the future of NPES while staying connected through special alumni events, school updates, and recognition as part of this growing community.

Whether you graduated years ago, watched your child walk the halls, or are a proud NPES grandparent, your connection to this community continues.

Join the NPES Legacy Giving Circle and help ensure the NPES experience continues for generations to come.



JOIN TODAY

Thank you for being an important part of the NPES community. As we continue to grow our alumni network, we look forward to staying connected and sharing the lasting impact our small school has on the lives of our students, parents, and faculty.

JOIN THE NPES ALUMNI COMMITTEE

Looking for a meaningful way to stay connected to NPES? We invite you to join our Alumni Committee!

The committee meets once a month via Zoom and works together to create opportunities for alumni engagement, including reunions, special events, networking opportunities, and ways to strengthen our alumni community.

Whether you graduated recently, many years ago, or are an alumni parent who wants to stay connected, your voice and perspective matter. It is a simple but impactful way to stay involved, reconnect with NPES, and help shape meaningful experiences for our community.

We would love to have you join us! Contact Erin Leyden, Director of Development, leyden@npeschool.org to learn more.

STAY CONNECTED!

We'd love to hear what you've been up to! Please complete our [online form](#) to share your news with us. Feel free to share this link with your former classmates to help reconnect them with NPES.

NPES ALUMNI MAGNETS

We now have NPES Alumni car magnets. Be sure to stop by the front office to pick up your free magnet or to have one sent to you, please reach out to [Erin Leyden](#), Director of Development & Marketing.

NPES ALUMNI WEBSITE

Our website is the most effective tool for sharing everything that makes NPES special. We work hard to keep it up to date and recently started adding new articles written by our incredible staff, offering insights into their classrooms and curriculum. Be sure to visit often to see what's new!

ALUMNI SPIRIT WEAR SHOP