

CATCHING UP WITH THE CLASS OF 2021 YOUTH AMBASSADORS

A NOTE FROM BRANDI:

The Youth Ambassador program gives high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to build leadership skills, connect with their community, and explore the cooperative business model. For the Class of 2021, however, the experience looked a little different.

Due to COVID-19 shutdowns during the 2020–2021 school year, these ambassadors did not have the opportunity to complete their senior-year programming. Despite that setback, this group showed resilience, adaptability, and a strong commitment to their personal growth.

As the coordinator of this class of youth ambassadors during their junior year, I had the privilege of working closely with these students during an unprecedented time.

I recently caught up with a few members of the Class of 2021 to see where their journeys have taken them. It's especially meaningful to look back now and see how each of them has moved forward, building careers, continuing their education, and stepping into leadership roles in their communities.

JACQUELYN PAUL

With a clear passion for healthcare, Jacquelyn Paul has steadily advanced toward her goal of becoming an occupational therapist. After graduating from Lincoln High School (Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan), she earned her undergraduate degree in Kinesiology in December 2024 from Iowa State University.

She is now continuing her education at the University of Minnesota in the Occupational Therapy Doctorate (OTD) program, with an anticipated graduation in August 2029. "It was always my plan to pursue a degree in healthcare," she shares.

As she progresses through her program, Jacquelyn has developed a growing interest in working with older adults and in outpatient rehabilitation settings.

Jacquelyn has continued to build on the leadership foundation she developed as a youth ambassador. She participated in the I-Lead leadership program at Iowa State University, joined organizations such as the Pre-Occupational Therapy Club,



Jacquelyn Paul

and held leadership roles through her work experiences. She now serves as a student ambassador for the University of Minnesota's Occupational Therapy program.

While her direct involvement with cooperatives has been limited since the program, Jacquelyn remains committed to community engagement. She has volunteered with CarFit through her OT program, supported a local food pantry

in Rochester, and completed fieldwork at a senior community center.

"Being a youth ambassador gave me the opportunity to build communication and leadership skills while connecting with others in my community," Jacquelyn says. "It helped me gain confidence and a deeper appreciation for the value of service."

REESE ZEMAN

Turning an early interest into a hands-on career, Reese Zeman has built his path in the electrical trade from the ground up. After graduating from Melrose-Mindoro High School, he entered the field with T.D. Padesky Electric as a material handler, already focused on his goal. "Throughout high school, I knew I wanted to become an electrician," he says.

Driven and focused, Reese advanced through a four-year apprenticeship with the same company, completing his training through Western Technical College in May 2026. He now works as a journeyman electrician.



Reese Zeman

Reese continues to build his expertise while already taking on leadership roles, serving as a job foreman and mentoring new apprentices. “The youth ambassador program helped me develop the leadership skills I use every day,” he shares.

His work has also connected him with cooperatives, including projects involving Dairyland Power Cooperative, Jackson Electric’s wholesale power provider. Outside of work, Reese stays engaged in his community, marching in the La Crosse Labor Day Parade with IBEW Local 14 and volunteering at local church festivals.

TEAGAN FREY

Teagan Frey has built a career centered on helping others, combining her education and passion for service to make an impact in her community. A graduate of Melrose-Mindoro High School, she continued her studies at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire, earning a degree in behavior analysis with a minor in criminal justice.

After graduating in May 2024, Teagan immediately advanced her education by pursuing a Master’s degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at the University of Wisconsin–Superior.

She graduated from the program in December 2025.

She now serves as a case manager with the Jackson County Sheriff’s Office and is a treatment provider for the Jackson County Adult Treatment Court. “I decided to stay local to be close to family, but I also want to help strengthen the community that contributed so much to who I am today,” shares Teagan.

While her long-term goal is to open a private practice, Teagan is already embracing leadership opportunities in her current role. “I served as an internship director during my undergraduate studies, and more recently, I’ve helped implement policies and programs within the Jackson County Jail and Sheriff’s Office,” she explains.

Her work includes active outreach, in-jail programming, and contributing to deflection policies and action plans designed to support individuals in the community.

Since participating in the youth ambassador program, Teagan has continued to recognize the value of cooperative and community-focused initiatives. She actively volunteers at local events, working closely with individuals affected by substance use



Teagan Frey

disorders and those involved in the justice system.

“Being a youth ambassador prepared me to take initiative and lead in both school and my career,” Teagan says. “It strengthened my networking and leadership skills in ways I wouldn’t have experienced otherwise.”

—Brandi Shramek, Member Relations Supervisor

July Office Closures

AMERICA 25th

Friday, July 3, 2026 (All Day)

Wednesday, July 8, 2026 (Noon - 4:30 p.m.)



CELEBRATE ICE CREAM MONTH WITH *Sundae on the Farm*



Contributed photo

Join the annual Sundae on the Farm on Sunday, July 12, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Peasley Dairy Farm in rural Black River Falls.

The Peasley family is celebrating 150 years of farming and seven generations of the family farm. The farm is operated by David and Tammy Peasley (5th generation), William and Kelsey Peasley (6th generation) and family (7th generation). Longtime supporters of the Jackson County community, the Peasley family invites guests to celebrate their legacy and enjoy a day on the farm.

“I missed the last time our family hosted the Jackson County Dairy Breakfast in June of 1992 because I was born in August that year,” shares Will Peasley. “I’m excited to be a small part of our family’s legacy of milking cows for 150 years in Jackson County!”

As a sixth-generation farmer, Will said continuing the family tradition is meaningful both personally and for the next generation. “I’ve always held onto the vision of raising my family on a working farm and giving them the opportunity to pursue a career in agriculture if they choose,” he says.

The event will feature ice cream sundaes, milk, grilled cheese sandwiches, and cheese curds, along with activities for kids. A community church service will also be held on the farm at 9 a.m. before the event begins.

“We feel human connection is important in this day and age,” Will says. “We’re excited to welcome family, friends, neighbors, and the community to our farm.”

Will also hopes visitors leave with a greater appreciation for agriculture and dairy farming. “I hope consumers can learn one more thing about production agriculture to better understand where their food comes from and how much effort it takes to get delicious and nutritious products to their plate,” he explains.

The farm is located at N7271 U.S. Highway 12, about 2.7 miles from the Kwik Trip on Highway A in Black River Falls.

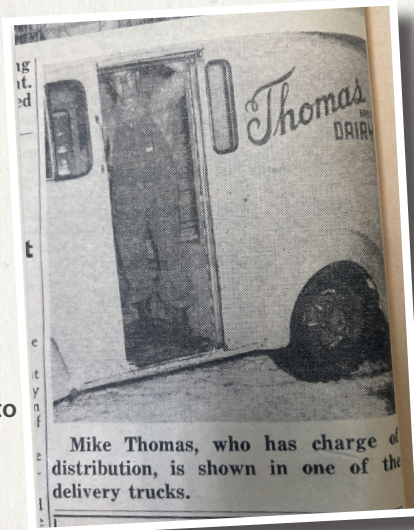
Parking is available on the farm, weather permitting. Follow the Jackson County, WI Dairy Promotion Committee for updates and additional event details. The event is by freewill donation.



Farm photo by Kelsey Peasley

WIRED THROUGH TIME

Thomas Dairy began in 1920 when Frank Thomas hauled milk by hand to a single customer. With the arrival of electricity through the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), the family business expanded rapidly, transitioning from manual labor to a fully mechanized operation. This access to electric power enabled Thomas Bros. Dairy to modernize its plant, increase production, and become the largest dairy in Jackson County.



Mike Thomas, who has charge of distribution, is shown in one of the delivery trucks.



From One Customer To Three Tons Of Milk Daily

Left above, Don Thomas is shown at the bottling and capping machine in the modern dairy plant. Right, Pat Thomas shows how bottles are washed and sterilized.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

LOGAN SEDDON

Jackson Electric welcomed Logan Seddon to the team on May 18, 2026, as a 1,000-hour laborer.



This role provides valuable hands-on experience and serves as a steppingstone toward an electric lineworker


apprenticeship and a long-term career in the field. Logan is eager to get started and build his skills. "I'm looking forward to gaining real-world experience outside of the classroom and continuing to learn every day," he shares.

A graduate of Blair-Taylor High School (Class of 2021), Logan recently completed Chippewa Valley Technical College's nine-month Electrical Power Distribution program. After exploring different career paths, he ultimately chose to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather by pursuing a career as a lineman. "Seeing the work they've done influenced my decision to follow that same path," Logan says.

Currently from the Blair area, Logan has also lived in several places throughout his life. He was born in Minnesota, spent 11 years in California, later returned to Minnesota, and eventually made his way to Wisconsin.

Outside of work, Logan enjoys spending time outdoors hunting, fishing, and riding ATV trails.



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