

The Academics, Arts, and Athletics Award, commonly known as the Triple 'A' Award, honors high school seniors throughout the state who have a 3.0 or higher-grade point average and who participate in League-sponsored athletic and fine arts activities. Eligible seniors must also comply with the Minnesota State High School League Code of Conduct.

This year, Tri-County is proud to announce that Brynlee Reese has been selected as Tri-County's female representative for the Triple 'A' Award. Brynlee is a member of the Northern Freeze volleyball team, softball team, and served as a manager for the basketball team. She participates in Tri-County's FCCLA program, gives her time as a peer buddy, and has been selected for multiple leadership opportunities for our school. Brynlee is a member of the National Honor Society and has represented Tri-County in the Area Envirothon and has represented us at the Region 8 Art Contest. As an artist, she enjoys the challenge of art and how it pushes her to express her creativity in different ways. Upon graduation, Brynlee plans to study cosmetology in Fargo.

In her letter of recommendation, Art Teacher and FCCLA Advisor, Justina Pietruszewski states, "Brynlee demonstrates creative tenacity and determination. After completing the required courses, she continued with advanced art electives, seeking to grow her skills. Last year, she competed in the MSHSL Visual Arts Contest, reflecting her courage to challenge herself and her commitment to personal improvement."

Mrs. Pietruszewski summed up her letter with, "Brynlee's success in athletics, academics, and the arts, combined with her leadership and her character, make her a respected and inspiring presence in our school. "

Tri-County is equally proud to announce our male representative for the Triple 'A' Award is Straet Spilde. Straet is a member of the Northern Freeze football, basketball, and baseball teams. Straet has been selected to the All-Conference team in baseball, the All-District team in football, and has served as a Captain in all three sports. Academically, while enjoying his core classes, Straet has also challenged himself with college courses. He feels these classes have allowed him to explore topics more in depth and have helped him grow academically by reinforcing the values of hard work and persistence.

Straet is also involved with the Tri-County choir. He has performed in ensembles for music competitions, and as a sophomore was honored with the "Best of Site" Award. Straet feels that seeing the joy the choir can bring while

serving the community at events like the Christmas performance at the assisted living center, have deepened his appreciation for service and shown how music can be a powerful tool in community building.

Straet plans to attend the University of North Dakota to study criminal justice.

English Teacher, Melissa Thompson, had this to say about Straet, “ He is a truly remarkable young man who demonstrates the qualities of a role model within our school community. Straet’s leadership, character, and pursuit of excellence make him an outstanding young man, and I am confident he has a bright future ahead of him.”

Brynlee and Straet, along with all the region 8 school’s Triple ‘A’ winners, will be honored at a banquet on February 5th at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen. Of these students, one boy and one girl will be selected to represent the region and participate in an on-court ceremony during the Class AAA championship game of the Boys Basketball State Tournament. At that time one boy and one girl will be selected as the statewide award winners and each will receive a four-year \$1000 scholarship.