



Bright Spots and Big Moments in Mapleton

Thursday, Sept. 11, 2025

Welcome to **Spark! Bright Spots and Big Moments**, your biweekly roundup of feel-good stories, standout moments, and celebrations from around Mapleton. From student achievements to staff highlights, this community newsletter is all about what makes Mapleton shine.

Spark stories are organized by:

Bright Spots – shout-outs and recognitions

Big Moments – events, milestones, and celebrations

Behind the Spark – staff profiles or features

Community Connections –partnerships, family highlights

High Fives!

[Share your good news!](#)

[Send a "High Five"!](#)

Past issues of all our employee newsletters are available [on our website](#).

Bright Spots



It's "Be Present" week in Mapleton!

As a part of Attendance Awareness Month, Mapleton is encouraging all students to [Be Present, Be Proud, Be YOU!](#)

This week is all about being Present. When you are present, you bring your own special gift to school, including your ideas, your energy, and your personality.

Four outstanding eighth graders from Trailside Academy—**Allison, Adair, Angelik, and Steven**—shared what being present means to them.

"Being present can mean a lot of things," said Steven. "It can mean being somewhere, like at a party for someone, or it can mean being there for someone, like emotionally."

For Allison, being present means showing up prepared. "It's about showing up, being ready, and paying attention." She added that her future goals—to be a doctor and President of the United States—motivate her. "My future, my grades, my attendance—it all counts toward my goals. That's what motivates me to stay present."



Angelik agreed, connecting presence to her academic goals. “My grades help me be present. I want to be able to go to college.”

For Adair, being present is also about relationships. “Being present is being there for someone you care about—like parents cheering on their child during a football game.” Steven added, “Being present for others is important, like on a team. You can’t let the team down. At Trailside, we’re crew, not passengers.”

When asked how they would encourage a classmate struggling to stay present in school, Adair said he would remind them to focus on the future: “Don’t think about the obstacles. Think about what you are trying to achieve.”

Angelik added, “Kids want to grow up and be successful. If you need help being present, ask your parents or teachers—they’ll help you find new ways to succeed.”

Keep an eye out for the green "Be Present" bracelets!

Showing up. Caring for others. Paying attention. That’s what it means to Be Present.

Seven Academy High School seniors earn College Board national recognition

Seven Academy High School seniors just earned National First-Generation Recognition Awards and School Recognition Awards by the nonprofit CollegeBoard in its National Recognition Program! The annual program recognizes the strong academic performance of underrepresented students, often serving as a signal to colleges and universities looking to recruit diverse, talented students.

These recognitions not only open doors to college and scholarships but also highlight Mapleton’s commitment to belonging and academic excellence.

Read more about these amazing students in the “News from the District” section [here](#).

Read the full story!

Valley View Innovation School hosts first Whole School Elective Day

Valley View Innovation School held its first Whole School Elective Day last Friday, Sept. 5, bringing all grades together for an afternoon of hands-on learning and exploration.



Students participated in 50-minute enrichment sessions featuring crocheting, baking and art, as well as soccer with the Rapids Youth Soccer League, Ninja Warrior challenges, karate, yoga and cursive.

Sessions were led by Valley View staff and volunteers who shared their skills with students. Staff said they couldn't wait to do it again!

Global Intermediate Academy fourth graders build working finger models

Fourth graders in Daisy Hernandez's class at Global Intermediate Academy really put their fingers to work last week, exploring the five senses with a hands-on anatomy project. Students built working finger models from paper and string, with segments standing in for bones and the string acting like tendons to show how pulling creates movement. After building, they compared the models to their own hands and discussed how bones, tendons and muscles work together.



Projects like this show that when students are in school, they are building, experimenting and discovering how the human body works.

Big Moments

JROTC 9/11 ceremony

This morning, Mapleton's Air Force JROTC Raider Squadron hosted its annual Patriot Day Observance Ceremony at DiTirro Stadium on the Skyview Campus.

The event honored the lives lost on Sept. 11, 2001, and paid tribute to the first responders and service members who continue to protect our communities and country today. Representatives from each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, along with members of Thornton's Fire and Police Departments, joined our students and community in remembrance.

The ceremony featured remarks from Lt. Col. (Ret.) William Arrington and Thornton Mayor Jan Kulmann, patriotic performances by the Mapleton choir and band, and a solemn tribute as cadets guarded the POW/MIA Chair of Honor.

Get ready for Homecoming 2025: "The Great Homecoming!"

Mapleton has a long-standing tradition of celebrating homecoming as an entire district, grades PK-12.

This year, Homecoming will take place on Friday, Sept. 26. This is a two-hour early release day for all schools, and afternoon (PM) preschool classes are cancelled so that all families may participate in the festivities.



Friday, Sept. 26

- **2:45 – Parade staging** begins at the Skyview Campus.
- **3:00–4:30 p.m. – Homecoming Parade** [View parade route map here](#)
 - Every school will have a float, and athletic teams and student groups are encouraged to participate.
 - Parade participation requires [permission slips for all students](#) who wish to walk with or be part of a float.
- **4:30–6 p.m. – Tailgate at the Skyview Campus** - Enjoy food, games, and fundraising opportunities for schools and student groups.
- **7 p.m. homecoming football game kickoff at DiTirro Stadium**
 - Cheer on the Skyview Wolverines as they take on The Academy Wildcats! Mapleton students and staff may attend for free with a Mapleton ID. Students in grades PreK–6 must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday, Sept. 27

- **Homecoming Dance – The Great Homecoming**

- 7–10 p.m. | Skyview Student Center (8990 York Street, Thornton)
 - Tickets: \$10
 - Mapleton student ID required for entry
 - A guest [permission form is required for students](#) bringing a guest from another school.
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York International School honored for attendance

In case you missed it, York International School was recently featured by CBS News Colorado and Colorado Public Radio (CPR) for its success in improving student attendance.

York has reduced its chronic absenteeism rate by 7.68% over the past three years, one of the largest improvements in the state, and was recently recognized by the Colorado Department of Education during a media briefing on Aug. 27.

[Watch the CBS story here](#) and [read the CPR story here](#).

Behind the Spark

Teaching for Tomorrow grows in year two

Mapleton's Teaching for Tomorrow program is back for a second year, adding new classes, more students, and the opportunity to earn a professional certification before graduation.

The program introduces high school students to education through college-level coursework and hands-on classroom experience in Mapleton schools. Enrollment has grown from about 30 last year to about 40 this fall.



This school year, the program adds two classes: Child Development and Teaching and Technology. Students who complete all four required courses can earn the Colorado Instructional Paraprofessional Certificate, which qualifies them to work in classrooms across grade levels.

[Read the full story here!](#)

Community Connections

Wolverine Den Food Pantry reopens for the school year



Mapleton and Food for Hope have partnered to support Mapleton families by opening the Wolverine Den food pantry—providing access to essential resources right in our community.

The food pantry is located on the bottom level of **Achieve Academy (9100 Poze Blvd.)**, and is **open to all Mapleton families every Thursday from 9–11 a.m.**, with no appointment needed. The pantry offers a variety of essential items and will continue to expand its selection as it grows.

The Wolverine Den Food Pantry

Open every Thursday from 9-11 a.m.

Achieve Academy (bottom level), 9100 Poze Blvd.

No appointment necessary! Open to all Mapleton families!

Be Present in Mapleton!

September is Attendance Awareness Month! This year, Mapleton is encouraging everyone to activate their attendance superpower with the [Be Present, Be Proud, Be You](#) campaign. This week, we are focused on what it means to **Be Present**.

Volunteering at your child's school is a great way to stay present in your child's education. Whether you help in the classroom, chaperone a field trip, support school events, or join a parent committee, your presence shows your child that school matters and that you're invested in their success.

When families volunteer, students feel supported, schools become stronger, and the whole community benefits. Your time and talents are a gift, and they make a lasting difference!

To learn more about volunteering in your child's school and complete the volunteer application, [visit Mapleton's website](#). You can also contact your child's school to learn more about volunteer opportunities, including Parent/Teacher Organizations and [School/District Accountability Committees](#).

High Fives!



"High Fives" are a quick and fun way to celebrate the people who make Mapleton shine. From kind gestures and creative ideas to everyday excellence, these shout-outs recognize those who go above and beyond and remind us of the many ways our community makes a difference.

[If you know someone who deserves a "High Five", submit your appreciation using this form.](#)

Christian Cruz & Aaliyah Cruz, Welby Community School of the Arts

"They have been off to a happy start of the year doing their best everyday at school!"

Submitted by Anonymous

Maureen Russ, Explore PK-8

"A huge thank you to Maureen Russ for going above and beyond to support our school! While we've been without a speech therapist, she has graciously stepped in to cover IEPs and assessments, keeping everything running smoothly for our students. Today, she took time to personally welcome our new speech therapist, walk her through district procedures, and create a schedule to help her start strong.

"Maureen's dedication, kindness, and teamwork are truly appreciated. Thank you for making such a positive impact and ensuring a smooth transition for our students and staff!"

Submitted by Heather Gorey

Terri Stowell, Early Childhood Education

"Terri deserves a two hands high five (if it were humanly possible, I'd give her more). She is the positive force that quietly makes the wheel spin smoother. She always has a genuine smile and a willingness to help. We truly appreciate everything you do. Thank you for being YOU."

Submitted by Malia Leialoha

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Spark! Bright Spots and Big Moments – Call for Submissions

Do you have a bright spot or big moment to share? Email communications@mapleton.us, or call 303.853.1020 to share your ideas!

Email: communications@mapleton.us

Website: <https://www.mapleton.us/>

Location: [7350 Broadway, Denver, CO 80221, USA](#)

Facebook: facebook.com/MapletonPublicSchools

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